

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

## Don't write. Don't come.

by Janie Reynolds

I roll over onto my side and grasp for the plastic pen on my bedside table. Unable to find it with my fingers, I try to lift my eyelids against the weight of the shame. But the piercing light scorches the comfort of my darkness. The lids fall again and I follow. Back into the noxious hollow of my bed.

I must reply to your letter offering me money to pay for the house.

So, repeating the effort, my shaky hand scrabbles again for the pen, like the feeble pincers on a steel toy crane in an amusement arcade. I feel it, the hard barrel rolling clumsily away on the surface, but I pinch it hard and yank it towards the writing paper on my lap.

I tighten the grip of my eyelids as macabre images taunt me in the dark. You, aroused, kneeling over her. Kissing her lips, her cheeks, her nose. Her, lying naked on her back. Pillow fights. The soiled sheets.

My muscles, primed for a fight, splint me in a vice. Comatose, I only breathe to avoid asphyxiation. The images flow like setting concrete through my mind, down my throat, through my guts and into my hand as I try to drag the pen across the paper.

I must write. Write my way out, somehow.

“Dear Adam,”

(Strike ‘Dear’. I cannot call you ‘Dear’.)

“Adam, I want you to know I still love you. Desperately.” No. Strike that. People will think I’m sick in the head. Or, they could think I made the whole thing up.

The clothes she was wearing. There on the bed. A flowery dress. Gladiator sandals. Her hair in yours. The soiled sheets. Photos of her on your laptop. The locked bedroom door. I didn't make it up.

"Adam, I am writing to tell you that, despite your infidelity, I still love you." No, strike that. This is about her not me.

"Adam, I forgive you. No one understands how you could betray me, your wife, in this way, better than I do." No, strike that. Do I want them to let him off?

"I'm writing to let you know you should be proud of your daughter. Maisie was picked for the swimming team." No, strike that.

"Every day, Maisie is flourishing into a beautiful young..." No, strike that.

"Adam. Thanks for the letter and the offer of money, but we are moving." No.... well, he will find out soon enough. OK. "Once we have moved, please don't write. Don't come. As for the money, I don't need it. It's not why I've written. I've written to say goodbye. I can't be here in the house any more. Maisie and I, we both need a fresh start. I beg you not to come and find us. Maybe Maisie will come find you one day, if she ever recovers from what you did to her."