

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

## Bad Feeling

by Elda Abramson

She had a bad feeling about the contents of this parcel.

She didn't recognise the handwriting but the return name and address sparked recognition. Sue Lawty was the second wife of a man she had known as a colleague and very briefly, one summer school night over twenty years ago, as a lover. In spite of the fact that he was a married man then with nine children. Madness. She thought, too late, of his wife who had born all those children and how it must have aged her and now the husband who had created that scenario was being unfaithful. She felt so bad about that night she never wanted it to happen again.

He said he understood but could they collaborate on the project they had discussed over the summer. He explained and it was easy to believe that he had trouble concentrating on his creative work at home. He was to make the two hour drive from Southport one day a week, Tuesday, to her studio to work on their mixed media project. As hard as she tried she couldn't shake off the pressure of feeling he was remembering their night together and that he would need very little encouragement to continue that liaison.

But he behaved well, albeit her feeling his unspoken desire, on these Tuesdays. She began to dread Tuesdays and did little or no art work on these days but attended to practical household chores. She resented him working away in the basement happily while she felt it necessary to keep her distance.

She started to dislike him being there at all. But still she said nothing when all she wanted was for him to stay away. This unpleasant situation went on for

months, until she really hated him anywhere near her. Finally, an excuse was found and he no longer spent his Tuesdays working in her home.

She never did have the courage to say how she felt.

So he kept sending her invitations to his exhibitions which she ignored. The years went by, and contact, not reciprocated by her, was lost. And now this large parcel and the news that Peter had died on a train of a heart attack five years ago. His second wife Sue wrote that she knew how much our friendship had meant to him and enclosed 10 of his large lithographs as well as all the correspondence she'd ever sent to him, which wasn't much, mainly Christmas cards.

She sat with the curled sheets of prints, the images she had always felt were sinister and her own handwriting, her own words to him in front of her. Feeling shame, fully realising her own weakness and dishonesty. And still a coldness to him within.