

...ing and embroidery. She is self-isolating in her s  
... Before deciding to focus on **Creativity**, sh  
... bit of TV and played The Sims but soon grew bored of l  
... pastimes. "I'm not very good but it **Connects** to som  
... rent takes my mind off things. Instead of just watching T  
... e music on and embroider a little flower on my jeans." Sh  
... or not allowing the isolation to overwhelm you is to stay i  
... family through voice notes. "**During** it's nice to hear s  
... e - not everyone wants to pick up the **COVID-19** and i  
... time so short voice notes can really help." She's also been  
... ting with her mates but says she's learning to enjoy the sil  
... "It's been nice to get **All The Time** away from my pho

Hello from the

Whiteinch Centre! As our usual groups can't be meeting during this period of social isolation, we've decided to keep our creative minds active by sending you these activities!

There are a few different ones that you can get over the next few weeks, so keep an eye out for new ideas from us. And remember you can always share any work you make with us via our Facebook page. We have also started a series of online videos which you can see by subscribing to our youtube channel [www.youtube.com/TheWhiteinchCentre](http://www.youtube.com/TheWhiteinchCentre) or through our facebook page. If you would like to get involved in any of our creative stuff or have any ideas that you think we should try please feel free to just send an email to us at [elenaharris@whiteinchcentre.org.uk](mailto:elenaharris@whiteinchcentre.org.uk)

Keep yourself safe and well!

### ACTIVITY 1: Black Out Poetry

You have been sent a random book page.

Read through the page and pick out words that can make up your own sentence. The sentence can make as much or as little sense as you like.

Using any materials you like colour or draw over the words that you are not using. You can do this simply or with a little creative licence. Both work great!

(I've included a wee example for inspiration...)

pieces of Kleenex. One day we find a safe. Cordelia knows it's called a safe. **She told her that once**, when she was little and mistook one for a balloon. She knows it's a thing men use, the kind of men we're supposed to watch out for, though she doesn't know why it's called that. We pick it up on the end of a stick and examine it: whitish, limp, **rubbery**, like something inside a fish. Carol says "Ew." We carry it **firmly back up the hill** and shove it through a grating in the pavement. **It floats down** there on the surface of the dark water, pallid and **drowned-looking**. Even finding such a thing is dirty; even concealing it.

The wooden bridge is more askew, rotener than I remember. There are more places where the boards have fallen away. As a rule we walk down the middle, but today Cordelia goes right to the railing and leans on it, looking over. One by one and gingerly we follow. **The stream below is shallow at this time of year**; we can see the junk people have dumped into it, the worn-out tires, the broken bottles and rusty pieces of metal.

Cordelia says that because the stream flows right out of the cemetery it's made of dissolved dead people. She says that if you drink it or step into it or even get too close to it, the dead people **will come out of the stream all covered with mist**, and take you with them. She says the only reason this hasn't happened to us is that we're on the bridge and the bridge is wooden. Bridges are safe, over dead-people streams like this one.

Carol gets frightened, or acts frightened. Grace says Cordelia is being silly.

"Try it and see," says Cordelia. "Go on down there. I dare you." **But we don't.**

I know **this is a game**. My mother goes down there for her walks, my brother goes there with other older kids. They slosh through the culverts in their rubber boots and swing from trees and from the lower beams of the bridge. **The reason** the ravine is forbidden to us is not the dead people but the men. All the same, I wonder **what the dead people would look like**. I believe in them and **I don't believe in them** both at the same time.

We pick blue and white weed flowers and some of the nightshade berries, and arrange them on burdock leaves by the side of the path, a horse chestnut on each. They are pretend meals, but it isn't clear who they're for. When we're finished we walk up the hill, leaving these arrangements behind us, half wreath,

take shape the way she wants them to. Carol giggles and can't remember what she's supposed to say. Grace doesn't like being told what to do, and says she has a headache. Made-up stories don't interest her unless they contain a lot of real things: toasters, ironing boards, the wardrobes of movie stars. Cordelia's melodramas are beyond her.

"Now you kill yourself," says Cordelia.

"Why?" says Grace.

"Because you've been deserted," says Cordelia.

"I don't want to," says Grace. Carol, who is playing the maid, starts to giggle.

So we merely dress up and then trail down the stairs and out across the newly sodded front lawn, our shawls dragging behind us, uncertain what's supposed to happen next. Nobody wants to take boys' parts because there are no good clothes for them, though from time to time Cordelia draws a moustache on herself with Perdie's eyebrow pencil and wraps herself up in an old velvet curtain, in a last-ditch attempt at plot.

We walk home from school together, four now instead of three. There's a little shop on a side street halfway home where we stop and spend our allowances on penny gumballs, red licorice whips, orange popsicles, sharing everything out equally. There are horse chestnuts in the gutters, wet-looking and glossy; we fill the pockets of our cardigans with them, uncertain what to use them for. The boys of our school and the Catholic boys from Our Lady of Perpetual Help throw them at one another, but we would not do that. They could put out your eye.

The dirt path going down to the wooden footbridge is dry, dusty; the leaves of the trees which hang over it are dull green and worn out from the summer. Along the edge of the path is a thicket of weeds: goldenrod, ragweed, asters, burdocks, deadly nightshade, its berries red as valentine candies. Cordelia says that if you want to poison someone this would be a good way. The nightshade smells of earth, damp, loamy, pungent, and of cat piss. Cats prowl around in there, we see them every day, crouching, squatting, scratching up the dirt, staring out at us with their yellow eyes as if we're something they're hunting.

There are empty liquor bottles tossed into this thicket, and

that week before taking Tarig home. She had stripped everything and given it away, never imagining she would come back, never imagining the quarrel with Mahasen. And when she did come back she had neither the heart nor the means to buy things. Pay the rent for the room and that was all. One plate, one spoon, a tin opener, two saucepans, a kettle, a mug. She didn't care, didn't mind. Four years ill in a hospital she had made for herself. Ill, diseased with passivity, time in which she sat doing nothing. The whirlpool of grief sucking time. Hours flitting away like minutes. Days in which the only thing she could rouse herself to do was pray the five prayers. They were the only challenge, the last touch with normality, without them she would have fallen, lost awareness of the shift of day into night.

She tasted the tea Rae had made for her and listened to the only two people she really knew in this city. Yasmin, her face a little pinched in the early weeks of pregnancy, dark shadows under sleepy eyes. But that was natural, she would be big and healthy in a few months' time, round in maternity clothes. And Rae – it was strange to see people she only knew from work in their own homes. He didn't shave at weekends.

One of the magazines that lay open on the floor had pictures of different world maps. It was an article on traditional maps and how they tended to show continents incorrectly in proportion to one another: Europe appeared larger than South America, North America larger than Africa, Greenland larger than China, when the opposite was true. In the latest, equal-area map, Africa was a massive elongated yellow, Britain a rosy insignificance. Somewhere in this vast yellow, near the blue that marked the flow of the Nile, was the life she had been exiled from.

She knelt and sat on her heels to look more closely. The familiar names of towns, in black type against the yellow, moved her. Kassala, Darfur, Sennar. Kadugli, Karima, Wau. Inside her was their sheer dust and meagreness. Sunshine and poverty. Voices of

The drink was sweet and sharp with lemon and nutmeg, the spirit so strong that it caught at the throat. For the first time in weeks the night was clear, and our breath made pale dragons in the still air. A thin mist hung over the river, lit here and there by the lights from the boats.

'Pantoufle wants some too,' said Anouk, pointing at the pan of spiced wine.

Roux grinned. 'Pantoufle?'

'Anouk's rabbit,' I told him quickly. 'Her – imaginary friend.'

'I'm not sure Pantoufle would like this very much,' he told her. 'Perhaps he'd like a little apple juice instead?'

'I'll ask him,' said Anouk.

Roux seemed different here, more relaxed, outlined in fire as he supervised his cooking. I remember river crayfish, split and grilled over the embers, sardines, early sweetcorn, sweet potatoes, caramelized apples rolled in sugar and flash-fried in butter, thick pancakes, honey. We ate with our fingers from tin plates and drank cider and more of the spiced wine. A few children joined Anouk in a game by the river bank. Armande came down to join us too, holding out her hands to warm them by the brazier.

'If only I were younger,' she sighed. 'I wouldn't mind this every night.' She took a hot potato from its nest of coals and juggled it deftly to cool it. 'This is the life I used to dream about as a child. A houseboat, lots of friends, parties every night ...' She gave Roux a malicious look. 'I think I'll run away with you,' she declared. 'I always had a soft spot for a redheaded man. I may be old, but I bet I could still teach you a thing or two.'

Roux grinned. There was no trace of self-consciousness in him tonight. He was good-humoured, filling and refilling the mugs with wine and cider, touchingly

'No, I wish she hadn't touched the letter. It puts me in an awkward position. The police think I'm behind the theft.' He placed his head on one side with pathos.

'Do they know? Who told them?'

'The man who lost it, I suppose.'

'That's Ronald Bridges,' Alice said. 'He takes fits. What's in the letter?'

'Not very much. It came with the cheque Freda sent me and it says "Please use this money to further your psychic and spiritualistic work. I leave it entirely in your hands" – something like that. An unprincipled woman. I should never have taken the money.'

Alice moved in a desperate access of temper against Freda Flower and her own doubts; she sat up violently and began to throw back the covers and reach for her clothes at the same time. 'I'll go and see that woman right away. I'll frighten the wits out of her –'

'No, no,' Patrick said.

'I'll tell her it won't be you who's going to gaol, it will be her that's going to Holloway if she stands up before the magistrate and says you forged that letter. I'll tell her, and she can see for herself, that I'm pregnant, and I'll say, "What right have you," I'll say, "to come between me and the man I love with a court case? You should have thought it over," I'll say, "before you sent him that cheque –"

'No, no, keep calm,' Patrick said.

'I'll say, "You should have thought it over, and no doubt you thought he would marry you when he got his divorce, you ridiculous old bag," I'll say, "now he's devoted the money to a cause and distributed it among the spiritualist students, now you say you didn't give it to him," I'll say. And I'll say, "Mrs Flower," I'll say, "you know the police are prejudiced and everyone's prejudiced against spiritualism, and they will

Glancing at the final sheet Rachael said, 'Oh—' She tossed the sheets down, moved over to the window of the room to look out at downtown San Francisco. 'I think you're going to get thrown by the last one. Maybe not; maybe you don't care.' She had turned pale and her voice shook. All at once she had become exceptionally unsteady.

'Exactly what are you muttering about?' He retrieved the sheets, studied them, wondering which part had upset Rachael.

'Let's open the bourbon.' Rachael carried the paper bag into the bathroom, got two glasses, returned; she still seemed distracted and uncertain – and preoccupied. He sensed the rapid flight of her hidden thoughts: the transitions showed on her frowning, tense face. 'Can you get this open?' she asked. 'It's worth a fortune, you realize. It's not synthetic; it's from before the war, made from genuine mash.'

Taking the bottle he opened it, poured bourbon in the two tumblers. 'Tell me what's the matter,' he said.

Rachael said, 'On the phone you told me if I flew down here tonight you'd give up on the remaining three andys. "We'll do something else," you said. But here we are—'

'Tell me what upset you,' he said.

Facing him defiantly, Rachael said, 'Tell me what we're going to do instead of fussing and fretting around about those last three Nexus-6 andys.' She unbuttoned her coat, carried it to the closet, and hung it up. This gave him his first chance to have a good long look at her.

Rachael's proportions, he noticed once again, were odd; with her heavy mass of dark hair her head seemed large, and because of her diminutive breasts her body assumed a lank, almost childlike stance. But her great eyes, with their elaborate lashes, could only be those of a grown woman; there the resemblance to adolescence ended. Rachael rested very slightly

‘IT’S MY OWN INVENTION’

and the battle ended with their both falling off in this way, side by side: when they got up again, they shook hands, and then the Red Knight mounted and galloped off.

‘It was a glorious victory, wasn’t it?’ said the White Knight, as he came up panting.

‘I don’t know,’ Alice said doubtfully. ‘I don’t want to be anybody’s prisoner. I want to be a Queen.’

‘So you will, when you’ve crossed the next brook,’ said the White Knight. ‘I’ll see you safe to the end of the wood – and then I must go back, you know. That’s the end of my move.’

‘Thank you very much,’ said Alice. ‘May I help you off with your helmet?’ It was evidently more than he could manage by himself; however, she managed to shake him out of it at last.

‘Now one can breathe more easily,’ said the Knight, putting back his shaggy hair with both hands, and turning his gentle face and large mild eyes to Alice. She thought she had never seen such a strange-looking soldier in all her life.

He was dressed in tin armour, which seemed to fit him very badly, and he had a queer-shaped little deal box fastened across his shoulders, upside-down, and with the lid hanging open. Alice looked at it with great curiosity.

‘I see you’re admiring my little box,’ the Knight said in a friendly tone. ‘It’s my own invention – to keep clothes and sandwiches in. You see I carry it upside-down, so that the rain can’t get in.’

Centra and behind the church car park, snagging thin plastic bags in its current, or where the river goes next. Who would tell her? The only time she leaves the house is to go to school, and the enforced Mass trip on Sundays, and to Connell's house when no one is home. She knows how long it takes to get to Sligo town – twenty minutes – but the locations of other nearby towns, and their sizes in relation to Carricklea, are a mystery to her. Coolaney, Skreen, Ballysadare, she's pretty sure these are all in the vicinity of Carricklea, and the names ring bells for her in a vague way, but she doesn't know where they are. She's never been inside the sports centre. She's never gone drinking in the abandoned hat factory, though she has been driven past it in the car.

Likewise, it's impossible for her to know which families in town are considered good families and which aren't. It's the kind of thing she would like to know, just to be able to reject it the more completely. She's from a good family and Connell is from a bad one, that much she does know. The Waldrons are notorious in Carricklea. One of Lorraine's brothers was in prison once, Marianne doesn't know for what, and another one got into a motorcycle crash off the roundabout a few years ago and almost died. And of course, Lorraine got pregnant at seventeen and left school to have the baby. Nonetheless Connell is considered quite a catch these days. He's studious, he plays centre forward in football, he's good-looking, he doesn't get into fights. Everybody likes him. He's quiet. Even Marianne's mother will say approvingly: That boy is nothing like a Waldron. Marianne's mother is a solicitor. Her father was a solicitor too.

Last week, Connell mentioned something called 'the ghost'.

Marianne had never heard of it before, she had to ask him what it was. His eyebrows shot up. The ghost, he said. The ghost estate, Mountain View. It's like, right behind the school. Marianne had been vaguely aware of some construction on the land behind the school, but she didn't know there was a housing estate there now, or that no one lived in it. People go drinking there, Connell added. Oh, said Marianne. She asked what it was like. He said he wished he could show her, but there were always people around. He often makes blithe remarks about things he 'wishes'. I wish you didn't have to go, he says when she's leaving, or: I wish you could stay the night. If he really wished for any of those things, Marianne knows, then they would happen. Connell always gets what he wants, and then feels sorry for himself when what he wants doesn't make him happy.

Anyway, he did end up taking her to see the ghost estate. They drove there in his car one afternoon and he went out first to make sure no one was around before she followed him. The houses were huge, with bare concrete facades and overgrown front lawns. Some of the empty window holes were covered over in plastic sheeting, which whipped around loudly in the wind. It was raining and she had left her jacket in the car. She crossed her arms, squinting up at the wet slate roofs.

Do you want to look inside? Connell said.

The front door of number 23 was unlocked. It was quieter in the house, and darker. The place was filthy. With the toe of her shoe Marianne prodded at an empty cider bottle. There were cigarette butts all over the floor and someone had dragged a mattress into the otherwise bare living room. The mattress was stained badly with damp and what looked like blood.

'IT'S MY OWN INVENTION'

'But the things can get *out*,' Alice gently remarked. 'Do you know the lid's open?'

'I didn't know it,' the Knight said, a shade of vexation passing over his face. 'Then all the things must have fallen out! And the box is no use without them.' He unfastened it as he spoke, and was just going to throw it into the bushes, when a sudden thought seemed to strike him, and he hung it carefully on a tree. 'Can you guess why I did that?' he said to Alice.

Alice shook her head.

'In hopes some bees may make a nest in it – then I should get the honey.'

'But you've got a bee-hive – or something like one – fastened to the saddle,' said Alice.

'Yes, it's a very good bee-hive,' the Knight said in a discontented tone, 'one of the best kind. But not a single bee has come near it yet. And the other thing is a mouse-trap. I suppose the mice keep the bees out – or the bees keep the mice out, I don't know which.'

'I was wondering what the mouse-trap was for,' said Alice. 'It isn't very likely there would be any mice on the horse's back.'

'Not very likely, perhaps,' said the Knight: 'but if they *do* come, I don't choose to have them running all about.'

'You see,' he went on after a pause, 'it's as well to be provided for *everything*. That's the reason the horse has all those anklets round his feet.'

## Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?

on the fore-part of her feet, and her arms, as they hung, bent at the joint: the stance, he reflected, of a wary hunter of perhaps the Cro-Magnon persuasion. The race of tall hunters, he said to himself. No excess flesh, a flat belly, small behind and smaller bosom – Rachael had been modeled on the Celtic type of build, anachronistic and attractive. Below the brief shorts her legs, slender, had a neutral, nonsexual quality, not much rounded off in nubile curves. The total impression was good, however. Although definitely that of a girl, not a woman. Except for the restless, shrewd eyes.

He sipped the bourbon; the power of it, the authoritative strong taste and scent, had become almost unfamiliar to him and he had trouble swallowing. Rachael, in contrast, had no difficulty with hers.

Setting herself on the bed Rachael smoothed absently at the spread; her expression had now become one of moodiness. He set his glass down on the bedside table and arranged himself beside her. Under his gross weight the bed gave, and Rachael shifted her position.

‘What is it?’ he said. Reaching, he took hold of her hand; it felt cold, bony, slightly moist. ‘What upset you?’

‘That last goddamn Nexus-6 type,’ Rachael said, enunciating with effort, ‘is the same type as I am.’ She stared down at the bedspread, found a thread, and began rolling it into a pellet. ‘Didn’t you notice the description? It’s of me, too. She may wear her hair differently and dress differently – she may even have bought a wig. But when you see her you’ll know what I mean.’ She laughed sardonically. ‘It’s a good thing the association admitted I’m an andy; otherwise you’d probably have gone mad when you caught sight of Pris Stratton. Or thought she was me.’

‘Why does that bother you so much?’

‘Hell, I’ll be along when you *retire* her.’