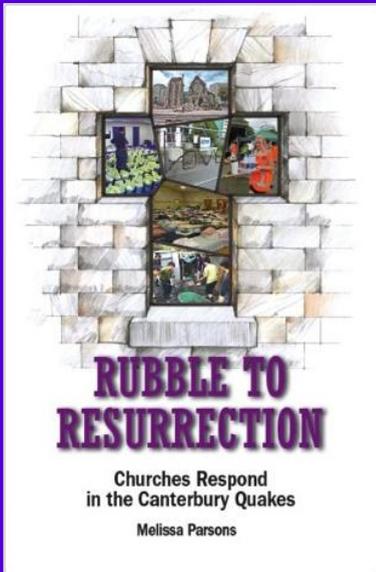


# THE CHRISTIAN WRITER



February – March 2015



Supporting  
Members' Writings

## RUBBLE TO RESURRECTION

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by Melissa Parsons

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

Our new Website has just been  
launched. See page 3 for details.

*Rightly explaining the word of truth – 2 Timothy 2:15*

(New Revised Standard Version of the Bible)



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Student \$15 (digital mag)

*(Highest rate of \$50 is under 14 cents a day. Student rates are under 5 cents a day)*

**Membership, Subscriptions and Address Changes:**

Jan Pendergrast (email: [jan@roads-end.co.nz](mailto:jan@roads-end.co.nz))

**The Christian Writer** is published bimonthly by the New Zealand Christian Writers and distributed to all its members. Contributions on the theme of writing are always welcome. If you have some advice or encouragement for Christian writers, or an announcement of some event of interest to members, do send it to the editor for consideration by the 20th day of the month prior to the publication date. Submissions should be no more than 500 words long and hard copy manuscripts will not be returned unless a self-addressed stamped envelope is enclosed.

The editor reserves the right to condense and / or edit any contributions for reason of space. Ideas and opinions will not be edited, but editing of a technical nature may occur to maintain the highest quality of writing possible.

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# THE CHRISTIAN WRITER

Feb – Mar 2015

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The views and opinions of authors expressed in this magazine do not necessarily state or reflect those of the editor.

### **New Website:**

As part of our rebranding initiative, we have just launched our new and user-friendly website. Besides being full of interesting information, such as details of workshops and copies of past magazines, it is designed to attract brand new members for NZ Christian Writers. So please encourage other Christian Writers you may know to Join Us on our new website.

The link is as follows:

[www.nzchristianwriters.org](http://www.nzchristianwriters.org)

## From the President

How time has flown. Already the first month of 2015 is over. I trust you had an enjoyable Christmas. It was lovely for us to have all of our children and grandchildren together for Christmas. One of the highlights of the holidays was walking to Marsden Cross. I enjoyed talking to Samuel Marsden's granddaughter and Cam, our son-in-law, chatted with his grandson on the track leading to the beach.

It's just a short time now till the retreat at Narrows Park when I look forward to renewing old friendships and meeting new members. Numbers are not as high as we would like but I'm sure we will have a time of encouragement. Do remember to start honing those Scrabble and Rummikub skills in preparation for the competitions.

It's not long until the Autumn Workshop. We are planning to hold the workshop at Rossgrove Chapel on 28th March. Speakers at that time will be Keitha Smith whose topic is *Developing*

*Character to Enhance the Story*, and Tom O'Neil, who is a motivational speaker and author. He will be speaking on *The 1% Principle* and *Goal Getting*.

As you are probably aware we now have a new website. Our thanks go to Justin St Vincent for the work he has done in getting this operational. Thanks also to a number of others who have contributed to the project.

Lately I have been picking lots of blackberries. One thing that stands out is the way those branches with the best fruit bend the lowest. I wonder; do I bow low in thanksgiving for what Christ has done for me or do I just bend under the cares of this life? In picking blackberries I experience pain but the fruit is sweet. In the case of Christ's suffering, never has such suffering resulted in greater blessing and sweetness for those who have trusted Him. May we each seek today to share His sweetness with others.

Janet Fleming



Mike and Janet Fleming at the foot of the Marsden Cross



NZ CHRISTIAN  
**writers**

## Autumn Workshop

**28th March 2015**

**from 9:30am – 4:00pm**

Rossgrove Chapel, Rossgrove Terrace  
Mount Albert, Auckland



### **Morning Speaker: Keitha Smith**

—co-author of the traditionally published *Mothering Heights*, a Christian book to help women make the most of their motherhood experience, will be speaking on:

### **Developing Character to Enhance the Story**

Keitha is an independent author of four novels that explore life's rich tapestry through funny, flawed and familial fictional characters. She also provides editing and story consultancy services.

### **Afternoon Speaker: Tom O'Neil**

—award winning motivational speaker, Promise Keepers Board member, and international author of the *1% Principle* (released by Harper Collins in the USA, UK, Canadian, Australian and NZ markets and recently included in the top 25 best sellers on Amazon.co.uk), will be speaking on:



### **The 1% Principle—Improving Your Performance TODAY!**

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*Don't forget to bring a packed lunch. Tea and coffee will be provided.*

#### **For more details contact:**

Janet Fleming or Jan Pendergrast on

Tel: (09) 405 0126 / Email: [mjflamingos@xtra.co.nz](mailto:mjflamingos@xtra.co.nz) / Email: [jan@roads-end.co.nz](mailto:jan@roads-end.co.nz)

# The Christian Writer

## Magazine Deadlines

For members wishing to submit a piece to the editor or a competition entry to our judges, please take note of the following deadlines:

### February – March Issue

Competition deadline: 10th January

Other submissions: 20th January

### April – May Issue

Competition deadline: 10th March

Other submissions: 20th March

### June – July Issue

Competition deadline: 10th May

Other submissions: 20th May

### August – September Issue

Competition deadline: 10th July

Other submissions: 20th July

### October – November Issue

Competition deadline: 10th September

Other submissions: 20th September

### December – January Issue

Competition deadline: 10th November

Other submissions: 20th November

*Ed's note: Submissions include articles for consideration, regular contributions (i.e. the President's Report, Competition Results, Get Creative entries, Book Reviews, Fred's Writing Briefs) and anything for the Notice Board.*

*Concessions to these deadlines may be made at the discretion of the editor and competition judges, provided any delay in meeting the deadline is not extreme.*

## Write a Limerick

*With acknowledgements to Bruce Lansky  
of gigglepoetry.com*

To help you get started, here's some helpful information about writing limericks. A limerick is a funny little poem containing five lines. It has a very distinctive rhythm and rhyme pattern.

### Rhyme Pattern:

- The last words of the first, second and fifth lines all rhyme with each other. We'll call those rhyming words 'A'. However the words could be *Peru, shoe* and *true* as illustrated in the first poem below; or *Tim, swim* and *him* as illustrated in the second poem below.
- The last words of the third and fourth lines rhyme with each other. We'll call those rhyming words 'B'. However the words could be *night* and *fright* in the first example or *dock* and *rock* in the second example.

### Rhythm Pattern:

- The first, second, and fifth lines all have this rhythm pattern: da DUM da da DUM da da DUM. Notice there are 3 DUMS or beats. Say "*There once was a fellow named Tim*" out loud. Now say, "da DUM da da DUM da da DUM" out loud. Notice that both have the same rhythm.
- The third and fourth lines have a different rhythm pattern: da DUM da da DUM. Notice there are two DUMS or beats. Say, "*He fell off the dock*" out loud. Now say "da DUM da da DUM" out loud. Notice that both have the same rhythm.

Here is a very famous limerick. Notice both the rhyme and rhythm patterns.

*There was an old man from Peru* (A)  
da DUM da da DUM da da DUM  
*Who dreamed he was eating his shoe* (A)  
da DUM da da DUM da da DUM  
*He awoke in the night* (B)  
da DUM da da DUM  
*With a terrible fright* (B)  
da da DUM da da DUM  
*And found out that it was quite true* (A)

When you write a limerick, make sure it has the same AABBA rhyme pattern. Make sure it also has the same three dums/ two dums rhythm pattern. To be sure, recite the poem, substituting ‘da’ for all unaccented or unstressed syllables and ‘DUM’ for all accented or stressed syllables, as I have done above. If your poem doesn’t have a similar rhythm pattern, then you need to make some adjustments.

Ideas for new limericks can come from almost anywhere. e.g. your city, state, country, or name. If your name is Tim or Jim, you could write something like this:

*There once was a fellow named Tim* (A)  
*Whose dad never taught him to swim* (A)  
*He fell off a dock* (B)  
*And sunk like a rock* (B)  
*And that was the end of him* (A)

Notice that the rhyme pattern (AABBA) and the rhythm pattern (3 DUMS, 3 DUMS, 2 DUMS, 2 DUMS, 3 DUMS) are almost identical to the rhythm and rhyme patterns in the *Man from Peru* limerick.

Okay, now that you know what the rhythm and rhyme patterns of a limerick are, you’re ready to write one. Here are five simple steps to writing a limerick:

### Step 1

Pick a boy’s or girl’s name that has one syllable, like Bill, Tim, Dick, Sue or Jill. We’ll pick ‘Jill’ so the first line is:

*There once was a young girl named Jill*

### Step 2

Now make a list of words that rhyme with the last word in the first line—in this case, Jill. Your list of rhyming words might include: hill, drill, pill, skill, bill, will, and ill.

### Step 3

Now write the second line using one of the rhyming words. Here’s an example:

*Who freaked at the sight of a drill*

(Notice that the last words in the first two lines rhyme and that both the first and second lines contain 3 DUMS or beats.)

### Step 4

Now think of an interesting story. What could happen to someone scared of a drill? Well, you might have an interesting story if Jill had to go to the dentist. Here’s what might happen in the third and fourth lines.

*She brushed every day*  
*So her dentist would say,*

(Notice that ‘day’ and ‘say’, the last words in the third and fourth lines, both rhyme. And notice there are 2 DUMS or beats in each line.)

### Step 5

Now you need to go back to the list of ‘A’ rhyming words to find one that can end the poem. Here’s an example:

*“Your teeth are quite perfect. No bill.”*

Here’s the limerick we just wrote:

*There once was a young girl named Jill  
Who was scared by the sight of a drill  
She brushed every day  
So her dentist would say,  
“Your teeth are quite perfect. No bill.”*

Now try it yourself!

## **Writing Fiction:**

### **Five Tips to Get More Creative**

Anyone can sit down and start writing fiction, but not everyone can sit down and start writing good fiction. Learning how to write fiction is an art form that takes a lot of patience, practice and determination (it also is nice to get a little help, which is where we come in). Here are five fiction writing tips to help you improve your craft.

#### **1 Start with tension**

Time and time again you’ll hear fiction writers and instructors tell you to start with action. This is flawed advice. Why? What good is the action if it isn’t grounded in context that’s important to the story or draws you to the main character? It’s better to start with tension, like a character falling short on getting something he wants—can’t save the life of a loved one, can’t beat a rival in a race, etc.

#### **2 Know what your characters’ wants are**

Interesting stories come from characters who want something. Romeo and Juliet want each other. Harry Potter wants to beat Draco Malfoy and Slytherin in Quidditch. Hannah Baker wants the people who led her to commit suicide know how they hurt her. Writing a fiction book requires that you have compelling

characters, and characters who have strong wants and desires are the most compelling kind there are.

#### **3 End each chapter on a cliff**

Okay, you don’t have to end each chapter on an actual cliff, but you do need to leave them with unanswered questions. This doesn’t mean you can’t answer questions during the book, it just means you need to create new ones as you go along. Be creative. Fiction is built on the curiosity of readers. If you don’t spark their curiosity (especially at the end of a chapter), what incentive do they have to start the next one?

#### **4 Give your characters obstacles**

The obstacles can be as difficult as you want (and should be pretty darn difficult to help spice up the story). But the key here is that they have to be able to overcome the obstacle no matter what it is—drug addiction, in love with a person who’s on the antagonist’s side, etc. Fictional writing is strongest when characters face tough odds and still come through in the end.

#### **5 Understand your audience**

Are you writing a fantasy novel? A crime novel? Fiction genres are different and are told in different ways, so audiences of each have different expectations that you need to cover. For example, if you’re writing crime fiction, you have to reveal what happened early and spend the novel solving the crime (and the whodunit). If you’re writing a thriller, your story is dedicated to characters trying to stop whatever it is from happening.

Take these tips to heart when writing fiction. A guide to narrative craft can really help give you a better understanding of how to write a fiction book. And you don't have to stop there. There are great fiction writing websites that offer fiction writing ideas; you just have to poke around the Internet for awhile to locate them. Or you can turn to any number of books on writing fiction.

*With acknowledgements to Readers Digest.  
Free download is available on their website.*

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<http://www.initiatemedia.net/adcentral/print-digital-ChristianLife.html>

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or email: [ray.curle@initiatemedia.net](mailto:ray.curle@initiatemedia.net)

Check out <http://www.initiatemedia.net/>

## THE FLAG

By Rod Hickman

I don't like to brag  
But I'm rather proud  
of our national flag  
It's a banner we wave high  
To see it flutter in the sky

I like to see this flag around  
Should fly full mast in every town  
Was carried overseas  
in World War Two  
Been bloodied and shot  
and tattered too

Men have died and victories won  
To maintain the freedom of every son  
But there's another flag  
that we should know  
Covered in crimson blood that flows

T'was the blood of Christ  
he gave for me  
Liberty and freedom, my God to see  
He fought that war on Calvary's cross  
To break the evil  
that would be my boss

So I hoist it high for one and all  
To muster now to the Saviour's call  
On second thoughts I like to brag  
Of heaven's royal and bloodied flag.



# Writing To Make a Difference

By Janice Gillgren

---

Can we actually, really, truly make a difference to our world?

To bring this to a more personal level—can I make a difference? Can you?

I've been writing this blog for five and a half years now, and it's been an adventure. Learning to write a regular weekly blog has been a huge commitment, and there have been times I've wondered if it actually, really and truly makes a difference to anyone.

But I think we all wonder that about what we do.

Perhaps top selling authors have accepted that yes, their work is making a difference—especially with books and other writings that are intended to do so, such as motivational and inspirational material (be it fiction or non-fiction).

However, there are probably few other writers that are likely to have the same degree of confidence about this.

Why would we care about making a difference though?

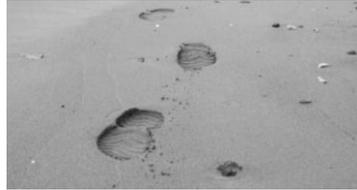
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow penned this poem:

*Lives of great men all remind us,  
We can make our lives sublime,  
And, departing, leave behind us,  
Footprints on the sands of time.*

(In 'A Psalm of Life')

We all want to be happy in this life, undoubtedly; we want to 'make our

lives sublime', but we also want to leave 'Footprints on the sands of time'.



*Looking back over my footprints on sand*

This latter phrase makes me think of permanence, such as an imprint on rock, because usually sand will wash away footprints at each high tide, or wind will soon erase them.

But to leave behind those footprints to be seen many high tides later implies distinction and endurance.

The Bible is one of such works, especially as it has spanned not just hundreds of years, but thousands. There are other historical works that have endured many centuries too, of course.

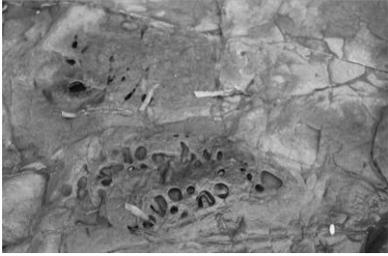
Few among us could imagine making such a long-lasting imprint on the shifting sands of time. Most of us would be happy to think we had made a positive difference for those who are nearest and dearest to us. Many writers say they pen their words for their children.

We want to be remembered for having made a difference.

The challenge is to actually make the effort and take the time to do things

that will outlast us. We get so caught up in the daily events of life. I certainly do anyway.

There are many occasions across history where people have made their names memorable (for good or bad) unintentionally.



*Footprint-like imprints in rock*

However, writing is not this way. Writing takes time. It requires commitment, constancy, determination, intestinal fortitude, patience and a lot of time.

You do not write by accident.

What you are writing, or want to write, may also seem small. This may deter you from even trying. However, faithfulness in the small things will lead to being trusted with the bigger things. You do not leave long lasting imprints in an ever-changing world by accident.

I am often challenged by such thoughts. Are you?

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## **Warm Welcome to NEW MEMBERS**

**Lesley Boshoff**

Thames

**John Colton**

Te Puke

**Laura Martin**

Hamilton

**Helen Port**

Mangonui

**Lynley Smith**

Snells Beach

## **What is the Role of Syntax in Literature?**

Syntax and literature are so important and dependent upon each other that the two cannot be separated. Syntax in literature gives the sum of the words meaning in a way that simply listing words never would. Syntax influences literature in a big way, because without proper syntax literature would simply not exist, nor would many of the subtleties that academics and casual readers alike love to ponder. In looking at syntax in literature, writers can use it in numerous ways to convey different meanings and provoke certain responses.

In order to look at the role of syntax in literature, it is first necessary to

understand exactly what syntax is. Syntax is defined as the structure and placement of words for the purposes of creating sentences. Usually, syntax does not concern itself with the placement of punctuation, though punctuation can help the reader determine where a certain emphasis is in the sentence. Such grammatical marks can help convey even deeper meaning than syntax alone.

By following the rules of language, syntax in literature helps convey meaning. Wording can help the reader determine who is speaking, and the overall mood the author wishes to convey, in a logical fashion. Readers typically expect a certain syntax flow. In some cases, such as with EE Cummings, syntax provided a figurative canvas for poetic expression that intentionally broke the rules of the English language in order to create a unique look and feel. Poetry is one area in which syntax often differs from its usage in other written forms.

Without proper syntax, literature would simply be a list of words that convey no particular meaning. Some have likened literature without syntax to words in a dictionary. While the words all mean something, they are not put together in any way that conveys a deeper sense of meaning or mood.

In most literature, syntax takes a standard form that most can recognise. Despite this standard form, the author still has a great deal of leeway in developing sentences to create moods and convey thoughts. The author may choose longer sentences or shorter sentences. He or she may use larger words that flow or shorter words that

help break up the passage. The possibilities are virtually endless.

Syntax in literature, at least in most forms of literature, begins with the typical construction of subject and verb. The subject and verb must agree, or be conjugated properly. In English, this usually involves putting an ‘s’ or ‘ed’ at the end of the verb, or simply leaving it alone. In other languages, verb forms can be much more complex and incorporate many different ending forms. These forms, in some languages, can be used to infer what the subject is, thus replacing the need to mention the subject in all cases; consequently when literary works are translated from one language to another, one of the great challenges is choosing syntactical structures in the target language that accurately represent the precise meaning found in the original.

*With acknowledgements to wisegeek.com*

## Shadows

By Deborah McDermott

I stood on the wide verandah, embracing the peaceful solitude of the shadowy night. A nearby cricket abruptly ceased its chirping and the cool breeze sighed itself to sleep, completing the silence.

The silhouettes of the msasa\* trees— brightly aflame with colour during the day—were now barely visible against the star-studded sky. As I gazed up at the tiny pinpricks of light, I thought of God’s promise to the Old Testament patriarch, Abraham, and how he had fulfilled that promise through one child.



Sitting there, breathing in the sweet smell of dew on grass, I began thinking of God's many promises in my own life and how he had so faithfully fulfilled each one of them.

I gave up trying to see the mountains on the distant horizon. It wasn't a time for seeing, but for feeling, believing and communicating with the one who created it all. A time also for learning, I felt, resting my chin on my drawn-up knees.

Memories of another day flooded my mind as I peered into the darkness. I had been at the top of a high mountain, gazing in wonder at the hills and valleys below me. Each detail stood out clearly, but somehow it was the dark shadows that enhanced the detail and beauty of what I saw. I tried imagining the vista without the shadows, but soon realised their removal would make the lovely colours appear dull and uninteresting.

As I stood on that mountain, I began drawing spiritual parallels and came to the conclusion that Christianity without struggles or shadows would be as insipid as food without salt. God in his wisdom knew godly character could only be built when I put my confidence in him during my times of testing; when there was nothing else I could do but rely on him. When I came to that point of understanding, I saw that the 'shadows' in my life were the very things God used to highlight my beauty in Christ.

Now, staring into the dark, shadowy night where detail was obscured by lack of light, I saw a different kind of beauty and truth. The first time God prompted me to leave my home for a totally new and unfamiliar environment, I did so with mixed feelings of excitement,

panic, determination and fear. In many respects, the new course the Lord led me on was just as obscure as the dark night that enveloped me now, where I could scarcely see further than the tip of my nose. I had no idea what the future held for me then. Yet, as I placed my trust in God, his plan began unfolding in ways that were both pleasant and surprising.

Regretfully, I have not always trusted the Lord so implicitly. To be alone in the dark can be a terrifying experience for some people. My times of unbelief filled my heart with a similar kind of anguish and my life became a daily struggle until I recaptured my faith and hope in God, who holds me in his hands. In an uncanny sort of way, such times of doubt helped me to better understand that the unknown is not really a dark place when I walk in the light of God's presence. To go when he says 'Go' is an exciting privilege—even if I don't know the ins and outs of what lies ahead—because it carries with it the promise of his wonder-working power and grace.

As though nodding in agreement, the moon peeped over the edge of the horizon and transformed the landscape into a gilt-edged showpiece. I smiled as thoughts of another analogy began flooding my mind... but that would have to wait for another night.

Opening the door, I turned on the light and left the velvety night to enjoy its own company. The pile of papers lay just as I'd left them an hour before and, with a sigh, I went back to work.

**Footnote:**

*This reflective piece is based on the author's life story while still in Zimbabwe. \*Msasa trees are indigenous to Africa and have a distinctive amber and wine red colour when the young leaves sprout in spring*

# GET CREATIVE

As there were no *Get Creative* submissions for this issue, I went looking through what I have on file and found this lovely piece by Grace Shapleske, who is now with the Lord.

For me, it fully captures the topic of *The Greatest Wonder of All*.

## What is most important to me about Creation

By Grace Shapleske

Mention the word creation and it conjures up a multitude of images before my eyes. A flock of migrating birds, wing tip to wing tip, calling to each other while in flight beneath a cloudless sky clothed in a glorious sunset of yellows, oranges and reds. Or it could be a toppling, powerful waterfall with its spray landing into a still pool. It could be a favourite puppy tumbling through grass. What of holidays by the sea with swimming every day and pony rides on the sand. We all have our memories of creation.

Then I thought of WORDS being the most created things as this world came into existence through God speaking words. He said, "LET THERE BE LIGHT" and THERE WAS LIGHT. Three heavens were separated and so on, until all this world was nearly finished. Then God said, "IT IS GOOD." There was the writing of the Ten Commandments by God and we began to see what God was like.

No, the greatest creation is humanity; for three persons—God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—had a consultation. They did not speak man into existence but took of the dust of the earth and breathed into Adam's nostrils and he became a living soul. Then God said; "It is VERY good." I see the Trinity present at each birth, and through what is inherited, He forms each baby into Life. Indeed—"we are fearfully and wonderfully made."



## The next topic will be **Heart of a Lion**

Maximum 40 lines for poetry and 250 words for prose.

Include the words 'Get Creative' with your submission. Although work is not judged, the best pieces received will be considered for publication.

*Email submissions to the editor no later than 10th March 2015*

## Origins of Four Commonly Used Idioms

### A red herring

MEANING— something designed to distract or throw someone off a trail.

ORIGIN—A herring is a fish that is often smoked, a process that turns it red and gives it a strong smell. Because of their pungent aroma, smoked herrings were used to teach hunting hounds how to follow a trail. They were drawn across the path of a trail as a distraction that the dog must overcome.

### In stitches

MEANING—laughing so hard your sides hurt.

ORIGIN—Presumably comparing the physical pain of intense laughter with the prick of a needle, ‘in stitches’ was first used in 1602 by Shakespeare in *Twelfth Night*.

### Know the ropes

MEANING—someone who is experienced at what they are doing.

ORIGIN—This phrase has its origins in the golden age of sailing, when understanding how to handle the ropes necessary to operate a ship and its sails was an essential maritime skill.

### Once in a blue moon

MEANING— something that happens very infrequently.

ORIGIN—a blue moon doesn’t refer to the actual colour of the moon, but to when we see a full moon twice in a month. This only happens every two to three years. It’s thought the word *blue* may come from the obsolete word *belewe*, which meant *to betray*. The ‘betray moon’ was an additional spring full moon that obligated people to fast an extra month during Lent.

## Recently Launched Book

Congratulations to John R Milne who recently launched his book



### Excerpts from Dee McColl’s book review:

As an octogenarian John Milne has not only lived a long life, he has also had a very active and productive one. Experiencing his fair share of sadness and heartache, he revisits these significant times which have melded and awakened a sincere compassion and understanding of grief and loss to those who suffer the death of a loved one.

This journey reveals the many faces of grief: Both parents and two year old sister all gone before he reached the age of eight; the death of his three month old son Stephen and grandchildren; also a tribute to the life of his only brother who died recently.

Included in the book are the words of his adult son Chris who died three months ago. This is profound and takes the reader into the torment of schizophrenia, and brings an understanding of why and how the decision can be made to voluntarily terminate one’s own life.

Also included are the experiences of others... The author makes time to express love and appreciation for those significant people in his life who have made a difference. Though the subject matter is sombre and sadness is evident, beauty shines through and leaves the reader with a sense of what enduring faith in God can mean in the valleys and mountain tops of life’s journey.

*To obtain your own copy of this very worthy book, go to [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com) and type Bereavement in the ‘Search’ box. John’s book will be first on the list.*

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## WRITING BRIEFS

Inspiring Christian writing of today and yesteryear—by Frederick Swallow

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### **‘Marsden’s sermon of 200 years ago still relevant’ (NZ Herald)**

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**Christmas Day 1814** was a historic day for our nation at Oihi Bay when Samuel Marsden preached the gospel for the first time on New Zealand soil to around four hundred folk: Chief Ruatara, Maori, settlers and seamen from Marsden’s brig *Active*.  
\*Wakas were used as seats on the beach.

**Christmas Day 2014** was special to me as I was able to be at the Samuel Marsden bicentenary celebration, held at quiet Oihi Bay. I joined several hundred folk enjoying the day seated around on the grass and on folding picnic chairs, to hear third generation Rev Samuel Marsden, Maori and Church Leaders give thanksgiving messages and read Scriptures from Luke 2:1-16 and Isaiah 7:14. Boaties in nearby launches joined in the hearty carol singing including *Te Harinui* written by New Zealander Willow Macky.

Samuel Marsden echoed his great, great, great grandfather’s very words saying, “My soul melted within me after the singing of that opening hymn *All people that on earth do dwell*. He then presented a Gospel message based on Luke and Isaiah, saying his fervent prayer was that the message, introduced to New Zealand by Te Rongopai, would be shared as God’s love to family, neighbours and friends, and that the glory of it would never depart from its inhabitants until time shall be no more.

#### Footnote

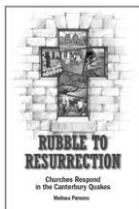
*I was pleased to meet the Rev Samuel Marsden. He showed much interest on learning I was a Christian writer, handing me his personal card to receive info about CWNZ—Fred Swallow*

*\* A waka is the Maori word for canoe.*

## Library Corner

### Book Review

By Debbie McDermott



### RUBBLE TO RESURRECTION

By Melissa Parsons

*Rubble to Resurrection* is an excellent overview of how churches throughout greater Christchurch pitched in to help with the aftermath of the 2011 earthquake and the aftershocks that followed. Of particular note is the excellent research that has gone into compiling the stories told in each chapter. This involved personally interviewing 56 priests, ministers, pastors, secretaries and administrators representing over 95 churches of various denominations, demographics and ethnicities. Also noteworthy is Melissa's attention to detail in acknowledging her sources of information in footnotes and appendices. She has also provided additional information at the end of several chapters.

While Melissa does not claim to have provided an exhaustive summary of everything each church did, she has achieved her primary goal which is to 'tell our stories to each other...' As many of the churches responded in similar ways or worked together to meet the needs of people, she has focused on a theme in each chapter, rather than on individual denominations. Some of the themes include: Responding to the Emergency; Walking with the Wounded; Caring for the Kids; Supporting the Seniors; Encouraging the Weary; Restoring the Soul.

Well written and interesting, *Rubble to Resurrection* is a highly commendable book every New Zealander should read.

To obtain your own copy, go to:  
<http://www.rubbletoresurrection.org/>

## Important Reminder

Members who are about to launch a new book or have recently had a book published should advise the Editor well in advance so details can be included in the magazine. If you would like your book to be reviewed in *The Christian Writer*, then please donate a copy to our Lending Library and we will be happy to do so. Reviews are limited to six per year, so do be prompt in getting in the queue!

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# Competition Results

## Under 30s

**Judge:**

**Vicki Nogaj**

Unfortunately, there were no entries for the Under 30s category because the deadline was missed. Do remember that competition deadlines always fall on the 10th of the month prior to the date of the next issue of the magazine. To make this easier to follow, a chart with magazine dates and deadlines can be found on Page 6.

## Level One

**Judge:**

**Debbie McDermott**

**Requirement:** CREATIVE: Beginning with the phrase 'It was a dark and windy night...' write a story with a cliff-hanger ending. 450 words

### General Comments

*I was very pleased to receive five entries to this competition, two of which were from members who have only recently joined NZ Christian Writers. Welcome. Each entrant produced a fine story with a great cliff-hanger ending, but I was particularly impressed by the standard of writing achieved by the top three. Well done.*

*Regarding the standard competition requirements—noted on the back cover of each magazine issue—only Cindy met these in full. It is very important to remember to include your name and the word count just below your entry's title or at the end of your document. Failing to do so will result in a point being taken off your final score. Meeting typesetting requirements, such as font type and size,*

*is also important as they teach you how to present your work professionally.*

*Another practical point is to ensure the default MS Word dictionary you are using is set to NZ English, not American. i.e. Americans spell 'neighbour' as 'neighbor'. This is considered to be a spelling mistake at NZ competition level and will result in a point being deducted from your score.*

*Apart from the above, each of the five entrants presented me with a worthwhile story and I really encourage you all to keep developing your literary skills.*

## First Place



**Cindy David**  
of Titirangi,  
Auckland

### Streets of Death

It was a dark and windy night. Samantha got off the bus to begin the walk home. There was hardly anyone on the road. She regretted not allowing Liam to pick her up from work on his way home.

Thoughts raced through her mind. Only a year ago, on a dark and windy night just like this, her friend Sophia was abducted while walking home. The body was later found in a bush a few meters from her house. Her killer was never caught.

Samantha drew her coat tighter around her and felt the urge to call Liam; his

voice alone could usually calm her. She groped in her shoulder bag for her phone but could not find it. Where was it? Did she leave it on her desk at the office? On the bus?

She never thought the night was going to be as dark as this. She moaned, “Why are there no lamp posts around here?” The long stretch of road ahead was hardly visible and the sound of the wind blowing through the trees were plunging her into deeper anxiety.

Had Sophia made the same mistake? The police had identified Sophia’s phone lying on the street the morning after she went missing. They theorised that she had received heavy blows to the head before being dragged into the bushes, raped and repeatedly stabbed.

Panic rose in Samantha’s chest as the wind blew harder. Her mother always warned her about walking alone at night. “*You need to be aware it’s not a safe world; the devil is lurking around every corner, waiting to devour anyone.*”

“I’m so sorry, mama. You’re right. It’s not a safe world. If it was, Sophia wouldn’t be dead.”

But wasn’t Sophia’s death meant to serve a purpose: to warn her about the dangers that may lie before her? Sophia didn’t die in vain—her murder served as a way to save her and all the other girls in her neighborhood.

But what could Samantha do now? She was careless and unprepared to meet the devil. She had perfume in her bag that she could spray into the killer’s eyes, or a ballpoint pen she could thrust into his

gut, but she feared that none of these would guarantee survival.

She sped her way up the hilly road, her heart pounding harder. Suddenly, she was jolted by the approaching figure of a man.

“Oh, my God...”

She instantly crossed to the other side of the road but also saw the figure shifted his direction to mirror hers. She turned back and ran as fast as she could. Realising that the man was now chasing her, Samantha screamed aloud, “Help! Please help me! Help! Help!”

### **Judge’s Comments**

*What I liked most about Cindy’s entry is its credibility. She has achieved this by using a real event (the tragic murder of Blessie Gotingko last year) as her source of inspiration, then writing her story as though she was the victim. This would have required a great deal of reflection on Cindy’s part in order for her to communicate the sense of tension, suspense, panic and fear so effectively. Her story has a very good flow to it and—apart from the excellent cliff-hanger ending—leaves the reader in no doubt as to what is happening.*

*Besides a couple of spelling mistakes caused by using the American dictionary instead of the New Zealand one, Cindy’s grammar is good overall, with only a few corrections needing to be made. They are:*

- *Para 3—the first ‘could’ is superfluous. This phrase would read better as ‘usually calmed her.’*
- *Para 4—as the first sentence begins with the word ‘She’, I recommend*

*moving 'she moaned' to after the closing speech marks in the second sentence. In the last sentence, change 'were' to 'was' as it refers to 'the wind' (singular), not 'the trees' (plural).*

- *Para 5—as 'Sophia' is used in the first sentence, I recommend rewriting the second sentence as, 'The police had identified her friend's phone...'*
- *Para 8—last sentence: delete the second 'that' and insert 'her' before 'survival'.*
- *Para 9—delete 'her way' as it slows this sentence down and is superfluous.*
- *Para 11—delete 'also saw' in the 1st sentence: (noticing the figure shifted infers seeing it happen) and 'aloud' in the last sentence as sound is usually associated with a scream.*

*Aside from these recommendations, this is an excellent piece of writing, Cindy, and worthy of First Place.*

## Second Place



**Keith Willis**  
of Kaukapakapa,  
Auckland

### Smuggling

It was a dark and windy night. Perfect. But I knew it wouldn't last. Moon rise was forecast just after midnight and this mission must be over by then or I would certainly be spotted. The only light showing was the phosphorescence creaming away from the bow.

Thankfully the wind was strong enough to drown out my engine noise. But I was scared. I wasn't accustomed to this sort of thing. My ancestors, back in Cornwall, were accomplished smugglers, but that was many generations ago. Fortunately I still knew how to handle a boat at night.

Looking skyward I could see nothing. Good. There must be heavy cloud. Way in the distance there was an occasional flash of lightning. Dead ahead and close to the horizon, I could pick out what looked like a cluster of stars. I knew that must be Tel Aviv. This was 1948 and Tel Aviv was not the brightly lit metropolis that it is today. From this distance it looked like a fishing village. My destination was the dark area just to the left of the cluster of lights.

My ears strained for the sound of a patrolling gun boat. What should I do if I was spotted by one? If I tried to out-run it I would probably fail and anyway their guns were big enough to blow me out of the water! No. I would just have to stop and surrender my precious cargo.

At last, after glancing at my watch innumerable times to calculate how long I had until the moon rose, I felt I was approaching the shore. I could still see nothing, but the wave formation was changing indicating shallower water. Within seconds of slowing the engine I heard the growl of shingle against the keel. The bow rose up and we came to a sudden stop.

The hatch crashed open and out poured my precious cargo. As they clambered out of the boat, many of them grasped my hand and whispered 'merci,' before

scuttling up the beach to the security of the scrub. Yes, they were thankful, but that word reminded me of the lack of mercy shown them in the Nazi camps and by the British more recently. I felt ashamed of my country for trying to prevent these Jews fleeing to the Holy Land.

A lightning flash allowing me to see the army truck parked up the beach and, unfortunately, for the soldiers to see my boat. Had they also seen my passengers running inland? With head lights blazing the truck drove rapidly towards me. Waving my arms I shouted, “Please help me push my boat out. I seem to have run ashore in the dark!”



### Judge’s Comments

*Except for choosing an uninspiring title, Keith has fully met all the requirements of this competition. There is a wonderful credibility to his story which, together with his evident passion, seems to indicate he was involved in smuggling Jews into Israel during and after the Second World War and around the time of the Israeli declaration of independence in 1948, when anti-Semitism and political intrigue over the Holy Land was rife. Whether or not this is so, the best creative writing is usually based on our observation of real events or on our own experiences.*

*Whichever of the above two options Keith has used as his source of inspiration, he has clearly conveyed what it must have been like during this difficult period in history. This, together with his literary skills and use of descriptive phrases such*

*as ‘creaming away from the bow’, is what makes his entry so highly commendable. His cliff-hanger ending is also excellent.*

*Grammar and punctuation are good. Corrections needing to be made are:*

- *Para 1—3rd sentence: ‘Moonrise’ should be one word. 6th sentence: To avoid so many commas, rewrite ‘My ancestors, back in Cornwall...’ as ‘My Cornish ancestors were...’*
- *Para 2—Because you are writing this story as though it is happening in the present, the sentences ‘This was 1948 and Tel Aviv was not the brightly lit metropolis that it is today’ and ‘From this distance...’ are out of place as they are written in retrospect. Perhaps rewrite the section as: ‘I knew it must be Tel Aviv, a growing town but from a distance it looked like a fishing village.’*
- *Para 3—‘gunboat’ should be written as one word, not two.*
- *Para 5—It is not clear if ‘merci’ is direct speech or a report of the gratitude being expressed. The sentence could be better reworded as: ‘...many of them grasped my hand whispering grateful merci’s before scuttling... It would also be a good idea to include a footnote, saying ‘merci’ means thank you.*
- *Para 6—the first sentence is a bit clumsy. I recommend rewriting it and the following sentence as: ‘A lightning flash lit up an army truck parked up the beach. Unfortunately, it enabled the soldiers to see my boat. Horrified, I wondered if they’d seen my passengers running inland.’ In the next sentence, ‘headlights’ should be written as one word, not two.*

*Well done, Keith and do keep writing.*

## Third Place



**Gaynor  
Lincoln**  
of Rotorua

### A Break at the Beach

It was a dark and windy night, and the luminescent sea thrashed the shore. I could smell rain in the salty air. Silky, the dog ran with me, her floppy ears flailing in the wind. With torchlight, I could see beach and dunes ten metres ahead.

“Sarah, where are you?” Wind tore and tangled my words. Sarah should have been back before dark, but night fell earlier due to the approaching storm.

I pushed my way through the soft sand as raindrops dotted my upturned face. I’d left the beach more than half an hour ago and my energy was sagging. So much for a relaxing weekend at the beach.

“Where’s Sarah?” I encouraged the dog.

Silky lowered her nose to the sand and zig-zagged across the beach, avoiding the swishes of incoming tide. She stopped beside a stranded log and sniffed, before rushing straight ahead. Had she picked up Sarah’s scent?

I strove to keep up with her, hoping Sarah hadn’t gone as far as the river mouth. I’d heard of its treacherous rips. She was fourteen and a sensible girl, but I feared for her safety in this weather.

The beach ended and shadowy cliffs loomed in front of me. I scrambled over

the rocks after Silky. We were nearing the river. Would she follow it around the point or indicate she wanted to cross? Silky rounded the point, leaping from rock to rock. I trailed her with the torch beam. Oh, to possess the night vision she possessed.

“Sarah!” I called.

Rain hammered my back and dripped from my hair as I stumbled over angular rocks, trying to keep up with the dog.

A crack of lightning startled me and I slipped, grazing my calf. I froze in pain for a minute as thunder rumbled, then clenched my teeth and continued. What on earth had possessed Sarah to come this far? I hoped Silky wasn’t leading me on a goose chase.

Silky barked. Did the thunder frighten her or had she found Sarah? Her bark came from further down the river bank.

The rocks gave way to shingle. With relief I scrunched through it.

“Sarah!” I called again, blinking away the rain in my eyes.

“Sandy! Over here.”

I swung the torch towards her. She wasn’t alone. A person lay propped up against the riverbank. I hurried over to discover her companion had a strip of Sarah’s skirt tied around his head. Blood stained the strip and his clothes. Beneath one pulled-up trouser leg, a sword-like shaft of bone protruded from his bruised shin. He studied me as I studied him. He lifted his hand and pointed a pistol straight at me.

## Judge's Comments

*Gaynor's story was gripping from the start and there was a twist to her title that I liked. She set the scene very well and her use of short, crisp sentences created the feeling of tension and suspense required for such a dynamic and unexpected cliff-hanger ending. I did feel, however, that unnecessary detail slowed down the pace slightly in a couple of places. e.g:*

- *In Para 7, the sentence 'Would she follow it around the point...' would be better shortened to 'Would she follow it?' or left out altogether as it is inferred in the next sentence.*
- *To make Para 11 more punchy, I recommend rewriting it as: 'Silky barked from further down the river bank. Did the thunder frighten her? Or had she found Sarah?'*

*Apart from this, Gaynor's story has good flow and creativity. The cliff-hanger ending has great impact as well. Spelling, grammar and punctuation are also good, and the only corrections needed are:*

- *Para 1—delete the comma after 'Silky'.*
- *Para 2—3rd sentence: Change 'Sarah' to 'She' as the start of the paragraph infers you mean Sarah.*
- *Para 3—1st sentence: There are two different actions in this sentence that are incompatible. Pushing your way through soft sand would indicate you have your head down, not tilted up. I recommend 'upturned' be deleted.*
- *Para 5—according to the NZ Oxford and Chambers dictionaries, zigzag should be one word, not hyphenated.*
- *Para 6—in modern literature, numbers higher than ten should be written as numerals; i.e. 14.*

- *Para 10—2nd sentence: A minute is an awfully long time to freeze in a panic situation. I recommend changing it to 'a moment'. In the last sentence, change 'Silky' to 'the dog' to avoid unnecessary repetition.*

*Apart from the above, this is a highly commendable entry. Well done Gaynor and do keep writing.*

## Level Two

### Judge: Janice Gillgren

#### Requirement:

POETRY—Write a descriptive poem (using all five senses) about a special place that makes you feel close to God. The poem should have clear rhythm and rhyme. 20-30 lines.

#### General Comments

*Welcome to those who have joined level two this year.*

*Because I asked you to describe a place that is special to you, I wanted to feel its specialness. I awarded first place to Judith for her clear poem which is both easy to read, and has great imagery.*

*Rhyming patterns were basically consistent by all four entrants, but rhythm was often out of step.*

*Beware of cluttering poetry with too many multi-syllable words. Words with three or more syllables can create difficulty with rhythm in particular, as they tend to make a poem busy. Listen carefully for the sound(s) that are accented (stressed) in each multi-syllable word, so you can make sure they will fit both rhythm and rhyme patterns.*

*It is especially important to take note of*

*the stressed syllable in the last word of each verse (line), as its sound is the one that has to rhyme. It doesn't matter if their spelling is different (eg 'fair' and 'mare') as long as their sound is the same. The vowel sound is the primary determiner, but consonant sounds are also important (e.g. 'shame' and 'stain' aren't true rhymes, though close).*

*The consonant at the end doesn't need to rhyme (e.g. 'leaves' and 'falls' both end with an 's', but don't rhyme).*

*Most entries included most or all of the five senses, as required. Make good use of your thesaurus or poetry dictionaries to help you choose the right words.*

## First Place



**Judith  
Powell**  
of Canterbury

### My Special Place

I leave our noisy house  
To sit out on the grass.  
God's dark sky far above  
Wraps me about with love,  
Adorned with stars of light,  
Helps keep my spirits bright.

This is my place to pray,  
A haven from the day.  
I sense God say, "Be still,  
With peace your heart I'll fill."  
I know that I am blessed,  
I sigh, and then I rest.

The air is quiet and still.  
I sit and drink my fill.  
The only sounds the dove,  
A coo, lonely above,  
And hedgepig in the leaves,  
A grunt, maybe a sneeze.

Toes on the hot dry ground,  
With crisp grass all around,  
I taste and sniff the air;  
Some moisture I sense there,  
A hint to bless the soil,  
And body worn from toil.

I could feel small out here,  
But God's presence is near.  
His love refills my heart.  
He'll never let us part.  
I know His Spirit's there,  
I need no longer fear.

### Judge's Comments

*Hi Judith. Well done. I've awarded you first place for your poem. I enjoyed the imagery of it, which helped me to feel why sitting on the grass at night is special for you. A better title—perhaps something like 'Daily Haven'—would be more suggestive of the content.*

*You've used a simple rhyming pattern of AA, BB, CC, although for some reason your first two lines don't fit that pattern. (House and Grass don't rhyme, because rhymes depend on the vowel sound before the final consonant.)*

*There are a few places where the rhythm could be improved. For example, in your third stanza: 'A coo, lonely above' could be replaced by: 'Alone he coos above'.*

*I also wonder about 'Toes on the hot, dry ground' (4th stanza) when you are describing night time, by which time the grass has cooled. Perhaps: 'toes dredge the dry ground; crisp grass all round' works better.*

*Finally, in your last stanza, the second line doesn't have a clear rhyming beat. This is because the word 'presence' requires both syllables to be voiced when followed by the word 'is'. A solution could be to say: 'God's presence though is here...' Presence has two syllables but by accenting the first, and changing the word order slightly, the rhythm pattern is preserved.*

*I have to confess I had to check on the definition of hedgepig (young hedgehog). It is a singular word though, so either you need to add an 's' to it, or use the word 'an' in front of it.*

## Second Place



**Susan  
Flanagan**  
of Pahia

### In My Mother's Garden

My usual hurried pace  
Slows to a wander  
As in my mother's garden  
I pause, gaze and ponder

My senses drink their fill  
Eyes beholding bees  
Busy in their work  
Among the blossoming trees

Ears pick up a din  
A cicadas cacophony  
Happy in the sunshine  
Calling one another boldly

I breathe in a pleasant aroma  
Freshly mown lawn  
Amazed at the smell produced  
By grass being shorn

I bend to pick a bloom  
My fingers start to fondle  
Every velvety petal  
At God's workmanship I marvel

I cannot resist the urge  
Place the nectar on my tongue  
Taste childhood memories return  
Of gardens when I was young

In my mother's garden  
Is wonderment for me  
God is there in all I touch  
And taste, smell, hear and see

### Judge's Comments

*Hi Susan. I have awarded you 2nd place for your poem. Well done.*

*Using one stanza per sense was a good way to make sure none were forgotten, and you certainly have created enjoyable imagery too.*

*However, many of the stanzas seem busy and cluttered due to the overuse of multi-syllable words, which don't fit with the expectation created by the first two lines. Words with three (or more) syllables, such as 'blossoming', can be particularly difficult to fit easily.*

*In the 3rd stanza, 'cacophony' is a wonderfully descriptive word; but doesn't rhyme easily with 'boldly' because the stressed syllable in cacophony is the 2nd one, which has a short 'o' sound, whereas the stressed syllable in 'boldly' is a longer 'o' sound.*

*As your rhyming pattern only requires the 2nd and 4th lines to have the same ending sound, keep your 1st and 3rd lines simple so they don't detract from the pattern. In the 4th stanza, for example, 'I breathe in a pleasant aroma' could be shortened to 'I breathe in sweet perfume'.*

*In the 5th stanza, 'fondle' and 'marvel' don't rhyme. The stressed sound in each of these two words is found in the 1st syllables, 'fon-' and 'mar-' which are quite different.*

## Third Place



**Ruth  
Jamieson**  
of Whakatane

## Beach Gleanings

The setting sun,  
the day now done  
A masterpiece —  
it shall not cease,  
to speak to me.

The seagulls soar,  
they screech no more.  
An awesome sight,  
now one in flight —  
astounding me.

The waves rush in  
with such a din,  
their rhythm set  
since time began, yet —  
amazes me.

The cooling breeze,  
its touch does please,  
of salty air,  
mixed with my tears —  
surprising me.

## Judge's Comments

*Hi Ruth. I have awarded you 3rd place; well done.*

*You have used simple rhythm and rhyming patterns. Your words are simple and generally uncluttered, and give me a clear sense of why this beach place is special to you.*

*I like the way you've unified the poem's structure by keeping the last lines a similar beat, sound and theme. Your title is appropriate and simple.*

*In the 3rd stanza, 'since time began, yet — amazes me' doesn't make sense, though I can see that it is in keeping with the last lines of the other stanzas... 'it amazes me' could work, as the word 'it' is quickly said and doesn't necessarily require another beat, so it won't disturb your pattern.*

*I cannot see that you have included two of the senses (taste and smell). Although 'salty air' in the 4th stanza could imply either or both of these senses, the salty air seems to be linked to 'touch' in the rest of the stanza. As using all the senses was an important requirement of the competition, you lost points as a result.*

*Also in the 4th stanza, 'air' and 'tears' do not properly rhyme, though they are close. Since the rest of your poem rhymes well, this last improper rhyme clashes.*

## Level Three

**Judge:**  
**Ruth Linton**

**Requirement:** TRAVELOGUE—Assume your family (imagine it includes two children of school age) has just returned from holiday overseas. Write a travelogue advertising the country visited as a family holiday destination. You may research the country chosen if you have not had a chance to go overseas yet. Please include one suitable photograph, or an acknowledged scan. Maximum 350 words.

### General Comments

*Travelling is a wonderful privilege, an awesome opportunity to see and experience another country and culture. Travel agents often send their staff overseas to research and experience what is available; the result is an amazing portrait of the trip and the country to make the viewer / reader wish to do the trip themselves. Their trips are often seen on TV. Sadly only two entries were received.*

*Travelling with children has its unique challenges and the writers of these travelogues were asked to see the trip from a child's perspective. Both entrants had clearly done their trips with children so discussed events and sights that even children would enjoy.*

*Lois did hint at how one could access her destination—this is an important part of such an article—but more information could have been given. Travelling as part of a tour party can be an attractive option, but it is important to identify the type of*

*group and its goals for travel: was it to see the sights, experience the culture or, perhaps, operate as a mission / support group for the nation visited?*

*Finally the photograph supplied was to enhance the article and further enthuse the reader with the idea of travel. Overall the entries submitted were well done.*

## First Place



**Julia  
Martin**

of Cambridge

### A Fair Dinkum Holiday

If sunshine, beautiful beaches, fine food, shopping malls and theme parks are on your wish list for an overseas family holiday, then go no further than Australia's Gold Coast. With just a three hour flight from New Zealand, a small time zone difference, and a favourable currency exchange rate, a family holiday in Australia is stress-free and value for money.

Whether you're looking for action and excitement or a chance to relax and unwind, there's something for everyone on the Gold Coast.

A wide range of accommodation options are available, depending on your budget.

Our family chose to stay at the Turtle Beach Resort located at Mermaid Beach – 90 kms from Brisbane airport. The large gated complex has apartments of all sizes, beautifully landscaped for privacy and shade with gardens and palm trees. The facilities are superb

with swimming pools, spas, tennis courts, mini golf, playgrounds, barbecue areas, a cinema and café.

The resort is near Broadbeach shopping (including the vast Pacific Fair complex), entertainment, restaurants and the golden sands of Mermaid Beach.

A holiday on the Gold Coast would not be complete without a visit to a theme park.

We chose Dreamworld and its neighbour WhiteWater World which offer a joint ticket with access to both parks.

Dreamworld is a paradise for all ages. There are rides suitable for little ones and they can be entertained by their favourite live, animated characters. For the older thrill-seekers there are some of the tallest and fastest rides imaginable.



*Thunder River Rapid Ride at Dreamworld*

At the Wildlife Experience all the family can enjoy viewing and handling some of the 500 native animals and birds displayed in their natural habitats.

Refreshments are readily available or you can take your own, and the queues for rides are never as long as other renowned theme parks overseas.

If you need a car, driving is easy; otherwise public transport is excellent for all your outings and transfers. The Gold Coast is a great place for a fun-filled, stress-free family holiday. So give it a go—you're guaranteed to have a beaut time!

### **Judge's Comments**

*Julia's introduction captured my interest immediately. It also included basic instructions for travel with a quick reference to time zones and exchange rates. However, there was little detail included. I actually wondered if her title was a little too colloquial (as with the word 'beaut' in the final paragraph). Sometimes such expressions go out of fashion quickly. Youth especially have their own 'in vogue' words and phrases which change frequently.*

*Julia briefly discussed options for accommodation (again nothing specific, but the word count could have been a restriction) and offered a very suitable range of activities. I've been to Dream World myself and know children would love it.*

*There were two places where the text didn't make sense. In paragraph two the third sentence is written as if the apartments were beautifully landscaped! Inserting the word 'grounds' before 'beautifully landscaped' would remove this misunderstanding.*

*The final paragraph begins 'If you need a car...' This would be better worded as 'If you prefer to travel by car...' or 'If you are travelling by car...'*

*Julia has included a clear and appropriate photo. My only suggestion would have been to have had at least one of the children waving enthusiastically-*

*ally as well as the man. This would strengthen the sense of this being a family outing.*

## Second Place



**Lois  
Farrow**  
of Christchurch

### Dancing Lights.

We sit mesmerised as a cast of over 600, mostly peasant farmers from surrounding villages, perform a clever, one-hour show on the Li River in Yangshuo, China. Village stories and love songs, graceful movement accompanied by soaring music and bathed in changing colours reflected on the water and surrounding mountains keep the audience spell bound.

Our family is with a group visiting a Children's home in south China to do practical work upgrading the home. Most of the group are from Hong Kong (which solves the language problems) along with two families from New Zealand and two retired Australians.

The three youngsters in our group, 14, 11, and nine, have a wonderful time. Not afraid to wield hammer or paint brush through the day, their highlight is playing ball, reading or doing craft activities with the local children after school. The common languages of love and laughter overcome communication difficulties.

On our weekend off we make the seven-hour bus trip to Yangshuo, famous for

the Liu Sanjie Night Show, and a popular tourist town near Guilin, Guangxi Province. Our hotel is comfortable and cheap and the meals superb. Saturday we are faced with choices, all suitable for the family: markets, caves, cafes, cycling in the countryside, or river cruising; all enticing.

The 437-kilometre Li River joins with the Yangtze in the north, and flows to the South China Sea. Guilin is claimed to be the largest and most beautiful scenic area in China. Our bamboo boat takes us up-river to the spot made famous by the image on the 20-yuan note, a scene of incredible peace and beauty with rounded hills and steep cliffs surrounding the winding river. Fisherman in tiny craft wait patiently with cormorants poised ready to dive for their catch.



*A 20-yuan bank note*

On Sunday we return to the village for another week of hot, sweaty work. With accommodation and meals provided on-site it makes a rewarding and cheap way for the family to experience another country and culture.

We will long remember the staff and children of the home and the dancing lights of the night show at Yangshuo.

Fact File:

Currency: Chinese Yuan.

Language: Chinese.

Getting there: From Hong Kong – overnight train and bus; or fly to Guilin and travel by bus or river boat.

### Judge's Comments

*Lois' title and introductory paragraph both grabbed my attention immediately. Well done.*

*Her use of the first person is different but was a good choice for her article based on a family trip to China. She managed to keep the tense correct throughout which can be difficult when the action appears to be ongoing. However, in some ways the article tended to be a family trip report rather than a travelogue.*

*I think it would have been wise to explain the group the family travelled with—what was its purpose? Who can go on such a trip? There are groups who run such philanthropic tours as well as churches and some people like to think they are helping others as well as enjoying themselves.*

*The punctuation of the final sentence of paragraph four is difficult. The word 'family' in the final sentence is followed by a colon and then a list of activities separated by commas. This is correct though with the items being more than a single word, semi colons may have been a better option. The semi colon followed by 'all enticing' is awkward. This could be overcome by rewording the sentence thus: ... 'all suitable and all enticing for the family ...' Another option would be to make it a separate exclamation at the end of the sentence: All very enticing!'*

*I was a little puzzled, in paragraph five, about the role of the cormorants. Did the fishermen actually use the cormorants to catch the fish? If so, how did they stop the birds from devouring the catch? Or were the cormorants nearby working in opposition to the fishermen?*

*The photo of the lights that Lois attached was not clear. This is because such night photographs are hard to take successfully. However, the photograph of the 20-yuan note was very good and clearly depicted some of the amazing geography of China that Lois referred to in her article.*

*I also appreciated her brief Fact File at the end of her article. Well done.*

*I prayed to the Lord, and he answered me. He freed me from all my fears.*

*Those who look to him for help will be radiant with joy; no shadow of shame will darken their faces.*

*In my desperation I prayed, and the Lord listened; he saved me from all my troubles. For the angel of the Lord is a guard; he surrounds and defends all who fear him.*

*Taste and see that the Lord is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him!*

— Psalm 34:4-8 (NLT)



# Notice Board

## Landfall Essay Competition

Entries for the next Landfall Essay Competition will be accepted from 1 January 2015.

### Closing date for entries:

5pm 31 July 2015

The winning entry/ies will be published in the November 2015 issue of Landfall.

### Winning Prize:

\$3000 and a year's subscription to Landfall.

*For further details go to*

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/press/landfall/essaycompetition.html>



## Poems in the Waiting Room Competition

The competition is open to all New Zealand residents. Poems must be the original work of the entrant, no more than 25 lines in length, previously unpublished, and not submitted elsewhere.

Poems may be on any subject or theme, hand-written or typed. All entries will be judged anonymously. Please don't write your name on the entry but attach a sheet of paper detailing the title/s of the poem/s, your name, address, contact phone number and email address.

### Entry Fee:

\$5.00 for one poem or \$10.00 for up to three poems from one entrant

**Closing Date:** 28th February 2015

*Please post two copies of each poem to Poems in the Waiting Room (NZ), 19 Hunt Street, Andersons Bay, Dunedin 9013*

## Kathleen Grattan Award

This biennial award is for an original collection of poems, or one long poem, by a NZ or Pacific permanent resident or citizen. Individual poems in the collection can have been previously published, but the collection as a whole should be unpublished.

### Closing Date:

31st July 2015

### Winning Prize

\$10,000 and a year's subscription to Landfall.

*For further details go to*

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/press/landfall/grattanaward.html>



## Sarah Broom Poetry Prize

Now in its second year, this prize is inspired by the spirit of imagination, freedom and determination that marked Sarah Broom's life and work. It aims to provide recognition for a New Zealand poet and a financial contribution to support their work.

**Closing Date:** 6th March 2015

**Winning Prize:** \$12,000

### Email entries to

[poetryprize@sarahbroom.co.nz](mailto:poetryprize@sarahbroom.co.nz)

*For further details communicate with Sarah direct at [enquiries@sarahbroom.co.nz](mailto:enquiries@sarahbroom.co.nz)*



## Bookmarks

To obtain attractive and informative Christian bookmarks, email Fred Swallow on [rise@xtra.co.nz](mailto:rise@xtra.co.nz)

# Competitions for April 2015

Due by March 10th

EMAIL ENTRY AS AN ATTACHMENT, COMPLETE WITH WORD COUNT AND YOUR NAME.

**Font:** Times New Roman, 11 points.      **Line spacing:** single.

**Spaces between Paragraphs:** 6 points      **Paragraph Indentation:** None.

**Please send a high resolution photo** of yourself in the event you are awarded a place.

## Level One—no age restrictions

**Requirement:** WRITING FOR CHILDREN—Choose a story from the Bible and rewrite it in your own words for children aged 7-8years. Ensure you use simple language appropriate to the age group. Include the Scripture reference as a footnote. 300 words.

**Email entry to:** Debbie McDermott at:      [sddp@xtra.co.nz](mailto:sddp@xtra.co.nz)



*Debbie  
McDermott*

## Level Two—no age restrictions

**Requirement:** AN ANGEL AT MY TABLE—Write a story about an ‘undercover’ angel (human or divine) helping a person in need. Even if you base it on a true account, it should read like fiction, with good characterisation and a clear storyline. 500-600 words.

**Email entry to:** Janice Gillgren at:      [jangill1359@gmail.com](mailto:jangill1359@gmail.com)



*Janice  
Gillgren*

## Level Three—no age restrictions

**Requirement:** POETRY: LIMERICKS—Limericks are short poems with set line lengths, rhythm and rhyme patterns. They usually contain quirky humour and are fun to read. Read as many limericks as you can and then write your own. You may submit two limericks if you enjoy writing them. However, only one will be placed. Strict rhyme and rhythm pattern essential. Five lines only.

**Email entry to:** Ruth Linton at:      [noru@woosh.co.nz](mailto:noru@woosh.co.nz)



*Ruth  
Linton*

## Under 30s—11-30 year age group

**Requirement:** Write a thank you letter from a person whom Jesus healed. What happened to them after the healing? 150-200 words.

**Email entry to:** Vicki Nogaj at:      [nogaj@vodafone.co.nz](mailto:nogaj@vodafone.co.nz)



*Vicki  
Nogaj*