

# Bourne toWrite...

creative writing  
workshops

## Words

by Chris Baker

*“I’m tired of words. You strive to be accurate, and the words come along and falsify everything.”* said Paul.

How many times have I heard this? Innumerable. If I have not said those precise words, I have shared the sentiment that they express – too many times to remember, the result of what a friend’s mother described as a red making situation. Sometimes the words spoken result in acute discomfort and for a long time afterwards.

I thought about what Paul had just said. Is it unjustified to describe his regret as the regret of the blurter, the bungler, the blunderer, the socially maladroit? But more than that, is it a failure in self-reflection? I toyed with these ideas for a while.

Who chose the offending words, did they self-select at random?

What thought was given to their meaning and impact before they poured out to wreak mischief?

Were the words uttered consciously or did some spirit take command and force out the words against the speaker’s will?

Was any thought given to the moment to utter them or the result of chance?

Who chose the audience or had it arrived centre stage without warning? And if it could arrive like a genie released from the bottle, who chose to speak in such a place?

Did the audience misconstrue what was said, perhaps even putting the most mischievous construction upon the words for their own purposes?

It is a common place that acceptance of responsibility for one's own misfortunes is not easy.

How much simpler for one's misfortunes to be thrust upon one, to be passive, the victim rather than the author.

Paul fell into this trap. He chose the words, whether to say them, when to say them, how to say them, to whom to say them and where. All within his control. Yet, in his opinion it is the words, those that he chose, that falsify. It is their responsibility. He has been outwitted by his own words. Hoist by his own petard. He hates them. Will he exact his revenge upon them in due course?

We had been reviewing Paul's correspondence with one of our competitors and how a very damaging construction could be placed upon what he had written. We were exposed. He was now exposed. I felt sorry for him. It was not that he had ignored advice. It was his unwillingness to admit, without reservation, that it was his fault. He had no self-reflection. One might look upon it as a question of integrity. Would he ever become self-reflective? Could he rescue his integrity.