

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

## Magic Hour

by Victoria Cooper

The heat of the day had not dissipated despite the lateness of the afternoon. Its summer haze clung to us and we stared at the sharp geometry dividing sea from sky. It blended our bodies with water and land just like the artist smudging charcoal to create form.

We crunched over mottled grey and brown pebbles and waded in; the low tide barely moving under our liquid limbs. Child, parent and grandparent bathed in bluish still waters and above the soft hush of gentle waves there were shrieks of laughter and low contented chatter.

Facing the sacred direction of the horizon, periodically one head then another would turn back to check the solitary figure of my father who stood on the shoreline delivering silent sermon and holding a cardigan.

Why is silence so worthy of suspicion? He was present yet absent; on land yet adrift at sea. He stared ahead.

We headed for the buoy, our bodies stretched out to each other, but not quite touching, just connected by invisible strands, indelible to hearts. My aunt and uncle held hands and were beautiful for they were unaware they were no longer young. I watched them and loved them so.

We strode majestic in those infinite shallow waters, the eerie light; that magic hour. The pull of the place stronger than any tug of undercurrent. Our combined mass of shared genetics floated up but I looked down at the water dripping from my fingers. I was mercury in that strange, plasma light.

I checked again; my father had turned his back. Silently I pleaded, “oh please turn back, you’ll remember then.”

My eldest son returned from the buoy smiling with salty wet strands of hair stuck to his suntanned face. When did I return and face my father’s back? When did I stumble over stones again and see recognition return to his warm face? Just like him, I cannot remember. Maybe I never did.