

Bourne
toWrite...
creative writing
workshops

Dear Digital Native

by Saffron Swansborough

Dear Digital Native,

I hope this email finds you well.

I have this memory. I dream about it sometimes

A place you'll never know.

It's where you shared experiences with people who were really there.

If you needed something

You went into a store

And if they didn't have that thing

They'd write it down -

In a purchase ledger book

That spanned two desks, three decades and four shop re-fits -

Then phone it through

Order it in

And you'd wait a week
Or hope for the best.

Everyone carried a pen,
We wrote letters long hand
Which took a day to draft
Two days to arrive
Or three weeks if sent by boat
Longer if it was a steamer

If you needed someone
To read your message right now
You'd fax them
On continuous paper
Which burst onto the scene
In a dazzle of sprocket dots

And if you needed to interrupt someone from afar
You could page them
They'd apologise and run off stage
From their 20th century drama

When you went out
With your mates
You'd look at them
With your own eyes

When you wanted to know
What a colleague had for dinner

You'd ask them the next day

When you wanted to see

What your sister's holiday was like

You'd ask her when she got back

Soft wear was a type of leather slipper

Fishing involved a rod

Vines were for wine

And friends were for real

When you wanted to find out something

You'd go to the library

If it was open

Windows had curtains

That twitched

And only voyeurs

Would go ogle

Workplaces closed at the end of the day

And there was this thing called Off

Now we walk around with

Every known world facts in our pockets

Invitations, dates, job interviews, christenings

Life's milestones are arranged at our fingertips

Click Reply to RSVP

Thumbs up

Heart heart
Smiley face, sad face, wow face, game face
We all write
On the same clipboard
And make things happen

When I was your age
The web hadn't been spun
Connections hadn't been made
Friends weren't yet reunited
Estranged families hadn't been brought back together
Uprisings for democracy hadn't been televised by
Teens walking to school

We're all raised by the Internet now

Uh-oh! Something went wrong
You are Off line
You have been disconnected

The Internet
Is Infinite
Please use responsibly

Regards,
A Digital Immigrant