

Lucid dreaming in fiction writing: An 8-week experiment

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Summary. This study examined how lucid dreaming (LD) can be used for fiction writing during an 8-week intervention with 29 writers of varied LD experience. Participants received LD induction training and drew on lucid, non-lucid, and hypnagogic/hypnopompic dreams to produce a short story. Quantitative analysis compared blind ratings of pre- and post-intervention short stories across five creativity domains (plot, character, setting, emotion, symbolism). Although no category showed statistically significant improvement, mean scores increased across all domains. Qualitative analysis revealed two main ways writers used dreams in their work: content-driven approaches, where the actual events, characters, settings, or themes from their dreams provided ideas for starting or developing their stories; and process-driven approaches, where participants adapted their creative process by setting intentions before sleep, exploring ideas while in the liminal state between sleeping and waking, and incorporating dream material into their writing and editing during the day. Writers also described wider benefits, including a greater willingness to experiment with ideas, genres, and styles of writing, trying new creative approaches, and feeling a stronger sense of connection to and confidence in their writing. These findings support previous research linking LD and creativity, and suggest that dreams may provide a unique, internally sourced way to explore symbolic and emotional dimensions in creative expression.

Keywords: Lucid dreaming, lucid dream, fiction writing, short stories, writers, literature, writing, liminal dream, intervention, fiction writers, experiment

1. Introduction

Dreams have long been recognised as a source of creative inspiration across the arts and sciences, with masterpieces such as Paul McCartney's *Yesterday* and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, and scientific discoveries such as the periodic table and the structure of benzene, originating in dreams. The reason for this may be the hyper-associative nature of dreams, which can generate novel ideas that may be inaccessible during waking cognition. Several theories of dreaming point to this. Wamsley and Stickgold (2011) review evidence that sleep supports consolidation of new memories into long-term storage and that memory reactivation during sleep often appears reflected in dream content. Hartmann's (1996) model emphasises the "loose" and highly associative cognitive style of dreams, which can produce remote associations between these integrating memories. Zadra and Stickgold's (2021) NEXTUP model similarly proposes that dreams actively explore remote associations in memory, helping the dreamer discover new possibilities.

Remote association is the cognitive ability to connect seemingly unrelated ideas into something new, and generally, the more remote the association, the more creative the result tends to be. Creativity itself is typically defined as producing ideas that are both novel and useful (Mednick, 1962; Runco and Jaeger, 2012). Some theories of creative cogni-

tion put associative thinking at the core of creativity (Beaty & Kenett, 2023). In particular, associative thinking seems to contribute to the creative quality of literary works, particularly short stories (Johnson et al., 2022; Taylor & Barbot, 2021). Because dreaming is naturally rich in remote associations, it offers fertile ground for creative material, especially when recalled and consciously integrated into a creative task. To support this, a specific type of dreaming can be particularly beneficial.

1.1. Lucid dreaming and creativity

Lucid dreaming (LD) is the experience of becoming aware that one is dreaming inside the dream (LaBerge & Rheingold, 1990), and it can be spontaneously or deliberately induced. This awareness can allow varying degrees of influence over the dream, from passive observation to active control of events, characters, and settings. Research has linked LD with enhanced creative problem-solving and insight. For example, one of Schädlich and Erlacher's 2018 studies suggests that motor skills rehearsed in LD could improve waking performance of athletes, and another one of their studies found an increased creative and inspirational potential in musicians engaging with LD, suggesting that some cognitive processes transfer between dreaming and waking states.

Creativity is also associated with LD frequency, with frequent lucid dreamers scoring higher on creative personality scale than non-lucid dreamers (Blagrove and Hartnell, 2000). Similarly, Bourke and Shaw (2014) found that frequent lucid dreamers solved significantly more insight problems than non-lucid dreamers, using the compound remote associate (CRA) test which requires one to find a single word that links three seemingly unrelated words into compound phrases. Finally, Stumbrys and Daniels (2010) found that lucid dreamers outperformed non-lucid dreamers on metaphor generation tasks but not logical problems,

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suggesting an advantage in tasks that rely on flexible and associative thinking.

1.2. Dream characters

Dream characters are known for offering guidance, support, advice for life challenges, or creative problem-solving to dreamers. In lucid dreams, this interaction can be deliberate, with dreamers asking characters to draw, write, solve problems, or generate rhymes and story ideas (Tholey, 1989; Schmidt et al., 2014; Stumbrys et al., 2012). Interestingly, studies have shown that dream characters often respond in ways that feel autonomous to the dreamer, sometimes displaying abilities or perspectives not consciously available to the dreamer.

Recent work by Zadra and Green (2025) shows precisely that: dream characters, even in lucid dreams, behave in unexpected and odd ways and the dreamer is rarely, if ever, aware in advance of what a dream character will say or do next. After being asked to create a drawing for Green (visual artist), dream characters refused, got annoyed, said they didn't have time for it, and had similar surprising responses, including producing works not requested of them and other dream characters intervening.

For creative writers, this unpredictability can offer a unique advantage: rather than constructing characters within the constraints of conscious thinking, they can encounter characters whose behaviours and ideas emerge spontaneously, often in surprising and revealing ways.

1.3. Fiction writing

Clare Johnson's (2007) doctoral thesis is a detailed investigation into LD for creative writing. As her own primary subject, Johnson described how LD benefitted the writing of her novel *Breathing in Colour*, including heightened visual perception, improved recall of dream content, in-dream experimentation with story ideas, summoning and conversing with fictional characters, and bypassing the inner critic. These accounts highlight both observation and active engagement with dream content.

Roklicer (2023) extended this work by analysing Epel's (1993) interviews with world-renowned authors (e.g., Stephen King) and conducting further 26 new interviews with writers who had incorporated LD into their creative practice. The findings suggested a wide range of benefits: from using dreams as starting points for stories to developing characters within LD, "turning up" emotions and sensory detail, decoding dream symbolism, world-building, and directly asking the dream what to write next. While these accounts were retrospective and self-reported, they offer a grounded set of hypothesised benefits that can be tested in a structured intervention.

1.4. The present study

While prior work has documented the creative potential of lucid dreams, few studies have examined how structured LD training might translate directly into tangible creative practice. This study addresses that gap by testing whether targeted LD practice can be integrated into the fiction-writing process to generate, refine, and expand narrative ideas.

The present study thus tested whether benefits identified in Johnson (2007) and Roklicer (2023) can be induced through an eight-week LD training programme for fiction

writers. Using a quasi-experimental mixed-methods design without a control group, participants engaged in weekly LD practice and a creative writing task. Stories were assessed before and after the intervention through blind ratings by independent judges, and participants' experiences were explored through thematic analysis of interviews, weekly logs, and group discussions.

The study addressed two research questions:

1. Quantitative: Does LD training lead to measurable improvement in fiction writing quality as assessed by independent judges across multiple story dimensions?
2. Qualitative: How do writers perceive the influence of LD on their creative process and writing practice?

Hypotheses:

- H1: Participants will show improvement in fiction writing quality after targeted LD training.
- H2: Participants will report perceived creative benefits from LD, including inspiration, problem-solving, and creative process changes.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

Participants were recruited via an online form hosted on the study website (www.lucidstory.co.uk), shared with UK-based writing networks, university creative writing departments, and social media. Applicants reported their writing background (professional/working writer, published writer, creative writing student, or hobbyist), their primary genre, prior lucid dreaming (LD) experience, and dream recall frequency. Hobbyist writers were excluded to maintain a baseline of writing expertise. Non-fiction writers were eligible if they demonstrated an interest in fiction writing.

A total of 69 participants were accepted. Twenty-three withdrew before or shortly after the initial workshop, and 17 withdrew later for personal reasons (e.g., workload, illness). Twenty-eight participants (21 female, 8 male, ages 22–85) completed the programme. Most specialised in fiction ($n = 24$), including novels, short stories, flash fiction, and novellas. Four participants primarily wrote non-fiction. In addition, many participants worked across multiple genres: 15 wrote poetry, 5 wrote memoir, 3 wrote drama or scripts, and 1 also worked in visual art.

Prior LD experience fell into three categories:

- Never experienced a lucid dream ($n = 12$)
- Past LD experience but not in the past year ($n = 12$)
- Occasional lucid dreamers (a few times per year; $n = 4$)

All participants submitted a baseline short story before the intervention and a second short story at the end. The study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the School of Psychology, Swansea University, and all participants gave informed consent.

2.2. Study Design Overview

The study used a quasi-experimental, mixed-methods design without a control group. The intervention lasted eight weeks and was split into two phases:

1. Weeks 1–4: Lucid dream induction training
2. Weeks 5–8: Creative integration of LD into fiction writing

Participants attended two main workshops (week 1 and week 5), plus optional weekly group sessions. Attendance

was encouraged but not mandatory. Group sessions offered peer discussion and guidance, which may have acted as an additional creativity stimulus; this is acknowledged as a potential confounding factor.

2.3. Lucid Dream Induction Training (Weeks 1–4)

The first workshop (two hours, online via Zoom) introduced LD theory, dream recall techniques, and practical induction methods, drawing on established protocols (LaBerge & Rheingold, 1990; Stumbrys et al., 2012). Four main techniques were taught:

- Dream journaling: Recording all remembered dreams immediately upon waking and noting recurring dream signs over time.
- Reality testing (RT): Performing checks during the day to determine if one is dreaming (e.g., reading text twice, finger-through-palm). RT cues were personalised to each participant's dream signs (e.g., buses were a recurring dream sign for one participant, so he implemented them into his RT routine, and this unlocked his first LD).
- Mnemonic Induction of Lucid Dreams (MILD): Repeating an intention to recognise dreaming, paired with visualising a recent dream scene.
- Wake-Back-to-Bed (WBTB): Waking up 30–90 minutes earlier than usual, staying awake for 30–60 minutes, then returning to sleep while practising MILD. This was optional for feasibility reasons; 16 participants tried WBTB at least once, with eight using it regularly.

Additional guidance covered lucidity stabilisation (e.g., spinning, verbal affirmations inside the LD) and nightmare management (e.g., disengaging attention, altering the dream scene).

2.4. Creative Integration (Weeks 5–8)

The second workshop introduced strategies for using LD in fiction writing. Participants were tasked with beginning a new short story inspired by a dream and refining it over four weeks. MILD was adapted to include creative goals (e.g., “I will find an idea for my short story” or “I will meet my protagonist in my dream”).

In-dream creative activities included looking for inspiration by engaging with the dream environment, exploring and modifying settings, amplifying sensory details, dialoguing with dream characters for plot or character development, testing alternate scene outcomes, asking the dream for narrative direction or problem solving, and similar. In-dream creative activities included:

Participants were encouraged to integrate dream material into their writing during waking hours and, where possible, re-engage with it in subsequent dreams.

2.5. Group Sessions

Weekly one-hour group sessions (online) allowed participants to share dream experiences, discuss story progress, and troubleshoot LD practice. Early sessions focused on LD induction training, while later sessions also included story development. While beneficial for learning and support, these sessions may have contributed to creative development independently of LD, representing a limitation of the design.

2.6. Data Collection

Quantitative

Participants submitted two short stories:

- Pre-intervention (baseline)
- Post-intervention (end of week 8)

Four independent judges, all experienced in fiction writing and literary assessment, rated the stories blind to whether they were written before or after the intervention. Each judge was assigned a fixed subset of participants and assessed both the pre- and post-intervention story from each participant in their subset. This allocation was chosen due to resource constraints, as it was not feasible to have all judges rate every story. Within each judge's set, the order of pre- and post-intervention stories was randomised to reduce the risk of conscious bias when evaluating paired stories. Because different judges rated different subsets of participants, inter-rater reliability could not be calculated.

Each story was scored on five dimensions:

1. Symbolism – originality and how well symbolism communicates to the reader
2. Emotion – intensity, clarity, empathy, and emotional communication
3. Character – authenticity, believability, complexity, dialogue, and development
4. Setting – authenticity, believability, world-building, sensory detail, relation to character
5. Plot – clarity, coherence, originality of idea and treatment

Scores were given on a 10-point Likert scale (1 = poor, 10 = excellent). Mean ratings across judges were used for analysis.

Qualitative

Three data sources informed the qualitative analysis:

1. Weekly checklists – included which LD induction methods were used each day, whether an LD occurred, brief notes about any LDs, and notes on dreams of particular relevance to the story.
2. Exit interviews – semi-structured, ~60 minutes, conducted by the researcher via Zoom, covering LD use, perceived creative impact, and reflections on the programme.
3. Group session transcripts – notes and recordings from weekly discussions.

A thematic analysis was conducted in ATLAS.ti, following a six-phase process (familiarisation, initial coding, theme generation, review, definition and naming, reporting). Sources were triangulated across daily checklists, exit interviews, and group discussions. Interviews were conducted by the same researcher who facilitated the programme; potential social desirability bias or expectancy effects are acknowledged.

3. Results

3.1. Quantitative Analysis

3.1.1 Pre- to Post-Intervention Changes

Across all five creativity domains (symbolism, emotion, setting, character, and plot) mean scores increased from

baseline to post-intervention (Table 1). The largest mean increase was observed for symbolism (+0.50), followed by emotion (+0.37), and equal gains for setting, character, and plot (+0.22 each). Although these differences did not reach statistical significance, the direction of change was consistently positive.

3.1.2 Interpretation of Effect Sizes

Although none of the t-tests produced p-values below the conventional threshold for statistical significance ($p < .05$), the uniform upward trend across all categories suggests a potential positive influence of the intervention. The largest mean improvement for symbolism is consistent with participants' qualitative accounts of unusual imagery and ideas gathered from dreams for story development.

3.1.3 Contextual Factors

Several factors may have contributed to the absence of statistically significant findings. The eight-week study period may have been too short to capture measurable changes, particularly as two participants reported experiencing their first lucid dreams only in the week following the intervention. Some participants used their lucid dreams for personal exploration, such as flying, rather than engaging with their stories. Others drew on just a single dream for inspiration and were unable to obtain additional dreams to develop or refine their narratives. In addition, having only one baseline story and one post-training story per participant limited the ability to assess creativity objectively; a more robust design would involve multiple works at each time point. Given these constraints, a qualitative analysis was conducted to provide a richer understanding of the outcomes.

3.1.4 Lucid Dream Success Rates

Of the twenty-eight participants who completed the intervention, twenty-five (89%) were non-frequent lucid dreamers at baseline. By the end of the programme, 80% of these non-frequent lucid dreamers had experienced at least one lucid dream, with three participants reporting their first lucid dream one to two weeks after the study concluded.

The number of lucid dreams reported during the intervention ranged from 1 to 36. The level of dream control also varied: some participants reported only brief moments of lucidity, while others described sustained awareness and the ability to deliberately influence events, settings, and characters. For example, one participant with no prior lucid dreaming experience reported inducing seven lucid dreams in the first three weeks, re-entering multiple dreams, and consciously transforming dream characters to navigate the dream scenario.

Several participants noted difficulty distinguishing between lucid dreams and other dream states, particularly liminal experiences (hypnagogic or hypnopompic) which were not explicitly addressed in the training. Post-hoc coding of dream logs revealed that thirteen participants (46%) also reported liminal dream experiences (A1), ambiguous states between wakefulness and sleep (Schwenger, 2012; Thompson, 2014), described as "half-asleep" or "unsure if dreaming or awake." Some participants combined liminal experiences, non-lucid dreams, and waking imagery to inform their post-intervention story.

3.2. Qualitative Analysis

Thematic analysis of combined data sources, including dream diaries, group session transcripts, and exit interviews, identified four overarching themes: Changes in dreams, What dreams provide creatively, How writers engage with dreams, and Changes in the creative process. Each theme was further broken down into subthemes representing recurring patterns in participants' accounts. These subthemes were refined through iterative coding until no new categories emerged. Counts (number of participants mentioning each idea) are provided in Table 2 to indicate the prevalence of specific experiences and strategies.

Participant counts given in this section refer to the number of individuals who mentioned a theme across any of the qualitative data sources: dream diaries, group session transcripts, or exit interviews.

3.2.1 Changes in dreams

During the intervention, many participants experienced a shift in their dreaming. Fourteen participants (50%) reported increased control in their dreams, with eight of them describing positive changes in recurring anxiety dreams and nightmares. Seven participants (25%) reported gaining insight from their dreams outside their creative tasks, and twenty-one (75%) noted a change in their dream quality. See Appendices A2-A6 for a list of participants and supporting excerpts.

Increased control in dreams

Fourteen participants (50%) reported increased agency in their dreams (A2). This agency sometimes transformed negative dreams: eight participants described positive changes in recurring anxiety dreams and nightmares. PH, for example, became lucid during a recurring nightmare and defused it by stating, "don't be ridiculous," waking up calm rather than screaming. PAB guided a vivid dream that would've

Table 1. Mean scores (M) pre- and post-intervention, with paired-samples t-test results.

Domain	Pre-intervention M	Post-intervention M	t(df)	p
Symbolism	6.39	6.89	-1.08 (24)	.290
Emotion	6.59	6.96	-1.24 (25)	.225
Setting	7.19	7.41	-0.74 (26)	.464
Character	6.89	7.11	-0.40 (25)	.694
Plot	7.11	7.33	-0.78 (26)	.441

Table 2. Themes and subthemes identified in the qualitative analysis, with number of participants reporting each.

Theme	Subtheme	N participants
Changes in dreams	Increased control in dreams	14 (8 related to nightmares/anxiety dreams)
	Insightful dreams	7
	Changes in dream quality	21 (vivid = 11, unusual = 7, detailed = 5, interesting = 7)
What dreams provide creatively	Starting points	24
	Problem solving	22
	Dream elements in writing	Various (Imagery = 26, Symbolism = 21, Emotion = 20, etc.)
How writers engage with dreams	Mentors	9
	Intention-setting	21 (Direct = 15, Indirect = 12)
	Liminal creativity	13
Changes in the creative process	Writing dreams into stories	27
	Unblocked creativity	18
	Different approach to writing	14

otherwise become a nightmare (A3). PX remained composed in claustrophobic dream situations. PY, in a recurring nightmare of drowning, asked for help and survived for the first time. She said: “The only two moments of lucidity provided the story and revolutionised my life. I can survive traumas.”

Similarly, some participants stopped recurring anxiety dreams by altering their scenario. PU changed a recurring anxiety dream about an old workplace by quitting his job within the dream, “I was making decisions about a recurrent situation/dream that’s been going on for 30 years.” After this, the dream reoccurred only once, with PU’s role shifting: “At Yorkshire TV studios again - now I am not an incompetent dream victim as formerly, but am fully in charge as studio supervisor/engineer. I’m in control, making decisions.” PW similarly walked out of a recurring stressful work situation in a dream, noting his dreams were “heading in the right direction.”

Insightful dreams

Seven participants (25%) reported gaining insight from dreams that extended beyond the creative task. PR uncovered feelings of guilt after dreaming about her mentor, calling her dreams “useful and processing” and PO reported growing self-awareness during the intervention. Others received symbolic guidance. PA had a vivid dream validating two real-life dilemmas, motivating her to resolve them: “Very interesting, vivid dream about an incident in my past. In the dream I was me, but with a much more mature viewpoint.” PH dreamt of a recurring symbol which felt like an answer to a puzzle she had been looking for all her life (A5). PU, a practicing Buddhist, reported a general shift in perspective: “I notice a deeper sympathy/empathy for others... The LD project is having influences other than the answers I’d hoped for.”

Changes in dream quality

The nature of dreams also changed. Eleven participants (39%) found their dreams more vivid, seven (25%) more unusual, five (18%) more detailed, and seven (25%) more interesting (see A6 for details). PA noted increased vivid-

ness and symbolism noting her dreams became more purposeful, while PV observed deeper attention to detail and emotional tone in her dreams: “I remember more things, the dreams feel more intense and real, and I’ve been able to focus my attention on little details that I wouldn’t have done before.” She said her dreams felt more entertaining towards the end of the study as opposed to mundane and dull at the start of the study. Similarly, PI noticed a move from dull anxiety dreams to rich, character-driven experiences (A7). PW also began observing “more interesting, story-like dreams,” and PR described hers as “3D, in-depth,” even dreaming she was producing a film. Thus, these changes in the dream quality were observed as more creative by some participants.

3.2.2 What dreams provide creatively

With the shift in dreaming, most participants’ creativity also changed. This was achieved in the following ways:

- Direct and indirect influence on both works in progress and new writing (Novels, short stories, poems, paintings)
- Direct and indirect influence on writers and their writing practice

Out of twenty-seven who submitted stories, twenty-four participants (89%) used dreams as a starting point, and twenty-two writers (81%) for problem solving.

Starting points

Twenty-four (89%) participants used dreams as starting points for their project stories. Most participants based their stories on a single dream, while others drew from multiple dreams. Sixteen participants (59%) used a non-lucid dream, three participants (11%) used a lucid dream, three (11%) used a combination of multiple non-lucid dreams, and two (7%) used multiple lucid dreams as a starting point for a new short story.

PQ’s story was prompted by a dream about a pilot, which then evolved through ideas from other dreams. PH used two of her dreams to start two different short stories (A8), and so did PL (A9), PC (A10), and PX (A11), among others. In addi-

tion, several writers also used their dreams to start poems as well as novels.

Stories they would not otherwise write

Eight participants (30%; A12) were inspired to explore unfamiliar genres, themes, or styles of writing. PNJ wrote a surreal wedding-in-a-cemetery story sparked by a dream, which she described as her “weirdest story yet.” PT combined elements from two dreams to explore new narrative territory. PI’s detective story about a woman going into hiding came from recurring dreams of being hunted, stating that “I would never have had an idea like this in real life!”

Problem solving

Twenty-two writers (81%) experienced dreams that moved their stories forward by producing solutions to certain problems. Nine participants (33%) used a non-lucid dream, four (15%) used a lucid dream, five (19%) used a liminal dream, and four (15%) used a combination of these types of dreams for problem solving with their project stories.

For example, PH was midway through her draft when she hit a plot hole. Intending to become lucid, she dreamt of a girl nicknamed Zui (later Zoe in her story) hiding a recorder in a kitchen cabinet. This dream detail became the exact plot device she needed to resolve the plot hole.

Dream elements used in writing

From starting points to problem solving, participants used their dreams to inspire different aspects of their writing.

Ideas. Many writers described a surge in inspiration. PV felt overwhelmed by the richness of her dreams: “I’m amazed at how much interesting content I’ve gathered from the past week.” PLJ compared her dreams to shaking a box of M&Ms – full of surprises. PI and PW also noted an increase in story ideas, with PW saying the process opened him “to the whole universe.”

Participants used dreams to inspire the following story elements in their project stories: twenty-six participants (96%) used dreams to inspire their story imagery, eighteen (67%) got a phrase, twenty-four (89%) shaped their characters, twenty-one (78%) settings, twenty-one (78%) symbols, twenty (74%) emotion, twenty-two (82%) themes, two (7%) perspective, and three (11%) received a new concept for their story. Most participants used multiple dream elements to develop their story, such as PC (excerpt from story and the corresponding dream report in A10), PH (A8), and PK (A23).

Imagery. Since dreams are highly visual, dream imagery influenced characters, settings, plots, and even story titles. PJ, for instance, drew inspiration from an image of a lantern he held in a dream, naming his short story *Lantern*. As a painter, he also incorporated dream imagery into his artwork, including a lucid dream that felt “unsettling and transformative,” helping him complete a Dali-like painting (A24). PZ built her story around a dream image of a man in a trench coat. Seeking more depth, she set an intention and later received a new image of a woman in a dress walking backward, which transformed her narrative.

Verbal. After visual imagery, auditory impressions are the second most common dream experience. A 2020 study by Fosse and Larøi found that 93.9% of dreams contain auditory elements, with speech from dream figures being the

most prevalent. In the present study, many participants heard words or phrases in dreams, using them as starting points or solutions for their stories. For example, PE’s story was inspired by a single dream phrase – “he’s there but not there,” – spoken by a dream character.

Five writers received a character name and three found a title for their story inside a dream. PV’s dream mentor provided both a title and a character name in an LD, while PH saw the name of a café in a dream, later using it as her story’s title. PN asked for the first line of her next novel and dreamt of a scene narrated by a character: “*My name is Kevin, I’m a journalist. I was travelling the world living the life when it happened. I came across the pink slip nightgown...*”

Characters. Visual and auditory elements in dreams often shaped story characters, with some participants intentionally meeting their characters in dreams to gain insight. For instance, PG visualised a door and watched his story character walk through it, enabling him to describe the character’s face and emotions, which clarified his motivations for an affair in the story.

PN dreamt of her protagonist as a portrait of a young man surrounded by black-and-white imagery, and PV’s cook character, carrying a mini fridge as a suitcase, came from a dream. PK asked to meet a spider, who she considered to be her story’s protagonist. The spider appeared in the dream and told her, “No, it’s not me,” revealing the old woman as the true protagonist of the story (A23).

On the other hand, PX asked to meet a wise medic woman but instead encountered birds in a dream, which later infused the character with symbolic power. Similarly, stuck on how to write a Gaelic-speaking character, PB dreamt that she didn’t need to understand Gaelic, because, in that era, women were silenced. This reframed her story through documents rather than direct dialogue (A26).

Settings. Dreams also inspired vivid story settings, with 78% of participants drawing directly on dream imagery and other senses. One of the judges commented on PF’s project story: “The setting is believable and very well written – this reader can smell and feel that room, that wardrobe, that body.” PN walked through lucid dream landscapes of countryside and rocky seaside, later incorporating these scenes fully into her story. PQ’s dream of an elephant sanctuary became a key location, while another dream of a Kenyan reserve unlocked character backstory and resolved plot challenges (A27).

Emotion. Both characters and settings often shaped the emotional makeup of stories. One of the judges noted PG’s project story had “emotion shown through all characters” and “intensity communicated with clarity.” PQ’s narrative on loneliness was sparked by a lucid encounter with a pilot in a dream, which carried into the opening scene and her character’s motivations. For PL, a dream featuring Hitchcock on a train gave his horror story an emotional arc. Similarly, PN received song lyrics in a liminal dream that added an emotional layer to her narrative (A17).

For some, emotional dreams led to other writings. PB, PX, and PC transformed their most charged dreams into poetry (A28). Others, like PA, described dreams “full of feeling”, which subtly shaped their writing style rather than specific projects.

Symbolism. As the most improved category assessed by blind judges, dream symbolism influenced writers’ project stories as well as their creative practice overall. PLJ’s symbolic dream encouraged her to challenge herself, ex-

periment, and take more creative risks (A13). Others directly integrated dream symbolism into their writing. PNJ dreamt of a man killing trees and leaving behind invisible energy spots, leading to a story where trees held ancient knowledge (A29). PS's lucid dream of flying with fairy lights and visiting a Greek temple, guided by Carl Jung, became a central symbolic sequence in her story (A30). PH's recurring rotating symbol in dream cabinets eventually expanded into a full novel, with 8,500 words written in one week.

Themes. Some participants recognised these repeating motifs by reflecting on their dreams over a longer period of time. These identified themes then shaped their stories. PLJ repeatedly dreamt of strange, unknown houses, leading her to write about lost houses and people seeking them through dreams (A31). PY noticed recurring themes of the sea and survival, inspiring a Titanic survivor story (A32). Similarly, PD found that water, boats, and islands kept appearing in her dreams, aligning with theme of the book she had been working on.

For some, dreams reflected the themes they unconsciously explored in writing. PF's recurring dreams of rescuing people mirrored her frequent focus on rescue narratives in fiction, providing fresh insight into her work. Similarly, PK wanted to understand why she was writing about a certain theme in her latest novel. The dreams revealed that it was a story of love and betrayal that just so happened to have a few crimes in it.

Perspective. Dreams also helped participants see their stories from new angles. PF struggled to write a story from a factual perspective based on real events because she couldn't understand the person's motivations. She set an intention for clarity, and a dream responded: PF saw the scene from above, as if viewing it through a window, while a bird flew by, symbolising her habit of observing rather than experiencing. This perspective shift allowed her to detach from assumptions and write the character as he truly was (A33). Similarly, PX's dreams provided a multi-layered narrative viewpoint that "felt a little like being both inside and outside a character in a short story like an omniscient narrator."

New concepts. Some dreams introduced entirely new concepts. PW dreamt of brainless beings called Golems, incorporating them into his story (A34). PK's dream world featured translucent golden tubes that characters floated through, adding a surreal, fantastical element to her story (A23).

Dreams therefore introduced participants to their characters, settings, and plot and provided rich imagery and auditory experiences, thematic elements, emotional and symbolic features, different perspectives, and new concepts that started their stories or moved them forward. Some participants received ideas directly from their dreams, while others experienced an indirect influence, often combining multiple dream elements to form a narrative. And in some cases, dream figures responded to participants' requests, directly guiding them toward a solution.

Mentors

To aid with their creative requests, nine participants (33%) encountered a mentor figure inside a dream. PV's mentor, an unlikely old woman in black, gave her the key to her story:

Set an intention to meet a mentor and get some help with the story. Became lucid when this old woman in black approached me in my sleep. She said one word to me:

Charmolypi. I asked her: what is this word? What am I meant to do with it? And she said: "use it for your story," and then I woke up. When I woke up, I realised I was struggling with a title of my story and the name of my protagonist and so this was extremely helpful to me. I also used it for emotion/symbolism in the story. (PV)

The word *Charmolypi* means *nostalgia* in Greek, which added a deeper layer to PV's story. Her protagonist was no longer a random cook that travels the world, but a person who returns to her hometown to seek a recipe from her childhood and reconnects with family along the way.

Asking to meet J.R.R. Tolkien, PH instead encountered comedian Spike Milligan, linked to the comedic tone of her story about a nuclear Armageddon. PN requested C.S. Lewis and met him, though she only managed to tell him she liked his books. PL met Hitchcock on a train, who handed him a story idea. PC's lucid dream involved Christopher Walken, who helped her relive a dream and realise she was dreaming (A35).

3.2.3 How writers engage with dreams

Intention-setting

Participants primarily used intention-setting to develop their stories or solve narrative problems. While some practiced this consistently, others only tried it occasionally. Fifteen participants (56%) reported direct dream responses to their intentions, and twelve (44%) reported indirect insights from later dream reflection. Six (22%) received no apparent response.

Some visualised or reviewed story material before sleep. PV imagined passing through an archway each night and eventually dreamt a story title and emotional structure. PR saw her intentions reflected in dreams involving Star Trek scenarios, meeting mentors, and connecting with characters from several of her stories (A14). PU, working on a memoir, received dream material about ships and naval life that directly and indirectly progressed his writing (A15). Stuck on a plot problem, PN asked for a solution:

Yesterday wrote to a certain point in my story, then got stuck as to how to resolve the action, to reach the ending I wanted. So before sleeping, I asked for a solution. Woke at 5.45am, went to loo, and had no memory of dreams. So went back to bed and asked again. Aware of dreaming a whole scene. Woke 6.30 and wrote the scene down and completed the first draft of the story. (PN)

PG's story further illustrates the impact of intention-setting on narrative development. After conceiving a story idea about an affair on February 8, he woke up two days later with the idea of having three narrators, though he struggled to determine the story's mood and ending. On March 10, after a group session, he decided to let the reader choose between three dream-based endings. Three days later, he woke up with a breakthrough: "It was revolutionary and made things clearer." He realised that the story needed a mood, and that it was about betrayal with the message "deception doesn't pay," after waking up from a dream he later could not recall.

PH used an intention to resolve a plot hole. She dreamt of a girl hiding a recorder in a cabinet, an idea she adapted to her story (A16). Similarly, PN asked for a new ending to her story as she wasn't happy with how it had ended, and

dreamt of a poster, which inspired her to rewrite the final section with greater subtlety:

Using the image as the point where I changed my story from the original, I rewrote the latter part, feeling much happier with the final story. It doesn't feel as obvious as the first version did. It leaves more for the reader to puzzle out. (PN; A17)

Similarly, PQ, unhappy with her entire story, set an intention before sleep and dreamt of someone transforming into a moth. The next day, she rewrote her story, incorporating this symbolic element and creating a layered, meaningful narrative (A18).

Liminal creativity

For some, story development occurred in the liminal state between waking and dreaming. PS refined a story idea originating in a lucid dream by following it in a half-awake state. PP, who struggled with plotting, used this state to build rapport with characters and shape narratives (A19). This practice evolved into the "morning writing" technique, introduced to all participants early in the study.

Morning Writing & WBTB. Writing in a half-asleep 'liminal' state before one fully awakens was termed morning writing. PF unlocked the focus for a new book in this state, drafting it in one sitting. Others used morning writing to expand on insights from lucid and liminal dreams (A20, A21). Some participants discovered this process spontaneously, while others followed study instructions (A22).

Some refined this technique during Wake-Back-to-Bed (WBTB) periods. While awake, participants were encouraged to write before returning to sleep. PX found drifting in and out of sleep during WBTB particularly fruitful for creativity. PD had a similar experience, describing a clearer focus at this time before the distractions of the day. PK and PQ wrote regularly in the early morning hours, with PQ using her WBTB period for flash fiction, character development, and edits. She found the WBTB state heightened clarity and creativity, allowing her to produce some of her strongest writing.

Writing dreams into stories

For most participants, writing from dreams was a nonlinear process, requiring back-and-forth engagement not just while drafting, but also during dream analysis, intention setting, and active engagement with dreams during the writing process.

Working with dreams. Some participants took dreams literally into their narratives, while others reworked them. PA jotted down dream ideas each morning, underlining anything that resonated. This material was then amplified creatively rather than directly translated. As PM described: "I think it's a bit like sculpture, where the sculptor has already seen the form in the wood or rock, but there is still a lot of work to make it look good!"

Some participants learned to see creative value in dreams that didn't seem directly related to their stories. PW, for example, shifted from dismissing his dreams to recognising them as a source of useful ideas, refining them into story elements over time: "If I read them correctly, I can see that I'm being fed useful ideas."

Expanding the dream. A few participants intentionally revisited dreams to develop their stories. PN's dragon-like

creature became the ending of a children's adventure story. She imagined the creature again as she fell asleep and later recorded the story's beginning after a lucid dream (A20). PJ turned a vivid lucid dream into a short story by returning to it in the liminal state: "I'd be writing the story and dipping into the liminal space while writing. I'd go back to that wretched car park, feel the rain..."

Others re-entered dreams through techniques like portals. PP re-ran and refined scenes in a dream-inspired setting of a caravan, layering in narrative details each time she interacted with her protagonist (A37): "When I opened my eyes, I was back at the starting point of the dream."

For others, the process was more spontaneous. PH's recurring dream about a ruined road evolved each time she dreamt it, allowing her to progressively extend the narrative.

Combining dreams. Rather than deepening a single dream, some participants combined different dreams to build their stories. PL first dreamt of a bizarre tortoise scene, then later of a man hiding a tortoise under his coat, eventually merging both ideas into a humorous crime story (A9).

Cleaning up. Choosing which dream elements to use and how to shape them was a creative challenge for many. Structural improvements were observed in some writing. PL's project story scored much higher than his earlier work, assessed as having "more control of the writing, quirky humour and a satisfying short form." However, some struggled with structure. PP's story was described as "rambling – with the randomness of a dream," and PNJ's was said to need clearer signposts.

Writers addressed this challenge differently. PZ selected two dream characters as protagonists but altered their roles to fit the story. After continued intention-setting, a dream offered clarity through symbols like music and a recipe. She used these elements but edited out less relevant details (A38). PM's camping dream lacked plot cohesion and consisted of contradictory and unrelated events, so he had to create a narrative around them.

Maintaining a balance between dreamlike qualities and structured storytelling was a challenge for some. PNJ struggled to keep surreal dream elements while ensuring coherence, highlighting the delicate process of preserving a surreal tone while ensuring narrative clarity.

3.2.4 Changes in the creative process

Beyond the stories produced, the 8-week intervention produced a creative shift in participants, with eighteen (67%) reporting a significant creative improvement or overcoming a creative block and fourteen (52%) reporting a different approach to their writing. Many described feeling more connected to their work, as if ideas were coming from within rather than from external prompts.

Unblocked creativity

For eighteen participants (67%), engaging with dreams reignited inspiration and cleared creative blocks. PB described it as her "creative mind giving me permission to write." PH felt she was "tapping into [her] subconscious and it's all pouring out creatively," while PA reported that her writing came easier with setting intentions, and that she was "given a more proactive relationship with subconscious" in this process.

The intervention "fired up areas of writing that haven't been active for a while" for PQ. PI started dreaming about

looking for new ideas and researching book ideas (A36) even when not priming her dreaming mind. PB's creative block lifted after a dream where a character affirmed her as a writer, giving her the push she needed to start a novel. Likewise, PG, previously stuck, found himself writing again, describing his early morning creative state as highly productive.

It seems as though increasing awareness of dreams is increasing creativity; when that bleeds over into real life, the creative connection part that works so well in dreams is making connections in real life. That's where my best work comes from. This course has created more spark and light in that part of the awareness. (PR)

For some, reconnecting with their dreams meant rediscovering their creative voice. PS, who had been focused on factual writing, found that the intervention helped her re-engage with creativity. Similarly, PF, after years of ghost-writing, reconnected with her own writing style, even welcoming dreams she once avoided. "Waking up in a creative mind" after a long time, PF also said that she now embraces a more lyrical and metaphorical writing style.

Different approach to writing

Fourteen participants (52%) reported a new way of thinking about storytelling. PP said dreams helped her tap into a "different creative unconscious layer." PN noticed deeper characterisation and emotional nuance. PJ, inspired by dreams, wrote in first-person for the first time.

Dreams also encouraged narrative experimentation. PQ and PX broke from logical constraints, exploring looser structures and symbolic connections. Similarly, PNJ felt a newfound ease in writing, describing it as "sparky and lively" rather than forced.

4. Discussion

This study examined how lucid dreaming (LD) could be applied to the creative process of fiction writing, using an eight-week group-based programme with professional, published, and student writers. Findings from both quantitative and qualitative strands indicate that dreams (lucid, non-lucid, and liminal) can contribute to creative work and process in multiple ways, particularly by providing starting points, helping to solve narrative problems, and altering creative processes. While quantitative changes in story scores were non-significant, they were uniformly positive, with the largest improvements in symbolism and emotion. These trends were reflected in qualitative accounts, where participants often described dream content as unusual, personally significant, and emotional.

4.1. From Dream to Story

Analysis of qualitative data indicated four main pathways through which dreams fed into creative work. First, changes in dreams were noted, including increased control, insights relevant to waking life, and shifts in dream quality such as greater vividness, unusual content, and richer detail, all of which sometimes enhanced the availability and recall of creative dream material. Second, what dreams provide creatively represented a content-driven pathway, in which participants drew on dreams as starting points, solved narrative problems through dreams, and incorporated dream

elements such as imagery, symbolism, or emotion into their writing. Some also described encounters with dream "mentors" who offered guidance or inspiration. Third, how writers engage with dreams captured process-driven strategies such as setting intentions before sleep, developing ideas in liminal states, and consciously weaving dreams into story drafts, approaches that supported a more open, experimental stance toward writing. Finally, changes in the creative process involved unblocking projects and adopting new approaches to writing, sometimes with greater flexibility, curiosity, and willingness to explore new avenues. Together, these pathways suggest that dreams shaped both the content of what was written and the process through which writing developed.

These patterns suggest that LD and other dream states may support both divergent thinking (generating novel and varied ideas) and convergent thinking (selecting, organising, and refining those ideas into narratives), aligning with prominent theories of creativity that define a creative idea as something both original and useful.

4.2. Lucid Dreaming and Creatives

Among the 25 participants with little or no prior LD experience, 80% reported at least one lucid dream during the study. This is higher than the 45% success rate reported in Saunders et al.'s (2017) 12-week study with non-frequent lucid dreamers, suggesting that creative writers may be especially receptive to LD training. Possible explanations include higher openness to experience and enhanced cognitive flexibility – traits associated with both creativity and lucid dream recall (Blagrove & Hartnell, 2000; Stumbrys & Daniels, 2010). While the lack of a non-creative comparison group prevents firm conclusions, this finding aligns with previous research linking creativity and LD frequency.

Beyond LD frequency, participants described exploring new avenues in their writing, producing stories they would not otherwise have written, and solving plot problems through unexpected dream-inspired solutions. These reports are consistent with Hartmann's (1996) view of dreams as a "contextualising" process that weaves new material into existing memory networks, often through metaphor, and other similar emotional memory consolidation theories (Malinowski & Horton, 2015). These also align with processes described in the NEXTUP model (Zadra & Stickgold, 2021), in which dreams facilitate novel combinations of distinct memories, supporting associative and flexible thinking. The improvement in symbolism and emotion scores may also stem from the inherently metaphorical and emotionally charged qualities of dreams (Blagrove & Lockheart, 2023).

4.3. Limitations and Future Research

The small quantitative gains are unsurprising given the study's duration, absence of a control group, and reliance on a single pre-post story comparison. As noted in the results, some participants only began experiencing LDs toward the end of the programme, limiting opportunities to apply them. Variability in LD frequency and dream recall also contributed to uneven exposure to the intervention.

Motivation emerged as a critical factor. LD induction often requires sustained effort before success is achieved, and maintaining engagement can be difficult without early results. Peer support via group sessions was helpful in sustaining practice; future studies might test the value of struc-

tured digital prompts (e.g., smartphone or wearable-based cues) to reinforce techniques and capture dream material promptly.

Another challenge is transforming vivid but idiosyncratic dream experiences into narratives that resonate with readers. Without targeted editing and reflection, raw dream material risks producing writing that is personally meaningful but inaccessible to others. Extending the programme to allow time for longer drafting and revision could address this.

Furthermore, this was an exploratory study with a self-selected sample of motivated creative writers, limiting generalisability. The absence of a control group prevents firm causal claims, and differences in baseline ability likely introduced noise into the quantitative measures. Qualitative interpretations are subject to recall and self-report biases, and the supportive group environment may itself have influenced creative outcomes.

The weekly group sessions offered a space for participants to discuss dreams, talk through story problems, and exchange feedback, and several participants reported that this collaborative atmosphere was motivating and creatively stimulating. Because the study did not include a control condition without peer interaction, it is not possible to determine the extent to which creative developments were attributable specifically to dream use versus the general benefits of collaborative support.

Future research should use randomised controlled designs to isolate the effects of LD training from other influences, test the approach with more diverse populations, and include multiple creative outputs per participant for more robust scoring. Given participants' spontaneous use of liminal states, these could also be explicitly incorporated into training alongside LD.

4.4. Applications in creative writing practice

Beyond research, these findings suggest a number of practical applications for writing education and creative development. Writing programmes and workshops could incorporate structured dream-based exercises such as intention setting before sleep, guided morning recall, and reflective prompts that help writers translate different dream elements (such as imagery, characters, and scenarios) into story ideas. Embedding these practices into existing writing curricula may offer an accessible way to expand writers' creative resources and prompt experimentation. A future publication will outline a structured approach that writing programmes could adopt, drawing on the present study and a subsequent study conducted with poets.

4.5. Conclusion

The study demonstrates that LD training, when paired with creative tasks, can be successfully adopted by writers and used in ways that support both idea generation and creative problem solving. While quantitative improvements were small, the qualitative findings suggest meaningful subjective benefits and highlight several promising mechanisms, particularly the use of dreams for symbolism, emotional depth, and narrative experimentation. Replication with larger, more controlled designs will help establish the reliability and scope of these effects. As such, this study provides an initial framework for integrating LD into creative writing practice, laying the groundwork for future controlled trials to test its efficacy and refine its application.

The next phase of this research, to be reported separately, will extend this approach to poetry writing through a combined workshop and sleep laboratory study incorporating both lucid and liminal dreaming.

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Appendix

A1

Liminal

PLJ, PG, PS, PJ, PM, PB, PP, PN, PF, PI, PU, PQ, PX

PU: "During dream, could not decide if this was imagination and I was awake, or was it a dream. It was an unclear boundary across which I had waking and dreaming awareness – so it seemed. Then fully awake. Possible lucid dream mixed with frustration that the Saxons were about to die."

"I hear Morse from German and Dutch coast stations (of 1959). DAN and PCH call signs (Norddeich and Sheveningen Radios) They announce traffic messages etc.

0800 wake: Cannot decide if the above was a dream – it was in my mind as I slowly woke."

PQ: 4/3: "I'm not sure whether this was a dream or not. It occurred during that time when I was waking, but was not yet fully awake. I know I had been thinking about my dream-inspired story throughout the night."

PZ: "I'm never sure if the dream is lucid or I am awake. Perhaps I need to have an intention on going to sleep of doing a reality check during the dream - if it is a dream!"

PX: "I got my story idea during WBTB when going back to bed and drifting off. This gets me in creative space."

PJ: "I would often go back to the dream that inspired my story. I'd be writing the story and dipping into the liminal space while writing. I would go back to that wretched car-park, feel the rain..."

PM: "I got extra characters and answers to some of the problems I was having with my story while half asleep."

A2

Control

PS, PU, PJ, PLJ, PV, PQ, PN, PX, PA, PU, PY, PK, PC, PAB

PS: Week 3: "lucid dreams on all nights, some control over the dream, able to go back into one dream after WBTB."

PU: 13/2: "2 dreams, Might be some lucidity - not sure. ...All the while - I seem to make decisions about what to do next."

PJ: "I haven't approached the beautiful lucidity of fifty years ago, but I have definitely moved things about - changed colours, straightened the road etc - by an effort of dreaming will."

26/1: Lucid: "A pheasant made from soup cans on lawn through stately windows. Later I changed the colour of a big stucko house from cream to green. Dream was full of colours.

27/1: Lucid: "Green.back to bed after breakfast at 8:15 I started to walk my labyrinth, misty, overgrown with a five foot plinth as it were for a "Garden Herm", the head and phallus both broken off. I heard an unknown male voice say

"what about my home life?" and saw to my right as it were a film-set, a smallish modern 'living room' lacking a ceiling or front wall. Electric lights, bright modern undistinguished soft furnishings I pushed it away and continued my path from the spiral t'ords the snake garden. Intrusively the back road of a small housing estate with rubbish bins was there to my right. I pushed it away... I am now driving my Maserati down Sidmouth esplanade to the west, and at my side a tall dark-haired young woman - Laura Roklicer herself? is directing me. I want to drive at 170mph so I straighten and flatten the road...I accelerate, and out of the speed the voice says "you could donate half a million".

8/2: Lucid: "looked at my hand and ring, counted myself down to Alpha level, In a room the shape of a bowling alley, but the drang was full of wrapped sandwiches and poduce. A black woman in a supermarket type uniform was standing sorting stuff § i thought, I'm in a dream of sorts but not really dreaming... I tried to change her into Angeline (Dr. Angeline Morrison, black friend and academic) I failed, my alarm went off; hit the snooze button, looked at my hands again; then I was definitely somewhere else, foggy, seemingly standing on grass. Nothing great, but I WAS aware that I was controlling what happened albeit slightly."

11/2: "suis.important to remember this in dreams of chaos. Last night I slept from 11:45 till five am, was aware that I was dreaming but have no recall save chaos, a strong sense of South Africa and, the need to publish a "song of resistance". I saw colours, which In the dream I thought to be the Namibian flag. Just now checked and, it was. There were people there pressing me on this publication. Moving to the small room, I experimented with mind-control but, too weary to be good at it. visualising gemstones in spectrum colours from white thru' the rainbow to ultra violet put me in dream state, conscious walking on a nudist beach in flipflops and a sweatshirt; amorphous female companion by my side whom I turned into our friend Catleigh; considered propriety and, turned her into my wife who didn't (wouldn't) enjoy public nudity. I took off my sandals, decided consciously to paddle, found the water tepid, felt the grit between my toes. Made my way - now alone - towards the usual dream hotel - ramshackle, chaotic, many stairs - but was pulled back by the alarm. I snoozed it and stayed half in, half out, of sleep. finally as the alarm cut in again I heard a clear young female voice sing "it is over" so I woke properly and sat up."

PLJ: "I am outside an old building with big stone bay windows. It is dark, night time & I am helping to pack a van. My ex is sitting inside doing nothing. Other people are doing the work, packing her flat for her. I am part of a team. When I see her sitting in a blanket I am angry and tell the others in the team that she is manipulative and lazy and I am not going to do anything for her ever again. So I walk away from it all. (Maybe this is lucid – I am not sure? There is a sense that I do have control over my actions at this point.)"

PV: 12th night: "Woke up at 6am and couldn't remember anything again. Stayed in bed and tried to fall back asleep (WBTB). After 20-30mins I was asleep again and aware that I was in a dream. In the next 40mins of being asleep I had a dream that felt very long but at the same time felt like it was on fast forward.

My dream was based in a world that was a combination of 'Matilda' and 'The Wizard of Oz'. During my lucidity I was able to mix up the characters and give them a different personality. For example, I was being carried by one of the

Wicked Witches' monkeys but I remember thinking it wasn't comfortable so I transformed it into a dragon that took me to the emerald palace. In there were a lot of characters but I specifically remember making Miss Trunchbull into a kind maid that worked for Glinda the good witch."

PQ: 8/2: "I feel it was lucid because I was actively making decisions about what I was going to do in the dream. Towards the end I can remember thinking that it wasn't going how I wanted it to happen and decided that I knew I could finish it. It was a very vivid dream."

13/2: Lucid dream: "Again, I felt I was lucid because I was deciding what I was going to do and what was going to happen. However, as the dream progressed it became not exactly frightening, but 'uncomfortable' (that's the best way I can describe it.) The discomfort stemmed from the two guys, or one of them actually, who were on the bed. I knew that I was anxious to get out of the dream, and again, I'm sure that I decided to wake up."

6/3: "I'm inventing ever more interesting ways of ensuring reality around the woods and tracks! This dream was very strongly linked to reality in a number of ways and is one of the first ones that I have recalled after the WBTB period. The WBTB period was quite short as it was very cold last night! I stayed in bed and read a little. I felt very much in control of this dream."

PN: "I stopped the dream and it felt like I'd stopped a wild magic. Went into another dream..." ... "Went back to dreaming by returning to previous dreams. Aware of wanting to remember and record dream."

PX: "Little squares of ice began to form on the ground underneath me. They shone brightly and I found that if I concentrated and put my hand towards the ground I could increase their number and it made me feel intrigued and as though I had some level of influence. Not sure this is full lucid, but it felt interesting."

4/2: "... Aware of incongruity. - Not fully lucid but felt I had agency - could stay or leave & respond."

8/2: "Semi-lucid? ... Felt like being a novelist in control of plot but unable as yet to reassure character."

PA: "A lucid dream that featured a man in fur made me realise I've always been a wolf in sheep's clothing. An epiphany. Felt different ever since, I took control of it. In the dream, I said oh I won't let that go, that image."

PU: 13/3: "At Yorkshire TV studios again - but now I am not an incompetent dream victim as formerly - but am fully in charge as studio supervisor/engineer. ... I'm in control - making decisions."

PY: "The only two moments of lucidity in my dreams provided the story and revolutionised my life. I can survive traumas. I feel more in control, feeling I can change the outcome now. I've discovered I have a voice."

PK: "I was able to change settings and rewind and replay dreams and get a different outcome."

PC: 21/2: "In the first dream, I had started flying and that made me realise I was dreaming and I was able to take control of my movements then. I started to wake up a bit, I think, because the dream started to fade a little, but then I fell back into the dream but lost the lucidity."

PAB: 4/2: "A vivid dream, normally one that would become a nightmare but I was able to guide the dream so I remained in control."

7/2: "awoke after 3 incidents where I took control of the dream."

11/2: "achieved very poignant dreams that did not leave me throughout the day. I remained in control of the dream. Only remembered one dream."

13/2: "During this dream I was able to control a potentially difficult situation with distraction. I also chose a game from home to bring in and play with a friend."

Nightmares and anxiety dreams

PH, PU, PW, PAB, PN, PX, PY, PI

PB: "less of a dream than a nightmare I managed to side-step by waking up! I am camping (a random shack though it's supposed to be our campervan!) on a cliff. The campervan seat is full of a bag which I think is the awning but when I go to get the bag it's a seal and I struggle to get it out."

PI: "Anxiety in my dreams has been replaced by creativity."

Insight

PH, PA, PU, PO, PF, PR, PY

PO: "Doing dream logs every morning, I try to write in a discipline way things I'm grateful for and a sketch of importance and a little insight. With the dream thing this has helped propelled that. Being a bit more self aware, really trying to listen and be aware and reflect on some insights."

A3

PAB - excerpts from dream diary:

"This experience is allowing me to sleep much better. As someone with a history of night terrors + chronic PTSD - this is massive!!! Thank you. During this dream I was able to control a potentially difficult situation with distraction. I also chose a game from home to bring in and play with a friend. [...] this process is helping tremendously. I am actually excited to go to sleep now!!!"

"7/2 - awoke after 3 incidents where I took control of the dream."

8/2 - lucid moment in my dream, I took control, saying no and awoke feeling very warm.

10/2 - I was able to stop a dream that I had after WBTB from going in an unpleasant uncontrolled direction. - lucid

11/2 - achieved very poignant dreams that did not leave me throughout the day. I remained in control of the dream."

She reports on another lucid dream: "Fascinating dreams! I was able to flip the dream completely when I didn't feel safe with how it was going. I literally went "Oh no, no, no..." and opened a filing cabinet, I flicked through (they weren't labelled) and went into another dream. It happened again (made me nervous as it was becoming a night terror) so I accessed the cabinet twice."

A5

PH - excerpt from dream diary:

"A wonderful lucid dream. I dreamt I found the answer to a puzzle I have been looking for all my life. I saw it clearly,

a round pink shape surrounded by blue segments – I have seen this shape before in dreams, though in different colours. This time, it was associated with a sense of elation. I was aware I was dreaming, but also felt that this was real. Important somehow. I woke up joyful.

Been running a business for 21 years, closing it tomorrow. Was thinking about doing art, so maybe that symbol meant you don't need to worry and do more art."

"The symbol I dreamed lucidly about a week ago keeps appearing in my dreams in different forms, now it is swirling around instead of static. I open doors and lids and it is there. I don't know what it is, but each time I see it, it becomes more complicated and beautiful. The shape started spinning, the brick walls are gone, fear of going to sleep for years is gone, quite happy to go to sleep now."

"For the third time, I dreamed of someone who is long dead, a former crush I don't consciously think about in waking life. I have started putting my dreams into an excel file so I can sort them according to who I see, where I am, and significant elements. It surprised me that this person is still in my subconscious."

A6

Vivid

PH, PI, PA, PV, PY, PQ, PL, PN, PC, PX, PD

PH: "Really vivid dreams. One of them was so vivid and interesting that I used it as the basis for a writing assignment set by my writers' group."

PI: "because I've been rather preoccupied, I haven't been doing many reality checks and on some days have forgotten. However, I am remembering my dreams very vividly."

PA: "I have been disciplined about writing up dreams as soon as I wake and have noticed that dreams are more frequent and vivid on the whole. I also tell myself to dream and try and continue dreams I have had when going to sleep as directed."

PV: "My dreams have been extremely vivid and bizarre lately which I love. I've been finding them entertained and not mundane and dull like previous weeks."

PY: "Although my dreams are not very lucid, if at all - certainly my recall and remembering them is much more vivid. Also, through remembering them and writing them down, I seem to have unlocked elements, thoughts, avenues to pursue in my writing of the story. I am really pleased about that."

PQ: "I am getting locations from dreams which are very vivid. I used these locations from dreams in my story as they were very vivid; location with the elephant was like a back story but moth was main location."

PL: "Since the start of the study, dreams have become much more vivid."

E.g. 20/02: I was in a barn waiting for a music TV show to begin filming. It was being televised and I was there because my dad was one of the film crew (in reality he actually was), and I briefly met Marc Bolan. He was sitting on a hay

bail strumming his guitar. The crew were taking a long time to set up, so I walked home with the intention of returning later. Just before I arrived home, I met David Bowie who was sitting on the ground in his front yard. (This place I recognised in reality. It was the home of someone I was at school with, and a family neighbour). He looked a little downtrodden and miserable, and was upset that he wasn't invited to appear in the programme, but he expressed great admiration for Marc Bolan and bore no grudge. He was scruffily dressed with spiky hair, a grubby face, and running makeup. He looked like he had just walked out of one of his 'glam phase' concerts, and spent the next few weeks living rough. I felt sorry for him but, unexpectedly, a 'runner' arrived and told him he was needed to perform for the show. I was so happy for him.

"This dream was particularly vivid and, if it had been lucid, I would have had a field day! I feel encouraged by."

PN: "This week I've had a few lucid dreams, recalled them in details, vivid and colourful."

E.g. 22/2: "A vivid dream with a family with whom I discussed what we were seeing very clearly. It was like we were exploring the scene without getting involved with any characters because we were separated by being in a car."

10/03: "Long and complicated dream, very vivid, detailed, colourful full of different sections, both in the layout of the place I dreamt about and with the different parts of the dream."

PC: "most dreams mundane but also quite dystopian dreams. Story working on nuclear winter, wrote some of it today. Very vivid dream, feel the aesthetic very clearly."

PX: "I have had vivid dreams, and on two occasions was aware of my own presence in the dream, and also of others' emotions. In one case, I somehow knew facts that one of the characters in my dream did not, but I also knew that I couldn't tell her at that time, even though it would have relieved her distress. This felt a little like being both inside and outside a character in a short story like an omniscient narrator."

PD: "Feel like I was close to a lucid dream and missed opportunities. Had very vivid dreams."

Unusual

PI, PU, PB, PLJ, PV, PL, PX

PI: I had LOADS of vivid dreams, at least 3 that I remember and wrote down. No lucidity but several interesting characters and scenarios. Some of them were quite trippy and unusual:

"The dream was so bizarre – fairy holding a joint and leopard sharks, the key elements from that dream."

PU: "Revisiting my last place of work, YTV studios in Leeds, (I left there 32 years ago) is a common anxiety dream I have. ... I saw people from the past, but they were insubstantial and I knew the situation for illusion. I was free of anxiety as I knew I was not part of what I experienced and I had no pressing duties. Before the dream faded with waking, and while in it, I mentally chanted the main details of the visit so that I could recall. It was this decision to store the experi-

ence, during the experience, that suggest to me the dream was lucid. I woke with the impression that the dream was lucid and unusual. I can still 'see' much of it now."

PB: "WBTB with an intention to find a location. Interestingly the dream that I can remember then was more monochrome than colour, unusual for me."

PLJ: "Having more bizarre dreams. One was with writer friends, in which I was told a secret by one of them, quoting, I was thinking what is the secret, what have I been told?"

PV: "My dreams have been extremely vivid and bizarre lately which I love. I've been finding them entertained and not mundane and dull like previous weeks."

"From the beginning just writing dreams down gave me inspiration. Stuff my normal functioning brain would never think of, bizarre dreams."

PL: "I've been having vivid dreams, very bizarre. One has given me a strong idea for a story."

PX: "A lot of bizarre shifts of scene/ disruptions of reality in dreams. I felt partly aware but had no desire to control them. Didn't think to do reality check but aware of and enjoying oddness and sudden shifts like both watching and being in a film."

Detailed

PF, PY, PK, PP, PR, PQ, PT, PV

PF: "Getting more complex and detailed, intense dreams after doing that creative intention."

E.g. 10/02: "Noted 4 dreams of increasing detail."

28/3: "Quite a long, detailed dream. A sense of escaping throughout."

PY: "I write dreams in much more detail now."

PK: 26/02: "One long dream just before waking. I could recall this in detail and even now can see the scenery around. I was lucid in this dream."

27/02: "A really long dream that I recalled in detail. It was a narrative that flowed from one idea to the other making sense."

17/03: "Detailed dream. I had asked the intention to find out who was behind my characters in the tunnels and who did my protagonists meet. I had four meetings, two in woodland camps strung with fairy lights all four with old friends from childhood. Long recall this time too."

19/03: "Two interconnected dreams. This time able to re-dream the sequences to find out more details."

PP: "I get more detail from the dream every time I go back in."

PR: "During this course, I experienced an increase in detail and increase in going from a flat storyline going to more vivid, detailed, 3D in depth dreams."

PQ: "It took me over half an hour to write my dream which is probably why I didn't wake up to do my usual WBTB ses-

sion. I was feeling quite exhausted, as if I'd really been doing this stuff !!"

PT: "In the first 4 weeks, I've had no lucid dreams, but increased dream recall and remembering more details from dreams."

PNJ: "The dreams I remember are getting longer and more involved."

Interesting

PNJ, PI, PT, PA, PV, PW, PX

PNJ: Reported mundane dreams in the first part of the study. Then:

"They are getting more interesting. I dreamt I was going round my house making notes of things to do to make it safe for my parents to live here. There were armchair arms growing out the floor and Barney said, 'well that has to go.' lol"

PI: "At the beginning of projects dreams were very boring, all about me and clients and friends, very dull. In the last 4 weeks got much more exciting."

PT: "Dreams seemed quite mundane. I'm now getting stronger colours in my dreams. I find this process quite interesting."

PW: "I am dreaming as an observer in the more interesting story-like dreams."

PX: "Dreams getting more interesting and creative. One dream, which I had on the first night, felt particularly interesting, as I was conscious that the landscape was strangely surreal and changing around me. I was in a seaside resort with some art deco buildings including a cinema and was walking with someone. I haven't met for some time when I became conscious of a very lively fairground to my left with dodgem cars. However, when I looked again, it had disappeared and become a very dingy playground. I laughed, noted and accepted the change, even though I was aware that it was odd.

In the same dream, I was on the ground with my small dog, a Chihuahua who brought me a cup of coffee with a spider inside the rim of the cup. I flicked out the spider and again accepted the situation while being aware it was surreal. The next part though was slightly different. Little squares of ice began to form on the ground underneath me. They shone brightly and I found that if I concentrated and put my hand towards the ground I could increase their number and it made me feel intrigued and as though I had some level of influence."

A7

PI: "A man was on a boat looking down into the water watching his children swim underwater and seeing dolphins that turn into leopard sharks. He then has a huge panic about his inability as a father to look after them and then when he takes a second look to look at them again, the sharks have turned back into dolphins and everything is OK. Another character that was also on the boat was a tiny fairy, instead of a magic wand, she held in her hand a massive joint. Per-

haps she was the cause of the man's temporary shark hallucination. Anyway... that is good inspiration for a story! (this is the one that I wrote about Dougie and the Dolphins)."

Extracts from story: "Down here Dougie" came the voice again. A woman's voice, sounding small and urgent. Face bent down he glanced from side to side but there was no one to be seen. At the corner of his eye a streak of white caught his attention, coming from underneath the arm rest at his righthand side. Intrigued, he peered underneath the armrest and blinked repeatedly as if willing the vision to disappear.

At the end of his nose, standing on the bench next to him, underneath the armrest was a tiny fairy like woman waving a white flag.

[...]

He stared at the dark shapes beneath the water. The shape of the dolphins was shifting, under the reflection of the water, their pointy noses appeared blunter and their fins seemed to change shape.

"Must be the fractal of the water" he figured. "They look different than I would have expected."

He couldn't take his gaze away, though a niggles at the back of his mind was wondering which side of the boat the kids were on. Were the dolphins swimming away from the kids or towards them?

He looked closer, screwing up his face to get a better look. The appearance of their skin that he had expected to see as smooth and shiny appeared mottled, leopard like.

Their shape, not slender and pointed, but muscular and sturdy undulating through the water. "More like a predator than a playful sea mammal." He thought.

His mind sped up, thoughts began racing, he tried to focus and make sense of what his eyes were seeing.

"Those are not dolphins" he managed to think.

"Those are not dolphins.

Those are leopard sharks.

Leopard sharks.

Leopard sharks.

Where are the kids?"

A8

PH – excerpts from dream diary:

Sat 25 Feb: There is a café in an alleyway behind the seafront where the bereaved go. It's a horrible place, really dirty. Orange and white parasols, red plastic chairs, metal tables. It smells and is filthy. On the floor are all kinds of dirt and squashed dead creatures that you have to walk through, and yet people go there and it comforts them. It gets so crowded that the owner leads people inside to sit in other places, little salons and nooks and crannies. She takes the rest of us to the seafront side of the building. There is a veranda café on the promenade. It's clean, but dark and somehow fusty as if nobody has been there since Edwardian days. It ought to be a good place to sit and look at the harbour wall and people watch, but we don't like it, and tell the woman it's lovely but we want to go back to the other café. She listens patiently and then says that we are only sitting here temporarily until there is room in the other café. We decide to go for a walk instead of waiting in the clean dark café, because although the other one is dirty, it is full of life, while this one is dead.

Tues 28 Feb: I met my mother at a family party, she looked beautiful, really stylish short hair, make up, and aged about 40. One of the older relatives started flirting with her. He wasn't interested in talking to me, and I realised, either I was still a child again or I was 60, and he was after my mother because she was a really attractive 40 year old. It became clear in the conversation that she was dead. Someone commented on it being an advantage as she looked so good and she said 'I haven't aged.' She was wearing a stylish knee length coat and looked a million dollars.

Story:

At first, there are just two of us. We see the tables set out with their bright red umbrellas, in a cobbled alley, and sit down. There is a luminescence here, a concentration of sunlight that warms our faces as we enjoy coffee and lemon cake. Maybe it's the way we tip back our heads to soak up the warmth that attracts the others, although they seem to come from nowhere, trickling in from branching alleys, as if drawn here by something else.

We make little conversation, but we know each other. We don't need to explain. The ones we miss, the wives and fathers, mothers and friends, we feel them here, see them as cobwebs and gossamer waving in the breeze, in colours we don't understand, just out of reach. They collect here, as we do.

Don't imagine that we haven't seen the dirt: the stickiness of tables, the filth between the cobbles, unnameable mess with the consistency of gum that adheres to the shoes everyone who comes. We see it and we don't care. We come back again, and again.

Eventually, the tables are full and a band of latecomers is shown inside. The flustered owner invites us to sit in dim corners, which we refuse. Shaking her head, she says 'it's temporary, you know', and takes us through to the other side, the shaded side, where she creaks open a door to a terrace.

Chairs and tables sit in silence, clean, old, unworn. Dusted daily, rubbed with beeswax. They face the sea. We should be pleased with this view, delighted by the cool shadows, the tasteful tapestries. But we turn away with a shiver. We tell her it's empty here, we can't stay. This place is dead.

A9

PL – excerpt from story:

Suddenly, confusion reigned. In response to my, quite reasonable request, Mr. Enigma went berserk. Leaping out of his position in the queue, he opened his coat and withdrew a wriggling three-foot crocodile. Then, in a loud, almost hysterical voice, he addressed everyone in just about every cliché imaginable.

'This is a hold-up! Don't make a sound! Everyone stay calm and no one gets hurt. This thing's loaded. Everyone put your hands in the air and stand against the wall! Anybody moves and the old lady gets it!'

A10

PC – excerpt from dream diary, dream that inspired the story:

8th March: "There is an old building in a rundown park full of mud and weeds. It looks a bit like public toilets from the outside, covered in pebbledash. Everything is grey and dismal. A brother and sister and some of their friends play around

the building, and the girl runs in to explore. Something is very wrong inside, with lots of strange smells and smoke. Something has gone wrong here and a pipe bursts open which will lead to an apocalypse. The children try and fail to escape the explosion. Outside, the buildings are tall with an air of neglect. I live on the top floor of one of these buildings, a cosy attic filled with light and beautiful views in the far distance. I have so many books here. People are running up and down the stairs, scooping up as many things as they can. A neighbour, who is actually my husband in real life, comes to tell me I need to leave to escape the apocalypse. I consider it, looking through all my things and deciding which ones I can fit in my rucksack. I am sad there are so many books I will never get to read. On the horizon, sun is starting to poke through, bright and orange, and I can see cows in the field. I don't want to leave. The neighbour is waiting impatiently by the door."

Excerpt from story:

The children, those little urchins with rags for clothes, flat caps and shoes with holes, spent a large part of their time, that is when they were not begging or filching coins from lightly guarded money bags, roaming the park like restless strays. It was not much of a park, certainly one of the lesser parks in the city; there was more mud than grass, the few trees were spindly, and not a duck had been seen in the pond for half a century. Yet, there were benches to sit on, a gaslight fuzzing soft and yellow throughout the night, and a pebbledashed building squatting low and grey behind some ferns. This building was invaluable when acid rain drove sideways or sleet slushed up the air.

A11

PX – excerpt from notes:

"February 25th: The setting for the first part was India and it involved a vision of grey-blue birds above lit by an unearthly light. I felt entranced and peaceful. I knew somehow they were spirit birds. Later, beside a small lake surrounded by poor Indian children, I lay down and was being troubled by a chubby badger-like dog, trying to get my attention which I ignored. It jumped into the lake and came up covered in gleaming gold coins, rather like the scales of a pangolin. I swept the coins off and threw them back but left a few for the children who had gathered round.

Upon waking: I immediately thought of a boy in a more primitive society with haemophilia. He could not be cured and his health was rapidly deteriorating. People from his family / tribe would make him a litter stuffed with feathers to keep him comfortable. He would die at the end of the story. I then went back to sleep briefly and dreamt of the actor and the weird illusion of lammergeiers with lacy wings. I floated up about 5 feet and returned slowly to earth – aware not normal but entranced. Again aware birds were illusions or spirit creatures.

[...]

After a workshop, I invited my central character, Wise Dove, to speak to me in the dream. She didn't, at least not directly, but I began to think of using the spirit birds to deepen the story.

I waited a few days before doing this and initially intended to use only the vultures but, in writing the second draft, I also found a place for the light blue/grey birds and, at the

very last minute for my badger/dog in the form of the golden coyote.

Excerpt from dream diary:

"I was with friends, Sue and Nick, in India where they had to complete some work related to science/engineering. Neither of them has worked in this field. Nick strung a lot of what looked like bats upside down on a washing line with possibly a bird in the middle. I'm not sure whether alive or dead. Possibly they were going to be cooked. I looked up to see grey/blue birds – pigeon-like flitting overhead in a very odd light. Effect of light gleaming and changing on plumage was breathtaking and I was mesmerized. My senses were all heightened and it felt like a visionary experience. I left the hotel where we were staying and went out walking. I came to a park where poor children were begging. I lay down on a patch of grass next to a pond and a tubby badger-like dog followed me. He (I'm sure it was a he) sat on me when I lay down. He kept moving to try and get my attention but I ignored him. Then he jumped into the pond and rolled around. He came out gleaming with gold coins, a bit like the scales on a pangolin. I panicked and felt somehow implicated in something wrong so quickly brushed off the coins and threw them back into the water but left a few for the children to pick up. The dog jumped back in and did the same again & I returned coins."

Excerpt from story:

"A bluster of black wings buffeted from within, raising her a little above the dry earth where she hovered, before three huge birds rose and wheeled in the darkening sky. Vultures, lords of death and devouring, their spirit wings improbably lacy, web-like. Wise Dove drank their dark energy, unwished for but not unexpected. Gradually the night reabsorbed them.

Behind closed eyes she called up the sick boy. Approaching fourteen years old, he should be coming into his summer with the energies of a young wolf but the swollen knees and elbows, the left hip he could barely move without screaming and the longing in his eyes as he watched the other children play became real to her. She felt the agony of his leaking blood, the soft-fruit tenderness of each new bruise, but for all her experience and commerce with spirits, she was unable to ease Brave Dragon's pain. The boy seemed to look into the next world, to commune with stars, not the sun.

[...]

The lifting this time was gentle, the air calm and blue. Above, light passed through wings as fine as damselflies', silvering the grey. As the plumage of the spirit birds dissolved into air, Wise Dove glimpsed a coyote whose fur gleamed gold. She held the raven feather between finger and thumb, signalled to Mild Deer to take up the doll. Thrown on the fire, it fizzed and sizzled giving off a little black smoke."

A12

PT, PNJ, PV, PI, PJ, PW, PP, PB

PW's dreams generated various elements he could incorporate into the story, that he wouldn't have thought of otherwise, such as the element of people acting like zombies but not actually being zombies. And PP was writing something that she would not have reached through purely conscious states of thought, including descriptions and intricacies of

descriptions like the flower and the floor from which it lifts up. PB also challenged herself by exploring fictional locations for the first time, prompting a different kind of story: 'I would never have written "In time neither now nor then" if it hadn't been for that dream.'

A13

PLJ: I walk down to the village. I see Tony in the dream, he lives in one of the large stone cottages on north road. He is pottering in the front garden. I stop and speak to him. He invites me in. There is another man there. They are reciting theatrical anecdotes. His wife Stevie is also inside. They are trying on costumes/vintage clothing as they are performing vignettes. It's all very funny. Next thing I know I am in a bathroom. It has old fittings and bare floorboards. There is a coat stand in the corner. I take an old dark mink coat from the stand and try it on. Underneath I am wearing a pink brush nylon nightdress. Stevie walks in and I apologise for putting it on. She says "No, it's quite alright, it's there for people to try on" There are black and white photographs on the wall. We are all in another room. I take the coat off. One of their daughters is there and says "I wouldn't have even put that coat on if I was you, if you only knew what had been on that coat..." Tony and Stevie continue being funny reciting a mixture of Shakespeare, Oscar Wilde, George Bernard Shaw. Tony then tells me something profound and personal. It feels as if it's a secret. Stevie lies on a chaise lounge and falls asleep with her mouth open. I am fascinated by her teeth, they merge into pitted metal, which extends into her right cheek. I am shocked at the ugliness, as otherwise she is very beautiful. Tony talks to me about something else, it's something to do with writing, and then I leave.

I am visiting Emma from my writing group and I am in some grand Georgian house. We are upstairs in a large hallway. She says "...and I have my piano room in here." She opens the door, it is a light and airy room with not much in it other than a grand piano. I can see tree branches in full leaf against the window.

I am with my two sisters, in Abigail's old bedroom that my mum then turned into a sewing room. I ask them what they might like for their birthdays, and tell them I would really like some pens and notebooks and that I have seen some beautiful V&A ones in the garden centre. I ask what happened to my mum's knitting needles and say that I would have loved some of them, especially my Grandma's pink ones. Charlotte looks uncomfortable, I know she has taken them. Abigail says "What on earth do you want those for, you don't even knit." I tell them I have always knitted and crocheted and Grandma gave me the pink metallic knitting needles for a project and I had left them here. I then tell them that it's alright as I have bought my own complete set of needles and hooks. They look really surprised but don't ask me what I am making."

Writer's dream depiction: "Don't know what the secret is but know I need a secret in my novel - Tony has read my novel in RL. Trying out these coats and Stevie tells me it's alright - I think it's about playing with and trying out ideas. Because the coat is something I wouldn't do - giving myself permission to do something you wouldn't otherwise do, like take it, put it on, play with it, and put it back if you don't like it. Black and white photographs - almost like something looking at me and me going what's right what's wrong and Stevie's telling me just try it. Stevie's teeth - again notion of

take something you don't like and play with it, if it turns out ugly and horrible then that's part of the creative process, you can throw it away, you don't have to keep it. Piano is again about creativity, playing with creativity. The ending - tree branches, taking something out of this to put out to the outside world."

A14

PR - excerpts from dream diary:

"9/3: Just met Alice in a very long dream. Amazing. Woke at 3. Written down the dream. It has the makings of a short story.

10/3: I have been managing to have an intention to dream a certain character, and it happens in the dream.

25/3: I keep meeting Alice. Wrote section 2, 3, 4, 5 already and now writing 6."

PC: "I made up names, but the characters were there. The setting from the dream as well. Bits of conversation towards the end as the dream became clearer were from dreams, I knew what the conversation was about but not exactly what they were saying."

A15

PU - excerpts from dream diary:

15/2: "To bed hoping for insight into my latest section of 1959 seagoing memoir. 2nd night of reading 1,000 words of scene on ship, Boxing Day 1959.

Woke WBTB 0600. Make intentions> Visualise last scene in memoir: 1959. Boxing Day at sea. ship's officers at breakfast - they rise as my wife enters.

Dream2: In Dream I feel sad that after all this preparation I'm not having a dream (this during the dream). Bring to mind the scene in ship's saloon - make intention of lucidity (still in the dream): I shall dream about this! Instead, I am in a spacesuit and float outside a space station."

17/2: "Intention to dream about ship's saloon.

Dream: Observe self in naval uniform - a young man. Seated next to a brother officer at breakfast. We are spooning cereals and milk. My shipmate passes me waffle with his fingers. I'm mildly surprised he did not use a plate."

18/2: Prepare with visualisation of ship's saloon at breakfast to help current writing.

Dream 1: A conference on a farm. Have a soak in a bath. Discover my writing features in Hartlepool newspaper: "We discover upcoming writer," it says. I'm asked to give a talk but don't want to. Some journalists are spies working for other titles!

25/2: "Ships passing in distance. Charts. Wife aboard.

6/3: Just a vague recall of a ship at sea. I think it is the ss Mahrona, (when my wife joins me) the subject of my present section of memoir - in progress.

17/3: Prep for sleep: To lucidly visualise ship's wireless room.

Dream 1: fugitive and vague. 0600 WBTB. Dream2: Prep as above. Did I dream or did I doze? Saw my old ships under tow into docks. I'm in ss Mahanada's wireless room - I send

and hear Morse: the call signs of my ships: GDNB, GWWZ, GOFM etc. Rise disappointed there was no dream in this long doze. But, an a hour later and on reflection, perhaps this was.

21/3/23:

Intention: Listen to ships; Morse from the past. Prep: mentally send Morse.

Dream 1 : I'm aware of Morse – hear; the call sign GDNB of ss Mahronda (my ship in 1959), calling and calling, with a forlorn sounding note.

0230 WBTB

Dream 2: I'm one of dozens of crowded commercial pigs, reared on cold concrete with no comfort. We are spattered with excrement. But I know the end to our suffering is coming – soon we will be bacon.

0600 WBTB

Dream 3: I hear Morse from German and Dutch coast stations (of 1959). DAN and PCH call signs (Norddeich and Sheveningen Radios) They announce traffic messages etc. 0800 wake: Cannot decide if the above was a dream – it was in my mind as I slowly woke.

22/3/23:

Go to sleep mentally sending Morse using call signs of several of my ships.

0600 WBTB

0800 wake. No recall of any dream event or image.

23/3/23:

Intention: continue with section 2 of my writing of the current seagoing memoir. (vol4)

Woke 0300: recall dream1. I run a business hiring out fair-ground rides. Am mindful of safety issues (NB – I've never been involved in such)

0600 WBTB: Dream 2 : Vivid clarity of walk by a motorway to collect a car. With my wife at first, but she takes a short-cut and I lose sight of her. I rest by a flooded excavation and toss lumps of clay into the water. A boy arrives and does the same until his mother takes him home. Under four feet of clear water there are the bright green leaves of coltsfoot plants . Think: this is wrong! That species should not be growing at the bottom of a flooded pit. Perhaps the flood is recent.

A16

PH – excerpt from dream diary:

"Went to sleep asking for help with my story and had a dream that solved a plot problem, but it was veiled. Not obvious. It wasn't until I woke up and was writing down my dream that I realised the kitchen cupboard in my dream could stand for the antique bureau in my story, and the large recording device my character put in that cupboard could represent a miniature transmitter in my story."

A17

PN – notes:

In effect, I got a phrase in my dream. I then used that phrase to add another layer into the story. I've also been able to use the phrase as the title.

It gave me the clue as to when she would've left him. The reason is she was pregnant.

I then added in references to the time of year in the story which I probably wouldn't have done otherwise. But it added another layer, descriptions outside about seasons changing, growing trees representing their relationship, etc.

PN – excerpt from story:

One day she points to the poster. "Why are there flowers round your hair?"

"Flower power."

"What do you mean?"

"If you're going to San Francisco, be sure to wear flowers in your hair." The quavery rasp echoes some sort of tune. His voice takes on a dreamy quality. "We wore flowery clothes and bands round our hair. We put flowers in soldiers guns, protesting against the Vietnam war."

"But that was in America."

"I was a star. I went everywhere. The summer of '69, Woodstock."

"You cared about peace in the world? I thought you were only bothered about the latest woman you'd conquered." She can joke about it now.

"I wasn't that shallow. Listen to my lyrics."

She fell for that one. Groaning inwardly, she watches him shakily put an old vinyl record on an ancient player. Gently lifting the arm over, he places it with great reverence onto the disc. A young, vibrant voice reverberates round the dingy room, lighting the corners with words of peace and love. "Is that you?" She's surprised.

He nods, eyes gleaming. Not wanting to give him the slightest excuse for more lascivious comments, she's avoided looking directly into his eyes. Till now. Surprised, she recognises the compelling gaze captured in the poster.

"Eyes never change." The words have left her mouth before she can stop them.

"Eyes you could drown in. That woman. The one I told you of before..." He drifts into memory. "Beautiful she was. Long dark hair, classic features, she was perfect. But it was those eyes that did for me. Only woman I ever loved." His sigh is deep and heartfelt. "Here, I wrote this for her." He wheezes back to the player. Golden evening sun lights up the green bush outside as more lyrics soar into the room.

"Four weeks to Christmas

I long to know

Why did you leave me?

Why did you go?

Four days to Christmas

Pain tears me apart

Where are you now?

You've broken my heart.

Four hours to Christmas

Why don't you phone?

Joy all around yet

I feel so alone."

As the tune fades, echoes of an old pain linger in his eyes.

"You must have loved her very much."

He nods, rheumy tears preventing speech.

A18

PQ – excerpt from dream diary:

04.03.23

"Richard has decided that he wants to become a moth and is then stepped on by an elephant.

Shona is driving home and hears Ricks voice telling her to drive. When they get back, she looks down to see a crushed moth dead on the ground.”

In addition to the moth element, the dream inspired the feeling of being driven to do something.

Excerpt from story:

‘ Oh Richard – we’ve talked this through before – you’re like a moth to the flame. You’re a friend, - a good friend,’ she added as an afterthought, ‘but that’s it.’

[...]

He waited and listened. He didn’t snatch the cup from her hand. The seabirds fell silent along the low cliffs. The wind had dropped too, a near miracle on Shetland. The only sounds were the slow, rhythmic slaps of the sea on the rocks and the noises in their heads, always the noises in their heads. They’d shared those since they were little, but the noises were different for each of them now. Very different.

Shona’s eyes started to close and her head fell forward onto her chest. She made a puzzled,

frightened effort to look at him, but failed.

He got up and wrapped his arms around her, burying his face into her neck as he adjusted her

weight so that she would rest comfortably against the curved wall of the brock.

The sky began to darken. Clouds rolled in over the open roof. The stone wall that had stood for more than a millennium began to move in on him. closer, deeper.

He lit tea lights and placed them in niches and then, taking a beautifully carved candle from his rucksack, he reverently set it on the ground in front of her and lit it. He kissed her and held her hand. He told her all the things he wanted to tell her, all the things that she hadn’t heard.

The All Points Bulletin came into the station at around midnight. The search for Shona was short. Richard Lisowski’s landrover was spotted in a layby near Culswick Broch before daylight. A uniformed officer was the first responder and had moved into the Broch carefully, as if it was a crime scene.

Shona Mackie was unconscious but alive. She would see her elephants. He called for an ambulance from Lerwick, got a blanket from the patrol car and put her into the recovery position.

There was no-one else in or around the broch. The tea lights were all extinguished, but the carved candle was still burning, a dead moth floating in the pool of wax at its centre.

A19

PP – excerpt from dream diary:

“I had a dream which I am developing into a story. Since last night I feel I have the full plot, have my characters, have quite a bit of detail. I am finding the easiest time to implement this is when I am drifting off to sleep, and I am somewhere between conscious thought and drifting off. I am finding it really useful for development of a story that has emerged from a dream I’ve been working on fleshing out when in this liminal wakeful imagining state. I’ve put some things to paper here and there. I feel like it’s helped me to imagine/create something that I might not have reached through purely conscious states of thought.”

A20

PN – excerpt from dream diary:

“2/3: Asked for levels in plot and character development. Before getting to sleep, saw woman’s eyes, very beautiful. Realised that was a way to develop my story. As falling asleep plot ideas ran round head. ... Couldn’t get (back) to sleep but plot ideas from last night ran round head again. So got up and wrote more of story.

8/3: After alarm dozed off again ... Asked for more ideas for a story. Received a phrase, a sentence about someone trying to find a home for a dog and saw a face of someone and knew his job. Recalled an image from previous dreams and was told a bit more about one of the characters. Got the beginning of another story linked to that character (just the first couple of sentences).”

A21

PN – excerpt from dream diary:

“Slept 10.30 woke 2.36am. Woke myself up to record the dream then couldn’t get back to sleep for 2/3 hours. Eventually managed by starting to imagine the beginning of the story I’d written last week. It involved climbing on the back of a dragon-like creature who flew off. As he flew I found myself on the deck of a yacht with a drunk woman falling over herself and spilling her drink everywhere. I recognised I was finally asleep and this was a dream. Instantly she froze, the drink also froze spilling in mid air and to my annoyance, I woke up again. Finally got off to sleep and woke up by the alarm I’d set for 6.40 to do WBTB technique. Lay in bed listening to Radio 3 for 20 min. Then slept again at 7. Woke at 7.45 having had very vivid dreams in mundane situations with family and friends. Wrote extensively in dream diary also recorded beginning to story.”

A22

PJ used to practise this technique and now purposefully went back to it during this intervention.

PN was struggling to write the synopsis of her latest novel, so she used the technique incorporating meditation in the liminal state in the morning to successfully write the synopsis.

The clearest time to write was 5am for PF, with her writing reportedly having a better quality straight after a dream.

PG would wake up at 6am, which was a very productive time for him to write, because he was not tired or sharp, so he went with whatever flowed in his head. Two weeks into the intervention, he started to write again after a significant period of a writer’s block in his life, describing this time as “the state of early morning relaxation given over to free thinking.”

PI followed a similar approach, writing as soon as she’d wake up and getting three pages of ‘stream of consciousness writing’ on most mornings.

A23

PK – excerpts from dream diary:

Tuesday 7th March

Fairies, food, mystery. Walking round a house. Every room decorated completely differently. Each host in the room offering a different type of food.

Sparkling golden translucent tubes that people can float through. [*This appears in my story as the transparent bubble they roll in*]

Wondering what food was I going to share?

Wednesday 8th March

...we went for a walk round the back of the estate, down an alley and came back out into a square where many people were milling about. A police helicopter lowered itself over a body and removed it. The police were dispersing the crowd. I found the male half of the couple, dazed. It was his dead wife who was airlifted out. I took him back to his house...

A bunch of children, unkempt, milled around. They were scraps of humanity, destined to die early. They injected themselves to keep themselves alive. One led me to the crumbling houses. [*Idea of dead, children and crumbling cityscape*]

Thursday 9th March

Children separated into sectors away from adults. Trained to be destructive. Meeting some adults initially show fear and loathing. [*Child scavengers*]

Friday 10th March

Two police came to my garage and opened the boot of the car. They were taking bags out. Someone drew a picture, a facial recognition picture, with an upturned nose. Just a line drawing. It was being used for something. I realised it was my old woman. (I drew the face in my diary. I can't draw, it was rubbish) [*Recognition of facial characteristics of my protagonist.*]

Saturday 11th March

Someone, not me, was walking along a beach and found a severed brown hand, child-size. They pick it up reluctantly, unable to leave it. Walking further on they come across another hand and then more pairs, severed in a pile in front of rocks across the mouth of a cave. Unable to leave them to be swept away they picked them all up including a child's foot and walked back, clutching them all to their chest. [*Used as basis for the malevolent creatures in the story*]

They want the prosecutor but can't find her. They go to the police station to hand them in, they are in tears now. The person in the waiting room opens the door to the woman clutching all the brown children's hands. The woman grows as she holds out the hands and feet until her head touches the ceiling of the station and gold light surrounds her. [*Recognition my protagonist is in Goddess form also that she cares for the dead children. Used the growth of the woman, Buba Lea into the Goddess in my story*]

Friday 17th March

I had a mentor for the journey... we walked to a forest camp where there was another old friend. We talked and she showed the way round the trees and the tents. Lights were strung between the trees and the tents. I wanted to go back to the town and found the way was shut off, concealed by

hoardings. Outside the lights of the camp, the road was narrow dark and full of fast cars in both directions, dangerous to walk down, but people were trying. [*Mentor, Buba Lea in the story. Woodland camp used in the story*]

I saw my first friend walking towards us from town, He was relieved to see us. [*used in the story as Anna coming towards Nurit*]

Another day in the woodland camp, I see the elder sister of my first friend. I tell her I had met her brother and also this mutual friend whose name I couldn't remember. [*People meeting in the camp*]

Excerpts from story:

People were still scrabbling on the mounds of detritus left behind by an uncaring enemy, searching this time for valuables as the search for survivors had long been called off. Their backs were bent and their hands grimy with broken fingernails as they moved the jagged concrete individually. Fights broke out when something was discovered deemed needy or useful in some way. A scream cut short made the girl turn her head away, desperate not to be seen.

The old woman held out a flat stone with a sliver of slate, a broken roof tile, no longer having a roof to cover. The girl snatched them both and soon covered the stone in loopy writing and drawings. She stopped and glanced up at the old woman.

'We're heading for the tunnels. Tell them that. They'll know.'

The girl looked hard at the old woman and then nodded briefly and bent to scratch the information on the stone. She finished with a careful drawing and xoxo. She stood, still clutching the stone and slate. The old woman pointed to an area behind them, well away from the scavengers.

[...]

The two walked past pitted concrete pillars, broken tables, and mangled chairs, stepping over scattered paper. It seemed to the girl that as they moved further and further into the inner recesses of the building, the old woman grew a little more, straightened a little more. By the time they turned down a narrow corridor and squeezed behind a steel door, she was sure of it.

'Who are you?' The girl pulled her hand out of the old woman's and stopped walking. She subjected the woman to her serious green gaze.

The old woman turned around and loomed over the girl. Her figure swelled until her head touched the ceiling. Her face showed no wearing of age, apart from her red-rimmed eyes. Her hair, now braided, was hidden beneath an old faded shawl of indeterminate colour. Gold light emanated from her body and head in a soft pulsing glow. And yet the girl felt no fear. She stared up at this giant of a woman who had such a kindly look and waited.

'You may call me Buba Lea.'

A24

PJ, lucid dream: "I have a couple of sacred works in my local Parish Church, and this appeared to be another such, when I realised I was looking at a famous religious painting, "The Light of the World" by the Pre-Raphaelite William Holman Hunt... What happened next was rather transformational and its impact lasted several days, if indeed it isn't still affecting me, so I shall have to explore and write it up



properly. I think it probable that its genesis was as much your lucid dreaming course as it was fevered hallucination, so: Thank You, Laura. The painting had a lot of the features (sea, stone etc.) for a very long time. During this process, I finished it; it was the result of the process.” (see figure above)

A26

PB – excerpts from dream diary:

28/2: in that liminal space between light sleep/fully awake I had a revelation as to the way my next novel can work; a protagonist's journal versus a box of documents, old diary, ripped-out pages, old letters etc. These unpick the story behind the protagonist's trauma. It means a 'voice' I have been trying to hear with no success at all isn't necessary. My character spoke Gaelic, I thought that I needed to speak the language to hear her voice. The revelation told me I don't need this, as women were silenced then and I won't ever hear her anyway. All her stories should be told through documents and archives.

A27

PQ – excerpt from dream diary:

“27/02/23

04:45

I was at an elephant sanctuary choosing an elephant. It was an expansive landscape dotted with trees and vegetation. There were two elephants to choose from. They were named 'Pinkers' and 'Blommers'. I do not know what I was going to do with the elephant. I dropped my pocket knife, my real world red knife, onto the ground and had a problem picking it up. Each time I bent down to pick it up, it wasn't there, though I eventually got it back, because it was in my back pocket, where I keep it in the real world. Someone was there to help me to choose an elephant, and we were discussing the relative merits of each elephant. I wanted to go to the loo in my dream (and apparently in reality too!) but I told myself that I didn't want to wake up just yet because I hadn't finished choosing my elephant. I ACTUALLY DID return to my dream, chose my elephant and then woke up and dashed to the bathroom! I have never been able to return

to a dream like that before. It was an uneventful but lucid dream. Although I set the intention of meeting a character from my previous lucid dream, that didn't happen. It was, nevertheless a very pleasant 'experience'.”

PQ later found that this dream can not only be incorporated into her story but that it can actually help her move the story forward. This idea fed into her character's desire for her future.

Excerpt from story:

This chance had been so unexpected. To actually get the post of 'Assistant Ranger – junior grade' – at the Kenyan reserve was beyond her wildest dreams. She laughed when she thought of the interview in the posh London hotel – how the interviewer had almost apologised for the 'junior grade' bit. Little did they know she would have volunteered for free given the chance. But to be paid for looking after the elephants...well life just didn't get better.

A28

PB – excerpt from dream diary:

“It is bright and sunny and I open the windows for the joy of feeling the sun/wind and fresh DIFFERENT air. In the dream I could taste that it was different. The sense of freedom is huge. I tell Ramsay to open his window as well and he is beaming, laughing. We are like dogs with the windows open and faces in the wind!

....The air embraces with lightness in a place that opens windows to run-away souls; offers secret therapy?

A landscape which will embrace; from which to borrow the light;

Visit, stay, rest; it is eternal; will be there for others as we have travelled on...

Happy space, a lot of joy, sensation of being a happy place. This may become a poem.....it is brewing!”

Poem:

Hir Pedn Wydh

A western breath enfolds, discreet,
where Belerion's mists shrouds sacred souls.
Here Time is warped by enchantment.
Here Nature's remedy is wrought by solitude.

To the frail, the dis-located or the fugitive,
this place murmurs like a granite sprite,
'Visit, stay, rest in the shining land!'
Yet countless, disremembered travellers pass.

Some fear to accept such solace; they retreat.
Others cannot - will not - hear the call.
The fortunate linger, borrow primal energy,
repay earth's life-force with love.

Though eons lapse, Pedn Wydh persists.
Forever will this thin-veiled, liminal place,
with sun-blessed occidental winds
gift a benediction on a dreamer's face.

* Cornish: Pedn – peninsular
Wydh – at the end

Pronounced Pen-with

Hir- far

Dream diary:

"Less of a dream than a nightmare I managed to side-step by waking up! I am camping (a random shack though it's supposed to be our campervan!) on a cliff. The campervan seat is full of a bag which I think is the awning but when I go to get the bag it's a seal and I struggle to get it out. The cliff overlooks a really calm sea when an Orca swims up, round in circles, creating waves and rain...somehow linked in my mind. I am afraid of a flood and run into the 'van' to hide in an old white wardrobe with the seal."

Poem:

Sea Dream

I dreamed of an orca and a seal:
I blame 'Wild Isles', the BBC,
but still flinch at the fantasy,
of deep-water predator
in my subconscious. But
what if the whale is a memo
from my mind? What will be
exhumed if I investigate?
A dream of defying bigotry?
An emphatic statement
of individuality, no nonsense?
Of collaboration not command?
The seal might have been me,
the whale might have been
anything. Or anyone.
Or simply a whale
in a dream.

PC – excerpt from dream diary:

"I'm teaching a class but no work has been left for them, so I decide to take them down the beach instead. I know there's a little village on the other side of some rocks on the top of some cliffs, but it can only be accessed by walking over the rocks. It's a small, dark, craggy beach with black sand. The rocks are very slippery and the waves are cold and violent. The sky is grey and it looks like there's going to be a storm. As I'm leading the students over the rocks, hoping to show them the village, a big wave engulfs me, pulling me under. The wave nearly rips my phone out of my hands, but I hold on tight. Underwater, I'm swimming in the dark and I realise I'm probably dreaming and should try to breathe. I eventually start breathing and the water is very cold."
Lucid part: "I am drowning at sea. As I go under, I tell myself I must be dreaming and I should be able to breathe in the water. I'm too frightened at first, but I finally do it and I can breathe fine, but the water's very cold."

Poem:

The beach at the edge of the world

dark grey rocks
cut
a path through the slosh
of waves

slick, silty, starfish bubbled cliffs,
with tiny pockets for your hands

I shall veer along that edge,
that cuts through basalt,
slippy seaweed bunting
siren singing me away from the sand

icy curdle of wind kissing shoulders,
bruised toes and rattling breath,
crouching low as I balance
on the edge of the world

A29

PNJ – excerpt from story:

The ground dips down into a hollow and I stumble past overgrown headstones, my feet bound with vines and threaded with wild garlic. Some statues are broken, others remain intact. A giant anchor full of steadfastness and hope weighs me down, I pull it along beside me and it cracks open wide. Birds plummet through the trees like stones into water. Hands reach to clasp my waist and keep it together throughout eternity.
[...]

There is wild garlic and birdsong and ivy curling around old crumbling stone, and trees, standing tall and poised. So many trees. I always wanted to be married under the cover of trees. Something that has been here for so much longer than me. Everything that happens to them is in the interior, all movement underground.

A30

PS – excerpt from dream diary:

6.02.23: There was a very vivid image of a murmuration of starlings overhead. They were lit up like Christmas tree lights and looked magnificent. I stood there amazed at the sight.
9.02.23: It was a repeat of an earlier dream where I saw a murmuration of starlings, but this time I was with them up in the air. They were flying all around, lighting up the sky. I was in the middle of them, but I didn't feel squashed, just exhilarated. It was only a short dream, and I am not sure how it ended. Freedom!
24.02.23: A few of us were let through a door, before flying a with starlings and arriving at the ancient Greek Dream Temples. We were taken there by a wise man, who introduced us to elders of the temples. They helped us to work with/and change some of our dreams using different techniques, before flying back home.

A31

PLJ – excerpt from story:

The house I am in now is weeping, I can almost feel its heart-break. Water runs down faded wallpaper, drenching carpets and deep pile rugs. I know this house has been forgotten for half a century or thereabouts. I am making assumptions from the furniture and fittings, the geometric pattern on the wallpaper, the browns and oranges swirling on the upholstery, once referred to as autumnal. There are teak bookshelves warped and misshapen from water damage, I trail my fingers over the spongy wood, now delicate and fragile as cardboard. I walk from room to room, searching for the source of the water. I can't find it. I go to the back door, the

sky is grey, but it is not raining. In the hallway, I look up into the stairwell. 'What do you want from me? How can I help?' I know I must do something.

A32

PY – Excerpt from story:

The unsinkable ship sank, and I saw and witnessed every minute of it. Our string ensemble of 4 had been playing at the captain's table event earlier that fateful evening of 14th April 1912. After a few hours and a few drinks, we were chatting at the table when we felt an almighty thud. It didn't sound right. But then we were in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean what could we have possibly hit? We didn't think anymore of it and just carried on with our evening. By now we had finished our meal and were playing some cards together and thought no more of the strange noise. Then one of the waiters came and gave each of us a life jacket and we were then ushered out of the restaurant into the crowds of panicked people frantically darting to and fro on the decks. We had been largely protected from this commotion when we were in the restaurant but there was no protection now and it was in those moments that it dawned on me that this ship was sinking. The panic around me was unbearable people screaming, shouting and sobbing.

A33

PF: "I could see D floating above the dead body, not connected, looking down on the pearly-grey sheen on his grandfather's face. He'd told me that he sat with the body for a while after he'd found it and I let my waking mind follow that image - then I started writing. It allowed me to experience the scene from a different perspective, not to analyse it so much but to feel it and see, partly with my own eyes (memories of my own grandmother being elderly and ill) and partly with his eyes (a child experiencing trauma). Writing the story was then more lyrical because I stopped using a direct retelling (how D would do it) and brought in colours and textures and inferences (D never did this)."

Excerpt from story:

"Picking up every stray tablet, I secure them in the small bottle and put them back on his bedside table. I tidy up the discarded Racing Post, the spilt water, the full ashtray. The heavy curtains are still drawn against the moon-fractured night so I open them, letting in a burst of June sunshine. It warms my face and I hold my breath, letting my cheeks soak up the glass-amplified heat.

Everything in order, I pull back the bed clothes and look at the body beneath. It's an awkward mess of bones and slack flesh. I run my hands over his naked chest feeling the rough, grey hairs against my palms, the folds of skin around his armpits loose under my fingertips. He's still taller and broader than me, but my muscles are bigger, harder and I'm still growing into them. I'd noticed him noticing me, noticing how I can lift the full milk pail, handle the stock on my own, move more hay bales than any of the other lads.

[...]

The sunlight in the room drains again. A ragged flock of pigeons mushrooming up from the trees, purpling the clouds readied for rain. I step back into the bedroom, close the wardrobe door with a judder and know it will be fixed tomorrow. So much will be fixed tomorrow.

I look at the photograph, into his eyes, and push it over. Mum can deal with Edgar. He's hers to burn.

There is no sunlight left now, scraped out of the room by the hungry clouds, turned in on itself to leave the raw guts of the day to cool. A prickling-flush starts in the nape of my neck, creeps over my scalp and into my brain, energising every part of me. I can feel my fingerprints rising, see my eyes looking back into my skull, inverting the scene. It's time. My time. Standing next to Dad, I draw all my strength into my arm and pull it back, lining my fist up towards his pearly face."

A34

PW – notes:

"From dreams: Two astronauts crashing, the balloon being sent up, commander having amnesia – all in the first dream, starting point; in the dream feeling anxious for them thinking they need help.

Thinking where does it go from there. Then started having other dreams.

Dream: lots of people inside a building with glass fronted doors, the glass and doors get smashed up, brainless people (not zombies) come in – inspired the idea of Golems.

Dream: they were all trying to escape, a deck, couldn't take off as there were clamps (?)

Dream: set in prison or war camp (where the Germans were held), they seem civile but suddenly turn aggressive, she uses electrical device to shock them but again they're not really human. – two guards from the dream something very odd about them, she uses electrical discharge on them – feeds into the story scene with scientists.

Excerpt from story:

'And what exactly do you produce here Dr Haldron?' Nelson asked, though he already had a shrewd idea of what the answer might be.

'Please call me Emilia. We produce people, Commander Nelson, workers and technicians to build our Utopian world.' Nelson's opinion was that one person's utopia was always another's dystopia but he kept the opinion to himself.

'You're growing clones?'

'No, clones would take too long to grow to adulthood and would need to be educated in the same way as humans. Plus, while we can ensure they would be the best possible physical specimens, they would still be limited for our purposes.' Nelson looked at Haldron with a quizzical expression. 'What I mean is we need workers who are smarter, stronger and more resilient than humans, even the best humans. So we have used DNA from a multitude of species and fast-growing compounds.'

So, if not clones, then what?'

'We call them Golems.'

A35

PC – excerpt from dream diary:

30/3: LUCID: "I dreamt that I was rescuing a little girl from a country under military rule. I managed to get her out of her room and we snuck through a series of offices, trying to avoid detection. We eventually got outside but were spotted by a secretary. We ran very quickly through fields and rainforests. I then realised that we'd travel much quicker if

we turned into birds, so we turned into birds and flew over lakes.

I then woke up, or so I thought, on a plane, where Christopher Walken was asking me what sort of dream I'd had. I told him I didn't remember a lot, so he helped me relive the dream. This time, it felt incredibly vivid, and there were lots of extra details, such as walking through a high school. I studied their faces carefully, because I've heard that you cannot invent new faces in dreams, you just use faces you remember from real life. I don't recognise anyone in the high school, so I begin to doubt that I'm dreaming. I leave the high school and continue my trip through the forest, turning into a bird and flying high over the trees. I wake back up again on the plane and complain to Christopher Walken that I didn't get to see how the dream ended and whether I escaped the militia. Christopher Walken told me that I could tell that something is a dream if there are things missing. He lifts up his arms and I realise he has no hands and I must still be dreaming.

I feel like the dream was inspired by what we discussed in workshops."

A36

PI: "21/3: Only remember one short dream about a sailing boat and sailing on my birthday with a client.

22/3: A couple of dreams. The first one was about a boat company on a river. I got kidnapped (not sure by whom or why). It reminded me of another similar dream that I had experienced the week before about boats on a river. I also remember in this new dream, thinking that I could interview the lead character (owner of a boat trip company) as part of research for a book idea.

I found this interesting the idea of book research/seeking ideas for projects are now coming into dreams. (because this has been the intention of this part of the project).

It's also interesting that I am dreaming more about boats. Last night's dream was about sailing and the week before I had also dreamt about boats. (In real life I have not been on a boat so this is not the source of my dreams about boats!)."

A37

PP – excerpt from dream diary:

Lucid: "First thing when in bed expanded the dream I am choosing to work into a story.

I tried spinning to stabilise. I chose a caravan door as the portal, with a colourful glass bead door curtain. I talked to my dream character/protagonist, looked around the setting, and remained lucid. She was sitting down playing guitar, seemed stand-offish at first, and the scene wasn't stable. I tried the spinning technique to stabilize (fun/dizzying kaleidoscopic shifting patterns). This helped to stabilize the scene, shake off my apprehension and build rapport with character - she seemed curious/concerned. Sat down next to her while she played guitar and asked questions. She had ferrets - a white one called Albi, and brown and white one called Choco Moose (Choc or Moose for short). Uncertain if there were 3 or 4. I/dream character thinks that's all the ferrets there are, gets a shock opening a cupboard and a black ferret with sharp white teeth hisses at her (dream character says his name is Jackson). Might have been half between awake/dream. Kept lucidity throughout."

Excerpt from story:

"What's your name?"

She smiles and riffs a question mark on her strings in reply. It hangs in the air between us a moment before she answers. "You can call me Kazzi."

As I digest her name, I start to take in our surroundings. The inside of the van seems to be stuck in a timewarp, all flowery lace curtains and fake orange wood. I lean back into the couch. "Where are you from, Kazzi?"

She smiles like a wolf, but doesn't look up. "Oh, you know. Everywhere. Nowhere. Wherever I want, really."

Something long, hairy, and white as pure snow slithers out from between the cushions of the couch, clambers around her shoulders, and lies there camouflaged as a scarf.

"What the devil is that?!"

Her smile is lopsided, halfway between a smile and a smirk.

"This is Albi. She's a ferret. Don't worry, she won't bite."

Before I can think of a clever reply, a flurry of clawed paws lollop across my lap. My hands fly into the air. "Jesus!"

She smiles wider this time, showing her teeth. "That's Choco Moose. He's got lots of energy. He's Choco or Moose, for short." The brown and white ferret twines its way up her body like a snake climbing a vine, and snarls at Albi, who snarls and bares her teeth right back. Kazzi continues playing her guitar, unperturbed. "They can get a little jealous sometimes."

She twangs and noodles on the guitar, amusing herself as she improves. I let the silence sit between us a while before speaking again.

"I heard you singing a song before."

She smiles and nods without looking up.

"Would you sing it again?"

She strums the guitar roughly, a thrum of discord that she quickly silences. She grimaces.

"It's in the wrong pitch. There's a capo in the cupboard above your head, can you get it down for me?"

"Yeah, sure." I let the blanket fall to the couch as I stand, turn and stretch to open the cabinet.

A vicious hiss, a flash of sharp white fangs and red eyes in the shadows - my heart leaps out of my chest and I slam the door shut. From the safety of the couch, she laughs at me softly.

"That's Jackson. You've disturbed his nap, can't blame him for being mad as hell. It should be in there somewhere. Careful now, he sure does bite - those teeth of his can sink right down to the bone."

I open the door again. He is peering angrily at me through narrowed red slits, with sleepy rage. I thrust my hand into the serpentine contortions of its black fur and feel cold metal. I retrieve the clamp like an eel recoiling into its lair, and slam the door shut.

A38

PZ – Short story:

A pale, slender finger on a ringless hand traces the path of a single raindrop down the glass but makes no sound. Below the window, a man in a trench-coat waits but doesn't look up. His name is Michael, and he is listening for the clunk to assure him the door is firmly closed. One hand is placed across his chest, with the fingers curled around something hidden underneath his coat. At the window, Clara looks down on him and notices his thinning hair. He hesitates at

the kerb and waits for the traffic to subside before making his way across the road, his long coat flapping at his legs as he strides into the rain.

Clara turns away with a sigh and turns her attention to the assortment of items on the dressing table. She runs her forefinger through the dusty surface to make a pathway that winds around and between a jar of face cream, a hair brush and an empty box that once held a bottle of expensive perfume. She stares at the grey deposit on her fingertip and rubs it against her thumb. A lipstick in a gold case rolls slowly away, and drops to the floor. She bends down to retrieve it, her long dress folding around her feet in a pool of blue silk that rustles slightly as she stands up again. The case holds the last of a lipstick the colour of black cherries. With a well-practised movement, she smooths the lipstick across her mouth by touch alone, then pinches her lips together to even the colour. No need for a mirror, even though there is one. She returns the lipstick to the small clean circle on the dressing table where it stood, next to the little wooden box that holds her jewellery. She lifts the lid and frowns, for the box is empty. Where are the pearls? Her mother's locket? The gold chain? The diamond brooch? She turns the box around and releases the catch for the secret drawer underneath, to find her sapphire ring lying in lonely splendour in its velvet nest.

She places it on her finger and an old familiar tune begins to play silently inside her head. The tones of a languid clarinet rise and fall, note by note, tugging gently at her memory. As the music gathers speed, she sways a little, hoping the name of the tune will surface but it doesn't. Nothing much stays with her for long these days; thoughts just drift away like dreams, and fade silently into nothingness. Idly she fingers the oval stone that graces her hand, its facets catching the light and reflecting in the mirror, but she doesn't see herself.

Aware of a chill she notices that her feet are bare, and goes over to the wardrobe. Pulling open both doors she considers the collection of boots and shoes that lie higgledy-piggledy in the dark recess. In the far corner at the back is a shoebox which she knows contains a pair of gold high heeled sandals with blue crystal beads adorning the heels. She had worn them once with the blue silk dress but it is a very long time ago and in any case they're not what she needs today. Instead she reaches for a pair of black lace ups; stout, sensible shoes, that are distinctly at odds with the elegant blue dress. She turns the shoes over, examining the heels and toes which have been repaired several times. How long since she wore these? How long since she's been anywhere to wear shoes of any kind? She slips her feet into the well-worn leather and ties and reties the laces. She flexes a foot, turns an ankle, takes a few steps, stands on tiptoes, makes a twirl, tries to admire herself in the mirror but still can't see her reflection. Even so, she doesn't turn on the light.

The same click that assured Michael that the front door was closed, now alerts Clara to the fact that he has returned. She listens for his progress through the house, flinging his coat on the chair in the hall, going through to the kitchen and putting the kettle on. She hears the scrape of the kitchen chair as he sits down to take his shoes off and imagines him placing them neatly on the mat by the back door. It's a while before he moves again, he must be making tea. Then he walks carefully in his socks along the polished wooden floor of the hallway and into the living room immediately be-

low where Clara is sitting. She hears the cup being put onto one of the slate coasters on the coffee table and the creak of the sofa springs as he sits down. He's probably picking up a book, he's always been an man of regular habits. She waits. It's fair to say that she's learnt to be patient these last few years. When she's sure he must be deeply engrossed in his book, she stands up, takes a deep breath, gets down on her hands and knees, rolls up the rug and stands it in the corner of the room.

She tiptoes softly to the centre of the bare wooden floor and begins to dance. Her metal heels and toes tap the floor in time with the music that now comes alive in her mind. She starts off slowly and builds up speed as her confidence grows, until with a final flourish, she stops, bows to her imaginary audience and listens to the silence. She waits, perfectly still until she hears the tell-tale creak of Michael's footsteps coming upstairs. She feels his presence the other side of the door but she stays where she is. It is a good minute before the door knob slowly turns, he is hesitant. He doesn't speak as he enters the room but looks around as if searching for something. Noticing the rolled up carpet he frowns and looks over his shoulder. With tense jaw and cautious steps, he approaches the dressing table and at the sight of the open jewellery box he takes in a short sharp breath.

He doesn't see Clara back away from him, he doesn't catch the flicker of recognition in her eyes at the moment she realises where he has been with the rest of her jewellery. He always said she should sell it. She eases herself sideways into the old leather armchair against the wall which moves slightly on its wheels and catches the hem of her dress. She winces and slides backwards to ease the silk from under it and pulls the fabric up, away from the floor. Her hands rest on the arms of the chair, the sapphire flashing on her finger. She draws a fingernail across the leather making a faint scratching sound and Michael spins round. He can't quite make out what is there in the shadows, but he doesn't move nearer. The sapphire gleams more brightly and her eyes shine in the darkness as she becomes more visible.

Now he can see that her face is angry, her jaw tense, the black cherry lips set firm; her arms stretched out towards him in a gesture of 'how could you'. She wrenches the ring from her finger and throws it at him, catching him in the centre of his forehead from where it bounces onto the floor and skitters away. Michael hears a low grinding sound and the leather chair begins to move. He stands open mouthed as Clara and the chair veer slowly backwards and fragment into the wall like so many pixels.