

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

## After the Party

by Sue Thompson

A glass of wine was thrust into Emma's hand, she downed it in one go, exhaustion creeping over her, heart pounding. Slumped in the chair she could barely speak, her body ached. She sat there for two hours, not being able to communicate, her mind stunned into silence. There had to be a better way. All she could focus on were:

**Chocolate cake, balloons, fizzy drinks, sausage rolls, cupcakes.**

Congratulations her husband remarked handing her another glass of wine, again she downed it in one. Still she could not reply. Exhaustion racked every part of her body. They had told her there were easier ways, different venues, but no she had not listened. She thought she had known best, thought she could cope. Round and round:

**Chocolate cake, balloons, fizzy drinks, sausage rolls, cupcakes.**

The place was strewn with rubbish, not an inch of the floor was free from debris. If there was a hell then this was it. Her worse nightmare comes true. Her mind filled with the horrors of the day, first the sink overflowing with water and rolls of toilet paper disintegrating into a murky mess; it had taken her half an hour to clear the tiny pieces of tissue. Then there was the smashed 5<sup>th</sup> dynasty vase, well ok it wasn't 5<sup>th</sup> dynasty but they were not to know that and to be quite frank it looked pretty expensive, it had been handed down through generations, and now it lay at the bottom of the dustbin discarded and forgotten.

**Chocolate cake, balloons, fizzy drinks, sausage rolls, cupcakes.**

Yet another wine found its way into her hand and she almost smiled, almost. Her body was beginning to come back to life and she could actually feel her jaw loosening. It was the noise that had got to her the most; she had no idea that it would get so out of control. The screaming and hollering, so loud you could barely think. How do others do it how do they cope? They must be saints, perfect people who have their lives so organised, the Stepford Wives come to mind. But Emma is not like them she muddles through from day to day forever on the brink.

**Chocolate cake, balloons, fizzy drinks, sausage rolls, cupcakes.**

She can hear them now upstairs, will they come down? Laughter floats down the stairs. Please just another 5 minutes peace. She closes her eyes and sanity is being restored. She can just about think straight. She hears the patter of feet...

Mummy the twins chant, thank you for a lovely birthday party can we have some more cake?