

# JANUARY

## Writing from in-person sessions which take place on Wednesdays

People share (non-obligatory) homework at the start of each session before further writing, reading and discussion. (Apologies, some items reformatted to save space):

### Cracker (Will)

There it sat, a shiny cylinder of mystery and luck.  
The mystery part is what will wait for you inside and who will get it. The luck part is a chance of 50/50 of it being in your favour and being of any use than more clutter in the junk drawer, which you could class as a cracker itself as it holds all sorts. Somethings useful, some not and others that hold their own mystery of what is it, and what does it do, and does it still work, like the ten batteries or that torch.

### Cracker (Pauline)

It's a cracker. It's the way I tell them  
Always said with an Irish accent.  
I love the Irish brogue, could listen to it forever.  
But I digress.  
Another cracker would be the one we spread thickly with butter, but I can't eat thickly spread butter anymore, it's bad for my heart.  
Then there's the TV detective who always solved his case.  
And last, but not least, there is the lowly Christmas cracker that is always filled with surprises of the kind that is usually, err, well, trash.  
Note that I said lowly, not holy – holy is something else entirely – Holy is the real reason for Christmas.  
Though it doesn't seem very holy to me these days.

### Perfect day (Sheena)

I wake up slowly. Through the curtains I can see a sliver of sun. I think of the day ahead: I have no list of things that have to be done today, no memories of things I said I'd do and haven't, no pressing-mails, no doctor's appointments. I turn off the news on Radio 4 and put on 2: I hear my favourite song. I put on walking boots and take my rucksack, put in a bottle of water and a chocolate bar. Eat my favourite breakfast and make some coffee. I talk to the cat, she had a good night. The postman calls with a letter from a friend; I put it in the rucksack to read later. I open the door and step outside. Which way shall I go? I'll let my feet take me.  
The start of a perfect day.

### A strange freedom (Mark)

Freedom comes in many forms  
Not all of them obvious at first –  
Sleeping with new friends in new dorms  
Or waking with a fresh burst

Of energy. A new regime  
Of timings set to the land  
Instead of the tired old routine  
Of factory whistle and the hand

Of the shop-floor clock ticking  
So slowly away. A new day  
That is urgent but flickering  
With winter sun, or birdsong in May

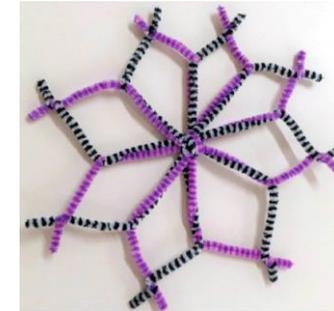
### Feast (Viv)

Festivities. Vegetables, Turkey  
Eastern star, from Heaven  
Sweet treats, Cakes & Puddings  
Feast meats from Heaven.

Festivities during Xmas & Easter,  
Sweet treats, like Roses, Heroes.



We received a **donation** from **Springfield School**, raised on their Roald Dahl Day; the **bring & share Christmas lunch** was a great success; and recent artwork featured **Christmas** and **New Year**.



## JANUARY DETAILS

### You, our participants

currently contribute to our rent in Fountain Street and help keep our services going with donations, large and small, in cash and in kind.

Vitality, you are also supporting one another.

**Be gentle (Bill)** Be gentle, tread softly when others don't care, Be gentle, look deeply when they don't have a prayer  
Be gentle, speak kindly till you touch the deep part, Be gentle, go slowly, just give them a start  
Be gentle, be patient hard though it be Treasures lie buried neath branches and trees  
Diamonds when polished shine like a dream, You may find lasting friendship and lo there is cream.



#### Contact details:

c/o Leek Health Centre,  
Fountain St., Leek, ST13 6JB (Andy collects mail weekly)

**Phone: 01538 528708**

**New mobile: 07760 138395 (now on a better connection)**

Email: [info@borderlandvoices.org.uk](mailto:info@borderlandvoices.org.uk)

Website: [www.borderlandvoices.org.uk](http://www.borderlandvoices.org.uk)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1398672493722468>

Borderland Voices contact: **Andy Collins: working from home**

**Shortest day (Jane)** The sun's rays only attempting to shine upon us today. Then it's taking an early night. Then will come the darkness; the night will draw in earlier, earlier than it ever does, to come and play its tricks of the night, to turn shadows into monsters and howls into screams. For the night does enjoy playing its tricks, especially on the shortest day when it has longer hours to play.

**Energy (Mary)** Don't have a lot. Sit around. If I can get out to a class, that's different. That gets me on my hind legs and out the door. Terrible temptation to watch too much telly. But even sitting, what's going on in my cells. They're all abuzz. Swap this with that they say; burn this up so we can GET ON. Even when this lazy article is just sitting there we, and all our friendly bacteria and phages and the giant cells that patrol her lungs and gut are at it. Keep this body going and one day it might get off its backside and do something useful in this wonderful world.



# Borderland Voices

24 years of arts for mental wellbeing



## The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

### Newsletter JANUARY 2022

A HAPPY  
NEW YEAR

**In-person sessions, Leek Health Centre, on Wednesdays.**  
**Every Wednesday (apart from Jan 5<sup>th</sup>): 10.30-12.30 Creative Writing; 1.30-3.30 Expressive Art.** All welcome.

For guidelines on **finding the venue** and **sensible precautions** once inside, email [info@borderlandvoices.org.uk](mailto:info@borderlandvoices.org.uk)

**Images** inside: bring & share **Xmas lunch; donation** from Springfield School; recent **artwork**

**2022 calendar** available **£3, or £4.50 incl. p&p.**

**January art: 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> with Frances Naggs – colour mixing** using acrylics