

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

## The Alibi (account)

by Stuart Carruthers

An assortment of abandoned crisp packets floats effortlessly down the high street, while teenagers scream as their hormones try to understand their purpose in life.

Francis turns the corner, its exactly 15:30pm.  
The setting winter sun temporarily renders her blind, John comes to her rescue.

Outside Woolworths a young man, his fingers emerging from inside his black woollen gloves, plays heart breaking notes on a battered brass saxophone.  
Strangers carefully approach and catch his eye as they drop unwanted coins into the velvet lined music case.

O this town needs colour.

Scrawny pigeons await his arrival from on high.  
He won't be long.

Emerging onto the grey concrete pavement come the afternoon visitors from the house on the hill.  
They won't stray far.  
Warm cups of tea and generous slices of Victoria sponge the highlight of their day.  
Any moment now Maggie will open her door.  
Smiling as they file past, she can pay the rent this week.

Thank you for the endless entertainment, day after day.  
No innocent person ever has an alibi.  
Who said I was?

Surprisingly comfortable, the best seat in the theatre that opens every day.  
Hail, rain or sunshine.

Spoken word or an artist's easel, your subjects await you.

Without looking at the clock above the Jewellers shop, it is 15:58.  
For a brief moment the idle clatter of the high street is smothered in the deafening sounds of steel on steel and the station master's whistle.

A man in a flat cap walks purposely in my direction.  
His shoes catch my eye.  
For a second, I caught the whites of his eyes.  
I imagined he'd just done something he'd been planning for weeks.

Cheap plywood over glass highlights the continued loss of this once great street.  
Ripped posters with faces you don't trust talk of better times.  
Silent often embarrassed individuals enter a doorway to receive a bag that just about keeps them alive.  
Don't look.

Ghosts walk these streets kicking imaginary cans between jumpers for goals, while dog's chase their scent.  
Sharpened pencil, scribbles frantically before I forget.

At the top of the street, books are carefully placed within the phone box.  
No library card required here.

At about this time, the sun says goodbye.  
Young hands grip their elders as they walk home. The sweet smell of vinegar from Vozza's chip shop calls out to them, but not today, maybe Friday.

No need to move just yet.

Above the doorway, sash windows covered in flaking white paint offer no real protection against this harsh ether.  
I can see you behind the nicotine stained drapes.  
His oversized gold chain pulls at your pale neckline.  
It was all too much for you.  
I know I'm not your favourite person, but your mine.

Finnegan's walk.  
Most people don't even know it's there.  
The wood panelled gate isn't very welcoming.  
If you bother to open it and take the short walk past the abandoned coal sheds, the emerging view will take your breath away.

It smells like rain.  
The shows end as the streetlights warm up  
A robin momentarily perches on the bench arm  
We parted on good terms