

More inspiration

A Project by Fife Writes

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Fife Writes would like to thank all contributors to this collection of inspired, cutting-edge and witty creative writings.

Contents

1. Coffee in the Cathedral – by Roger Knight	2
2. Morning treat – by Roger Knight	2
3. My spiritual haven. A place called Yondah – by Roger Knight.....	3
4. In praise of the Hibiscus. Australia / Bermuda – by Roger Knight	3
5. Desert Hyacinths. UAE – by Roger Knight.....	3

1. Coffee in the Cathedral – by Roger Knight

During our weekly trips to St. Andrews, once we have completed our errands, we order our take-out coffees and head for the ruined sanctuary of St. Andrews cathedral.

Against a south facing wall there are a row of benches seldom used, where we can sit looking out across the remnants of the cathedral that still affords an atmosphere of ravaged grandeur and tranquillity.

A refuge from all the unrelenting noise of these trying times, providing the perfect antidote.

With the faint warmth of winter sun on our faces, we gradually absorb the ambience and the sense of history reflected around us.

The events that took place here hundreds of years ago that these magnificent ruins testify to, now stand as though in silent tribute. Slowly sipping our coffee, we start to feel enveloped by the solemnity of history and think that we now share that same fear of pestilence, uncertainty and upheaval of those that went before us. So in some sense history does repeat itself, despite the advances of civilization.

My weltschmerz begins for the first time to lift slightly and seems almost irrelevant compared to the endeavours that took place here centuries past. I start to realise that I am just passing through, one among pressing billions and that my existence is of little consequence in the overall scheme of things.

We leave with an invigorated wider perspective, feeling a little more buoyant.

2. Morning treat – by Roger Knight

After rising and showering each morning, I give the dog his breakfast before going on our walk along the old railway track.

Despite his training as a guide dog, he has since turned feral and chases pheasants and deer whenever he comes upon them. On our return we share a slice of hot buttered toast and marmalade together, which has become something of a daily ritual.

The sound of the toaster on ejection captures his full attention and sphinx-like he crouches at my feet as though in supplication, patiently and intently awaiting his portion, drooling all the while with rapt attention.

Once gulped down he licks his chops in appreciation and I bask in the satisfaction that I have begun another day knowing that I have made this old and retired guide dog's life a little bit better and in turn momentarily dispelled some of my own gloom.

The sense of sheer mutuality and satisfaction uplifts me and confirms that the smallest things as well as the most mundane can still be gifts.

I am reminded of that enduring quotation of Emerson's '.....to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded.'

3. My spiritual haven. A place called Yondah – by Roger Knight

Some of us, are fortunate enough, to have a corner of this world, where we feel spiritually connected, uplifted and enchanted. A state of being, where we really come to know ourselves, become bathed by the subliminal and experience perfect harmony within ourselves and with our surrounding environment that evokes these feelings and emotions in us.

Sometimes, we are unable to say why a particular place has such an effect on us. Perhaps it is the recognition of our imagined concept of paradise that dwells deeply in us.

For me, there is an isolated beach house, located on the tip of South Australia's Yorke Peninsular, situated on 300 ocean-front acres, with secluded sandy coves, dramatic cliff top walks and panoramic sea views to Kangaroo Island and the Gulf of St. Vincent.

Through the wheat fields that mobs of kangaroos bound across, a long track runs down towards the sea.

In the grey-blue distance the curved roof of the beach house can be glimpsed and beyond it, the sea.

It's the sort of scene that Andrew Wyeth would have loved to paint.

The stark unspoilt beauty, with its' far horizons and soothing silence.

Already, I am enveloped in rapture, as my quiet desperation soon dissipates, as I start to engage with my new realm.

But I don't rule it, it rules me, and I am it's grateful subject!

4. In praise of the Hibiscus. Australia / Bermuda – by Roger Knight

Intricate and delicate floral delight.

Chinese symbol of the fleeting beauty of fame.

You uplift me with your rich variety of red, pink, white,
orange and peach coloured petals, the kind worn behind the ear,
by a Gaugin model.

Your pollen laden anthers are like the feathers on a feathery duster.

Botanic gem, so often ignored,
you grace my garden with such colourful intensity,
and tropical grandeur !

5. Desert Hyacinths. UAE – by Roger Knight

Protruding through the warm sand,
their withered, blackened stalks have almost made them
unrecognizable.

But the winter rains have stirred them into life again,
and for a brief time, like a botanical phoenix,

they have burst into bright yellow flowering trumpets,
as though heralding their place in the order of things.