

**Bourne**  
**toWrite...**  
creative writing  
workshops

## Unrequited Love

by Sue Hitchcock

When a gosling hatches, it imprints on the first thing it sees. Usually it is its mother, but it could be the wellingtons of a human carer, as described by Konrad Lorenz. Is love like that?

When David Sang first arrived in Britain, his first stop was at the Commonwealth Institute in Kensington to be given some help and advice before starting his degree course. As he arrived he noticed a white girl getting into a taxi with half a dozen black boys. He asked the receptionist who they were and was told that the Somali boys were going to the airport to see off one of their friends. She had no idea who the girl was.

David found himself isolated at university. There were no other West Africans there and the two Somali boys in the Arts faculty were anyway as foreign to him as were the English. Then one day, to his amazement, he saw the girl from the Commonwealth Institute. She obviously had no objection to black skin – the Somali boys were as black as he, so he decided to follow her. The Somalis were Muslim, but she never covered her long hair, so he thought maybe she was Christian, like him. Finally he found the courage to speak to her and she was friendly enough, but he was a stranger to her. He explained that his department was on the main site, not in the new buildings where the Arts faculty was, but she lived in a hall of residence next to the main site so they walked along until she said goodbye.

David had to concentrate on his studies, but he kept seeing her and started to look out for her. Mostly she didn't even notice him. He would have to get her alone. One Friday he saw her heading into town with a bag and tailed her to the station. Presumably she wouldn't come back that night, so he went home and tried to study.

Next morning he got up early and with a book to read, he went to the station. He watched all the arrivals but she wasn't there. Despite the lateness of his return, he couldn't sleep, thinking about her. She must come back today as she had lectures, like him on Monday. He spent another day trying to study at the station, but having to stop every half hour for train arrivals.

At last, late afternoon she arrived. David jumped up and offered to carry her bag, which she refused as it wasn't heavy. She wondered what he was doing there, but thought no more about it, having spent the weekend with her close friend in London, including quite a lot of drinking. Once again she just said goodbye when they reached her turning and thought no more about him.

Back in the men's hall of residence David went to his room and glumly sat on his bed. Then there was a knock on the door. It was the student on telephone duty, telling him to hurry as his father was on the phone. He had forgotten that the costly phone call from West Africa was planned for Sunday night, and joyfully he heard his reassuring family telling him how proud they were of him and urging him to work hard.