

FEB - MAY 2024

# YOUNG

## CHRISTIAN WRITER

Look INSIDE for:  
Short Story Winners!  
New Poetry Writing  
Competition  
Word Hunt  
Humour and more!

A magazine of NZ Christian Writers

## CONTENTS:

- 3**  
**President's Note**
- 3**  
**Editor's Note**
- 4**  
**Short Story Competition Winners**
- 5**  
**Jesus Calms the Storms**  
*by Taylor Foster*
- 7**  
**The Lord Will Never Forget a Forget Me Not**  
*by Abigail Murray*
- 8**  
**Greg and Chuck**  
*by Joshua McEwing*
- 9**  
**No Ordinary Afternoon**  
*by Hannah Stirling*
- 10**  
**Poetry Competition**
- 11**  
**Word Hunt & Vocabulary Corner**
- 12**  
**Real Expectations**  
*by Kathryn Paul*
- 12**  
**Writers' Humour**
- 13**  
**Dead Boring**  
*by Jenny Barkley*
- 14**  
**Small and Sweet**  
*by Seren Craggs-D'Arcy*

# Young Christian Writer Magazine

Young Christian Writer is our student magazine published three times a year by NZ Christian Writers.

## WRITING SUBMISSIONS:

**Send us your writing to be published in YCW magazine!**

Email Kathryn:  
[ycwmag@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:ycwmag@nzchristianwriters.org)

Note: Submissions should be emailed as a Word document with a maximum of 500 words by the 10th of the month before the next issue.

## BOOK / MOVIE REVIEWS:

If you have enjoyed a Christian book or movie recently, you can send us your review (200 word limit).

Email your review to:  
[ycwmag@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:ycwmag@nzchristianwriters.org)

## JOIN AS A MEMBER:

Visit our website:  
[www.nzchristianwriters.org](http://www.nzchristianwriters.org)

Welcome to our Feb-May 2024 edition of *Young Christian Writer* magazine. I trust you've had a fantastic start to the new year, and are looking forward to what 2024 will bring in your life and writing.

C.S. Lewis, writer of the brilliant book series, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, said: 'You can make anything by writing.' He is right. Writing opens the imagination to the act of creation. The reason why C.S. Lewis wrote the *Narnia* series was because he wanted to give his adopted sons stories filled with adventure that taught them to be better people. *Narnia* stories are a spiritual allegory.

Likewise, one of the reasons I love NZ Christian Writers is that it fosters a creative community of writers keen to improve their writing. After all, writing is an act of creation. Our competitions, local groups, magazines, seminars, and retreats are five ways that can help us each learn how to become a better writer. For several writers, their goal this year may be to publish their first or next book. If that's you, may I encourage you to remain diligent to complete that admirable goal.

## PRESIDENT'S NOTE:



As always, write on,

*Justin St. Vincent*

## EDITOR'S NOTE:



With love in Jesus Christ,

*Kathryn*

Happy New Year! I'm writing this during my lunch break at my work place – a kumara farm. It's very hot and today's work task is pulling weeds out of the kumara rows. It's not an easy job and it causes sore muscles, but I'm grateful to have a job. One day I'm sure I'll write a story that involves a kumara farm.

What activities do you have in your life that you could write about? Perhaps you can use one in a short story, an article or a poem and send it to our magazine. You can expect to get better at writing every time you do it. So keep up your passion for the things you enjoy doing and share it on the written page.

My thanks and appreciation to Shing Stirling for creating this magazine issue.

## COMPETITION RESULTS:

# SHORT STORY COMPETITION WINNERS

### 12 YEARS & OVER

TAYLOR  
FOSTER

1ST  
PLACE

ABIGAIL  
MURRAY

1ST  
PLACE

JOSHUA  
McEWING

2ND  
PLACE

HANNAH  
STIRLING

3RD  
PLACE

### SHORT STORY COMPETITION INSTRUCTIONS

- Write a short story that has a Bible scripture reference in it somewhere.
- Maximum words 1000 (no minimum).
- Give your story a title.
- Send in your short story as a Word document.

### Judge's Comment:

*“Congratulations to all the winners! The scores were very close and all stories deserve to be published in the magazine.”*

# Jesus Calms the Storm

by Taylor Foster

Age 19



Based on Mark 4:35 - 41

Once, Jesus and his 12 disciples were on a boat crossing a large sea. The boat rocked gently among the waves and stars lit up the night sky.

“Pull on the ropes!” yelled Peter, an experienced fisherman. His thick brown hair blew in the wind as he stood at the end of the ship. He turned to a big man seated on the boat’s edge and called out, “Keep paddling, James!”

James, the strongest man of the 12, tugged at large wooden oars that propelled the boat forward.

A voice came from the centre of the boat, “Where’s Jesus?”

It was Matthew. He stood, wringing his hands. He wasn’t used to boats and didn’t like the way the wind was picking up strength or the way the dark clouds were looming closer.

“Over here,” another disciple yelled, “he’s sleeping!” Jesus was lying on his side, fast asleep. He rested peacefully.

Peter waved his hand in the air, “Let him rest, he’s had a big day. We can get across the sea.”

After a long time rowing, a powerful storm began to pick up. Rain battered down on the disciples and huge waves pummelled the boat. Some waves even came up and over the boat, filling it with water.

“Hold down the ropes! Bring in the oars!” Peter yelled at the top of his voice, trying

to be heard above the storm. James and his brother, John, frantically obeyed. Matthew was on his hands and knees, tossing water out of the boat.

Suddenly, a huge wave knocked into the boat side, tossing Peter to the ground. The disciples were soaked through and terrified.

John called to Peter, “We have to do something. We’re going to drown out here!” He could barely be heard above the wind. Peter’s eyes were wild as he looked at the water and barely kept his balance.

He swallowed hard.

Suddenly, a voice yelled from beyond the side of the boat, “Help!”

John and Peter ran over and stretched past the edge. Matthew was dangling with his feet in the ocean, hanging on with all his might! Peter and John wrestled to get Matthew back into the boat, being tossed with every wave.

With the help of a surge of water, John and Peter, with Matthew being dragged behind, were flung into the boat.

Matthew gasped and spluttered as he coughed up water.

“We need Jesus!” screamed Peter, his eyes wide with panic. Every disciple looked to the back of the boat. Jesus still lay there, fast asleep. He was wet, just like the others, but the peace on his face was very different from the faces of the disciples.

"We need to wake him up," John yelled.

Matthew nodded quickly while the other disciples all called out their agreement.

Peter ran over to Jesus and shook his shoulder. "Teacher, Teacher, wake up!" Jesus' eyes opened gently and he looked up at Peter's bedraggled and soaked face.

"What is it, Peter?" Jesus spoke quietly.

"Teacher, don't you care that we are going to drown?" Peter looked desperately into Jesus' face. Jesus calmly rose from his cushion.

He looked around at the disciples. They were a sight to behold! Crouching down on the boat, soaking wet, some shaking, all with fear locked into their eyes.

Jesus looked lovingly at each of them. And, suddenly, with a voice like thunder, he raised his hand and spoke to the storm, "Silence! Be still!"

In a matter of moments, the wind stopped, the waves lost their power and the rain ceased. Even the dark clouds disappeared from the night sky and the stars were visible again.

All the disciples were frozen. They couldn't believe what they had just seen!

Jesus looked at each of his disciples. He shook his head slowly and spoke, "Brothers, why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

The disciples looked at each other and then at the ground.

John looked towards Jesus and then back at the other disciples. "Who is this man? Even the wind and waves obey him!" he whispered.

John was amazed and confused all at the same time. But then he suddenly remembered everything Jesus had done. John had seen him heal sickness, restore life and redeem people's lives. Jesus loved everyone and helped them through any

difficulty. How could the disciples have doubted Jesus' ability to calm a storm and care for them?

Peter, feeling the same way as John, walked up to Jesus with his head bowed. "Teacher. I'm sorry. I'm sorry I didn't think you cared. I'm sorry I didn't have the faith to believe that you could get us through the storm."

Matthew also felt disappointed in himself. "I'm sorry too. I let my fear get in the way of trusting you."

James looked up. "I'm sorry, too," he said. "I'm sorry I thought I could get us through the storm using my own strength."

The rest of the disciples started apologising too.

As the words died down, Jesus called his disciples together. He smiled lovingly at each of them and placed his hands on the nearest disciple's shoulders.

"I forgive you," he whispered, "Don't worry, I'm here. I'll always be here. You never need to fear because I will always protect you, be with you, and keep you safe. Forever." He looked around at his friends and smiled, "Even when I'm sleeping or you're sleeping."

The disciples nodded.

Jesus looked up at the sky and rubbed his stomach, "Now, who'd like some dinner?"

All the disciples nodded quickly. They'd do anything with Jesus.

From that moment forward, the disciples never forgot that Jesus was their protector and safe place.

With him, anything was possible because Jesus was a God who cared very much for his children.

This means that fear wasn't and isn't needed anymore because Jesus provided peace then and now to all his children he dearly loves! Which, by the way, is all of us!

# The Lord Will Never Forget a Forget Me Not

by Abigail Murray

Age 11



In the valley of the greenest grass sat a stalk with one Forget Me Not Flower. The Forget Me Not's blue flower petals shimmered in the sunlight. All around the valley were Lily of the Valley flowers, their white petals not near as beautiful as the Forget Me Not's petals.

The Lily of the Valley flowers bullied the Forget Me Not because it was the odd one out. The Forget Me Not wilted in sadness, wishing to be somewhere else.

Then a girl came skipping through the meadow, humming to herself. The Forget Me Not tried to hide behind all the Lily of the Valley flowers, but it was no use. His blue petals shimmered too brightly and she spotted him right away. She walked toward him, trying carefully not to stand on any of the other flowers, and crouched down to look at him.

"Hmm, the odd one out huh? I know what it feels like too," she whispered to herself, not knowing the Forget Me Not understood her.

She stood up and looked around at all the other flowers, who were all standing tall.

"I know exactly what it feels like," she repeated, then turned and skipped away, humming again.

The Forget Me Not knew from that moment that he wasn't alone. Many felt like the odd one out.

The next day the same girl came skipping and humming his way, stopping to crouch down and look at him.

"Hiya again, nice day isn't it?" she whispered, "You're wilting, why?"

She face palmed herself. "Hailey, you're talking to a flower. He can't understand you," she sighed to herself, her hand still on her forehead.

"Why is this Forget Me Not wilting, brain?" She stopped face palming and looked at him, then the other flowers, then back again.

"I think I might know. You are getting bullied by the others."

She face palmed again.

"Flowers. Don't. Get. Bullied. Hailey. It's your imagination."

She sighed and looked at him with sparkly green eyes.

"Well, I think you're beautiful."

She pulled from her pocket a small book with a navy-blue cover and a gold cross on it.

"Here's the last sentence of One Samuel chapter sixteen verse seven."

Her eyes skimmed over the page.

"People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

The Forget Me Not thought for a moment. He didn't have to care what the other flowers thought of him, because if God loved him, that's all he would need.

From that day on, the Forget Me Not stood up confidently, and never wilted of sadness again.

The End.

# Greg and Chuck

by Joshua McEwing

Age 11



“Ouch!!” said Greg, as he got up off his old, wooden chair. Greg was an older gentleman who wears glasses that sits on the tip of his nose. He wears a tool belt around his waist and has a builder’s pencil in the top left pocket of his blue and white checkered shirt. Greg has a wooden walking stick that says “Faith, Hope, Love” (1 Cor 13:13). He appears friendly to everyone who walks into his hardware store called “Bob’s Hardware”.

Greg saw two police officers pull up right outside his store. Greg thought the police were going to come into his amazing store, so he smiled at the police officers as they got out of their car. Greg figured out that the police officers were going to the Bakery next door to have some lunch.

...

Greg saw a young boy walk into the hardware store and he said, “Hello there young fella”. Greg guessed that the boy was about 8 years old. The young boy walks towards the counter with some nails, a measuring tape and a hammer that he had grabbed from the shelf.

Greg asked the boy what all the stuff was for, and the boy said, “My dad is going to build me a massive treehouse in my backyard!!”

“Lucky you,” said Greg.

The boy handed Greg 20 dollars for the stuff and the boy was on his way back home.

Suddenly, a short 16-year-old looking kid runs into the shop eating a delicious looking cream donut. Greg shouted “Hey!!” The boy grabbed a screwdriver and sprinted out of the store and into the bakery next door.

Greg put the closed sign on and walked into the bakery next door, with his walking stick. Greg sees the kid sitting at a table by himself and tells the police what the kid had done. The officers walked up to the kid to arrest him. Greg speaks to the kid and says, “The bible says do not steal (Exodus 20:15) and you just stole”.

The police officers then say “Hand over your phone”. The kid does what he is told to do. Greg then says, “What is your name boy?” “My name is Chuck,” said the kid. Eventually the kid gets taken away in the police car.

5 Days Later...

Chuck comes back to the store and apologies to Greg for his actions and returns what he stole. Chuck then asked some questions, “Why is your store named Bob’s Hardware if your name is Greg?” Bob replied, “My father’s name was Bob, and he was a fighter pilot in WWII.” Greg points to a picture of his father on the wall.

Chuck is now best friends with Greg, and they talk to each other every week.

# No Ordinary Afternoon

by Hannah Stirling

Age 9



(Sigh) "Well, I failed my spelling exam again, Mum."

"Oh really, Corrie."

"Yep. My score was 15 out of 100."

"Well, you'd better practise for your next one."

"Yeah..."

"Did you meet anyone new today, Corrie?"

"Nah."

"Oh. Well, I cooked your favourite food for dinner. Nachos."

"Yay! Can we use the turquoise table settings?"

"Okay."

"Yay! The settings are sort of blue too so Andrew won't mind."

"Anyway, it's dinner time now. Go get your brother."

"Okay." (Runs outside)

"Andrew, it's dinner time now. Andrew! ANDREW! Where are you?"

"Help!"

"Oh no! Mum!"

"What? Where is Andrew?"

"That's the problem!"

"Corrie..."

"Mum, I yelled for ages and I looked everywhere but I couldn't find Andrew. I only heard a faint 'Help!'"

"Oh no! Corrie, go get your father. I'll ring the police."

"Okay."

"Dad! Dad!"

"What's the worry, now?"

"Andrew's lost!"

"Are you sure?"

"Yes. I heard him say help!"

"Okay, this is urgent. I'll go get the police."

"No, Mum already did."

"Oh. Well, here they are."

"Hello! I'm Paul, the policeman. Apparently you've lost your son."

"Yes, I have. And Corrie here heard a faint 'Help'. Corrie, where did the 'Help' come from?"

"In those bushes."

"Okay Paul, can you do anything with this?"

"Yes, lots. How about we go have a look there right now? Here's a torch and a life kit. Let's go."

"Help!"

"I can hear him!"

"Yes, now be quiet, Corrie."

"Do not yell again or I will knock your head off!"

Did you hear that?"

"Yes, I did."

"What are you going to do to me?"

"Sell you."

"Aagh!"

"Be Quiet!"

"We're getting closer!"

"Yep. There's a clearing over there. I think they might be there."

(Gasp) "You're right!"

"Let's see what we can do. They can't see us. Hmm...," thinks Paul.

"Let's go and handcuff the kidnapper!"

"That's a great idea, Corrie."

"Yes, come on."

"What are you doing here?"

"I've come to arrest you for kidnapping."

"Oh, gosh."

"Now, where is that boy you kidnapped?"

"O-over there."

"Andrew!"

"Dad! I thought I'd never see you again!"

"Same. It's great to see you! Let's go home."

"Yep, I've got to put this fellow in jail."

"Mum! We found Andrew!"

"That's great! But who's that other man?"

"He's the one who kidnapped Andrew. He's going to jail."

"Oh. Come inside and have dinner."

"I'm so relieved you're safe, Andrew."

"Yeah. I thought I'd never see you again."

"Let's thank God."

"Dear God, thank you for keeping Andrew safe, and thank you for this meal. Amen."

"Anyway, I just thought of a scripture. It's in Proverbs 22 verse 3, 'A prudent man foresees the evil, and hides himself: but the simple pass on and are punished! If that man saw us, he would have hidden himself, but he was punished because he did not foresee us coming to arrest him.'"

"You're right, Corrie!"

"Let's eat now, I'm hungry." (Andrew)

The End.

## POETRY COMPETITION:

Enter the next writing competition. Win a \$30 Manna Store voucher!

### Instructions:

Write a poem of any style, e.g., haiku, limerick, rhyme.

Poem must include a Christian theme or message.

Give your poem a title.

Maximum of six verses/stanzas.

Send in your poem as a Word document.

Include your name, age and area where you live.

Email your entries with YCW Poetry Competition in the subject line to:

[ycwmag@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:ycwmag@nzchristianwriters.org)

Anyone up to age 25 can enter. You are permitted to submit more than one entry. No entry fee. Competition results will be published in the next issue of *Young Christian Writer* magazine.

**TYPES OF POEMS**

Hunt for different types of poems in the word find below.

- lyric
- sonnet
- sestina
- limerick
- narrative
- epic
- villanelle
- ode
- ballad
- epigram
- rhyme
- elegy
- cinquai
- haiku

**What is** a composition in verse, especially one that is characterised by a highly developed artistic form and by the use of heightened language and rhythm to express an intensely imaginative interpretation of the subject?

Answer: A poem (ref: dictionary.com)

c p l o d e m l q s o n g h c  
 e l m v a n s d x b e c o i k  
 p u y w k n o m d r s c y c s  
 i d f r x z n a h j k g p l r  
 g c v q i k n t y t e u v c d  
 r x d e c c e b n l y q m w a  
 a y e a n i t s e s r b c c l  
 m a s a z r x i o f g b i m l  
 p l m d t e v i t a r r a n a  
 o k m d c m h a i k u o q i b  
 a w o l m i p b f m k d u e s  
 n c v i l l a n e l l e a t z  
 m l g k g b n c i j r d i u a  
 i h x c i p e y q e r h y m e

# Real Expectations

by Kathryn Paul

Do your expectations of yourself have a healthy balance? Do you expect to succeed the very first time you do something new? I've come to realise that I often have had an unrealistic expectation of how well I will do the first time I try something.

I was pondering on where this unrealistic and not very logical mindset had come from and a vague childhood memory filtered through my mind. It wasn't clear regarding the time or place, who or what, but the action of being given only one chance to try something and the feeling of disappointment and of missing out because I didn't reach the mark – those feelings were the strongest in my memory.

Somehow I had taken on a subconscious message that if I didn't get it right the first time, then I wasn't good enough, or it was unusual, or it meant I wasn't talented in that activity.

But now I know better. Not getting something right the first time doesn't mean anything much. I know if I practise any skill I will improve. If I practise it enough then I will get it right a lot more often than I will get it wrong. I recall a famous horse trainer called Monty Roberts quoting the following saying;

'Amateurs practise until they get it right; professionals practise until they can't get it wrong'. The key is practise!

So don't fall for the lie that you're not good at writing or any other activity you'd like to do. Start by trying, continue by practising and celebrate every success you have along the way, including the point that you persevered. You are a winner!

## WRITER'S HUMOUR:

**Q: What type of blood does a proofreader have?**

**A: Type 0**

**Q: Why are writers always cold?**

**A: They're surrounded by drafts**

**I bought a pen that can write under water. It can write other words as well.**

**I'm writing a book about reverse psychology.**

**Please don't buy it.**

**Farmers would make great writers. They really know how to work a plot.**

# Dead Boring

by Jenny Barkley

A HOMESCHOOL WRITING GROUP

When my older boys were teenagers I was absolutely struggling to get them to write and was looking for an incentive that would relieve me of this constant battle.

I read a book by Susan Richman called "Writing From Home" and lifted the idea of a writing group straight from her pages. This group was purely an incentive for my boys to write, the carrot being an afternoon playing with their friends, and a yummy shared lunch.

We had recently seen the film "Dead Poet Society", and I was explaining to my sister, who was visiting from Auckland at the time, that the group would be similar to this. She told me that in her locality of Birkenhead there was a writing group named "The Dead Sheep Society".

My thirteen year old son, who was listening in to our conversation, commented from the corner in his low dead pan voice, "If we have one it will be dead boring!"

I loved it and forthwith the group became known as Dead Boring. One plus of the name was we did not feel we had to scale esoteric heights in our writing, we just had to write. Sometimes necessary writing is boring. But we quickly found that boring did not often describe the items contributed. In fact a poem was tabled at our second meeting which in reviewing the offerings of the first meeting, suggested we needed to find a new name. However "Dead Boring" stuck.

Originally the mothers also had to bring some writing, and this proved to be very valuable. One: they were reminded how difficult it is to "Just write something!"; two:

they modelled many different genres to the children and three; they recorded many family stories in the process and I bet when these are one day found by their aging children they will be so loved and laughed over.

Nearly 30 years later the group has seen many people come and go. Sometimes it is mostly teenagers, whom the younger children adore, and at others it seems more like a crèche.

We have varied from a few friends, to over 80 attendees, and in consequence have at times had to split the group – never a popular or successful option, but how many of us have toilet facilities for that many?!

While it became very much a mothers' support network, and we included some field trips, an annual concert, mid-winter dinner etc, the fortnightly focus has always been on providing an audience for our children's writing. Children were always encouraged to read their own writing, though this was never mandatory.

Dictation was an option for the young ones, and I remember when one young lad turned 4, his favourite gift was a scrap book so he could now tell his own stories and be a real participant at DB.

At one point several writing groups sprang up in Christchurch and in wider Canterbury. One was named by the children The Alive and Interesting Club!! In later years changing the name of our group was considered, but funnily enough there was an uproar from past student members, so Dead Boring it has remained.

## WRITERS' NEWS:

Seren Craggs-D'Arcy, age 11, recently competed in the Ursula Moray Williams Creative Writing Competition held by the Timaru District Libraries. Seren was awarded **first place** in the Years 4-6 category. Here's her **winning story**...



# Small and Sweet



by Seren Craggs-D'Arcy

This is the story of a sunflower but not just any sunflower as you will see. Sunny lived in a great big field of yellow-gold flowers, in the middle of a large farm. A sunflower's life is generally a long and happy one but Sunny was not enjoying his very much.

You see all of the flowers in the field were rather lofty and some of the tallest even grew up to two metres. Sunny was not very tall, in fact he barely reached half his comrade's height. So you can see why on this particular bright morning he was not feeling very enthusiastic about anything.

It was Saturday and Sunny was just thinking (as sunflowers do) about the fact that it was so very unfortunate that he, the small and subtle, was planted smack bang in the middle of the field, where everyone could tease him.

While he was brooding over this, he suddenly heard the sound of voices, a boy and a girl aged about 9 and 11 years were walking slowly around the paddock flowers looking at each of them in turn. It seemed to sunny they were avoiding the bigger ones but inspecting the smaller ones.

"We may have to give up on the sunflower idea," the girl was saying. "But they are grandma's favourite, and besides it's so dull in the hospital," the boy, Johnny replied. The girl sighed, "They are all too big to fit in the pot though," she said sadly.

Soon they came to the spot where Sunny

was and they looked at him. "What about this one!" cried Johnny.

"Yes, it's perfect," agreed the girl, "but I wonder why it's so small?"

Johnny and his older sister Martha bent down to remove Sunny from the soil.

How odd, thought Sunny to himself, to be taken out of one's first home and put in a pot. He then felt himself being lifted up into a bucket and taken through the field.

"Bye!" he called to all his friends and family and they waved back but they did not know where he was going.

When they arrived at the hospital ward the children put the pot on the bedside table and their grandmother slowly eased herself into a sitting position.

"Oh!" gasped the old lady. "How perfectly lovely," she said.

Her face, which a few minutes ago had been very pale, now was slightly flushed.

Over the next few days Sarah "the grandmother" got better and better until one day she was allowed to go home and of course Sunny went too. He was put on a very warm window ledge and there he lived until he fell into a deep sleep from which he would wake up on a bright morning next spring.

Sunny the sunflower realised that being small often has advantages.

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Connecting Christian  
writers in New Zealand

**VISION**  
To encourage and  
inspire Christian writers  
throughout New  
Zealand

**VALUES**  
Christian faith, God's  
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### **PRESIDENT**

Justin St Vincent  
president@nzchristianwriters.org

### **EDITOR & MEMBERSHIP (Magazine contributions, change of address, queries)**

Kathryn Paul  
editor@nzchristianwriters.org

### **TREASURER**

(Subscriptions, donations)  
treasurer@nzchristianwriters.org



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