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**toWrite...**  
creative writing  
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## Coke Cans in the Wind

by Janie Reynolds

One night I was sitting on the bed in my hotel room, and I realised that, to write a book worth reading, I would have to start with a more interesting sentence than “one night I was sitting on the bed in my hotel room.”

I thought, deeply. How can I write something interesting? I closed my eyes, and waited. I waited for words to find me and pictures to emerge in my head, so that one could follow the other and so on and so on into a story, but not much happened. ‘It’s too hard to write,’ I found myself thinking.

So, I hurled myself off the sumptuous bed and walked towards the window. As I did, I could feel footprints forming under my bare feet. At the window, I looked out over the unknown city and saw that a storm was rising.

As I stood gazing, my fingertips brushed gently against the fine silk of my pyjamas as my arms hung loosely by my sides. A pale truck sped along the empty road hauling its load like a lone camel. Empty Coke cans rattled along the pavements with the litter of tramps, lifting and spinning in the wind like juggling balls. A boy, curled over in a hoodie, stopped, just below my window and hesitated for a moment. Then, weirdly, he stared straight up at me. How could he have known I was there?

I noticed it was, indeed, winter, because the rim of his hair glistened with frost and his breath formed small clouds in front of him. I felt like an intruder, a spy. Was this allowed, to look down on life? Was it wrong? Should I be down there talking to him or picking up the coke cans and placing them in waste bins?

Then I recalled that I was supposed to be trying to write something of interest. I returned to my bed and started writing about how I walked to the window, felt the footprints beneath me, and the silk pyjamas, and the truck and the coke cans, and the boy who knew I was there.

And I smiled as I realised that, if I wanted to be a writer, there was always a window to look out of. Yet how rarely did I remember that. I was too often of the opinion that I could write with my eyes shut.