

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2021

THE CHRISTIAN writer

SEE INSIDE FOR

Are You Having a Good Time?
Poem by Rodney Hickman

The 'Would Be Girl'
Article by Maureen Tearle

Book Reviews:

Liberated Life Sentence by Jill Clarke

Coming Home by Janene Forlong

The Barnabas Prayer by Robin Cox
and

An Unexpected Life by Graham Ashby

Haiku Poetry Writing

Writing Competitions and more

A magazine of NZ Christian Writers



Mission: *Connecting Christian writers in New Zealand.*

Vision: *To cultivate, encourage and inspire a vibrant community of Christian writers throughout New Zealand.*

Values: *Christian faith, God's Word, professionalism, quality and social outreach.*

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Editor and Membership Secretary: Kathryn Paul: editor@nzchristianwriters.org
For magazine contributions, address changes, membership queries.

Treasurer: For subscriptions, donations: treasurer@nzchristianwriters.org

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Book Review Requests: (current members only)

Mail a copy of your book to our Book Reviewer, Julia Martin

286 Karapiro Road, RD4, Cambridge 3496 or email: reviews@nzchristianwriters.org

The Christian Writer is our bimonthly magazine published by NZ Christian Writers and distributed to all members. Contributions from members are always welcome. If you have some advice, encouragement, or an announcement of an event of interest to members, do send it to the editor for consideration by the 10th of the month before the next publication date. Submissions should be emailed as a word document attachment and be no more than 500 words long, except at the discretion of the editor.

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 a high standard of writing. Views and opinions expressed do not necessarily state or reflect those of the editor.

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The Christian Writer

Aug – Sep 2021

ISSN 2537-8708 (Online)

VOL 38. No 4

ISSN 1171-0098 (Print)

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Website:

Our vibrant, user-friendly website is full of interesting information, such as details of seminars and copies of past magazines. It also gives each individual member an online presence. We encourage all members to reach out to other Christian writers. Feel free to share our website link with them so they can join us. As a member you are the best advocate for growing our collective of NZ Christian Writers.

www.nzchristianwriters.org

President's Report



Welcome to the August-September 2021 edition of our magazine, *The Christian Writer*. We are already planning ahead for our 40th Anniversary of NZ Christian Writers in 2023. One of

the key projects we are currently developing is a legacy book that captures the heritage and history of our collective from the last four decades. One founding member, Beth Walker, has been instrumental in collating the various articles, documents and photographs from our history. Beth, I thank you so much for your diligence in keeping meticulous archives from our history. Our board are now the happy custodians of these precious files.

One of the highlights of these archives is recognising the incredible intergenerational influence NZ Christian Writers has witnessed over many years. We have a wealth of experience within our collective. It's so encouraging to see beginner and young Christian writers joining us to learn more about the craft of writing and developing their own unique talents for God.

We anticipate launching our legacy book at our Retreat 2023. If you would like to be there for this significant milestone in our history, you are welcome to register early on our website. Visit www.nzchristianwriters.org/retreat-2023 Please note we have a 100% refund policy up until March 20th 2023. We trust this gives you confidence in booking to secure your spot. If your own personal circumstances change, you would still have time to let us know in advance.

Congratulations to this magazine edition's photography competition winner, Imelda Cruz Wood. You'll see Imelda's photo featured on our front cover of this magazine. Imelda shares, *'It was taken beside Route 79 while travelling between Fairlie and Geraldine. During that time the hillsides were covered with crops of canola flowers and that was October 2020.'* Thank you so much for contributing this beautiful image.

I also want to thank our amazing board of dedicated members who are committed to seeing NZ Christian Writers develop and grow. In addition, we want to formally recognise that our magazine editor, Kathryn Paul, has also decided to help serve as our membership secretary and local group coordinator. If you have an interest in joining a local group in your area, or you feel God is asking you to host a local group, do contact Kathryn. She would love to hear from you: editor@nzchristianwriters.org

Once again, we trust you will enjoy reading our magazine.

Blessings
Justin St Vincent

Editorial: A Positive Difference

by Kathryn Paul



I'd like to thank and acknowledge long-time member Frederick Swallow who has been contributing faithfully and consistently to *The Christian Writer* magazine for many years. Frederick's series of *Writing Briefs* have been informative and inspiring.

This magazine edition contains Frederick's final submission for *Writing Briefs* and these contributions will be missed by our readers. I have felt encouraged reading *Writing Briefs* as each memoir from history reminded me how far our efforts can be taken by the Lord to make a positive difference. Thank you, Frederick, for being a reliable and punctual contributor to the magazine.

If any of you, our subscribers, has a burning idea for a column of interest to writers, and a resolve to send it regularly to *The Christian Writer*, please feel free to follow in Frederick's faithful footsteps. Let me know what you would like to write about.

I am grateful to all who take the time to contribute to our magazine and welcome submissions from new members. Our magazine is edited and proofread before it's published, so contributors don't need to stress about sending in a perfect piece of writing. Achieving a high standard in the final copy of our magazine before printing is a team event. We do it together.



Please remember we at New Zealand Christian Writers are here to connect you with other writers and encourage you in your personal writing projects. You are not alone on your writing journey. We are committed to helping you in whatever way we can.

As technology and communications are increasing, so the need and opportunity for good Christian writing is increasing. Have you ever wondered if you should bother to write? The answer is yes! Do write! Like a bright and sincere smile, a positive piece of writing can lift someone's day and even change their life for the better. Keep going!

With love in Jesus,

Kathryn Paul

I love to hear from members. Email: editor@nzchristianwriters.org

Notices

Writers Group Leaders Wanted

We need leaders in the Waikato and North Auckland regions due to high membership growth. Please email Justin at president@nzchristianwriters.org for more information or Kathryn at editor@nzchristianwriters.org if you're keen to have a go at leading a monthly writers group.

Book Reviews Criteria

Members are welcome to request a book review for any of their published books, whether recently released or not. The main criteria is the book has some Christian relevancy. For more information on how to have your book reviewed in *The Christian Writer* please refer to page two.

Christian Writers Workshop Weekend for Unpublished Writers

When: Saturday 18th September – Sunday 19th September 2021

Where: Highland Home Christian Camp, 1352 Pohangina Valley East Road, RD14, Ashhurst

Cost: \$345 includes meals, accommodation and workshop

Register: Email kerri@averministries.com

Website: www.averministries.com/writers-retreat/

Winter Writing in the South Island at Sister Eveleen Retreat

These Writing Retreats are not run by NZ Christian Writers but some of our members have attended and recommend them.

Visit www.sistereretreat.com for details of August and September 2021 Retreats.

Canterbury Branch Seminar for Christian Writers

Seminar Topic: *Writing, Publishing, Promotion.*

Facilitator: George Bryant, QSM, JP, MA (Hons), Dip Theol, DipEd, DipTchg, AFNZIM, ATCL

Venue: Empower Church, 140-146 Springfield Road, St Albans, Christchurch

Date: 16th October. **Time** 9am – 2pm. **Cost:** FREE. (Koha donation welcomed.)

There is plenty of parking onsite. User-friendly (no writing required, only note-taking.) All welcome! To view the event poster visit our website here:

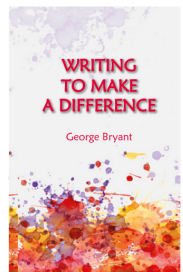
<https://www.nzchristianwriters.org/christchurch-retreat-for-christian-writers-with-george-bryant-qsm/>

To Register: contact George: bryantgw@xtra.co.nz or 027 314 6690.

Writing to Make a Difference by George Bryant

Have you received your free booklet, *Writing to Make a Difference*, by George Bryant? If not please contact George at bryantgw@xtra.co.nz to request a free copy.

George has kindly made complimentary copies available for subscribers of *The Christian Writer* magazine.



Are You Having a Good Time?

by Rodney Hickman

I often felt guilty about having a good time
It seemed to be selfish, some sort of a crime
Where did that idea come into my head?
Did I listen to voices the devil had said?

One holiday I visited the great USA
A full month touring, but it was on one special day
While viewing the Grand Canyon, it came to me
My eyes were opened and there I could see
God in His grandeur, showed me His power
Displayed with joy, scenes changed by the hour
That He loves us and wants us to enjoy life much more
That He himself is happy and definitely no bore
So I'm glad I am saved and He is my friend
My attitudes changed and my views amend
It removes all the pressure I applied to my will
I rest in His love; my heart remains still.



Picture courtesy of freechristianillustrations.com

Professional Writing Services

Free advertising! Are you a member who can offer other members a professional service relating to writing or book publishing? If so, you are welcome to send in your advertisement – maximum 100 words, to editor@nzchristianwriters.org

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Candice Hume

E: info@astuteediting.co.nz

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A WORD ABOUT EDITING

I am a freelance editor having received a Diploma of Proofreading and Editing from NZIBS in 2012. I have edited a large range of documents including novels, biographies, magazine articles, websites, and university assignments.

In August 1968, while beginning teacher training, Jesus Christ changed my heart and the whole direction of my life. I am passionate about working with Christian writers, helping them polish their work until it shines.

I endeavour to read the writer's intentions, not just their words, helping them shape their writing into a more accurate, natural and pleasing form.

Graham Pedersen: 027 440 5851

E: gpetersen@hotmail.co.nz

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CHRISTIAN EDITING

My name is Lola Goulton and I run Christian Editing Services.

I hold a Bachelor of Commerce Degree in marketing and have twenty years' experience in human resources, including writing and editing a company newsletter, developing a government website, contributing to a textbook, and writing and proofreading more client reports than I can count.

I specialise in editing Christian fiction and advising pre-published and self-published authors on the business side of writing, publishing and marketing. Find out more at <https://christianediting.co.nz/resources/> or <https://christianediting.co.nz/blog/> and sign up for a free two-week course on revising and self-editing your novel.

Iola Goulton

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WRITING ANSWERS

I have 20 years of experience as a copy editor and proof reader. I work on non-fiction books/articles/memoirs and also academic editing/proof reading.

I work with authors to prepare their work for self-publishing. I make sure their documents are print ready and, for example, I tell them that they do need to use mirror margins on their documents and no, the printer won't do that for you.

I have qualifications in technical and professional communication, editing and proof reading, science and laboratory technology.

I am in my happy place when editing and thoroughly enjoy turning people's prose into award winning documents.

Janette Busch

E: WritingAnswers1@gmail.com
or Janette.Busch@gmail.com

WRITING & EDITING SERVICES

As a career journalist and book editor, I've spent a lifetime working with words.

I spent 13 years in secular media working for the Northern Advocate, NZ Women's Weekly, NZ Herald, and then in London as a feature writer for *Woman* at IPC magazines.

After that I specialised in writing for Christian publications, namely *Daystar* magazine, *Challenge Weekly* and I was editor of *Christian Life* news-magazine.

I've edited books on a variety of topics, including missions, biographies, fiction, travel, poetry, music and theology.

My goal is to help writers on the road to publishing and make their words sparkle and shine.

Marie Anticich (027) 660-9933

E: marieanticich@gmail.com

Creative Placemats

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(Tune: adapt Adel Weiss)

Thank you, Lord for our food and meeting our needs, for homes and friends from your good hand. Lord bless New Zealand forever. Amen.

Come Lord Jesus be our guest, may this food to us be blest, as we eat, we say hooray, hooray!

Thank you, Lord, for Mum who cooks so well, it's such a wonder our tumms don't swell.

We give thanks Lord for goodness in many ways, and for this food we say, Amen.

As we meet around this table to enjoy our meal with vege – tables, we give thanks, Amen.

Lord we think of those in other lands suffering hunger. Guide the leaders to rule wisely and honour you.

WRITING BRIEFS

Inspiring Christian Writing of today and yesteryear –

Series by Frederick Swallow



Dragged by a Crocodile

A true story by writer, Elsie Milligan

When Fundulu, a young African, crossed the Zambesi River through a ford, he leant over to scoop a drink. In a flash a lurking crocodile knocked him unconscious with its powerful tail as it snared him into a riverside cave.

On waking, Fundulu felt his head bursting, his chest as if clamped with iron bands. (A crocodile seizing a deer, noses it into a crevice until ready to devour it.) In searing pain Fundulu crawled out onto a dry foothold.

Boys from Lundu Village looking for honey, finding Fundulu collapsed, carried him to Lundu Mission Station where Dr Reynolds operated on his badly infected wounds. He recovered after care.

The Chief told Dr Reynolds, 'We remember you and missionary helpers teaching and writing us good words from God'. Fundulu said, 'I will now follow Jesus in his path'.

Scripture Press Publications

The 'Would Be Girl'

by Maureen Tearle

Am I the odd one out? Am I the only one who has ever thought they haven't really achieved much in life, or who is not really that good at a lot of things? Labelling myself accordingly, I am a 'would-be' person. A would-be singer, artist, writer, dancer etc. I have dabbled and enjoyed doing these things, but my melancholic personality tells me that I will never be 'good enough'.

I did achieve my childhood dream to become a nurse, but it was always a struggle. Nothing ever came easily to me. Some people are like that. Or are they labelled as 'slow learners' as I was? I lived up to that expectation. Other people seem to fly through professions, their dream ambitions and achieve their goals. Still others are never satisfied and frequently change their professions accordingly. Is it because they feel they have reached their potential and done all they could and now it's time to move to the next thing?

I for one definitely changed professions, but not for that reason. I went from nursing to being a fulltime mother of four, although carrying on nursing part-time some 20 plus years.

I enjoyed working for 15 years as a community support worker for people with mental health issues. During this time, I retrained to become a counsellor. In my late 40s and our children grown, I found this training challenging and fulfilling. Graduating with a degree in social work practice with a major in counselling, I have not looked back. I am doing what I feel I was created to be doing. Hence I get great satisfaction from my work in helping people to hold onto hope.

So what about all the would-be's that I once dreamed of being? I realise they are all 'gifts' of the Arts, things I love and value and enjoy from a sideline. It no longer matters that I can't become 'professional' in them. They are God-given expressions of my love of beauty and I can still use them to God's glory. I can sing in a worship team, I can draw and paint when the mood takes me, I can dance to worship music. (The Aglow International movement gives wonderful freedom.) I can write to express myself and hope by it to also encourage others.

As for the not feeling 'good enough', or 'not worthy', I have grown up and gotten over myself! These are just 'lies' from our childhood that others have contributed to. Feeling a 'dunce' at school, being told I was just a 'stupid girl' by 'well-meaning' brothers and bullies at school were all lies and sadly, I believed them! But they did me a favour because, due to my somewhat stubborn nature, I determined I wasn't going to be just a 'dumb girl' and I purposefully worked hard to prove them wrong.

Having a dream and purpose in mind helped as I strived to finish my schooling and be accepted into nursing school. I graduated as a General and Obstetric nurse after four years of tough hospital training in Hawkes Bay. Then I married the man of my dreams (that's another story). I owe it largely to him that I got through all my training. He believed in me and supported me in it. We have been married 44 years.

I now relish in how God has created me. I am no longer 'odd' or 'different' or even 'special'. I am exactly how I was meant to be. It is a wonderful realisation and way of being, to be able to accept and value ourselves and be thankful for how God has made us!

What about you? Do you feel the 'odd one out' or 'different'? What does God say about you? What does He think about how He has created you? I am sorry now for not always liking, let alone loving, myself or how He created me. Now I am so thankful! Sometimes we need to confess these 'lies' or 'ungodly beliefs' (UGBs), trace where they have come from (often childhood), face them, and replace them. (David Riddell.) We ask God what He thinks about us, so we know the truth.

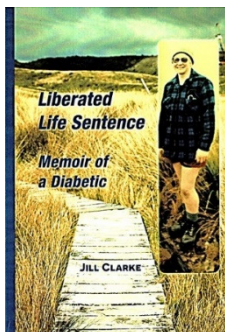
You are God's handiwork. Allow Him to direct you along a path that is pleasing to Him. Be open to God's call on your life. God has uniquely created you with different gifts, talents and abilities. He gives an assignment specifically suited to you, just as he did for me. (J Rayburn – 2014). *For we are God's handwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.* Ephesians 2:10.

Maureen Tearle is a Nurse (RN) and BoSP trained in Narrative Therapy and IDT (Interactive Drawing Therapy).

Our 40th Anniversary Retreat!!

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writers
RETREAT

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Liberated Life Sentence

Memoir of a Diabetic

By Jill Clarke

Review by Debbie McDermott

Self-Published 2021

Diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes at the age of five, Jill thought she was going to die but wasn't afraid. 'I knew Jesus would take me to be with Him and my lovely Mummy.' She found out later that the doctor hadn't told her she was going to die. She had only heard the 'di' part of 'diabetes', a word too big for a little girl to understand.

Treatment for Type 1 diabetes included regular pre-meal testing of body sugar levels in urine samples, to determine the amount of insulin Jill required, a strict unappealing diet, and limited exercise. Life finally became more liveable for Jill when testing blood for sugar levels was introduced in the 1960s.

Despite her health challenges (including blindness caused by a diabetic retinopathy) Jill's passion for life was, and continues to be, indomitable. As a young girl, she had not been allowed to take part in sport for fear it would make her sick, but one day she decided 'I could and I would!' and has never looked back. She keeps fit by taking daily walks and has participated in tramping trips, white water rafting, horse riding, hot air ballooning and parasailing, just to name a few of her adventures.

The strong takeaway message of Jill's story is that her life has not been defined by her condition. 'Nothing has held me back from doing all I wanted in life unless I have allowed that to happen. I'm happy, satisfied and fulfilled.' What a testimony of living a liberated life sentence to the full!

To obtain your copy of *Liberated Life Sentence*, email Jill on jill.clarke1@xtra.co.nz. All proceeds from the book will go towards Diabetes New Zealand, Wanganui Branch.



Coming Home

Finding what you're looking for in the heart of God

By Janene Forlong

Review by Julia Martin

Published by Messenger Books USA 2020 Available from www.ecclesia.nz

The author was inspired to write this book after hearing her elderly, confused mother constantly saying, "I want to go home" and "Something's not right."

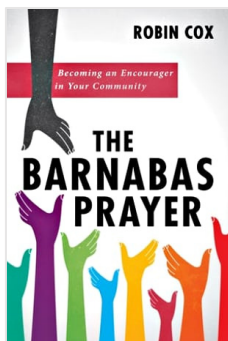
Realising the plight of her mother is the plight of many of us, Janene seeks to address these issues using personal stories along with examples and passages of Scripture.

Starting with humankind's original home in the perfect Garden of Eden, she traces the downfall and alienation from God, caused by Adam and Eve's sin, which leaves us with a sense that things are not right in the world and with a desire to come home to God.

She writes: 'God has put a sense of Divine purpose within you, a mysterious longing to meet and to know your Creator.'

The message of the book is restoration. God is the great restorer and He will restore that which is lost and return things to what they were intended to be – including our relationship with Him, and with an eternal home in heaven.

This small book is full of hope and gives answers for those who feel lost and confused in the world today.



The Barnabas Prayer

Becoming an encourager in Your Community

By Robin Cox

Review by Julia Martin

Published by Resource Publications, USA 2021

Encouragement is a gift and it's something we all need from time to time. In the early Christian Church, a respected leader named Barnabas earned the nickname 'Son of Encouragement' because of his selfless, servant leadership whereby he nurtured, mentored and encouraged all those he came in contact with, and he did it with respect, empathy and courage.

In seeking to describe Barnabas's Christlike qualities, Robin composed a short prayer:

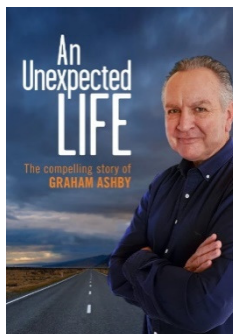
The Barnabas Prayer

Jesus, let me see with your eyes,
Hear with your ears,
Reach out with your hands
Walk your talk with your feet,
Connect with your heart,
And love with your love.
In your precious name, I pray.
Amen.

The author explains what we can learn from the approach of Barnabas and how we can work it out in our own lives.

Each chapter ends with a list of suggestions and practical things to do, so that Christians can make a positive impact and difference in their community. He closes with a challenging quotation from John Wesley:

'Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as you ever can.'



An Unexpected Life

The Compelling Story of Graham Ashby

By Graham Ashby

Review by Julia Martin

Published by Castle Publishing Ltd 2021

Born into a dysfunctional family and raised amidst violence and alcohol abuse in one of the roughest parts of South Auckland, the author's chances of having a good life were bleak. With no suitable father figure he soon drifted into bad company.

But things changed when Graham was invited to the Every Boys Rally in his neighbourhood, run by Christian men who showed true kindness, patience and genuine friendship. In 1969 at age 12, Graham attended a Dr Billy Graham crusade and that night he accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour. For the first time in his life he experienced peace, hope and joy and had a reason for living.

Many challenges lay ahead. At age 18, Graham was diagnosed with aggressive cancer that threatened his life. But God spared him and placed him in the homes of godly, loving people and their families where he learned farming, building and social skills.

Along with his devoted wife, Wanda, he attended Bible School, trained in Christian camping and then spent the past 37 years serving the Lord fulltime in preaching and teaching ministries.

Graham's autobiography is a thrilling and remarkable story which I believe will challenge all who read it. It shows how a loving God purposely and providentially drew Graham to Himself and from that life-changing encounter has used him to build and strengthen His kingdom.

The book also shows the powerful impact ordinary Christians who lead authentic Christ-like lives can have on the needy and lost among us.

Treasures

by Robin Knight

What is a treasure? It is something that is valued highly. Take for example the family car. You liked it on the floor of the showroom, you enjoyed riding home in it and putting it with pride into the garage, you showed it off to your neighbours and friends, you polished it and vacuumed it to keep it clean and also serviced it regularly. Over time you still enjoy it on day-to-day trips into town and on long journeys – you treasure it.

However, consider the worth of it. When new you paid thousands and thousands for it. The running costs also added up, yet if you want to sell it after a few years you find that it is hardly worth anything compared to what you originally paid for it. This is called depreciation.

Practically everything depreciates or devalues over time. Nothing appears constant, not even things you really treasure.

In the 'religious' world this also applies. The rites and rituals, exalting music, gatherings etc may initially set people on 'fire'. People may also combine to build a new edifice in which to meet. It is then dedicated, used, repaired and after a while replaced or sold off. The community's treasured building has gone.

Compare all of this with the treasure of having Christ live within us. This relationship will never depreciate. In fact, over time it will constantly appreciate. The relationship will be enlarged, made more fruitful, expanded, intensified. In fact are there enough words that can truly describe such an increasing asset? This should cause us to truly nurture the relationship on a daily basis.

Ponder also Christ himself. He is always constant, always the same, never altering, always available and utterly trustworthy. None of this will ever be devalued. Now isn't that someone to really treasure?

Matthew 6:18 For where your treasure is, there your heart will also be.

Therefore, purchase and nurture TRUE treasures, Christ and your relationship with Him, not the things of the world that will depreciate.



Have we found the many hidden treasures in Christ?

Art courtesy of freechristianillustrations.com

Join a Writers Group

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Our local group leaders are available to help connect you to a community of writers in your area. Please contact these leaders to find out more about meeting dates, times and locations.

www.nzchristianwriters.org/groups/

WELCOME New and Returning Members:

Agnes Olubode-Awosola
Hamilton

Anthony Mckeown
Auckland

Carmel Hickling
Taumarunui

Carol Wilkes
Thames

David Moore
Auckland South

Elisha Roest
Tauranga

Hannah Ashton
Nelson

Jacob Isaac
Auckland

Karla Rose
Te Awamutu

Lynne Maguire
Westport

Marian Lane
Auckland

Maureen Tearle
Hikurangi

Maxwell Carr
Auckland South

Pauline Bain
Auckland South

Rachel Weston
Tauranga

Rosealie Robinson
Hokitika

Simone Ammon
Lower Hutt

Wendy Larsen
Wanganui

All NZCW members are invited to share a Writer Profile and Book Feature(s) on our website.

For details email our NZCW president, Justin St Vincent:

president@nzchristianwriters.org

Haiku

Courtesy of www.literarydevices.net/haiku/

Definition of Haiku

Haiku is a Japanese form of poetry that consists of short, unrhymed lines. These lines can take various forms of brief verses. However, the most common structure of haiku features three lines of five, seven, and five syllables, respectively. A haiku poem generally presents a single and concentrated image or emotion. Haiku is considered a fixed poetic form and is associated with brief, suggestive imagery intending to evoke emotion in the reader. Though this poetic form originated in Japan during the thirteenth century, it is also a significant element of English poetry, especially in its influence on the Imagist movement of the early twentieth century.

Because of the haiku form's brevity as well as fixed verse and syllabic pattern, it leaves little room for anything more than the presentation of a single and focused idea or feeling. Therefore, haiku poems are allusive and suggestive, calling upon the reader to interpret the meaning and significance of the words and phrases presented.

For example, here is a haiku written by Issa, a Japanese poet, and translated by Cid Corman:

only one guy and
only one fly trying to
make the guest room do

This haiku creates an image of a man and a fly in the same room. The phrase 'guest room' is clever in that it implies that both the guy and the fly are welcome temporarily and neither have ownership of the room. This evokes a humorous response and sense of enforced coexistence between man and nature in shared space. Though the poem consists of a single image, presented with simple phrasing, it evokes humour and inspires thought and interpretation for the reader.

Common Examples of Poetic Images in Haiku

Historically, haiku is associated with describing the seasons and their changes. In fact, traditional haiku feature *kigo*, which is a word or phrase that specifically indicates a particular season. This supports the brevity of the form as well as reference to the time of year. Many poets focus on the natural world and its seasonal changes as subject matter for haiku through the use of nature themes and imagery, which evoke corresponding emotions.

Here are some common examples of poetic images in haiku:

- cherry blossoms
- wisteria
- moon and its phases
- cold (ice, snow, etc.)
- Trees and boughs
- rain
- flowers and petals
- insects (butterflies, bees, caterpillars, etc.)
- birds (herons, swallows, etc.)
- forest animals
- water (dew, pond, etc.)
- light (twilight, dawn, candlelight, etc.)
- fruit
- garden
- landscapes (mountains, forests, seas, etc.)

Structure of Haiku

Traditionally, a haiku is a Japanese poem featuring three lines and consisting of simple, yet impactful, words and phrases. This language is structured in a pattern of 5-7-5 moras. Moras are rhythmic sound units that are comparable to syllables. When translating Japanese haiku to English or other languages, the balance between syllable count and meaning of words and phrases is complex. Japanese haiku feature 17 total sounds, or on, which some English translators argue is closer to 12 syllables rather than 17 total. On are not the same as syllables in English and are therefore counted differently, leading to translation discrepancies as to whether 17 English syllables effectively represent haiku.

In addition, Japanese haiku are written in one line, unlike the form with two line breaks that is featured in most English translations. Japanese haiku often feature *kireji* (a 'cutting word') that creates a pause or break in the rhythm of the poem, rather than a line break. *Kireji* may be used to juxtapose images.

Overall, the common structure of most haiku poems is:

first line: 5 syllables

second line: 7 syllables

third line: 5 syllables

This 5-7-5 pattern and structure means that a haiku poem, as a rule, consists of three lines and 17 total syllables.

Gathering of Published Christian Authors

A very successful conversation with many published Christian authors took place at George Bryant's home recently on Saturday 17th July 2021. Thank you to Sharon Manssen for the photo!



L to R (back): Jeanette Knudsen, Joan and George Bryant, Bryan Winters, Stephen Whitwell. **L to R (front):** Lesley Ayers, Ruth Linton, Elaine Blick, Simone van Kan, Elizabeth Smith.

Writing Competitions Points Board

The second six-month competitions for Levels One and Two in 2021 have begun. Level Three's year-long points competition is continuing to climb. Our next prize-winners will be published in the Dec 2021-Jan 2022 magazine edition.

In each magazine, place getters receive points: 15 points for first, 12 points for second and 9 points for third. At the end of May and November, highest points in Levels One and Two are awarded monetary prizes for first, second and third. Level Three points are tallied at the end of November. Prizes up for grabs are: **\$60 for First Place**, **\$50 for Second Place**, **\$40 for Third place**.

To be promoted to Level Two or Three, contestants need to receive points at least three times on their current level. Our judges also require regular entries and improved writing.

Level One		Level Two		Level Three	
Christine Platt	15	Eion Field	15	Jean Shewan	51
Pam Driver	12	Ella Hamlin	12	Caroline Cook	45
Rod Hickman	9	Jill Clarke	9	Pat Kerr	30
Mel Cruz Wood	9			Shirley Jamieson	15
				Pauline Marshall	12

All entrants receive helpful feedback via email from the judge.

Competition Results

Level One

Judge: Debbie McDermott

Requirement: 'Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning,' declares David in Psalm 30:5b (New Living Translation). Retell an incident in your life, or your family's life, that illustrates this statement. (400 words)

General Comments

I was delighted to receive six good entries to this competition, each of which covered the topic well by demonstrating how God can bring us to a place of peace, comfort and joy when we're experiencing sorrow, disappointment and/or hardship. I would particularly like to congratulate the entrants for the candid way in which they wrote about the events that had caused them pain. Being honest and real invariably adds an element of credibility that the reader/hearer can relate to and perhaps even apply to their own lives.

Receiving multiple good competition entries always makes judging a challenge for me. I finally made my decision on who to award First, Second and Third Place based on the following criteria:

1. How well has the topic been covered and is there a good balance between the negative and positive aspects of the entrant's testimony?

While all entrants did fairly well in this regard, Christine's testimony is the most balanced because around 50% of it tells her reader how God brought her through her disappointments to a place of victory. Of course, if we are still struggling to come through a time of deep grief and sorrow, it may not be possible for our testimony to be quite so balanced, but we should nonetheless endeavour to share as much of God's goodness as we can if we are to impart hope to others experiencing similar difficulties.

2. How well is the entrant's story/testimony written?

Accuracy with grammar, punctuation, tenses and spelling is always an important requirement of any writing assignment if you are to avoid losing marks or a winning place (or higher winning place, as the case may be) in the competition. Areas for correction have been discussed in my personal critiques to entrants.

3. How strong is the takeaway message and is the story memorable?

This criterion is, in my view, the most important. The less impact our writing makes on our reader, the less effective it will be in the long term. Giving our reader a strong and memorable takeaway message they can mull over, and hopefully respond to, should always be our objective as Christian writers.

First Place



Christine
Platt
of Red Beach,
Auckland

Goodbye Tears

Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning. Psalm 30:5

I slumped into my plane seat, dejected and angry. I'd started my missionary work in Ivory Coast, West Africa only eighteen months before, full of excitement and anticipation. Months of ill-health followed. Finally, I was going home on sick leave.

'This is ridiculous God!' I muttered. 'Why don't you just heal me? You could do it so easily.' Tears of resentment pricked in my eyes. I tried to sob quietly, out of sight of my fellow passengers. Weeping lasted many nights as I poured out my frustration and disappointment. After some weeks of treatment, I was told I needed a longer recuperation. My return to Africa stretched far into the future. More tears.

Friends encouraged me to go to a weekend conference. I dragged myself there and grumbled: 'O.K. Jesus, here I am.' To my astonishment the atmosphere of quietness, the beauty of the surrounding gardens and the sensitive scriptural teaching enabled me to lay my pain at Jesus' feet, really listen to him and not dwell on my own sadness.

Over the weekend the Lord impressed on my mind these life-impacting words. 'Christine, I love you just as much when you are languishing in bed as when you are pounding the student halls of residence and helping these young Africans to know me. Your value is not in what you do but because you are my precious daughter.' More tears.

I'd known that in theory for years and had even taught it to others. This time, that truth descended from my head to my heart with a resounding bang. My self-imposed burden lifted. Utterly amazed, I felt joy begin to creep back and light up my weary soul. I could trust God for the work I wasn't able to do in Africa. It was his mission field and he would get me back there when he chose. In the meantime, I could cooperate with his timetable and not try to enforce my own.

That deeper understanding of God's grace and acceptance has transformed my life and ministry since then. I did return to Africa and served for several years there. I still struggled with ill-health, but increasingly my joy was not in my circumstances but in the experience of God's unfathomable love for me.

Second Place



Pam
Driver
of Auckland
South

Is That Singing?

She's probably in the shower, I'll phone again in ten minutes. I call the second time, but still no answer. This is not right. She knows it's very likely I'll be discharged this morning. My beautiful sister from Australia had endured two weeks managed isolation, to care for me after my bi-lateral knee op. She'd been released from governmental custody on the Friday, and I'd had the surgery the following Tuesday. On the Sunday in-between, Auckland had escalated to level 3. My sissy hadn't even been able to visit me in hospital.

It's now Sunday morning the week later. She should be waiting for my call. Where is she? My phone log records call after call. My neighbours on both sides go over to check. The front door and back ranch slider are open, but the security doors are locked. They call out but hear nothing in return. I phone my brother-in-law in Australia, but it's early and there's no answer.

It's the first time I've punched this number into my phone. One-one-one. The policeman is very reassuring. There's nearly always a routine explanation, he says. They'll despatch a car. Not routine in this case, I think, but don't say. I keep dialing my sissy's mobile phone over and over. I try my brother-in-law again. He answers. I give him the details and he grasps my concern, as the policeman who doesn't know my very organised sister, could not. They had just sold their house, planning to travel once covid was over. The final settlement went through the same day my sister joyfully quit managed isolation.

The police ring. They are at my house. Do they have permission to break in? Yes, of course. I wait. The hospital staff are wonderful. Both neighbours text me, concerned. There are lots of police at my house. A half hour more and a lovely policewoman rings. She won't tell me over the phone, she will come to see me in hospital and then drive me home. I know what that means. I ring my brother-in-law. For the first time ever, I hear him weep.

My knees heal, but my heart will take longer. Yet this morning I hear singing. My own voice, melodic with praise to God. It's been a while. He understands. He cares. Soon dawn will break and the night will be over.

Third Place Equal



Rod
Hickman
of Palmerston
North

ANSWERED PRAYER.

The year is 1968 and the Vietnam war still rages on. Being a new Christian I felt a longing to further my bible knowledge. The place I felt to go was Faith Bible College in New Zealand. I applied for a student position and was accepted and my joy was wonderful.

However the Australian government needed troops for Vietnam and decided to enact conscription for young men. This involved mandatory army service. The law at the time was enlist or go to jail. Conscientious objectors were deeply frowned upon and you were treated as a traitor. To my horror I received my call up letter and in my heart I didn't want to go to kill Vietcong. I wanted to help my country but killing other men was abhorant.

So, here I am, called into the Australian Army and at the same time accepted into bible college. I figured only God could sort this out and whatever decision was to befall me, I would be obedient to that. I was told to attend the Army medical along with other young men. I was a farming boy and was fit and weighed in at 13 stone.

We were told to strip down to our undies and given a clipboard and sent to a battery of medical experts who went over us with a fine tooth comb. I was told that I was one of the fittest men they had seen that day. My weight on the Army scales was seven stone. I thought that was strange. The last doctor that day was a psychiatrist and I told him I was not keen on firing a gun at another human. I was prepared to be a first aid person, an ambulance driver or an electrician which was my occupation at the time. He told me I would probably end up two years in jail. To me, that would be an embarrassment as my own father had fought the Japanese in New Guinea and besides I would have to kiss my College entrance good bye for two years. That night at home I weighed myself and the scales read right on 13 stone.

Two weeks later I received a letter stating I was medically unfit for the Army and therefore I could now still attend Bible College. Psalm 30:5 says "weeping may last through the night but joy comes in the morning."

Third Place Equal



Mel
Cruz Wood
of Wairarapa

DEMOCRACY REGAINED

Arriving home after Sunday mass on August 21, 1983, breaking news from television stunned me: "Senator Ninoy Aquino, who just landed back to the Philippines after three years of self-exile and a heart bypass, was assassinated on the tarmac of Manila International Airport! Escorted by soldiers from an aircraft into a vehicle waiting to transport him to prison, a gunman shot him in the head."

I screamed in disbelief, "Oh, my God! Soldiers escorted him for safety reasons, how did that happen?"

His remains lay at the Santo Domingo Church, where tens of thousands of his supporters like me, queued to see him in a coffin clad in his white shirt, stained by his own blood.

For 18 years, Senator Aquino had been a stalwart supporter of freedom from Marcos' dictatorial rule. Human rights and justice were oppressed and anyone who opposed Marcos, risked incarceration or simply disappearing.

By 1986, we were all desperate for democracy and justice, so we stormed heaven with prayers. Surprisingly, a miracle showed a sign of answered prayers: two army generals with their platoons reached breaking point and took a stand against Marcos' dictatorship.

With their lives in danger, they took refuge at the military camp; called on Manila Archbishop, Cardinal Sin for help and support. Cardinal Sin analyzed their plea. When convinced that they were really against Marcos, he made his move and called on the church-owned Radio Veritas for people's help and support to oust the dictator.

Heeding the call, people from different walks of life, different cities and provinces rushed to the scene. Despite the risk, we confronted the government soldiers who had orders from their Commander-in-Chief to gun down protesters: With strong faith in God and love of country; with hands holding rosaries, a massive barrier led by nuns, priests and seminarians stopped military tanks from running over us.

Another amazing scene that lightened the confrontation, was women offering bread and flowers to hungry government soldiers with pleading words: "We are all Filipinos, we need to protect, not harm each other."

God's miracle did happen! At dawn of February 25, 1986, the third day of protest; the American government intervened by providing Marcos, his family and cronies, two Airforce helicopters to escape the people's wrath. Democracy was won!

With tears of joy, we all jumped, hugged each other and thanked God for our victory against tyranny!

Level Two

Judge: Jeanette Knudsen

Requirement: Writing from a spectator point of view, tell us about something hilarious that happened at an outdoor church event. Your story can be based on fact or fiction, or it can be a mixture of fact and fiction (i.e. faction). The objective is to make your reader laugh with you. (300 words)

General Comments

Congratulations to the three contestants who entered and attempted the task of writing an hilarious account. To write a humorous story and make your audience laugh is not an easy undertaking. But you all made a good attempt, even though the results were 'amusing', rather than 'hilarious'.

I awarded first place to Eion Field, the most amusing of the entries, second place to Ella Hamlin and third to Jill Clarke. Well done, all of you. All the competitors adhered to the requirements: to write about an outdoor church event, either fact or fiction, to limit the piece to 300 words, to write from a spectator point of view, and to tell about something amusing, if not actually hilarious.

It is important to remember that when you have only 300 words for your story, the whole account must work towards your goal. There is little room for unnecessary details that do not contribute to the story's requirements. To keep it moving, eliminate filler words, like 'slightly' and 'presently', which slow your writing down. If you cut out earlier unnecessary details, you will have space for more description in your ending.

Try to write in the active voice, rather than the passive voice; for example, instead of writing 'others were setting up tables', say 'others set up tables'. Little changes like this help to make your story more immediate and to move it forward.

Spelling was generally good. Avoid slang, like 'amped-up' and colloquialisms like 'did a take on'. Watch the use of tenses to make sure you are consistent. Give yourself enough time to check and double check your entry and avoid mistakes like using the same name for two different people.

Your ending is worth spending time and effort on improving. Add more descriptive details, for example, about the knickers and blouse or the mess in the boot. Build the story to a climax with short sentences, no unnecessary words, like 'very', and give the reaction of the spectators to the event.

Keep up the good work.

First Place



Eion
Field
of Waikato

Shock Horror at the Church Picnic

It was family chaos the morning of the church picnic. But finally the food and swimming gear were ready. It was time to get in the vehicles. Brenda took Paula and the twins in the Corolla.

She called to husband Alan as she took the wheel. “See you there.”

“Okay!” Alan drove off in his SUV to get sports gear for the picnic.

Alan had noticed Paddy (their puppy) wanting to come. There’d be no room in the SUV, loaded with gear, so he’d popped Paddy into the boot of Brenda’s Corolla – it was only ten km out to the picnic area.

Brenda, slightly vexed, drove the others to the picnic. The kids raced to the swimming hole. Then Alan arrived, needing help with the gear. Others were setting up tables for lunch. Presently Brenda asked Alan where the hamper was. Alan shrugged; “I dunno, love.”

“But I left it for you to put in the SUV. You must have seen it on the driveway!” Brenda looked anxious.

“Oh boy! I never saw it.” Alan was edgy. “Looks like I’ll have to go back for it . . .” Just then the kids came back from swimming. “What’s wrong?”

“We’ve forgotten the hamper, that’s what!”

“No we haven’t,” said Paula. “I put it in your boot, Mum!” No-one had realized.

But they were in for a shock. When Brenda opened the boot, there was Paddy looking very satisfied having eaten half the sandwiches and made a disgusting mess of the rest. The shrieks of horror soon turned to shrieks of laughter as they saw the funny side and others joined the hilarity.

The minister came over. “Don’t worry, Brenda,” she chuckled. “There’s going to be stacks of food, even without your hamper.”

“Lord make us truly thankful,” muttered Alan.

Second Place



Ella
Hamlin
of Napier

The Dangling Damsel

Evening rendezvous for our Snow Camp was 6pm in the Alpine lodge dining hall. I am the camp cook. While dinner was heartily consumed, reports were given about the day's activities. The young people were all accounted for. The day appeared to have been a huge success. A blood nose that made the snow a shocking colour was the top story, until Danny told his tale.

Now, it is well known that our darling Danny had for the last three days been showing off in front of the loveliest leader of the girl's team. There were romantic rumours, guesswork and bets of his gain game, and this amped-up act was looking to be for her benefit.

"I was in the queue, waiting for the next triple chair to come around. The three skiers in front were on the launch platform ready to be uplifted. It happened in a flash. The big guy in the middle just had to plonk himself on the chairlift seat, as instructed; but instead, he looked behind for the rail. He was a big boy. As he turned, he bumped the skier on the far-side. Well, she flipped like a skittle. Head-first, she shot over the edge."

The collective group gasped in anticipation. Danny continued.

"Her skis wedged on the mounded snow and the platform, so that she dangled, upside-down in her boots."

The group cried with intrepid laughter as Danny did a take on the dangling damsel's distress.

"Who was it?" someone asked.

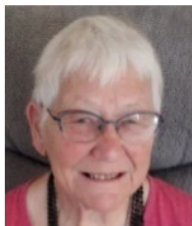
"Don't know, but it sure is the craziest thing I've ever seen."

Danny continued, with an up-side-down rendition of theatrical screams from his chairlift prop platform.

All were now in hysterics, except one lovely little lady who had turned bright red.

Oh! dear me, darling Danny. How are you going to fare?

Third Place



Jill
Clarke
of Wanganui

The Church Picnic

The races were over, winners rewarded and the church family spread out around Kowhai Park finding things to occupy time before the bar-be-que lunch was cooked. Some went to the Shoe House. Remembering the rhyme 'the old lady who lived in a shoe had so many children she didn't know what to do', they climbed up, over and around each other until there was no room for any more. There was a struggle to disentangle. The dinosaur was an attraction for some with its steep steps and a slide from shoulders to nose, while younger children swung from the octopus' legs or seesawed up and down. They were having good fun.

A group of teens decided to go mountaineering. Concrete pipes had been carefully placed then covered with a heap of concrete to create the mountain. It resembled Mount Taranaki with a coating of snow. After a trial climb and crawl, an adult was chosen for supervision. He had a stop watch to time each individual. The winner would be announced after each teen had completed their mountaineering and caving effort.

One at a time they climbed then moved through the pipes at their individual top speeds. An assortment of casual wear prevailed. Mack, wearing shorts crawled out rubbing his knees feeling sore after his turn. Beverly in a blue dress stumbled out of the pipes huffing and puffing with the effort she made. Mack in jeans emerged unphased. Molly had a rough idea of what it would take to win. Given the starting signal she climbed, then crawled into the first opening, finding her way through the maze of pipes to the end. She emerged at the finish wearing knickers and blouse, her favourite pink skirt still somewhere within the pipes.

Level Three

Judge: Julia Martin

Requirement: Many young boys are reluctant readers. Write a story aimed at boys aged 8 – 12 years. Leave the ending inconclusive so they will be encouraged to read further. (400 words)

General Comments

Writing stories for children nowadays is more challenging than years ago because young ones have far more options competing for their time and attention. There's a myriad of activities and entertainment they can tap into on devices which offer them instant gratification. With a simple swipe on a screen, or a button on a remote or keyboard, even the youngest can navigate their way around a world of opportunities – both good and bad – which require little if any concentration or perseverance on their part. So how does the written word compete in this environment?

Many children, and boys in particular, tend to become reluctant readers. Once they have learned how to read, there's often a marked decline in the way they regard reading. Many start to see it as something they have to do, rather than what they choose to do or because they love to do it.

This assignment involved writing a short story to entice boys aged 8 – 12 years to put away devices and read the printed word. As this is a big challenge for the writer, the story must therefore be exciting and compelling.

Points to consider:

- *Give your story an interesting title that hints of mystery or adventure.*
- *The story needs a dramatic beginning that attracts the attention of the reader.*
- *The main character(s) must be impressive and memorable. Boys love heroes they can look up to and these can include science fiction and fantasy characters.*
- *A conflict or crisis needs to be introduced straight away and the action fast moving to build up suspense and momentum.*
- *Include comedy if appropriate as boys of this age enjoy humour and often the wackier the better.*
- *Have a cliff-hanger at the ending so they are left thinking – Wow! What happens next? I want to know.*
- *With only 400 words for this story, keep your writing concise and vocabulary straightforward. Use the active voice and avoid unnecessary description and detail.*

I received four well-written stories for this assignment. First place is awarded to Jean Shewan for her science fictional account of an intriguing encounter between robots and human beings – a contemporary topic which is popular with boys. Her story has a good title and an arresting beginning to attract young readers. There's a developing crisis, and the ending is inconclusive which arouses curiosity and a desire to know more. Jean has used dialogue effectively and her vocabulary is suitable for this reading level.

I awarded second place to Pauline Marshall who has just moved up to level three and has written an interesting story about a mishap with a pet mouse. Congratulations Pauline on your first success at this level.

Third place equal has gone to Caroline Cook and Pat Kerr. Both of their stories were interesting and well-written, but lacked the 'X' factor to engross their readers and leave them hungry for more.

I do appreciate the efforts of these regular entrants and applaud their progress with their writing skills in different genre.

First Place



Jean
Shewan
of
Christchurch

Return to the Real World

“Danger alert! Danger alert!” Proton rushed to the control centre, his blue antennae flashing vividly in the dark tunnel.

“What’s happened this time, Proton? You seem to be in overdrive lately. This is the third time this week you have sounded the alarm. Now remember to talk slowly and clearly.”

“Yes, Supertron,” the little robot replied meekly before taking a deep breath. “My human is refusing to do what I told him. What do I do?”

“I need a few more details. Where did you want him to go? What was his reason for disobeying?” Supertron paused, remembering belatedly that Proton had a tiny brain and found it difficult to answer more than one question at a time. “Where did you want him to go?”

“To the west quarter to mind the sheep. He said he didn’t want to be away for more than twenty-four hours.”

“What was his reason?”

“He said he was ‘married’, that his ‘wife’ was having a ‘baby’? I don’t understand these terms.”

“Did you enforce the rules? What else did he say?”

“He said he would rewire me if I didn’t leave him alone. I don’t understand.”

Supertron checked his screen and searched for similar incident reports. He was alarmed to find three other examples of disobedience noted in the last week, apart from Proton’s earlier scares.

“Okay, return to your sector and continue working. I will look into this.”

Proton zoomed away and Supertron thought about what he should do next. This threat of rewiring was of great concern. It implied that the slave knew something about how a robot works. That could upset the whole system if the humans understood more than the Chief did. “I’ll have to take the whole story to Megatron, if I can get an appointment. First, I’d better make sure that I have all the facts clearly in my brain. I might lose my place if I raise the alarm for nothing.”

“Did you hear that?” Dave and his assistant at the control centre nodded to one another. “I told you that they were starting to lose control. We need to carry on our campaign of civil disobedience until we can work out a way to disable these robots. We also need to find a way to get in touch with the real world.”

“We’ll talk to the others tonight. Someone must have an idea”.

Second Place



Pauline
Marshall
of Christchurch

What am I Going to Tell Sis?

‘I’ll just have a peak while Amy’s away,’ James whispered. He opened the shed door and stepped over the rubbish bags to the little mouse house. It was a really cool little home, made by their cousin, with a ladder up to the nest. He lifted the lid and counted five tiny white furry bodies tumbling over each other. The mother mouse scuttled downstairs.

‘Amy won’t know if I take one out for a minute.’ He carefully put his fingers amongst the moving bodies and picked one up. He held the tiny creature against his jersey with one hand, and with the other hand closed the lid of the mouse house. Then he stepped carefully over the rubbish bags and kicked the shed door closed.

James paused near the back door. He’d better not take it inside because Mum was in there. He had heard Amy say that Nana used to have a pet rat that ran up her arms and across her shoulders, so he carefully placed the tiny mouse inside his sleeve. Sure enough he felt it tickling its way up his arm, and he could see the little bulge moving.

‘This is so cool.’ He felt the tickles near his neck and reached up to grab the mouse. But somehow it fell – right into a drain-pipe! ‘No! There’s water down there, and I can’t reach it!’ He could see the tiny white blob struggling, and then it was still. His stomach flipped. What am I going to tell Sis?”

Racing inside James yelled out to his mum. No answer. He raced upstairs. Oh no, she was on her phone, and she had this weird rule that the kids shouldn’t interrupt her! James jittered about, his face all anxious. At last she closed the phone.

‘Mum, I’ve killed Amy’s mouse!’ They both raced downstairs and outside.

‘It’s in there.’ His mum peered down at the tiny white blob, then disappeared indoors, coming out with a sort of ladle with a really long handle. She reached with the ladle far into the drain-pipe, up to her shoulder.

'I've got it.' Up came the ladle with the dead mouse in it. She took it inside, rinsed the mouse under the tap and wrapped it in a small towel. Then she put her mouth right over the tiny snout and blew tiny breaths into it. Nothing happened. More breaths.

Suddenly ...

Third Place Equal



Pat Kerr
of Roxburgh

Sailing Close to the Wind

"You're sailing too close to the wind, young man!"

I looked at her face- eyes narrowed, nostrils flaring, and fingers twitching the tea towel... I skedaddled out to the verandah where Grandpa was ensconced in flounder netting repairs. It's his happy place.

I love floundering with Grandpa. We drag the inlet, catch the fish, sometimes cooking them on a beach fire.

"Want any help, Grandpa?"

His friendly eyes caught the sunlight on the verandah.

"Guess you're old enough to tie a knot now. Watch."

Grandpa always smells fishy, salty and oily - and nice. He wears gumboots and overalls. His fingers are flying, a blur. I did notice his missing thumb.

He stops.

"Do you want to learn to tie knots or hear how I lost that thumb?"

"Both, Grandpa!"

"Right. Watch carefully."

Slowly he demonstrates a knot.

"It has to be pulled tight this way."

It looked simple. I practised a few times. His hands flew again. My loop hung limply. He grinned.

"Now, about that thumb. I was tying a pig's ear..."

"A what?"

He grinned wider.

“A pig’s ear. It’s a knot we use when tying down fish bin covers. It ties down hard, but comes undone quickly. This night was stormy and cold but we had a big fish haul which I was covering. Suddenly we struck a rip tide and a squall, a terrible combination. The boat was like a cork in a storm drain. If the waves broke over us, the boat would splinter...and I wouldn’t be here.”

I breathed again, picking up the loop I had dropped.

“Your thumb, Grandpa!”

“Coming to that...it was dark, the deck slippery. I was exhausted and not concentrating, thinking of a hot breakfast and sleep. My hand was holding the rope making the loop. A big wave broke, the boat tipped and I slipped, dragging the rope. I never felt it cut my thumb like tissue paper. But it was gone. I finished tying the cover and made for the hatch, noticing all the blood. Then I realised it was mine. I fainted.”

‘Dinner’s ready!’

“How old were you Grandpa?”

“Seventeen. How old are you?”

“Eight.”

Gosh, at eight I had my own rowboat...”

“Dinner’s on the table!”

We’d better go. We’re both sailing too close to the wind! More stories when the coast is clear.”

We grinned.

Dinner smelled fishy.

Third Place Equal



Caroline
Cook
of Auckland

The Forest Boys

“Hey George, hey Pete, let’s play in the forest,” said Jack, running to catch up.

“Boys disappear in the forest, Jack. It was Tom last year, Nick the year before. We’re going to the rocks,” replied Pete.

"Other boys have disappeared," said Jack. "Not me. Scared. That's what you are. Scaredy twins, scaredy twins."

George clenched his jaw. He clenched his fists. "Leave us alone Jack!"

"Someone's losing his cool again, eh George?" Jack ran towards the forest.

George and Pete played at the rocks until their tummies growled. It was time for dinner; time to go home. Eerie noises escaped from the forest as they walked past the trees. The twins raised their eyebrows at each other as they broke into a run.

"Great timing," Pete said to George. The boys exchanged hungry smiles when they saw the weekly neighbourhood barbecue underway at the end of their street. Head chef was their father as usual.

"Is anything cooked yet Dad? We're starving!" George said exchanging a fist pump with his father. A man of few words, Pete's father pointed to the plate of food being carried to the table.

"Beat you there, George!" Pete challenged. Within minutes the boys were ploughing their way through mountainous plates of food.

By 9.30pm George and Pete were struggling to keep their eyes open.

"If you two are going to be rock adventurers tomorrow morning, you had better get yourselves washed and into bed, so you wake up with the birds," the boys' mother suggested.

The twins smiled at each other as they imagined tomorrow's adventures.

Before the twins found the energy to stand up, Mrs Gallet appeared, out of breath. "Has anyone seen my Jack? He hasn't come home. I can't find him anywhere. Nobody knows where he is. I'm so worried." She took a deep breath. Her eyes searched the faces for a response. Pete looked at George. George looked at Pete. Mrs Gallet fell to her knees, looking straight into George's eyes. She knew Jack and George had their differences. She also knew George had a short fuse. "George, please be honest. Do you know what happened to Jack?"

Adults surrounded Mrs Gallett, calming her. Tiptoeing away, bedtime seemed like a good option to George and Pete at that point.

"Pssst George, what do you think happened to Jack?" Pete asked from his pillow.

There was no response. George was asleep.

Competitions for October 2021

Due by September 1st 2021

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

Font: Arial, 10 pt **Heading:** Bold, 18 pt **Line spacing:** Multiple 1.2

Spacing between Paragraphs: 6 pt **Paragraph Indentation:** None

Alignment: Justified. **Send a photo** of yourself for publishing purposes.

NB: If you are not sure what level you're on, email Debbie McDermott at:
level1@nzchristianwriters.org

Entries are judged on: Entering, format and layout 15%, Topic requirements 25%, Creativity, flow and impact 25%, Grammar and punctuation 25%, Spelling 10%.

Level One—for members 16 years old and over

Requirement: Excluding poetry, write about any aspect of nature and the great outdoors in your preferred genre: i.e. fiction, non-fiction, travelogue, devotional, testimony, essay etc. (500 words maximum, 400 words minimum)



Debbie

Email entry to Debbie McDermott at level1@nzchristianwriters.org

Level Two—for members 16 years old and over

Requirement: Write about a time in your life when you became very aware of the goodness of God. (400 words)



Lesley

Email entry to Lesley Edgeler at level2@nzchristianwriters.org

Level Three—for members 16 years old and over

Requirement: Write an opinion piece for a local secular newspaper that deals with a current topic. Towards the end bring in a Christian perspective that challenges readers but doesn't preach. (300 words)



Julia

Email entry to Julia Martin at level3@nzchristianwriters.org



NZ CHRISTIAN WRITERS is a nationwide collective of authors, bloggers, editors, lyricists, poets, publishers, songwriters, storytellers and writers throughout New Zealand. Along with our bi-monthly magazines and competitions we offer inspiring seminars and writers retreats to encourage, inspire and upskill people in their writing.

NZ Christian Writers' vision is to cultivate a vibrant community of Christian writers by connecting them to other like-minded writers in New Zealand. We welcome both beginner and experienced writers.