



FEB - MAY 2021

# YOUNG

## CHRISTIAN WRITER

Look INSIDE For :

WINNER! Short Story  
Competition

Author Interview

New Writing Competition

Members' Fiction

How to Write a  
Book Review

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.*

**President:** Justin St Vincent: [president@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:president@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](mailto:reviews@nzchristianwriters.org)

**Young Christian Writer** is our student magazine published three times a year by NZ Christian Writers. We also publish a bimonthly magazine, **The Christian Writer**. All members receive both magazines digitally. A printed copy of *Young Christian Writer* will be sent to all student print subscribers automatically and to full membership print subscribers by request. Contributions from members are always welcome. Submissions should be emailed as a Word document no more than 500 words long. If you have an item or an event of interest do send it to the editor for consideration by the 10th of the month before the next publication date.

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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### Website:

Check out our website for interesting information, such as who our board members are, how to join us and to view copies of past magazines.

Members with published items have a free profile page on our site to promote their work. Please encourage other Christian writers you know to join us via our website:

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

# President's Note



Welcome to our *Young Christian Writer* magazine! We trust you are experiencing a great start to your 2021.

For those that may be new to NZ Christian Writers, we exist to encourage, inspire and upskill young people in their writing. You may be a beginner on your writing journey, or more experienced. *Young Christian Writer* is designed to help all young writers grow in their faith and excel in their writing.

Our community of Christian writers is growing and you are welcome to invite friends and family to join us via our website: [www.nzchristianwriters.org/join/](http://www.nzchristianwriters.org/join/)

Our magazine editor, Kathryn, invites you to enter our fun competitions and enjoy reading short stories, author interviews, book reviews, and so much more. We publish *Young Christian Writer* with you in mind. So feel free to connect with our editor and share your ideas and writing with Kathryn: [editor@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:editor@nzchristianwriters.org)

Throughout 2021, let's be encouraged by 'Pressing Toward the Goal' as written in Philippians 3:13-14, NKJV: '... reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.'

Justin St. Vincent, President, NZ Christian Writers

## “Hi!” From the Editor



Do you ever have trouble finishing things you've started? That great story left without its ending – that poem that didn't work so well and you gave up on it? It's fun to start something new, but it can take real determination to complete it.

Can you imagine what it would be like if a sports game only went part way and then stopped? What if the All Blacks were two thirds through a final game and then quit? I'm guessing there would be some very disappointed fans.

Sports teams play the game until the end because everyone wants to see the final outcome. It's like that with your writing. You have fans now and future fans you don't know about yet. Be encouraged to persevere with your writing so everyone can enjoy the final outcome. You might be surprised how many people will want to read your writing in the future. Do it for the Lord, do it for your fans and do it for you.

Blessings and Love in Jesus,

Kathryn



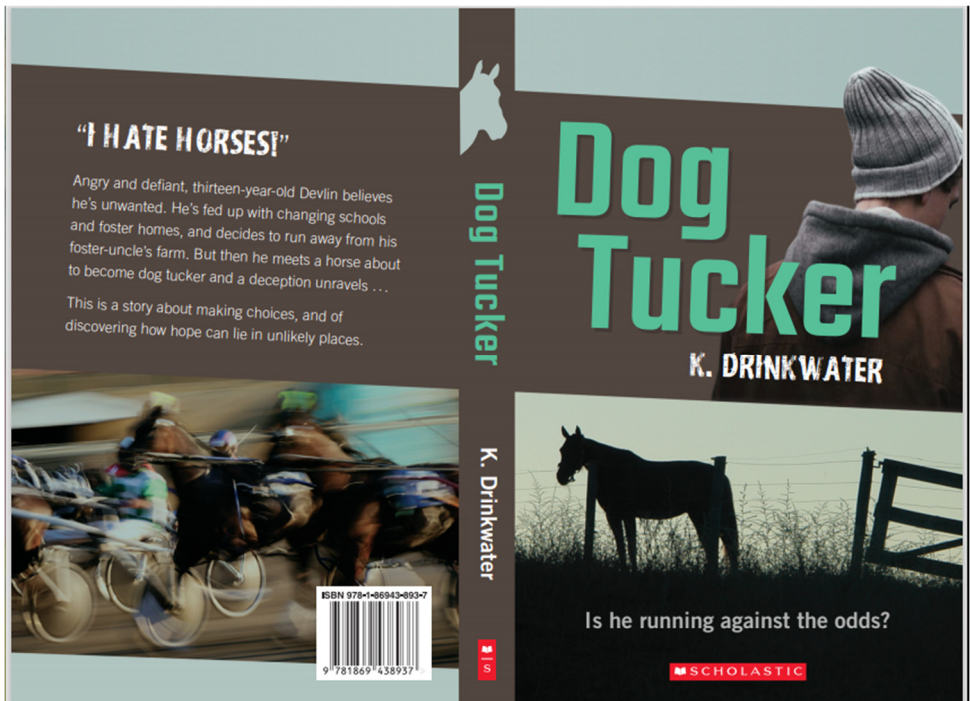
# Interview with Kathryn Drinkwater

Author of the children's novel, *Dog Tucker*

by Kathryn Paul

*Dog Tucker* is a children's novel first released in 2009. This year the book is making a come-back with a revised cover edition to be released in March 2021. For the first time it is going to be available as an eBook.

*Dog Tucker* is published through Scholastic NZ and will be sold through Scholastic NZ's Books in Schools. You can also order it at the counter of your local bookstore or through an online store.



Following is what Kathryn shared with readers of *Young Christian Writer* magazine, in response to our interview questions.



**QUESTION:** How old were you when you discovered you liked writing?

**ANSWER:**

I began writing in primary school. I wrote my first puppet show around age nine. At intermediate level I found I'd often write many pages during creative writing while many other students struggled to produce one to two pages. I'd write until my hand hurt. Then I'd write some more. Then I'd take it home and write some more and bring it back to class the next day. At Form Four level which is the equivalent of Year Ten, my English teacher encouraged me on the quality of my work and called me 'the writer'. This helped motivate me to believe in myself and my ability to write well.

**QUESTION:** What inspired the content of your book, *Dog Tucker*?

**ANSWER:**

At the time there seemed to be a shortage of books for boys that were an engaging read yet without questionable content. Some parents weren't comfortable with the spiritual content of certain books. I decided to try and fill that gap by writing something boys and parents would like.

It's good to write about what you have some experience in. I have been a foster caregiver. I wanted to raise awareness of what it can feel like to be a foster child and a foster caregiver. I wanted to bring out in the open some of the difficult circumstances New Zealand families are coping with.

I love horses and reading horse stories, but I didn't want to produce a typical kind of horse story. There are plenty of those already. So, I chose to introduce readers to the horsey world of harness racing – a less well-known equine sport. I have a background in harness racing and have driven harness racehorses on the track.

**QUESTION:** How did you get published through Scholastic NZ?

**ANSWER:**

My first goal was to change, ‘one day I’ll write a book’ into ‘I have written a book.’ I met that goal and then I sent the story into a children’s novel competition. I didn’t get placed but my entry made it into the top ten. It was returned to me with a few judge’s comments of how I could improve the story. I made those improvements and sent the book to Scholastic NZ. It took a long time (months) to receive a yes, but it was worth waiting for.

**QUESTION:** Did you take any writing courses to help you learn to write well?

**ANSWER:**

Yes, I did a writing course by correspondence (snail mail). I loved getting those big fat yellow envelopes in the mailbox with my next lesson and assignment! The writing course helped me get articles published in magazines and a short story published. Later, I also did a course in copy editing and proof reading. Both those courses have helped me in my writing and publishing journey.

**QUESTION:** What kinds of places have you visited or been a speaker at, due to your role as an author?

**ANSWER:**

I met several other authors also published by Scholastic NZ and that was fun. I was interviewed on Radio Rhema and I have visited some schools whose English classes were reading *Dog Tucker* as a class set. That was fun too. I enjoy meeting the students and answering their questions.

**QUESTION:** Is there anything else you’d like to share with young Christian writers?

**ANSWER:**

One of the things I enjoy about writing is the creative freedom to let my story run wild. I encourage each of you young writers to worry less about getting your words right in the first draft. First allow yourself the pleasure of enjoying creating what you wish to create. The technical details can easily be dealt with later. Come back to it after a break with fresh eyes to proofread. Enjoy!

# Book Review Competition!

**Prizes: Two \$30.00 Manna Christian  
Bookstore Vouchers!**

## Competition Details How to Enter:

Write a book review telling us about one of your favourite Christian books. Ensure the Book Review is your own original writing. (Don't copy the blurb on the back of the book or anyone else's review). Minimum length 100 words and Maximum length 400 words.

You need to be a member of NZ Christian Writers to enter our competitions. That way you will receive your own copy of our magazines and see your work in print. If you are not a member, we would love you to join.

Visit [www.nzchristianwriters.org/join/](http://www.nzchristianwriters.org/join/) and see page two of this magazine for more details. The cost for a student digital subscription is \$20 for the year. To receive printed magazines (6 issues of *The Christian Writer* and 3 issues of *Young Christian Writer*) for students the cost is \$35 for the year.

Email your entry as a typed, word-document and attach it to your email message. Be sure to include your name, age and school. **OR** Scan or photograph a handwritten copy of your entry and email the picture as an attachment with your email message. Handwritten work must be printed tidily so it's easy to read. The editor will copy type it for the magazine.

Email your entry to: Kathryn at [editor@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:editor@nzchristianwriters.org).

There are two age categories for this competition. They are: **14 years and under**, and **15 years to 25 years**.

**PRIZES: Each first-place winner will receive a Manna voucher valued at \$30.00.**

**Please send your entry in before April 1st 2021.**

Winners will be notified by email. First-place-winners from both age categories will be published in the next issue of *Young Christian Writer* magazine. Depending on room, highly commended entries will also be published.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR SHORT STORY WINNER FROM 2020  
FOR THE 15 TO 25 YEARS OLD CATEGORY!**

**Rebekah Reid**



## These were the requirements for the short story competition we ran in 2020:

‘For this writing challenge you need to write a story about your own imaginary **online game**. The **characters** or **avatars** need to be **from the Bible**. You must communicate the description of your imaginary online game in the form of a **story**. You can use any of your favourite game apps for inspiration and think of a movie like *Jumanji*. But make sure your version of a *Bible Jumanji* or a *Bible Pet Rescue*, for example, is your own original idea.’

# WINNING SHORT STORY

## Level1: Exodus

by Rebekah Reid

“Josh! Josh over here!” Josh looked up from his game and groaned. It was Molly, his nine year old sister.

“What is it now, Molly?” he asked with a sigh.

“Mum and I are going to the night service at church, do you want to come!?” Molly could hardly stop herself jumping on the spot! The three weekly church services were the highlight of her week. Josh was decidedly less enthusiastic, and avoided church whenever he possibly could.

“Ugh! No thanks Molly. You can sit for hours listening to some guy talk about a book if you want to, but that's not for me.”

“Oh, but Josh, the Bible isn't just... just some old book! Cause it's all true!” Josh sighed.

“Just tell mum I'm tired, okay?” Molly nodded quietly and shut the door behind her.

Josh fell asleep that night thinking over all those stories he'd heard. I mean, they were just so crazy! They couldn't be true... could they?

The next morning, Josh woke up with a start. Early morning sun was pouring into the room - but not his room. In fact, it wasn't really a room at all - it was a tent. Outside the slightly open door he could see small, sandy coloured houses, and people starting to move around. But the people didn't look familiar, they didn't even look happy. They looked exhausted, underfed, and even beaten. He scrambled out from the small tent and headed towards a group of boys about his own age, carrying big clay jars.

“Where am I!? What's happening!? This can't be real!” The boys just looked at him and walked away. Josh looked around desperately and saw a woman sitting alone outside one of the small houses. As he approached he realized he had no idea what he was going to say.

“Ummm, excuse me. What's happening? I don't understand”. The lady looked up at him with a tear streaked face.

“He's doubled the workload again, and it's all the fault of that Moses! Who does he think he is!? He says he wants to help but he's only making Pharaoh angry!” Josh's face grew pale and he sat down quickly. Moses? Pharaoh? He hardly dared to ask, but somehow he managed,

“Where am I?” The woman looked surprised.

“Egypt of course, same as we have been for hundreds of years, same as we will be in hundreds more.”

“Egypt. Of course”, he murmured.

All Josh really wanted was to sit somewhere quietly and figure this out, maybe play a game and take his mind off it. Suddenly a thought struck him - he must be in a game! It was just like that movie! ‘All I have to do is beat the level!’ he thought excitedly! He jumped to his feet and ran back to where the lady was just starting to move.

“Where are you going!? What happens now!?” This time she barely spared him a glance.

“Same as always happens - we make bricks.”

Josh joined the ever growing crowd moving towards the outside of the city. As he walked, he looked around and his gaze stopped on the girl next to him. Just then she glanced up, and smiled a sad sort of smile.

“Shalom. I'm Eliana.”

“I'm Josh”, he replied, smiling back.

“Did you come to escape the plagues?” She looked at him with her soft brown eyes. “If you have, then you've come to the right place. God wouldn't harm anyone who trusts in Him.” Josh wanted to explain he didn't believe, much less trust in any God, but he wanted Eliana to like him, so he decided to head for a safer topic.

“I'm new here, would you tell me about the plagues?”

“Well...” she paused. “It's a long story, and we're almost there...”

“Just tell me the quick version?” he pleaded.

“There's been all sorts - the whole Nile turned to blood, locusts destroyed all the crops, the Egyptians and their animals were covered in the most awful boils, and not long ago there was darkness! For days on end the sun didn't rise! There were others too - nine so far. Only God knows what's next.” For a full minute they walked in silence. Finally Josh got up the courage to ask,

"This Moses guy, he wants to get you out of Egypt?" Eliana looked up in surprise.

"How'd you know?"

"I just... read it somewhere." She nodded, a look of confusion on her face.

That day Josh worked harder than he ever thought he could. As he staggered back to the Hebrew village that night, all he could think about was how much each and every step hurt.

"Oh God," he whispered. "How long till I pass this level?"

"Everybody! Listen, please listen!" Josh joined the crowd gathering around. Eliana came and stood beside him.

"That's Moses", she whispered excitedly.

"He looks nothing like he does in movies!" Josh whispered back. Eliana looked confused, but she didn't say anything.

"God has spoken! The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob! Tonight he is sending an angel of death to claim the first born son of any who do not put the blood of a lamb around their door! This is the last sign and then the Israelite's will be free from their slavery in Egypt!" At this, the crowd erupted into excited conversation!

As Josh headed back to his tent, he heard bits and pieces of conversation. Many people had given up on Moses and on God, but many more were going to put blood around their doors.

In the middle of the night Josh was woken by sounds of music and singing! The angel had come as Moses said it would, and Pharaoh had freed the Israelites from their many years of slavery!

"Come on!" Eliana shouted. "The Exodus is just beginning!"



Colour in Moses from [freechristianillustrations.com](http://freechristianillustrations.com)

# **The Day of the Stray**

by Clare Matravers

Tony the young sheep, lived in a paddock with his flock, watched over by the Shepherd.

One day, while everyone else was on the far side of the field, he spotted some tasty grass near the fence line. As he munched, he noticed a worm wiggling in the next meadow.

"The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence," it said in a little wormy voice. Indeed, the grass over there did seem to glow more emerald green. Tony looked back at his own home field. Boring!

The worm winked.

"Look," it squeaked, "there's a hole in the fence, come on over!" Tony squeezed through the gap and scampered behind a tree. He peeked out. No one had noticed his absence. With a wave, the worm disappeared into the ground.

The grass was certainly delicious but after munching for a while Tony began to feel sleepy. He lay down. The next thing he knew the sun was setting behind the hills. He panicked. His nice safe home paddock was nowhere to be seen. Without realising it he had wandered down a hill, towards a dark scary forest.

"Help!" he bleated. No answer. He was cold, lonely and scared. How he wished he hadn't strayed. A voice in his ear startled him.

"What do you think you're doing?" He turned to see a large goat looking down his nose at him.

"I'm lost!" Tony's legs wobbled in fear.

"Go that way." The goat pointed with his curly horns towards the forest at the base of the hill. "There's even better grass there." He grinned in a wicked way. Tony wasn't about to argue. Those horns were big. He scampered down to the bottom of the hill.

Tony took a nervous bite of the lush grass. The sun was gone and it was getting quite dark now. He had the feeling someone—or something was watching him. He looked up to see many pairs of yellow eyes staring at him from the forest. Then a large black shape leapt through the air towards him. Tony screamed and began to run as fast as his hooves could carry him. He could feel hot breath on his back and dreaded the snap of jaws on his ankle. Then he saw a bright light—somebody was approaching. He risked a peek behind him, just in time to see the creature disappear in amongst the trees. Tony stood trembling in the light, not knowing who was on the other side of it but too tired to run any more.

And then he heard the best sound in the world. A beloved voice, one he had known all his life.

"Oh there you are," it said. "I've been looking everywhere for you. Come on you big silly." The Shepherd picked him up in his strong arms. Tony snuggled down and relaxed. The Shepherd was taking him home—and he would never stray again.

Matthew 18:12-14 The Parable of the Lost Sheep

# The Christmas Tree

by Sherri Bee

There was a short, singular "plop" as a pinecone dropped inauspiciously to the ground, landing between the flattened fronds of a flax bush. No one heard; the woman's house was at the other end of the section. Besides, falling pinecones were not only commonplace, they were also just one of many small sounds competing with each other in the somewhat untidy patch of land.

The pinecone lay silently. It would have been forgotten had it ever been remembered in the first place. But within its intricacies changes were happening. A tiny shoot poked its way out of the pinecone. No one knew it was there, hidden as it was by the long grass and the flax plant. It grew steadily, undisturbed. It was nearly a year before the woman, while strolling around sniffing delightedly at the scents of broom and hebe flowers, happened to glance towards the flax bush. She gave a tiny gasp of pleasure as she spied the little pine tree. She looked to see if there were others; she counted seven baby pines altogether, of different ages and heights. But this one was the oldest.

Unbeknown to the little tree, the woman discovered that pine trees were considered a weed; a pest that could quickly overcome the land. But she loved trees and could not bear to remove the pine babies. So the young pine grew unhindered.

Two years went by. The tree really looked like a pine now, in miniature. Its topmost branch leaned over with a quirky curl to one side.

One day, the woman came to look at the tree. This was not unusual--she had been lovingly checking the trees' progress since she had first noticed them. Today there was purpose in her eyes.

The woman brought a spade and a large bucket to the tree. She carefully dug around it, picking it up along with its surrounding soil, and placed it in the bucket. As she carried it away, little birds chirped eagerly, their beady eyes already agog at the hole in the ground; a potential source of live food.

The tree was taken into the woman's house. Its new location was noisier but in a different way. There was very little bird sound and no purring of tall pines nearby. But there *was* a lot of human noise--young children laughing and older people calling to each other cheerily. Light came from one side sometimes during the day. Strange harmonies and hums came from a wall at one end of the room. It caused the hard surface the bucket was sitting on to vibrate. The little tree vibrated silently as well. Water was poured into the bucket. The tree absorbed it thirstily.



A girl came to the tree. She exclaimed in delight, proclaiming its cuteness. The woman passed a box to the girl. The girl groped through the contents of the box, choosing just a few items carefully. Silver and blue tinsel were draped around the tree. Shiny balls were hung on the end of its little branches plus bells and little plastic apples. There was a whole bunch of special messages written on handmade cardboard stars; she selected just one, because the tree was small. "Christmas is a time to share the GOOD NEWS of JESUS CHRIST", the message said. The woman came back and helped her find a small string of lights. The girl smiled with pleasure as the lights glowed against the dark green needles of the little tree. Box-like objects were placed around it.

One day, the room was very noisy. All the objects were removed. They didn't return. The tree began to feel quite thirsty.

The house became quiet after that. The little pine sat in the bucket. It was hot and dry. The lights no longer shone. The pine's needles began to fade, contrasting weirdly with the shine of the silver and blue tinsel. One of the shiny balls fell off a branch, landed with a sharp "plop!" below.

A few weeks later, the woman came and looked at the tree. It was no longer dark green. She gave it a drink of water and considered removing the tinsel and lights. But she got distracted, and again the tree was forgotten.

Finally, the woman stripped the tree of all its embellishments. It was left bare and shrivelled, its needles yellowish. The woman gave it a large drink. Then she tenderly lifted it out of the bucket, wrapping its soil base in polythene. It was put outside on another hard place. There was bird song to be heard out here, and the rustle of a macrocarpa tree. The little tree sat for days, apparently forgotten again.

A noisy hum approached the tree. It was not the first time. There had been noisy hums ever since the tree had been in the new hard place. A car door slammed and a young woman came to the tree. "What a beautiful little tree," she said. "I would like to take you home." She called out to someone. "There's a sign here saying trees free to take." She picked up the little pine tree.

Many years later, the thick branches of a tall pine tree stretched over a sloping farm paddock. The tree creaked in the sea breeze. As the sun lowered on the western sky, streams of light shone, playing back and forth on the pine needles in tones of yellow and gold. "It's for the Good News of Jesus Christ," the tree whispered. "Merry Christmas."



*Photo by Morgan Clasper*

# How to Write a Book Review

by Kathryn Paul

After enjoying a good book, writing a positive review about it is a great way to tell others what you liked. It will encourage and support the author and it's an excellent way to practise writing.

- Begin with the title of the book and the author. Include the illustrator if there is one.
- You may also include the publisher and the year it was published; these details are usually found inside at the front of the book.
- Describe the type of book. For example, is it a graphic novel, non fiction or illustrated story book?
- Grab attention with your first sentence, to entice your readers to read on.
- A review needs to be honest and kind. Focus on the good aspects.
- If something negative needs to be said remember your motive is to be helpful to the writer, not to put them down. If the book is so bad you can't find anything positive to say, it's probably best not to write a review in the first place. Not drawing attention to the book is consequence enough for the writer.
- You may describe some of the story but don't give too much away. Allow those who haven't read it yet to enjoy the suspense of finding out for themselves.
- Share how the story stirred your emotions. Did it make you laugh, afraid or sad?
- If you know where the book can be purchased it's helpful to mention it so those reading your review can easily obtain a copy for themselves.
- Read reviews written by others to get an idea of how they have done it. (There are reviews in each issue of *The Christian Writer* magazine).

Your review can be written online, (many book selling sites provide an opportunity for a review). Or you can type it and send it to a magazine that publishes book reviews about books similar to the one you've written about.

*We trust you've enjoyed this issue of Young Christian Writer magazine. Remember interaction with real live people is important. So take a break from screen time and book reading time. Enjoy having conversations with people and listening to them talk. It will enrich your writing and your life. With love in Jesus, from Kathryn.*



**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.