

Bourne
toWrite...
creative writing
workshops

This is How You Tell a Story
A timed exercise

by James Stiffel

This is how you tell a story...
before the end of the 3rd millennium,
before the ice caps were completely gone,
before the last tree fell,
and before the last human drew breath,
a man well into his 40's walked out onto the barren dirt of the earth. The heavy door
seemed to get heavier everyday for him as he gave it one last nudge closed behind him.

The bio dome's automated systems were all powerless now. But the plants inside still had
enough life giving breath to give for another year or so...maybe. It didn't stop the need
for something to eat though. A fully grown rat might be nice, preferably not radio-active.
At least he wouldn't have to pay for it. There wasn't an awful lot he had left. Being the
last human left really did suck during the end of the world. The ground trembled beneath
him. Probably an after shock from the level 8 earlier. But it wasn't. It...was a vehicle. A
vehicle. How? The chances were astronomical. Probably an AI on the frits. The vehicle
slowed as it approached him. He readied the lead pipe in his hands. No good for hunting
now. But there wasn't going to be anyone in there. Not sane any way. He saw a figure in
the drivers seat. Son of a bitch. There was someone. Well, he's getting jack shit from me.
The vehicle stopped. The door opened.

A man, well into his 70's walked out...or rather stumbled out. The man's heavy suit
nearly ca-lapsed on the floor in front of the younger one. A noise filled the air. -sssssss!
His helmet was cracked. The old man was frantic. He clawed at the younger man's boots.
"h-h-h-hel-l-l-lp me!"
His air.

He's dying.
He saw his pain.
His suffering.
He sighed.

Not needing another thought, he ripped off his helmet and gave it to the old man. He tightened it shut. The old man breathed a relieved sigh. Before the younger man died he mouthed the words:

“BIOME. THAT WAY. MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME.”