

When I think about 2020, I'll have mixed emotions. It has been a challenging and devastating year for so many. Before MumWrite, I was struggling with the sudden reality of having my 4-year-old back at home full-time, alongside my 2-year-old. Suddenly, there were so many meals to plan, exciting and varied activities to dream up, a constant supply of energy and enthusiasm needed, and less and less time for me to be myself.

It was in these first few weeks that I finally settled on an idea. For a while, I had been struggling to find opportunities that worked for me as a mum. Not only did I need workshops and events that were understanding of my general mum-tiredness, interruptions, childcare issues, etc; I also needed something that was at a time that worked for me and also something that went beyond routine writing. My big love is experimental writing so I would have loved to find something that encouraged me to write in different ways, that challenged me to push the boundaries, as I enjoy doing in my writing normally.

Hence, MumWrite was born! I didn't know if it would work but I applied in hope to the ACE Emergency Covid fund for a little starter money and miraculously, I received the funding! After that, I tentatively put out a call to see if any mums would be interested and received an amazing response. Due to that, I struggled to limit myself to the initial ten mums I had planned, and in the end, invited 21 mums onto the programme! This meant more work with a limited budget so I decided to put out a call via Ko-fi for any donations to help support MumWrite.

Amazingly, lots of you opened your minds and pockets to MumWrite and you have all been thanked at the back of this anthology. This anthology wouldn't be here without your generous support and it certainly wouldn't be here without the talented mums who put their trust in me and came along for the MumWrite pilot!

The programme consists of workshops covering different genres and writing techniques, writing prompts, feedback from myself and peers, and an online community (Twitter, Slack, Facebook etc). What I didn't fully appreciate was how big the side benefits would be – the growth in confidence, the supportive community, the humour and understanding, the camaraderie in the face of untold pressure, the friendship and reassurance that the mums found in between the writing. I realised that MumWrite wasn't just a writing development programme, it was a real community and it had made an impact.

This is something I'm incredibly proud of. It couldn't have happened though without the trust that was put in me by the amazing MumWriters on the pilot. They went along with my experiments with their writing and pushed the boundaries further than most of them had done before, or if they had, they still tried to push themselves beyond what they already knew. They also shared their work bravely and beyond the programme, many have started submitting work elsewhere. Lots have already been published, while others will be published in this anthology for the first time. Whatever their stage of writing and publishing, I am proud of all of them and I sincerely hope they will take forward what they've learned from this programme into their future writing, no matter what form that takes.

I hope you enjoy the anthology and thank you for your support once again. You are part of the MumWrite community as much as the participants.

Nikki Dudley

MumWrite facilitator

- 1) First, build your machine. This can be made from any material. I have seen time machines made from jelly, collage, pipe dreams and instruction manuals. The bones of baby birds are popular amongst a certain crowd with a taste for the macabre.
- 2) Decide whether you are going forwards or backwards. Both are differently terrifying. Both provide equal opportunities to fuck things up. I once met a man who travelled to the future and accidentally invented the single-use takeaway coffee cup. He has spent years repeating a time-loop, trying to uninvent it. However:
- 3) Try not to blame yourself for any actions that go awry. Like many manmade [sic] disasters, the single-use takeaway coffee cup was inevitable. Which leads us onto:
- 4) There are no new ideas, just old ones that occur at different points in time. It might seem like a new idea, but believe me, someone in the future has already thought of it.
- 5) Anyway, I digress.
- 6) Although a certain amount of digression is inimical to time travel. I'd suggest you get used to it.
- 7) So. Hold your destination in mind and approach your machine.
- 8) Close your eyes. It might help to do a yoga pose (I prefer One-Legged Pigeon, or Child's Pose if I'm feeling weary).
- 9) Touch your machine, gently at first. Let the tips of your fingers receive the textures of your machine. Run your hands all over it. Become fierce. Impersonate a tiger and roar at your machine. Rattle it, shake it, crush it if you can. Try to devour

it. If the entire machine won't fit in your mouth, then rip it to shreds or gnaw chunks off it. Absorb your time machine. That is to say, BECOME ONE WITH IT.

10) When you come out of this state, open your eyes. You should have reached your destination.*

11) If you wish to return to your original location, you will need to repeat the process.**

12) Don't expect things to be the same when you return. Don't expect them to be different either.

13) If you would like to know what time travel is like before you decide to go through with it, perform the following exercise:

13a) Gather the pieces up and try to make sense of them

13b) Randomly scatter

13c) Tear this page to pieces.

*Please note with time travel there are no guarantees

**Please see previous note

1. Reach inside the cavity.

2. Cup the organ gently.

3. Ignore the smell. This is merely old gas.

4. Check each arterial valve for bruising.

5. If an abnormal sound is detected such as weeping,

proceed with the following emergency steps:

Whisper: *I love you*

If unresolved, repeat 50 times

For older units, repeat daily until expiration date.