

GUILD OF YOUNG WRITERS

WRITING
PROMPTS AND
INSPIRATION

BOOK
RECOMMENDATIONS

SHORT
STORIES

VOLUME #8

**WINTER
2022**

Story Studio Writing Society is located on the traditional territories of the **WSÁNEĆ** and Lkwungen-speaking peoples. We respectfully acknowledge and thank the Lkwungen People, also known as the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations communities, for allowing us to live, work, learn, play and create on their lands.

Through the work we do on the territory, we are accountable to the following communities: Esquimalt, Songhees, **STÁUTW** (Tsawout), **WJOLELP** (Tsartlip), **BOKEĆEN** (Pauquachin), **MÁLEXEŁ** (Malahat), **WSÍKEM** (Tseycum), T'Sou-ke Nation, Scia'new Nation and Nuu-chah-nulth: Pacheedaht Nations.

We acknowledge that the historical relationship to the land and territories of these peoples continues to this day.

As an education based organization, we recognize that we have the responsibility to work towards truth and reconciliation, and to remain open to suggestions, consultations, and partnerships, especially with local Indigenous communities and organizations, on how our organization can continue to work towards reconciliation.

We hope that Story Studio's programing and publications create a safe, welcoming and engaging environment for all people, including Indigenous peoples.

We acknowledge the support of the CRD Arts & Culture Support Service, the City of Victoria Strategic Plan Granting Program. and our generous donors.



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Editor's Note

Happy New Year, writers and readers!

2022 ended on a busy note for writers in the Guild, and for Story Studio as a whole. It was an exciting, and expansive year as the guild surpassed 50 members in our online community! From a small group of just over a dozen local members, to now connecting with young writers across British Columbia, this Guild of Young Writers has exceeded all of our expectations, and continues to inspire new endeavors along the way.

We celebrated the release of two new anthology publications with a book launch for local authors in November at GVPL. Both anthologies will be a part of GVPL's Local Emerging Authors Collection in 2023, and are also available for purchase at Russell Books, or through our online shop.

We were also joined by authors, Sean Rodman and Michael Christie in October and November for virtual author chats for members of the guild. An incredible opportunity for our writers to listen and learn from the authors' incredible wheelhouse of knowledge in the writing world!

We look forward to being joined by many more incredible writers in 2023 beginning with local author Jeanette Bedard and author and playwright, Mark Leiren Young.

We also look forward to expanding our Zine readership with subscription opportunities in 2023! We thank you sincerely, for your support of our young writers



Rebecca Ruiter
PROGRAM COORDINATOR





BOOKS WE'VE READ AND ENJOYED THIS SEASON

Recommendations from the Guild



Only a Monster - Vanessa Len

Everless - Sara Holland

Chasing Starlight - Teri Bailey
Black

Legend - Marie Lu

Nightschool - Svetlana
Chmakova

Caraval - Stephanie Garber

Extasia - Claire Legrand

Truthwitch - Susan Dennard

Gearbreakers - Zoe Hana Mikuta

We Hunt the Flame - Hafsah Faizal

Paper Towns - John Green

How We Roll - Natasha Friend

Brave Face - Shaun David

Hutchinson

I Have a Secret - Yoru Sumino



BOOK LAUNCH



"THIS HAS BEEN A VERY COOL EXPERIENCE FOR ME, TO MEET
OTHER WRITERS WITH WACKY PERSONALITIES TO RIVAL MY
OWN, AND TO START SHARING MY WRITING BEYOND MY
IMMEDIATE RELATIONS

~ KATHRYN

Summer Writing Studio 2022
PRESENTS:

'A Glimpse Behind the Curtain'

an anthology collection of 24
stories, chapters, and selections of
novels written by emerging authors
ages 12-17.



Imaginary Islands 2022
PRESENTS:

'Imaginary Islands'

an illustrated anthology of
stories written within a
collaboratively designed magical
world of the British Columbian
coast and Gulf Islands, written by
youth ages 9-15.

On Saturday November 26th, Story Studio celebrated the release of two new anthologies with a book launch held in the GVPL atrium space.

Twenty-four young authors from across the Victoria area contributed short stories and excerpts from their novels written over the course of the summer in 'A Glimpse Behind the Curtain'. Others from across British Columbia had a chance to work collaboratively with the astonishing local illustrator, Audrey Greenlees, in building a collaborative magical setting for 'Imaginary Islands'. Over a dozen participants wrote individual stories reimagining different popular locations within the province during an outbreak of magic!

It was delightful to see the connections these writers have made within these virtual programs come to fruition with an in-person celebration. Providing these writers with the opportunity to publish their words and stories for the world to see is nothing short of magic itself!



Physical copies of both anthologies will be available in GVPL's **Local Emerging Authors collection** (digital and print) in Spring 2023!

Copies are also available within highschool libraries, and for purchase at Russell Books.

If you're interested in supporting Story Studio and our Young Writer's by purchasing a copy of your own, contact us at info@storystudio.ca or head to www.storystudio.ca/shop

Stitchwraith

BY MOLLY

They told me he was crazy, but I don't believe them.
My father was an honest man, a truthful man. Not a crazy murderer.
I'm going to find out how exactly, they said he had gone insane.
He was an owner of a sewing company.
What could've gone wrong?

At least, that is what I had told myself, sitting in a chair, facing his old typewriter of forty years, his fingerprints still embedded into the keys. I had heard this clicking so many times.
Files were open on his desk, a strand of red ribbon tying them all together.

[JUNE 5TH, 1959]

KEY:

POLICE INTERROGATOR: **CHIEF INSPECTOR HEINZ, JACK (I)**

SUSPECT: **MR. FRANKSON, VINCENT (S)**

BEING SUSPECTED OF: THREE COUNTS OF MURDER, TWO COUNTS OF KIDNAPPING

TIME FOR LOG: 2:49pm, June 5th, 1959.

For the purpose of this tape, any movement, evidence shown, or suspicious body language will be recorded manually.

I: Start the tape, Sam. Is it working? Testing, tes—

SAM: Yeah, it's working. Go ahead.

I: Alright. Mr. Frankson, good of you to come.

S: I still dunno why you're holding me here, Inspector.

I: We discussed this before, Mr. Frankson. Three women from your place of work have been found dead in alleyways, *(all three near the suspect's place of residence, for the tape.)* and two others are missing.

S: I said, I didn't do it. *(Arms are clasped over chest.)*

I: You have been recorded leaving the facility at 5:27pm on the Friday where this woman *(for the sake of the tape, I shows image of Edith Jones.)* went missing.

S: So? Yeah, I left the building at that time. Who says that nobody else was walking around the streets at that time?

I: This is not mere coincidence, Mr. Frankson. Secondly, when the second woman went missing *(I shows image of Elizabeth Taylor)* you also had left. And with her. *(I shows image of Warren MacKenzie)* And these two, *(I shows pictures of Leigh Quail and Sarah Smith)* both left at the exact same time you did. Witnesses have you on the corner of Birch with them.

S: Look, I can't say anything. I just didn't do it.

I: That hardly gives us anything to go on. We cannot simply let you free by you saying you didn't do it. Heard it all before.

S: L-listen, they could be anywhere, they could be listening, feeding on my thoughts, and maybe yours too, or anyone's, at any given moment. They scare me, sir, they scare me. *(S looks warily around room. Sweat beads on forehead)*

I: Who do you mean, Mr. Frankson?

S: The [REDACTED FOR SAFETY OF SUSPECT.] They could be anywhere, anywhere! I see that red thread, it's burned into my brain, what have I become?

I: Alright, Mr. Frankson. We're going to get you to cal—

S: No! No, they can't know, I—I talked about them, please, Inspector, I don't want to die.

I: You won't, Mr. Frankson. Please, remain calm.

S: Oh, you'll meet them one time or another! They hide as things... Anything. Maybe they're... They're you. Or that plant! Or that clock, tick, tick, tick, biding their time, waiting to smother me and drag me down, oh, no, no, no, that cannot happen, no, no, no, no.

I: Mr. Frankson. Please. Re—

END OF TAPE, LAST [0:45 SECONDS] REMOVED FROM TAPE.

[JUNE 8TH , 1959]

KEY:

POLICE INTERROGATOR: **CHIEF CONSTABLE, DANIELS, SAUL (I)**

CHILD SUPPORT (YES): **MS. WILLIAMS, AGATHA (S)**

WITNESS: **MS. FRANKSON, HEIDI (W)**

TIME FOR LOG: 3:14, June 8th, 1959.

I: Start the tape. Testing. Hello, Heidi.

W: Hello there, Mr. Policeman! Fancy gadget you have there, Mr. Policeman.

I: That's called a 'tape recorder', Heidi, it records all you're saying.

W: That's a fancy name for it, Mr. Policeman.

I: That it is, Heidi. Do you know what you're here for?

W: My father's in trouble, isn't he?

I: That is correct, Heidi, but, do you know why your father is in trouble?

S: Keep it short, Daniels.

I: Calm down. Heidi, do you know why your father is in trouble?

W: There's people missing. Miss Edith is missing. She wasn't at her station today, so I had to sit in her chair and wait. But she didn't come!

I: Did you tell your father?

W: I thought she was sick! Daddy said that she just didn't show up, and if she did she would be sent away, without pay!

I: Firing her?

W: Just for the day, if she had left, I would have left.

S: Are we done here? You seem to be going in circles.

I: Not yet. Heidi, when did your father return home, normally? Were there any days when he seemed... Off, or he came home late?

W: Yes, actually. He seemed fidgety. Just like when my mommy left. He came home around five most days, but a few days he just didn't. I had to ask Mister Renard to take me in for the night. Me and Katharine are very close. He agreed.

I: Thank you, Heidi.

W: See you around, Mr. Policeman! Thank you, scary stitch lady! Have a good day, tape machine! *(the young girl smiles at the tape machine, and the Child Support woman's eye twitches.)*

END OF TAPE.

The files flutter to the ground in front of my feet like feathers. I was five years old. They interviewed me? Why do I have no memories of it?

Edda looks at me, sympathy in her eyes, shining. "I'm terribly sorry, Heidi. He does seem a bit..."

"...over the edge?" I choke out, my throat closing up.

"I suppose that's how you'd say it."

The clock made sixty ticks before Edda spoke again. "Our break is nearly over, we ought to get back to our stations."

I nodded, my eyes still glazed over.

Stitch, sew, cut, tie. Stitch, sew, cut, tie.

It was different, now, that there was a machine, but when they broke, you had to make do.

Stitch, sew, cut, tie.

That rhythm was the only thing making my heart keep going, each snip with the scissors seemed to snap me back to reality. I paused, took a breath, and continued. The machine would shut down without warning, and it irritated me senseless. Edda had a few tricks to start hers up again, but I could never do it the way she did.

I yelped as I accidentally stabbed myself with a sewing needle, then cringed at how the whole facility simply stared. I left my worktable and went towards the supervisor. He glanced up at me.

“What is it?”

“I’ve injured myself. May I have wraps?”

The supervisor snorted. “I don’t see any blood.”

I bit back a snappy response. *‘Such words could get you fired, Heidi,’* I thought.

I simply repeated myself, and held out my hand. He scowled and grabbed a small roll of wraps, telling me to return to my table. I obeyed and wrapped up the small dot of blood on my finger. I stared at it for a bit, admiring my handiwork, when a wave of nausea passed over me.

‘You’re fine,’ I thought, returning to the piece of fabric on my desk.

I grabbed the red thread and a second wave threatened to make me pass out. I gulped and pushed my hand off the desk.

Edda looked at me again and I shook my head. *‘Fine. I’m fine, I’m fine, fine, fine.’*

I pushed the pattern into place with a few bobby pins and continued to move the needle forward. I was shaking, my hands like jittery ants trying to move away from danger. Each time I threaded again, I could feel unknown eyes looking upon my weak heart with disapproval. I shuddered and pushed out a breath as a pair of stitched red eyes gazed back at me, grinning, with a small pushpin in their hands.

‘Silence, Heidi. Silence.’



Find the next installment in the Spring 2023 Release





BETRAYED

An excerpt by Lola

Chapter # 6

He puts me down on a bench near the room I wanted.

“Officer?”

He turns to look at me. “Yes?”

“I was wondering, may I please use the lady’s room?” I fake a blush.

“Yes of course, it is just down the hall. There are other officers everywhere so please stay out of their way. Oh and also, I will call a taxi now and when you get back from the lady’s room you can get in.”

I smile, “Thank you, you have been so kind to me. I don’t know how to thank you enough. You would be a better husband than my old one. Way better.”

He blushes, then walks to the phone to call a taxi. I walk to the bathroom and go in.

“Jack? Are you there?”

I wait a few minutes before deciding he is taking too long. I pull myself through the grate and up into the vents. Crawling through vents isn’t exactly the most fun thing to do. I crawl for what feels like an hour before I get to the room where I want to drop down onto the table next to the monitor that will show me the answers and get my uncle to trust me. The computer requires a password, but I slip a stick with information into it and it gives me access. I sit in the chair and type some stuff into the monitor. I pull up the video feeds and play the one from the night we broke in. It starts boring, but gets interesting fast. A guy in a hood comes in and slips something to a security guard. The security guard pockets it and motions the guy through. The guy, at least I think it is a guy, walks through the dark hallways. Suddenly a young man swings from the vent above the other guy. He whispers something and then the guy with the hood hands a bag to the younger guy. The younger guy and the bag are both vaguely familiar. I pause the feed and zoom in on the younger guy’s face. Gasping, I almost fall out of the chair. Jack. Wait, could he have purposefully alerted the guards. And who is he talking to? Is he a traitor as well as Kai?

Suddenly I feel a sharp pain in my head and I fall face first to the ground.

“Perfect, you did well Jack. Bring her to me, now grab the feed from the player and let’s go.”

That voice sounds familiar, and through the pain in my head I look around. Jack is holding a baseball bat and I get a closer look at the guy who is carrying me. It’s Kai.

What? How could Jack betray us? That must be how we have been getting ambushed a lot. They have an inside man. Uncle was right, I should not have come.

I start to squirm in his arms but my head sends shooting pains through my skull and neck.

“Nice try, you’re coming with me. I’ve worked too hard for this to fail.”

I keep moving and he gets annoyed.

“Jack, knock her out please. She is getting on my nerves.”

Jack moves towards me, raising the bat.

“Jack don-”

He knocks me out.

Chapter # 7

I come to with my head and neck screaming at me. I am tied to a wooden chair in a small room. Jack is sitting not tied up at a desk near the chair. He notices me awake and winces.

“Jack how could you... you little...”

He looks away, and I try moving.

“I had to Ailith, boss was poisoning your mind. When Kai told me what I could do to help you I...”

I gape at him. “Help me, are you insane? You betrayed the company and your friends. You tricked me and got me kidnapped and whacked me on the head with a baseball bat. How is that helping me? Oh and also, you are the only one poisoning my mind.”

He shakes his head and looks at me pityingly. The door opens and Kai comes in.

“Ah hello niece, I see you are awake. How are you? That bruise looks terrible, I haven’t seen you in forever.”

I growl and he just grins.

“Jack, leave us. Oh and bring in the cart there would you?”

Jack pulls in a cart full of large torture objects and then gives me one final look before leaving the room.

“Now, it is just us. Answer the questions and no one gets punished. But knowing you I should pick a weapon.” He decides on the katana, he turns around and grins at me. His teeth are rotting and look as though they have never been cleaned. He approaches me, slowly as if afraid, he knows I can do nothing to him though, tied to the chair. He hesitates then spins the katana around slowly and sits down in a chair. “So, we can do this the easy way. Or the hard way, your choice.”

I pretend to think about it for a second. “The hard way would be great, thanks for asking.”

He growls, “Tell me. Where is my brother hiding?”

I grin and whistle sharply. “Well that is a great question, but I’m afraid I can’t answer that. Any other questions before I get bored? My attention span is very short.”

He smirks at me. “I was hoping you would say that.”

He puts the katana to my neck but I just laugh. Then I attack. I jab my knee into his groin and he grunts. He falls to the ground in pain. I grab the katana and slice through my rope binds. These people are stupid enough to use rope to keep me, wow.

"I will never tell you anything Kai. You are a betrayer to our family."

He slowly looks up and grins. "Well I was going to tell you that I was going to use you as leverage to get what I want from my brother but this could be more interesting. You really think I am the traitor. Do you want to know what really happened to your parents?"

I back towards the door, ready to sprint when he gets up. "What are you talking about? They died in a police accident."

He starts to laugh. "That's what he told you? He told me they died in a fire before I found out the truth."

"And that is..."

He just laughs harder. "Of course he hasn't told you. Well you wanna know the truth? He killed your parents right when you were born. So he could have a daughter. His wife died giving birth to a baby girl so he killed his own sister. Took you, then killed his brother in law. He wanted a child of his own and he was prepared to do anything to get that. He told you I betrayed the company? You want to know why? The company is evil, and he is poisoning the world with it."

I am in shock, or I must be dreaming.

"No, you are wrong. My parents were killed by police. They couldn't"

Then it all makes sense. He was always so careful with me. Because I was the only child he had.

"But why did you not tell me? We could have left together. Why?"

He just keeps laughing. I can't take it anymore. I raise the katana on impulse and stab him in the heart. With his dying breath he says. "You have been betrayed by everyone you loved, now you have no one. No one."

Then he heaves one more breath and dies.

I sit on the cold metal floor and cry. My life as I know it, is gone. From now on, I will trust no one, and most of all. I will love no one.

The End.





The Sirens Sing for Odysseus

BY CAMERON

Chapter # 7

"Hey! Hey!"

With an effort, I pulled my head up from the pillow. "It's three in the morning, what's wrong?"

Devon's ecstatic face grinned back at me. "I've got an idea to make this the best weekend ever!"

That got my attention. "Well, what is it?"

"A bonfire!" he exclaimed. "Mixed with a sleepover!"

I smiled. "Okay. I'm listening."

Devon pulled out a paper with plans, a timeline, and a checklist scrawled on it.

"Good God! Have you been up all night!" I exclaimed.

He grinned sheepishly. "Pretty much."

I shrugged. "Well, understandable, I suppose."

Devon laughed. "Now what are you waiting for? We've got supplies to gather, fires to prep, and grandfathers to annoy! Let's go, go, go!"

Galvanized into action, we grabbed some sleeping bags, hot dogs, and smore ingredients and prepared to end my weekend of vacation with the biggest bonfire either of us had seen.

~ ~ ~

When I woke up on Sunday morning, I clambered sleepily out of bed and checked the clock on my bedside table.

"1:00 PM?" I exclaimed. That wasn't at all according to routine! Sighing, I looked over, saw Devon still fast asleep, and silently resigned to being a little off today. It would feel weird, I knew, but I couldn't change time, and accepting that fact was a lot better than having a full-blown meltdown and waking us both up. I rubbed my eyes and trudged out of the room to get ready for the day.

I entered the kitchen to the sizzling smell of bacon frying.

"Hey there, kiddo, you've been asleep awhile! Care for some hot breakfast!" I shook my head no.

"Cheerios is fine for today, thanks." Grandad frowned and moved the pan to a burner that was off.

"That's your safe food, isn't it?" I nodded silently and he turned away from the stove to look at me. "What's the matter, Mordecai?"

Shrugging, I mumbled out a string of barely intelligible words. "Devon's not awake yet and I don't want to wake him up myself and I'm off routine and I don't know."

He put his hand on my shoulder. "Hey, hey, easy there, it's alright. Here, I've got you some Cheerios," he said, setting a bowl in front of me, "And you can go outside and set up the structure for the bonfire, okay?" I gave a thumbs-up and immediately started eating my cereal.

After I had finished, I grabbed my book and went outside to set up the bonfire. I'd just do a little reading first, then I'd get to it, I told myself.

Shortly after, Grandad came out of the house. "Just to let you know, you've been reading for about seven hours, and your bonfire structure isn't done. Also, Devon's still in the bedroom. I think he's sleeping."

Seven hours? And he's still asleep? Today was really not my day.

I sighed, closing my book and headed back upstairs to my room, expecting to wake my friend up. I didn't expect, though, when I entered the room, to find him very much awake.

Sobs racked the smaller boy's body as he lay curled up on the bed. I immediately went to his side, putting my hand on his back to comfort him.

"What's wrong? Is everything alright?" I asked.

Devon managed to choke out a few words. "They found me. I'm leaving. They're- they're gonna take me away."

When I tried to ask who 'they' were, he only started crying harder. I panicked, turning him around so that we were looking at each other. I hated eye contact, but tried not to shy away from him. Devon needed me. My friend needed me, and I couldn't let him down.

"Hey, hey, just- breathe with me, okay, watch, here, count, go with me, say it with me, alright- Deep breath, and- do, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti, do, alright, how was that?"

He nodded, breathing heavily. "Yeah, yeah, uh- do, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti, do."

I smiled at him. "That was great! You did great, now, just one more deep breath, alright, and can you tell me what's going on, please? Could you do that for me?"

Devon seemed to relax a bit. "A- alright. Well, uh, when people die, their spirit is supposed to go immediately to the afterlife for judgement, but when I died, I got bonded to the rock, so- so, I didn't go, but they can track you, if you come out as a ghost for too long, and I did, I did, so- they're coming, they're coming, they're going to take me away-" He broke out crying again.

I patted his back. "Look, they can't be that fast, just calm down, let's go back to the bonfire, have some laughs, it'll be alright. When are they coming?"

"Now!" Devon bawled.

My face fell. No, no, not tonight, not now, they wouldn't take him now, my only friend, no, no-

"Alright, we- we gotta find a place for you to hide, we'll hide you, it's alright, you'll be safe, it'll be okay, close your eyes, sing with me again, okay, here- do, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti, do, here-"

"Do, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti, do," he sang shakily, as he floated up and started glowing. I clapped my hand over my mouth to stifle the cry that was torn from it.

"Yeah, yeah, that's good, like that, just- do, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti, do..."

"Mordecai, what's happening? I feel cold, what- what's going on?" A note of panic came up in his voice.

"It's alright, nothing's happening, just- don't open your eyes, it's okay-"

Of course, he opened his eyes and started screaming. "Mordecai! Help me, help me, I don't wanna die, I don't want to go, help, help-"

I grabbed his hand. "It's fine, you'll be fine, you're not going to die, remember- do, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti, do-" But he was beyond those simple calming notes now, as he screamed and cried out for me.

"Mordecai, please, please, help, I don't wanna-"

I held onto him as he started to pull away from me, digging my heels in and leaving marks on the bedroom floor, dragging him back towards me. To safety.

"No!"

And with a soft 'pop', my first-ever friend disappeared forever, leaving me in a cloud of smoke and clutching a small pebble.

The noise of a car beeping sounded from outside of the house, though I was too distraught to care much. Soon after, my grandad entered the room to find me crumpled on the floor.

"Hate to be the bearer of bad news like this, but your mum's here now. She came early."

**Find the final chapter in our
Spring 2023 Zine Release**

*No matter how far we fall, there is always
something there, there is always something
new.*

- Kira



SCP Adventures

AN ONGOING STORY
BY BOWEN

Chapter Two: Relocation

We made our way back to gate A. We took the elevator up to the surface and saw a helicopter landing on the helipad. Dr. Buck and I both jumped inside.

“And that’s why I hate Mondays,” I said.

“What happened to you guys?” asked a person, who sounded like they were in their early 20's. His voice sounded strangely familiar.

I turned around and saw a junior researcher sitting behind me. He had brown hair and glasses. “And who are you supposed to be?” I asked him.

“My name is Gustav,” he said, as he raised his hand in an attempted handshake. “I’m Dr. Wheeler.”

I refused his handshake because of Covid.

He put his hand back down.

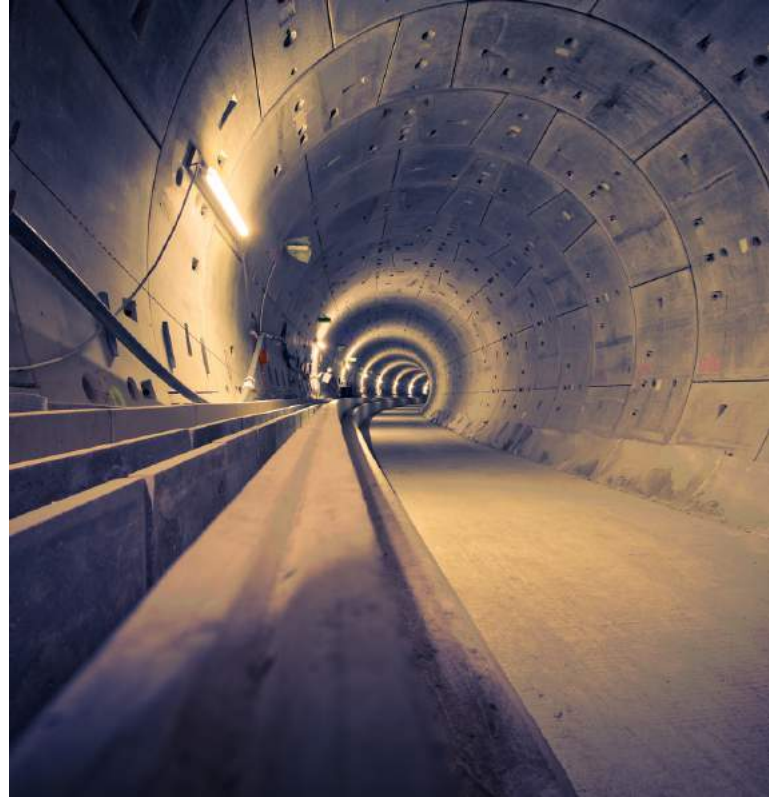
“You never told me we had new recruits,” I whispered to Dr. Buck.

“I wasn’t informed either,” she whispered back.

“Isn’t this amazing?” Gustav asked.

“What is?”

“We are literally working with the paranormal! I have been a HUGE fan of this kind of stuff for my whole life, and to think that it’s actually reality is just mind blowing.”



“Yes, well you shouldn’t carry that kind of “fanboy” attitude while at work. It will attract the wrong kind of attention. And don’t discuss anything outside of work,” I warned him.

“Yes, yes I already got the long written warning about it,” he said.

I sighed. I already knew from meeting this kid that I was definitely going to have a hard time working around him.

We landed at Site 999 which was located in [DATA PROTECTED], Canada.

We got a tour of the site and Gustav seemed to be most interested in the weapons vault. He took great interest in what appeared to be a handheld railgun in a thick plexiglass case with a four digit passcode on it.

“Maybe we should keep an eye on the new kid just to make sure he doesn’t blow up half the facility,” I whispered to Dr. Buck.

“Don’t worry. We will only be here until site 19 is up and running again,” she whispered back.

I saw a strange looking weapon on a table behind me. It looked like a rocket launcher, but much wider. I was about to pick it up when I heard a voice.

“Don't... Touch... My chainsaw cannon,” said the voice.

I turned and saw a man with red hair, glasses, a red soul patch, and an amulet dangling from his neck.

“Chainsaw cannon?”

“Yup. just a little something I taped together in my spare time,” said the man.

“Who are you?” I asked him.

“The name’s Bright, Dr. Bright,” he said. “What about you?” asked Dr. Bright.

“I’m Dr. Wheeler,” I said. We shook hands and I departed to find my new office.

I had met several new people along the way. There was an MTF unit named Lawrence who had a scarred and slightly shrivelled face. Apparently he had a run in with SCP-106 and is now scarred for life. There was another MTF unit named Carson who always had his helmet on, he was also the on-site jokester. He was the complete opposite of professional. I also got to meet the new site director, his name was dir. Zolgamax Jones. He looked like he was in his late 40's or early 50's. He had white hair and chiseled cheeks. He wore a blue blazer jacket and yellow UV protective glasses. He was a cool guy, but he took work very seriously and let go of distractions, which is a good thing around here.



Find the next chapter in our Spring 2023 Zine Release



STICKS AND STONES AND SPIRITS

BY RAINE

Walking through the woods, no one to be seen in any direction, completely alone.

Lilac enjoyed walking through the woods, but as the fall season progressed, the forest became cold and damp, with red and orange leaves colouring the landscape. Only his breathing, and each footstep in the mud, could fill the silence. On cloudy days like this, Lilac preferred to stay indoors, but he needed to get away from everything. Outside of Kaslo, the terrain was rugged and mountainous. It's not relaxing, but Lilac had been coming to these forests ever since he was little, so it gave him a sense of calm. Rather than following a specific trail, he preferred wandering in any direction since he could find the way back himself. He was a fast walker too, after just a few minutes he was already well up the mountain.

It was afternoon, and it was going to get dark soon. Lilac's goal was to hopefully see the sunset and make it back home with his flashlight. Fall was the perfect time to go hiking, since it's unbearably sunny in the summer, and there isn't enough daylight in the winter. He walked along the side of a ridge, holding on to the trees for stability. A gust of wind shook the branches above him. Once the ridge leveled off, he walked towards a clearing. There wasn't time to catch a breath.

"Ouch!"

Lilac's foot got caught on a branch, and he fell to his knee, catching his upper body with his right arm. He quickly got up and brushed his pants before continuing on.



Besides being able to escape from everything, Lilac used his time in the woods to try and focus on what was around him. He tried paying attention to what's in front of him, mapping out the route in his head. He listened for animals and falling branches. Today however, the forest has been putting him on edge. Maybe it was the unusually dark clouds, or the wind getting stronger. It was also quite cold for October, Lilac already needed to wear an outdoor coat. Hopefully getting to the summit will make him feel better, that's all he needs right now.

Lilac had been walking for a while now, but then he stopped. *Where am I?*

He must have been stuck in his head for too long, wondering whether he should've gone with his parents.

No. I don't need to bother them they're too busy.

He looked around in all directions. This part of the forest wasn't familiar at all. He assumed he was taking the right turns. He's been to the summit before, at least that's what he told his parents, he's really only ever been near the bottom of the mountain.

I have to do this. No one else can be here, it's just me.

Lilac looked up at the sun.

If it's setting in the east that means I've been walking southwest this whole time, and the mountain is uh, east of Kaslo I think. Yeah yeah I'll walk that way.

He decided to follow that direction, even though the sun actually sets in the west. The branches cracked under his footsteps. He didn't remember this many trees fallen over.

~ ~ ~

Almost there.

The terrain grew steeper as he went on, rock walls looming around him. To the right was the entrance to a cave. A small opening in the side of the mountain, he could see the ground rapidly descend from the entrance.

Lilac knew that caves were common in the area, he even visited one near Ainsworth, but most of them weren't marked on the maps. He wondered if anyone had ever visited this one.

Before continuing to find the right path, he heard a voice.

What did I do wrong? Where did I mess up?

W-, was there someone inside? Lilac turned back to the cave. He stood at the entrance, his mind racing. *Shit, what am I supposed to do?*

He pulled out his phone, there was no cell service in the area. He turned on its flashlight and pointed it into the dark. It wasn't very strong, but he could see the cave continue down a straight path.

Do I need to look for him?

He didn't have any other devices with him, no food or special equipment. This was supposed to be a quick stroll through the woods.

A roar of thunder could be heard in the distance.

Maybe I can look in the cave while waiting for the rain to pass.

He heard the voice again. It echoed throughout the forest.

What did I do wrong? Where did I mess up? I'm sorry.

Looking back one last time, he stepped into the abyss. The inside of the cave was much colder than the forest above. Even if autumn was already chilly, it felt like an entirely different season down here. Lilac didn't think he would need to go that far inside, since he could already hear the voice from the surface. He just needed to find them and figure out what to do from there.

After three minutes inside however, there was still no sign of anyone lost. The cave so far was just a straight path, so Lilac knew he could simply turn around to exit. But if the person was deeper inside, how could he hear his words from the surface?

The inside of the cave was also very moist. Some of the rock surfaces were slippery, and the air was refreshing. Lilac eventually came across a small stream. Using his phone flashlight, he found stable rocks to step on, basically just walking through the water, soaking his shoes. He checked his phone battery. 35%

Shit.

He knew that number would deplete fast in this cold, so he needed to be quick. Lilac was so far from the entrance that he couldn't hear whether the storm had passed yet, or whether there was a storm at all.

Well if I'm this far inside I may as well keep looking. If things get bad I'll just run out of here and call for help at home.

That's when Lilac remembered that he really didn't have anything on him. Usually when he went on outdoor excursions his parents and camp counselors would bring things for him. But now, with only a phone, and the clothes on his back, he wasn't very prepared.

I have to do this. They need me. I have to help.

Lilac kept navigating the uneven rocks and slopes. It kept getting more complex as the cave continued on. Lilac had a hard time keeping track of the time. At some point, he arrived at a fork in the paths.

He heard the voice again.

Where's the exit? Someone tell me where's the exit? I'm sorry.

It was coming from the path to the left.

Lilac took another deep breath, and started walking in that direction. That's what he saw online. To calm yourself down you take deep breaths, right? No matter how fucked up your situation is? But no matter what he thought, he couldn't bring himself to abandon whoever was still inside this cave.

The space kept getting smaller, the walls on either side growing closer to each other as he kept walking. Then he saw something he never expected.

A figure floated across the cave. He had the stature of a boy his age, with brown skin and fluffy hair, and his clothes had stains and tears. His body glowed, and lit up the area around him.

What the fuck it's a ghost!!?? Shit shit this is a trap I'm gonna die this is not good-

Lilac realized his mistake. His goal was now to just get out of there as fast as he could. He needed to be sneaky, so as to not get the ghost's attention. No more flashlight. He turned around. He could not see shit through the darkness. The ghost was still floating there, observing his surroundings. Lilac grabbed a wall, and it slipped.

pit pat pit pat

The sound echoed throughout the whole chamber. The ghost immediately looked in his direction, and used his hand to summon something from across the room.

A sword.

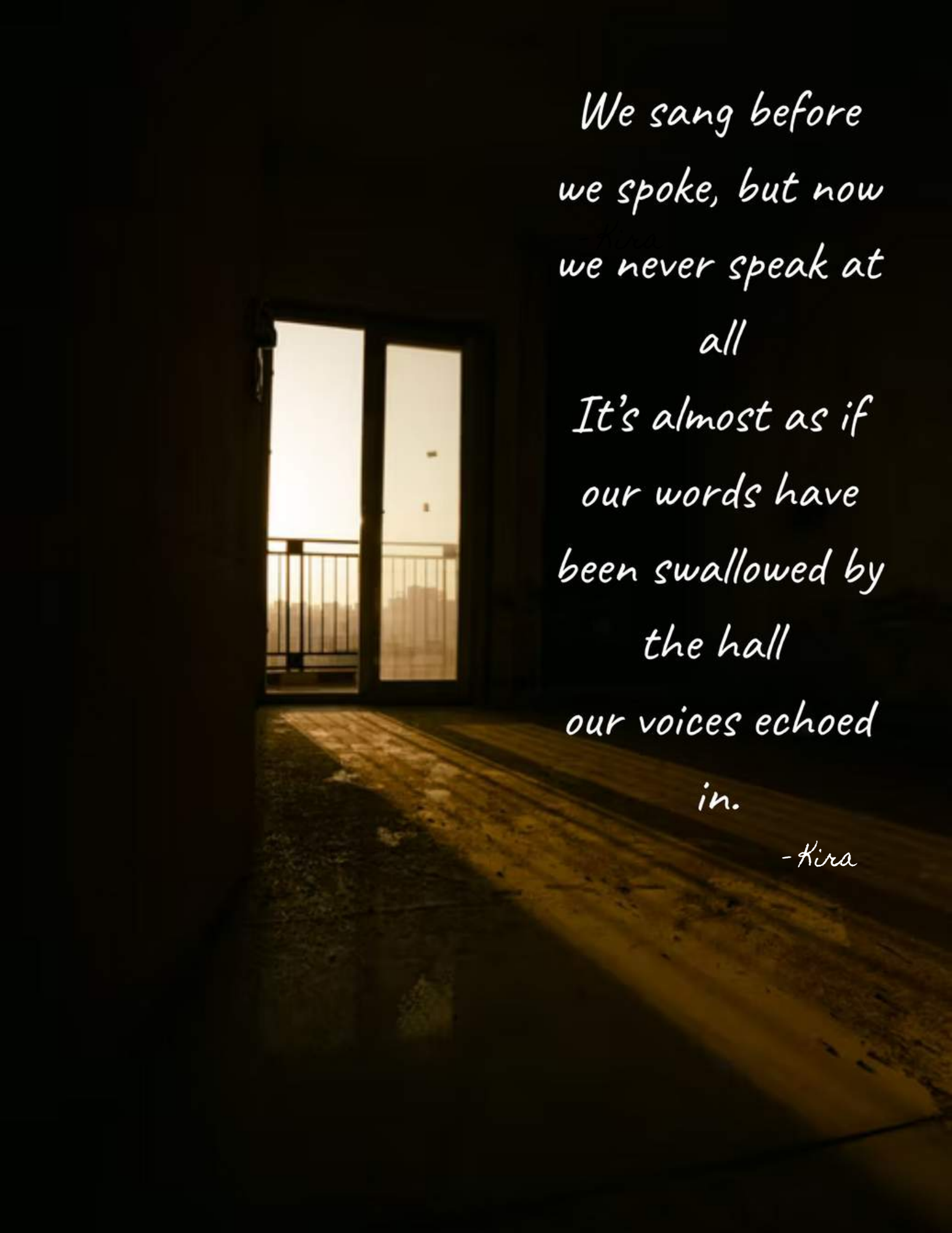
Oh my god, you're kidding me.

He didn't think things could get more insane. But he knew he had to book it or else. Lilac picked up the rocks that fell, for his defense, and while crouching, tip-toed backwards away from the ghost. His heart was beating, and the few sounds in the cavern were ringing in his ears.

The ghost still didn't move, seemingly unaware of Lilac's location.

Lilac slowly backed up all the way to the fork in the paths, and took the path to the left. He picked up his pace, every other thought pushed away, his only focus was escape.

**Find the next installment
in the Spring 2023
Release**



We sang before
we spoke, but now
we never speak at
all

It's almost as if
our words have
been swallowed by
the hall
our voices echoed
in.

-Kira

WRITING INSPIRATION AND PROMPTS

BY ABBY

Feeling stuck in your writing? Lacking inspiration? Need to try something new? Challenge yourself by selecting one of the following writing inspiration prompts to try out! The following ten prompts and story inspiration were created by Abby and inspired by the many sentence prompts we see when searching online, as well as our own experiences in the Guild, and in school.

Write to Music

Play a piece of music that has no lyrics, and write in your journal about the lyrics you think would fit it best. This can be the beginning of a poem. Does the music stir up memories? If it were the soundtrack for a movie, what kind of movie would it be? Write part of the story.



Collect Words

Did you hear a word that you liked? An expression that caught your attention? In Spain, people say things like, "I was more lost than an octopus in a garage." That's quite a mental image. Keep a list of interesting words that you can use as poem starters. You might do a little research on the origins of words and phrases in the list. Many words have curious stories behind them. How does the word sound to you? What images does it bring to mind? Does it have more than one meaning? How does it feel in your mouth? How is it different from similar words? What does it remind you of? Write about it.

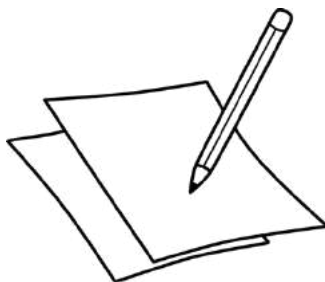


Story in a Car

What sort of car would it be? What time period is the story taking place? Maybe magical creatures stole the car and are trying to learn how to drive. Have you had any of your favourite memories take place in a car? Write about it as if it happened to someone else. Are the characters moving houses? Cities, countries? Worlds? Why are they moving? What is surrounding them?

Rewrite the Bible

Exactly what it sounds like, rewrite it! Would it be set in a different time period, like the Victorian Era or the modern world today? Who would the main characters be? Would you split each book of the Bible into its own long story or condense the whole Bible? Go ahead and even just pick one book and get started!

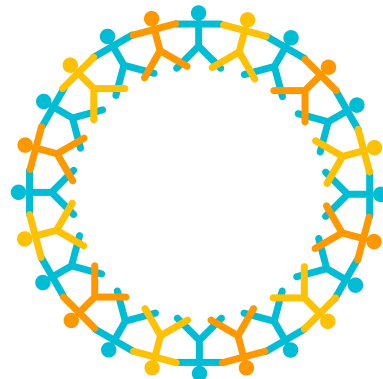


Write a Fairytale

Maybe you'll write a fairytale which already exists but then add a twist, such as changing the time period. Is it in a modern world? Think about if you're writing an original fairytale. These stories were told to warn kids about things like wolves which would easily kill them or the dark woods which they'd get lost in. What would the purpose of the story be? Write that story.

Countries are now People

What if countries were turned into people; how would their personalities look like, ethnicity, likes, dislikes? How would the countries/people interact with one another? What about if the countries are at war? Like Russia and Ukraine are right now. Maybe the colours of the countries' flag are their favourite colours or patterns (stripes, stars).



Dream Stories

Set a story in the last dream you remember. Expand the dream you had and if it didn't have a clear ending, write one for it! Who are the characters? What is their goal and motive? Is the world magical? If you don't remember enough of the dream to write out the whole thing, take the premise of it and rewrite it.



Bubble Worlds

Imagine if instead of planets where people lived what all life on earth got moved to living in a bubble? Would the world die if the bubble popped? Don't worry too much about the physics or the details of how it works just play with the idea and see what happens. One last question: Where do the bubbles come from?



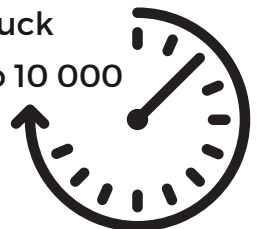
Magical Portals

In a small town portals are appearing left and right and they all go to different places. Where do they go? What would happen if multiple people stepped in at once would they break the portal and would they be stuck somewhere? Can they come back from where the portal leads or are they trapped forever...? Test your ideas out!



Five Minutes

Write about a story depicting five minutes of a character's life in 10 000 or more words. This can either be an important event such as losing a parent or as unexciting as dropping your ice cream on the sidewalk. Think about how you're going to format it. Are you going to say the amount of time at the beginning of each chapter/paragraph? Good luck stretching five minutes into 10 000 words or more!





SHARE YOUR WRITING

Submission
Opportunity!
Ages 13-18

THE GUILD OF WRITERS: CREATIVE WRITING SUBMISSIONS

Calling all writers, ages 13 to 18! Do you have a story to share? Perhaps a poem, song, or comic you've created? Share your work with us! Submit your writing to be featured in our SPRING 2023 zine release!

Submission are open to all Canadian residents ages 13-18.
Submit your piece of writing by emailing info@storystudio.ca by
March 1st 2023.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Submit a poem, scene, short story, comic or other piece of writing of a maximum of 2000 words.

Submit your writing, along with any illustrations to info@storystudio.ca

Deadline: March 1st 2023

WINNERS FEATURED IN OUR SPRING EDITION

Our panel of judges will include members of the Guild of Young Writers, Story Studio professionals and visiting authors. The top two pieces of writing selected will be shared in the next zine release along with any illustrations and short author biographies to recognize the new authors.



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