

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

## Write it short

by Jane Figgess

*In the style of passages from Don de Lillo's 'Libra'*

She liked to sit on the top deck at the front, hands gripping the silver rail. The bus lumbered into the grey afternoon as it pulled away. People stared at their phones. They always did. She wondered what they were scrolling through and why. Her balance flickered on the fast bends where the buildings dropped away. She thought the bus would topple over. The engine noise assaulted her hearing aid but she had vowed not to take it out. She kept an eye out for people walking along the road where there were no stops or shops. Where were they going? There was always more to it.

They watched Tom Cruise videos all day, mother and daughter, lying on the single bed. Criss-cross lines kept appearing on the picture. She told her she'd waggged school again, been to Paston Park. Bunked off they called it down here. Claire didn't think it was a big deal, what did they do in that school anyway? The other kids were snobs and she had to catch up from starting the school late, she was unsettled with all the moving around. Like the time she threw the boy's trainers out the window and he sobbed but really it was his fault for laughing at her. But there it was. Sent home from school. No wonder she wasn't keen.

Claire listened to the girl's wheedling. She couldn't buy her the latest coat; she had to make do with the Spliffy one she'd wanted last term, the one the school said she wasn't to wear. But she didn't go hungry and it was food she wanted to eat, not the brown stuff other mothers made round here.

When they were cold she begged money from the girl's father for the meter. All her life she's had to put up with being told it was her fault. There's always more to it.

Sophie Carpenter sits in front of the laptop, the laptop of bookmarks and links, the laptop of possibilities not yet found. She has been using a computer for five years, since they all had to get one and sometimes she feels like her eyes are being pulled out. She knows her arse is fat from sitting. Sometimes she wanders off into Amazon, Googles questions that flit across her mind. She forces herself to return to the to the specific detail of the starter or plenary, the particular moment in the 50 minute lesson she needs to be 'Outstanding'. She wastes a lot of time. There is always more to it.