

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

## Prologue

by Olivia Sprinkel

She blew in with the wind one morning. People don't remember exactly when she arrived. But they remember a time before, and a time after, but only in so much as there was a different quality to the time.

You could sometimes hear people in the tavern trying to puzzle it out. "It must have been autumn", they say. "I remember that the leaves were tumbling from the trees, and the birds were gathering to migrate."

"Oh yes, apart from that flock of starlings that forgot."

"It seemed a strange time to come to town, when we were preparing to close down for winter, to retreat behind our doors."

"That's what I don't understand. How did she become part of our lives?"

And so the conversation, continued, speculating.

But they wouldn't find out, not from her anyway. For as abruptly she had arrived, she had left. No-one had seen her leave. Some people claimed to have heard a clatter of hooves passing through the streets one night.

It was when Mielikki went to knock on her door on a morning that glowed, to deliver some herbs she had picked, and there was no answer, that her disappearance was discovered. Mielikki told her mother and her mother told her lover and her lover told the priest and the priest told the blacksmith, and the blacksmith went down with her tools in her hand to see if she could open the door.

She didn't need the tools, for the door was unlocked. When the blacksmith opened the handle of the heavy wooden door - a handle she had made herself, so she let her fingers appreciate the ironwork for a moment - a small white kitten with all-seeing blue eyes ran out, mewling, and then ran back in, to wrap itself around her legs.

On the table was an envelope, addressed to:

"To whomever finds me."

The blacksmith knew this was her. But still. She didn't want to open the letter alone. Her instincts were to prove right.