

Bourne toWrite...

creative writing
workshops

First class

by Richard Wilding

I've often fantasised about finding a massive stash of cash. I once did a calculation, while waiting in the reception area of my feckless solicitor (he who did everything in his power to secure for me a meagre divorce settlement) and the calculation made a lasting impression on me: if I lived to be 85 – which is an arbitrarily chosen age selected here merely for illustrative purposes – I would live for 4,420 weeks. Say for the first sixteen years of my life I was not an independent agent – that amounts to 832 weeks. And say for my last five years, I lose the will to do much of anything, or perhaps I become infirm; maybe I suffer from dementia; whatever befalls me in my closing-of-the-curtains years those years add up to an additional 260 weeks. Add these non-action weeks to the earlier 832, and then subtract that sum from the 4,420, and it leaves me with a lifetime composed of 3,328 productive weeks. Let's call it 3,333 for symmetry.

Am I really telling myself that in all of these 3,333 weeks I can't eek out one single week or two to go to the bureau, find my passport, pack a small bag (I travel light; always have done) and make my way via Leeds-Bradford airport to some wonderful other place? If I had a massive stash of cash, that's what I'd do. I'd use it to buy myself time, to buy back the time I lost when I was a senior leader at the bank and all my time and all my worries went on trying to show how well I could perform against my kpi's so that when the performance review came I would be rewarded with the promotion and pay I merited. I'd buy myself a holiday, wouldn't care where to. I'd leave it all behind me.

I'd go to Leeds-Bradford, find the most alluring destination I could think off and simply buy a one-way ticket there, first class, all the trimmings. I'd buy a flight somewhere at least ten hours away, probably California but I'm not ruling out Mali, so that I could take full advantage of the upmarket meals they serve and those seats that turn into beds.

And I'd get off at the other end, wink at the cabin staff, hire a cab to the swankiest hotel I could find and stay there until the cocktail waitresses bored me. That's what I'd do.

I suppose you could say that I did actually find a massive stash of cash in that I had my inheritance from mother. Was that massive? Enough to buy Larkins Hill, true, but I had to fight for it especially when there were doubts expressed about how she died, as if somehow my last visit had had something to do with it! I ask you. Mother had problems with her breathing, always had had for as long as I can remember and it had been a really muggy night, so.