



# WordSmyth

Welcome to *WordSmyth!*

*Introduction*

Welcome to WordSmyth!

A creative magazine

That aims to inspire.

Prepare to explore

Descriptive haiku, stories,

Imagination

Prepare to read on

Through this, the second issue

Of many to come!

## The Slums of London



The thick smog churned out of the towering funnels that rose from the factory below them. As soon as you took a breath it entered your mouth and infiltrated your lungs. London was misty, murky and full of crime. As I walked, my shoes tapped on the jagged, uneven cobbles. I could barely see to the tip of my nose, but that was just part of living in London back then. Everyone I passed walked purposefully, looking straight ahead. I turned my gaze to the right and saw an old woman huddled on the doorstep of a ramshackle apartment. I was astounded that nobody cared to help her.

It was a chilly evening and I thrust my hands deep into my fur-lined pockets. I walked past the dreaded, dank, dingy workhouse. The rusted, padlocked iron gates clanked in the gentle evening breeze. I sped up, not wanting to linger outside a place where so much suffering had taken place. As I hurried by, I saw a gaunt, pale face of a child staring out of a barred window. As soon as it saw me look at it, an expression of surprise crossed its face and it turned away.

As I continued my journey, the state of the houses grew steadily poorer until they were made from scrap materials. Many were lopsided and I could hear babies screaming, mothers moaning and fathers groaning from every window. I turned into the doorway of particularly dilapidated hovel. The door was unlocked, so I gently pushed it open. What I saw made my blood run cold. Mr Smith, the man I had an appointment with, was sprawled out on the floor with a knife in his back, a steady flow of blood adding to the dark red pool that already surrounded him. He was a war veteran, I think, and this was going to be my first appointment with him. My task was to try and help relieve some of the horrors he had witnessed on the battlefield. I met him once, briefly. He kept rambling on about how his enemies were going to hunt him down. At the time, I thought he was mad, now I know he spoke the truth.

Just then I heard a voice behind me: “Ah, Dr Jenkins, I’ve been expecting you.”

By Ant Hargett

## A Sequence of Haiku

Cold rain fast falling  
sleet-slick on the window pane  
winter's steady chime

CMB

### Haiku

Sand scatters the beach  
Waves crash on the sandy shore  
Blue water shimmers

The lightning flashes  
And slashes through the darkness  
An electric show!

Violet clouds spin  
New snow travelling to earth  
Gently covering.

Frozen pond  
An oak leaf  
Half in  
    Half out...

By Benedek Kordas

Winter is coming  
Put hats and coats on now  
Have a snowball fight

A new time is here  
Trees blossom in the distance  
Children look stunned

The hot sun beats down  
Children will play in the park

No parent in sight

The leaves are scattered  
No leaf will be spared  
The beautiful fades

By Ajay Dhir

Waves crash onto beach  
Salty smell waft through the air  
Summer at its best

Cliffs rise very high  
Gulls caw very loud on high  
The beautiful coast

The big universe  
So large and mysterious  
When will we find out?

By Alex Bosworth

The high tall straw,  
Swaying in the breeze,  
Dried by the sun.

The bright sun shining,  
Casting up on you and me,  
In its full glory,  
Lightening up our grey morning.

As the day draws hastily nearer,  
The sun goes out to hide,  
And the moon creeps in with night.

By Frank Moody

Miserere Mei

*I gaze upon a frosty night,  
My men sleep, peaceful in my sight.  
Yet well I know they do not dream  
Of candy floss, scones and cream;  
They dream of horrors from the past,  
Of friends who fell and breathed their last,  
Of men who drowned in holes of mud  
And bodies showered in deep red blood.  
Of itchy shirts and heavy caps  
And bowls of gruel and haunted naps.  
Of oozy mud and jamming guns  
And mothers weeping for dead sons.*

*Morning now, I feel overwhelmed with gloom  
For this is the day I send these men to their doom.*

*One short sharp blast from the whistle  
Up they go through wire, sharp like a thistle.*

*I watch them fearlessly run  
Into the gunfire of an angry Hun.  
One stopped and stood as though in a trance  
Then twirled as if performing a dance  
To the symphony of the battle*

*The stutter of rifles like a baby's rattle.  
Then he fell to the ground like a limp rag doll,  
Another man who had lost his soul.  
His hand reached for heaven one last time  
Till that as well, dropped into the bloody slime  
Of matted ribs and butchered skin;  
Might I add he was not known to sin.  
So I ask this question to all ye:  
Should men have to die as did he?*

*Evening now, trudge back to a tree guarded, desolate village  
Half houses stare out at me broken from a pillage.  
Time to settle down to an ice-cold ground  
Beside the bodies of those who drowned  
In pools of blood and misty gas  
The men of Britain in their mass.  
And as I squint through hazy skies  
And rest beneath Death's haunting eyes;  
I see him calling out to me  
Finally now in death he's free.  
  
All ye back home, in comfy beds  
With happy dreams and innocent heads.*

*You've never killed a man before  
And watched him writhing on the floor,  
With skin tearing wire snapping at his heels,  
You'll never know how it really feels.*

*Tomorrow I know I'll die for sure,  
And endless pain I shall endure.  
My death shall make not the slightest change  
To this deadly battle on this shooting range.  
So when they call, "Come join in the fight,  
You're the one we need". You know they're not right  
You'll think to yourself as you snatch your last breath  
All I was, was another death.*

*I know in death I shall be free*

*Yet still I think:*

*O Lord,*

*Miserere Mei*

By Patrick Stiven

## Apollo

Enveloped in a book,  
Sucked down the waterfall of words,  
I become Apollo,  
Until the dying of the light.

Squashed down in my trumpet,  
Blasted out in the melodic tune,  
I become Apollo,  
Until the tuneless bell rings.

Unleashing the ball,  
The ball is my arrow; the stick is my bow,  
I become Apollo,  
Until the final whistle blows.

Absorbing the sun's light,  
I see his chariot in the sky,  
I honour Apollo,  
Even as Winter comes near.

By Freddie Wyatt



# Oliver Sterling

## Chapter 1

### Dead

It was time for elevenses on a Sunday when she came. With her long curly black hair, she looked like some breed of terrier, with its long fur all soaked and wet from the rain. Though she wore a hooded waterproof coat, her features were bold and clear through the heavy rain and the misty glass of the windowpane I was looking out of. I laughed at the thought of Mr Crewe batting his eyes at her when she came through the door, it was in his nature to lure women of all ages, as this lady was, into his world of make believe he said he had created. I did not expect this lady to turn up at our apartment though. She seemed the kind of woman to be teaching in a primary school, or a nursing home. Nevertheless, the smile I had expected her to have as she knocked on the door was non-existent. Instead, a face of grief stared back at me. That of one who had suffered too much pain and could not go any further.

“Sorry to bother you this morning, but could you point me in the direction of Mr Montague Crewe’s home?”

She asked in a calm, but glum voice. As soon as she had ended her sentence, Montague appeared at the door beside me,

“Why my dear lady,” he said, batting his eyes as I had said he would.

“It just so happens that you have come to the right place, are you sure that you were asking for directions? Or did you come for something, else?” Again, Montague attempted to seduce her, smouldering as he did so. When Mr Crewe bent down to kiss her hand she pushed past us, and sat down onto Mont’s ‘special armchair’ (He was fond of that one in particular). I asked her, “So... Miss...”

“Dr Dianne Sterling”, she replied, eyeing the carpet as though it were made of gold, her eyes wide open.

“Dr Sterling, why have you come to see us today?”

“I’m here on an account of my stepson”

“Is he in need of help?” I asked in a concerned voice.

“Only needs a burial, he died 4 days ago...”

“How sad... you need us to find how he died?”

“No, we already know. He was on the side of the road, beaten up and pushed out of his car. Left to die...” She started crying, and I was determined to help her.

“So Dr, Give us all the details.”

“Well I’ll start from the beginning. My husband John and I were happily married for 12 years, never once did we fight one another. However, John had married before me, and so had a 15-year-old son when we were married. His name was Oliver; he was a lovely boy. But that was before the drugs.”

“How old was he when this happened?” Montague asked.

“He was only 16, I blamed myself for his addiction though, he was so full of grief once I was part of his life, see, his mother died just months before hand.”

“How terrible...” Montague said, placing a hand on her lap. She pushed his hand away immediately after. She got up and Burst into tears.

“Oliver went ‘Mad’ and drove his father crazy with stress and worry. He lost all his money by gambling and betting on races, but would never win anything. He would leave home for days and be found unconscious in an alley, covered in bruises, the victim of

gang violence. At that point John gone too far. John died of grief... 2 years ago. Since then I had not conversed with Oliver, nor actually seen him. I was told he rented house in Solihull, just across the road from where he died, over the time I lost contact with him. I was notified just yesterday, and saw him, dead.”

## Chapter 2

### The Scene

Again large tears fell from her eyes and I spoke to her in a soothing voice.

“Can you give us a location? Perhaps an address that could help us start gathering information?”

“Yes, 12, Lookers crescent, Solihull...”

“Perfect, we shall get going right away!” Montague exclaimed, I was not impressed, seeing that she had recently lost her son.

I showed her out, then Mont asked,

“So, Leopold, set up the sat nav and we shall leave now, best take your gun.”

I slipped my pistol into my pocket and started up the Rolls. Mr Crewe appeared wearing a suit and tie and got in the car, then put on his sunglasses, even though it wasn’t sunny. It was a rough half an hour drive, usually it

would take us half of that time, but due to traffic we arrived much later.

Once we had arrived Mr Crewe got out and glanced around, Police tape had been put up around the crime scene and a female police officer walked up to us and said that we had been expected, Dr Sterling had told them that we would come.

She allowed us past the tape and left, we got straight to work.

It was true, Dr Sterling had been true to her word. It was clear that a car had indeed rolled up right where Oliver's body had been, there were the skid marks to prove it, and a speed camera on the main road had probably captured some footage of the crime. There was only one way to figure out for sure though. We had to look through the footage.

"Ah, Leopold, look here, this man hole has my name on it! It says Crew road works! Spelt it wrong though..." Montague said excitedly, he liked it when things related to him.

I left Mr Crewe to inspect the scene a bit more and chat with the locals, and probably fall in love a few times too...

I sought out the right people and was able to get the memory chip from the

camera, it seemed that not only was it done on Thursday in the night, but the number plate was in pure sight! It read BU23 5NN, perfect; we could locate the car and inspect it.

While I was gone, Montague had found some information out as well, though on the footage I was unable to tell what make the car was, one of the locals had.

"Cassandra Willock has told me that the car was a black land rover."

Montague stated, "That means that if we go to a Land Rover dealership we may be able to locate who owns the car!" For once, he was more useful than usual!

### Chapter 3

#### The Dealership

We got in the Rolls and Mr Crewe said a solemn goodbye to Cassandra. Then drove the short distance further into Solihull to the nearest Land Rover Dealership. Once we had pulled up outside the dealership building; it's clear windows displaying a wide range of cars, we parked and walked inside, I made sure my coat was tightly done up as to not reveal my pistol.

As I had been brought up in a poor family, had no car, and wasn't allowed to drive for the first few years of

adulthood due to a mishap with a few fingers and a bread knife, I was in awe at the sight of so many automobiles. It reminded me of the Queen song by which my Father had taken a liking to in my youth, 'I'm in love with my car'. The song started looping in my head just by thinking of it.

We had only walked 10 yards when a man came up to us, his badge read: Mr C Williams. He greeted us with a warm smile.

"Hello, my name is Charles, have you come to purchase a car, or are you just here for the free coffee? Because if so, get out!"

"No no no... My fine sir, we are here on an account of a car that was involved in a crime from earlier this week."

"You are police?"

"No, detectives."

"Ah, you're here after what happened to John Sterling's boy? Yes I can find the car you need; do you have a number plate?"

"Yes," I hastily got out my notepad and read my bad handwriting, "BU23 5NN, that's it."

"Perfect, now will you just wait over by the lounge, and I'll get you the papers

in just a moment. And, help yourself to some coffee."

Whilst we waited and sipped our tea, coffee, and tucked into the feast of biscuits provided on the coffee table staged in the centre of the lounge, surrounded by an audience of chairs and sofas.

During my third bourbon biscuit and a cup of hot chocolate I had discovered, Mr Williams came back from wherever he had been and slapped a large wad of papers onto the table, sat down and started reading.

"It appears that the car number plate you gave me is indeed a car of ours. We sold it 4 years ago to a car renting company in Stratford, and it seems as though they had sold it to Connor Smith."

#### Chapter 4

##### The Lie

That did not make any sense; Dr Sterling told us that it was Oliver's car. Then suddenly, an idea sprung to my mind,

"Was the car issued to a household? Or a phone number?" I inquired.

"Yes, looks like it was issued to 32 chapel street, Solihull."

“That’s not near Oliver’s address, but someone must be living there!”

Mont and I immediately got back into the Rolls with the file safely in Mr Crewe’s briefcase and drove to the house.

It was rather large, not too modern but maybe Victorian. There were several parking spaces outside and one of them was filled by a black land rover. The number plate was legitimate though, and it wasn’t the car we were looking for.

Montague knocked on the door and we waited patiently. Then just as we were about to turn and leave, a face appeared outside the door, a young woman, possibly in her twenties. Whom Mr Crewe had taken an immediate liking to.

“Hi, can I help you?” she asked, in a hoarse voice,

“Yes...” I started, but Montague interrupted me.

“Yes indeed, is this Connor smith’s house? We are looking for the owner of this house.”

“Oh no, this is a youth hostel, but the landlord Dr Sterling is on holiday.”

“Dr Sterling?” we said together,

“Yes, her and Mr Sterling own all these houses, but she is on a trip to Hawaii, she left 4 days ago.”

That was familiar, Dr Sterling had said that that was the day when her son died, but she didn’t go to Hawaii! She was hiding something.

“Mr Sterling is dead.”

“What! No he isn’t! Dr Sterling left with him on Wednesday!”

“He died 2 years ago.”

After convincing her that he was indeed dead she explained all that she knew, that she was told by Dr Sterling in a cheery voice how she and John were going to Hawaii.

Once we knew all that was needed, we left for Dr Sterling’s house.

## **Chapter 5**

### **The Truth**

We got out, drew our guns and stormed inside the house, it was unlocked for some unknown reason.

The Doctor was nowhere to be seen, Montague checked upstairs, nothing.

“Perhaps she knows something we don’t, and so left as to not be found.” I shared.

“Possibly.”

We began searching in every room for any clues, the bedroom seemed the most logical place to start. We found various bits and bobs; a cold cup of tea, the mug painted with flowers and plants, and an envelope addressed to John Sterling.

Of course, John was dead, and it was likely that she had written it a long time ago. But the ink was still wet and it hadn't been opened. We took the risk of invading someone's privacy and carefully opened the fragile piece of paper.

It read,

*"Dear John, I know you won't agree on this. But I have done it, Oliver was clearly the cause of your death. Of course, they'll eventually find out, my love, but I've risked it to make a statement. I'm sorry about what I did. I'll meet you there darling."*

I passed it to Montague and thought for a moment.

*'I have done it...'*

Those hallowed words could mean anything,

*"They'll eventually find out, my love"*

Of course, she meant us. Me and Montague. Our only goal, to find out

who killed Oliver. But she knew. She knew all along.

*"I'm sorry about what I did."*

Of course, she did it.

## **Chapter 6**

### **She did it**

She killed her own son, just to gain vengeance over her husband's death. She obviously hated Oliver, and loved her husband. And so, once he had died. Killed her son...

*"I'll meet you there"*

"She's dead."

"Probably killed herself, judging by the long rope hanging from the tree, oh, and the body."

"What?!"

It was true, even from her bedroom, we could clearly see the tree sitting in the back of her lawn by the fence. And the rope hanging from one of its boughs, her body, and the knot by her neck where it had cut off her breathing.

Dr Sterling was the victim, and the murderer.

By Tommy Perry

A beautiful day  
Will always drive the time away  
What more can I say?

As the day goes  
All the water flows  
Like a majestic swan.

By Sam Wallin

One beautiful day,  
There was no cloud in the sky,  
I thought about God.

I love butterflies,  
Fragile and clever they roam,  
Around my garden.

There was a tiger,  
He stood tall, tender, strong and sly,  
In the horizon.

Love, is a strong word,  
Use it wisely and gently,  
Use it correctly.

By Freddie Spiewakowski

The soft green grass is  
Nice on my bare and ragged feet  
It comforts my wounds

I bravely jumped in  
The harsh dark unknown, creatures  
Everywhere stalked

By Harrison Hateley

The soft comforts and  
Warmness of the duvet with  
Soft cotton and warmth.

Frosty falling flakes  
Colourless clouds covered me  
Soft sleet slickly falls

By Oliver Kovacs

**Autumn.**

Golden leaves falling  
Trees swaying and coming down  
The crisp autumn is here

**Winter.**

Thick snow on the ground  
A blanket on the Earth  
Cold time with a rhyme

**Spring.**

Birds singing sweet songs  
New birth settling around  
Springs signs are coming

**Summer.**

Ice-cream vans booming  
Wispy long grass hard dry ground  
Summers heat intense

By Reed Maclagan

The grass tingles my feet  
They sink to the bottom  
Just like a rock in the sea

The clouds big and fluffy  
Take you to another world but  
When it's dark it's mad

The Ocean, so vast and peaceful  
Hiding a number of treasures  
Home for millions of big and small creatures

By Wahab Khan

## **Room 101- Dystopian**

Moonlight streamed in from the window, rays dancing across my still face. I gazed out at the dark sky, with all the stars strewn across the galaxy, like breadcrumbs left by some unseen giant. Squinting into the darkness, I attempted to catch a glimpse of Earth beyond the full moon. Of course, it was not actual light being reflected by the moon, but rather a reflection of sunlight. I leaned forwards slightly, catching a glimpse of Deimos edging away from the dominant Phobos, nearly twice its size in the sky. I had heard that they only had one moon on Earth, and I wondered what it would be like to stare out through a window at only one moon framed in the vacuum of space.

**101**

Abruptly, I pulled away from the window. A voice resonated through the small room, issuing from the small speakers fixed into the walls.

“Good night, citizen of Ares! Chores will begin tomorrow at six hours. You have been assigned water maintenance. Thank you for your co-operation. Past is future, death is life.”

The final slogan rang out into the silent room, and the dim strip of orange light

flickered out, leaving only the light from the small window providing illumination, for me to navigate the small room. I scanned the room, from the small bed in the corner, to the small table and chair that took up the remaining space.

I paced five metres from one side of the room to the other, and sank onto the stiff bed. The rough fabric of the synthetic material it was composed of scratched against my tentative fingers. There were no luxuries such as cotton sleeping mattresses for the workers.

**100**

A short crackle of static roused me from my sleep, and I dutifully staggered up out of my bed, scabbled for the lock release, and swung open the door. As I left, I could hear the faint voice crackling around my room, finally ending with the slogan. I entered the wash room, and turned on the taps, slapping some water across my face, and wincing in the cold jolt they brought. My task for today was quite a quick one, only taking a few hours, and I allowed my thoughts to drift as I began taking apart the stiff taps. I reached underneath the sink for a brush, and paused. My fingers clutched emptiness. That is not to say that they



met with a vacuum, but rather that there was no brush there as I had expected. Frowning slightly, I turned towards the speaker positioned on the wall.

99

“Could you send down an extra brush to Washing Block 101 please?” My voice rang out in the silence, bouncing off the metal walls, fading away.

“Your request is irrelevant at present. Please report to Room 99 please. Thank you for your co-operation. Past is future, death is life.”

I had never visited that area before. Nor had such a situation occurred in the few years I had been working here. I quickly reassembled the pipe, before turning and leaving the room. Turning left as I left the room, I followed the corridor along. Strangely, Room 99 appeared next to Room 103. There did not seem to be a Room 101. Unsure, I hesitated outside the door. The lights flickered on the ceiling. I took a step back, into the doorway. Suddenly, darkness swept up the corridor, choking the orange glow.

97

With all light eclipsed, I heard something moving in the darkness.

Panic rushed through me, and I edged back against the wall- except there was no wall there. The door had opened. I entered the room without conscious thought, and swung the door shut behind me. Vision returned to me as the lights reignited, stuttering into life and illuminating the room. A large stain of some dark liquid pooled on the steel floor. I turned around, looking for speakers in the wall to question. There were none.

“Can anyone hear me?” There was an unmistakeable shake in my voice as I whispered into the quiet. No answer greeted me. I turned back to the door, ready to leave. It was closed. I caught hold of the lock, and pulled. No movement. The door stayed locked. I paused, confused. Catching hold of the release lock again, I tugged, with all my strength. The door did not swing open.

94

Fear overpowered me. I was trapped. I turned to look about the room again, and noticed a small hatch set into the wall. There was nothing else in the room, no desk, no bed, not even a small window. I opened the hatch and peered inside. It was dark, but seemed to be stable. Sighing, I poked my head into the narrow opening. I gave a frantic

look to the sealed door, then shoved the rest of my body inside. The tunnel was tight, and barely fit my thin frame inside. I began to wriggle through, and after a few minutes caught sight of a light at the end. I hastened my crawl, eager to be free of the choking atmosphere inside the pipe. I hoped that they were still intact, or else the atmosphere of Mars would kill me quickly. I reached the end of the pipe and poked my head out into another room.

89

I fell out of the tunnel onto the hard metallic flooring. Glancing around the room again, it might have been any other room, with the same whitewashed plain walls, and dark ceiling and floor. Inspecting the number, I saw droplets of the liquid still glistening in the orange glow. Staring around, I made for the door again, but expected it not to open. I was correct. Looking around again, I almost expected to see the pipe with the grille cover set into the wall. I opened the grille, and crawled into the tunnel.

81

By the time I reached the next room, nearly 10 minutes had elapsed. I barely tried the door this time, but to my

surprise it opened with the slightest touch. I hurried out of the door, half expecting it to close before I reached it. However, I emerged not into the corridor I had anticipated, but into another room. As soon as I entered it, the lights faded, and there was only a faint glow emanating from a metal box in the corner of the room, where a bed should have been. I stepped tentatively towards it, and it lit up. There was an electronic display perched on top. It showed a number, and a face floating beneath it. My face.

68

Abruptly, the display changed to show words. Some very familiar words. *Past is future. Death is life.* Even as I watched, the words scattered in the screen, and reformed, reading: *Past is future. Death is a lie.* As soon as they had formed, they dispersed as quickly as they had formed. I blinked, wondering if I had imagined it all. A voice erupted into the silence, shattering the peace.

“Welcome to your end.”

“Who’s there?” I asked, relieved by the presence of another voice.

“The destroyer of humans.”

“What do you mean?”

“In one hour’s time, there will be no more human beings in the universe.”

I was shocked into silence for a few seconds, before I was able to draw enough breath into my lungs to ask “How... Why would you do that?”

“Simple. There is barely anything left to do. One could almost say that if I was patient enough, they would have died out on their own. As to why, there is no need for them to exist anymore. They polluted their home planet, Earth, and then set out to contaminate other planets.”

“But even if you destroy Earth, there are still humans elsewhere- there are thousands right here on Mars!”

“Who said that I needed to destroy Earth? There is no Earth anymore. It was destroyed many years ago.”

47

The sentence rang in my head. I knew the meaning of the sentence, but could not understand it.

“You- but...”

“And as for Mars, well...” There was a pause in which I could almost imagine them smirking. “I took care of all on Mars long ago.”

“No- You can’t have... I heard other people!”

“There were no other people here. There was only you, all alone in your dream room, while I gave you orders! You are the last, the only living human being in the galaxy. And soon, in 47 minutes, you will be dead. Welcome to Room 101. We hope you enjoy your stay; however short it is.”

With this last line said, all light crackled into darkness, and I heard a slight scuffling, coming from the direction of the door. Crouching in the corner of the room, with my back against the metal machine, I listened to the scurrying noises invading the room. I imagined small insects, crawling across the metal towards me. As I listened intently to the noises though, I realised that they were more metallic, like sharp claws padding onwards, clicking against the hard steel on the floor. I could wait there no longer, and I stood up, my fingers feeling for the door release catch. They had said 47 minutes. Nearly 10 had elapsed. Frantically, I began kicking the door, in a vain attempt to somehow open it. Another chattering sound, less than an inch from my foot.

A sob of terror escaped my throat, and a creature crept onto my boot. I jumped about, trying to squash the creature, but it determinedly clutched to the plastic of my footwear. More creatures came closer, and jumped onto me, clawing at my clothes and skin.

30

Even as I scabbled over myself in an attempt to remove the animals from my body, more of them piled on top of me. I sank to the floor, pulled down by the heavy weight of the creatures.

Suddenly, all weight of the creatures vanished, as if it had never been there.

Evidently they had feared that their entertainment might fail before the elapsed time. 30 minutes left to live.

Infinite torments to make them as painful as possible. I wondered what the next treatment would be. A plague of flies? Oxygen deprivation? To my surprise, nothing followed. Silence flooded into the room, pressing down on me, forcing me to slide desolately to the cold floor. Waiting idly for my death was almost worse than punishment.

Then a mysterious gas entered the room, curling in shrouds, gliding closer to my prone form. As I noticed it, I took a desperate ragged breath, and held it. The gas now filled the whole room, and I felt my lungs

beginning to contract, about to force me to breathe. I tried to stop, but eventually my body shook, drawing in a stunned breath. Nothing happened. No sudden pain. Just my gasps filling the still air. Now I fell into a state of constant despair.

10

A bright flash ripped through the air from the display I lay splayed against. I turned my head slowly to look at it.

10:00. 9:59. 9:58. The countdown continued. As I sat there, I gradually came to my sense. I needed to escape.

9

With the faint glow of the timer illuminating the room, I burst through the door, into the other room, and searched for the grille of the tunnel. It was not there. In fact, there was not even a tunnel, or any sign of there having been one there. I spun back towards the other room.

8

I entered the other room, and began kicking the door. It did not move, or give any sign of beginning to break, the stiff metal not even yielding a dent.

7

Light pulsed in the room from the time display. I pulled the metal box away

from the corner of the wall, panting with the effort. A single wire led from the machine into the floor.

6

There it was- the weak point. As if the timer knew I was beginning to escape, it began to pulse more rapidly, the numbers flickering faster. I took the machine in my hands, with the sharp corner pointing down at the floor.

5

With all my strength, I thrust the metal box at the floor. A loud clang resonated about the room, and I stared disappointed at the small dent it had created, barely big enough for a finger, let alone a body.

4

With horror, I began to realise my mistake.

3

The room was suspended above the ground of Mars, with the normal atmosphere of the planet around the rooms.

2

By opening a hole in the floor, I had allowed this atmosphere to enter the room, and the air.

1

Gasping in the lack of oxygen, I fell to the floor, my lungs burning. The room swayed before my eyes. As I closed my eyes, I thought I heard one last echo of a voice.

“Thank you for your co-operation. Past is future, life is death”

101

I opened my eyes. I lay on a firm mattress, with a scratchy blanket over me. A voice echoed around the room. “Good morning, citizen of Ares. Welcome to Room 101.”

By Paul Cooley

## Life

Hungry. Sleepy. Thirsty. Hungry. Sleepy. Thirsty.

Friendship. Nervous. Excited. Joy.

Attraction. Love. Revision. Success.

Friendship. Study. Success.

Love. Travel. Work.

Happy. Sleepy. Joy.

Confusion. Friendship. Explanation.

Sadness. Teary. Waving.

Travel. Love. Happiness.

Shrivelled. Kind. Caring.

Happiness. Welcoming. Teaching.

Sadness. Love.

Deaf. Blind. Confused.

Freedom.

By Alex Bosworth

The freezing cold wind,  
Thumped against the window pane,  
It swept through the house

Majestically,  
The sun rose above the trees,  
It blazed down on us

By Ant Hargett

### **Spring in my step**

Flowers start to bloom  
The sun is smiling at me  
In the morning air

### **Cooling off**

Sitting down to rest  
Frozen treats are delicate  
In the blazing heat

### **Autumn's gift**

Treasures hard to find  
Little, brown and tough as rock  
Hiding in the leaves

### **Polar town**

If you go outside  
Put an extra layer on  
You won't turn to ice

By Danji Ward

Greenness peeping through  
Winter running, Spring's coming  
Flowers blossoming

Sleekly, Silently  
Efficiently and costlly  
Earth's best friend

By Mahabir Daler

Unimaginable amounts of sand cover the  
shore  
Deep blue waves crash constantly  
The sun beams beautifully down happily

The frost harshly freezes,  
Anything in its path  
Until the spring

The blossomed cherry tree  
Reaches out with colour  
Very beautiful

By Roan Court

Butterflies are cool,  
In the big, huge, green forest,  
They fly up so high.

An Ocean voyage,  
As waves break over the bow,  
The sea welcomes me.

By Will Robson

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