

Bourne
toWrite...
creative writing
workshops

Five Words

by MaryPat Campbell

Apples

September winds blew, leaves turned yellow and brown, as the small green apples fell to the ground in the orchard next door to our house. If we didn't shin over the wall without being caught by crotchety old Mr. Yeats, they rotted and became part of the autumnal compost.

"Oi, get out of here, you trespassing little thieves," shouted Mr. Yeats at the top of his crotchety old voice. It was the only exercise he got that autumn, shouting at us children and waving his stick in the air as we scarpered back over the wall, our pockets full to bursting with the green and sour beauties.

Bowl

When his grandma died, John inherited her large, heavy cut-glass fruit bowl. It was dusty and dull when he unpacked it from its cardboard box crammed tight with layers of old newspapers. He washed it in hot soapy water and shined it up with a soft cloth till it gleamed and sparkled in the sunlight coming through the window. Lily, aged six and a half, filled it with oranges, lemons and peaches while John stood back and looked at it with astonishment. It looked radiant and new sitting on the kitchen table among the unwashed breakfast dishes.

Delicate

Frank, a single man in his early 80s was wheeled by the porter in to the art class twice a week from the elderly care ward. Still and silent he sat for weeks looking straight ahead blankly, dipped his biscuits in his tea, ate and drank quietly surrounded by the other people in the class who were absorbed in their creations. When encouraged to join in he shook his head, grumbled and folded his arms tightly across his chest. One day when nobody was looking he reached out a shaky hand for a paintbrush and began. Within a few weeks Frank started to produce the most delicate paintings I had ever seen. The quietness in him expanded as the colours emerged on the paper in front of him while he dared to become a real person again.

Hamstrung

Lydia tried learning to drive but each time she booked her lesson with the driving instructor, her boss demanded she worked overtime that day and she had to postpone.

She tried going to yoga classes but found that her annoying neighbour upstairs had signed up to the same Thursday evening class as she did, and so Lydia dropped out.

Lydia swiped right and left on the dating app like everyone else, only to find that the men she chose to meet were dull and uninteresting. It made her sigh and wonder what the other swiped-to-the-left guys would have been like.

Scribe

Brother Anselm mixed his blues, blacks and scarlets daily and applied them to the illuminations surrounding his faithful copying of the biblical texts. While he worked he dreamed of a woman with the blackest hair and the whitest skin he had ever seen. He occasionally added small likenesses of her to the margins around the edges of the vellum pages, while praying quietly so that his blasphemous thoughts would not overtake him. Occasionally he whistled a soft tune, to make sure his loud thoughts were drowned out of earshot of the Abbott.