



Year 5

Memoir



The Writing For Pleasure Centre
- Promoting research-informed writing teaching

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Superglue

I was desperately sitting in front of the incubator watching the duck eggs. Although I knew they weren't ready to hatch, I still sat there waiting.

One afternoon, when I came back from school, my dad told me one of the duck eggs had started hatching. I was so excited until... I found out it was about two or three weeks early. My parents had to superglue it together. We all thought it wouldn't hatch but we were wrong. We all knew that if it hatched the duck lurking inside would be called Superglue.



Soon, the ducks started poking their tiny, orange beaks out of their little turquoise house. First to hatch was an adorable little male duck, who we called Gamima (at the time we thought he was a female). The second one to hatch was small compared to Gamima. We called her Daffy. Over the course of the next few days, the other eggs started to hatch – all of them except Superglue.

Finally, his egg started to form a lightning bolt across the top and a small beak pecked its way through the shell. As soon as I laid my eyes on him I knew he was my favourite. In some way he was the most special. He was a small pile of adorable, yellow fluff and I loved him dearly.

Soon, I and the rest of my family were allowed to hold the ducks. It was the most amazing experience I had ever had. They had the beautiful shape and were too soft to describe! They closed their eyes when you stroked them and leant their head to my body. As I stroked their head, I felt their soft skull beneath their warm feathery skin. They were so light they could fall over if a light breeze hit them. Their tiny webbed feet gripped to my relaxed fingers.

That weekend it was time for the ducks to have their first adventure outside. It was a beautiful, hot summer's day and the blazing sun shone over our garden. Daisies had started sprouting from the grass and apples were hanging from our small apple tree. The ducks were all so happy. After an hour outside, it was time for the ducks to go back into the house. My dad scooped up six of the ducks and took them inside. The only one left was Superglue who was wandering around in the garden. Me, my mum and my brother were watching him. The minute we turned our backs away, there was the sound of a faint quacking and a fox running. A fox had superglue in his mouth. When my dad tried to catch the fox, it ran out of the garden and disappeared.

Superglue was gone forever.

No one's day but ours

We will explain it and deal with the consequences later, I thought.

I looked out the window and watched the bright sunshine reflect off my dad's car. I felt a warm glow inside. Waving goodbye, I knew that today was going to be just perfect. It was no coincidence perhaps that I could see the Chattri memorial from that very same window, the promised land almost teasing me.

I grabbed my backpack and met my friends by the postbox, just as we had planned. "Have you got the goodies?" I asked Joe excitedly. He told me he had, and from the rustle I could hear as we walked, I believed him with all my heart. Joe always had a way of making you feel reassured, perhaps it was his height. Joe was taller than the rest of us. He had sharp, white blond, messy hair and he looked trustworthy to parents.

We were impatient to get to the Chattri so decided to use our 'shortcut'. Looking back now, it was not so short at all. Climbing all the fences and the barbed wire was difficult. Navigating the barbed wire seemed, at times, to be like fighting against the ocean's tide. "Maybe we should have just used the paths?" Dan suggested, sarcastically. Dan was the shortest in our group, and at our age that meant something.

He was also incredibly skinny and had comically thin, hairless legs. They seemed to hang down from his shorts like twigs.

"Where would the adventure be in that?" I said, in such a way that I did not even believe myself. We still had a way to go and it was cold and lonely in the shade of the valley. The warmth and the light shone on the Chattri – right at the top of the hill – but not on us.



When we finally got there, Joe opened his rucksack to reveal what we had all been waiting for. It was a feast to the eyes of any eleven-year-old boy. It was all the treasures a boy of that age could dream of. There were chewy strawberries and snakes and what felt like endless packets of sweets. There was also the largest cola bottle you could get! We held them in our hands and raised them up to the clear blue skies – like a victory cry.

This was it. This was freedom. We were free, free to do what we wanted. We simply wanted to be together and be alone. We wanted to scream and shout, to play silly-fools. We played together that day, as if the clock had stopped. This was our day.

My lasting impression will always be standing at the top of that hill. I ripped at a chewy-snake, stretching it away from my back teeth, with my eyes shut and head back. I heard my friends rolling down the hill into the thick and welcoming grass. I felt like a king. King of my world, with my comrades there to support me. Soaking up the day, we did not need or want for anyone or anything – least of all our parents.

“We will explain it and deal with the consequences later,” I whispered into the silk of that afternoon breeze. I wonder where that afternoon breeze is now.

By Ross Young



Long Time, No See

As I sat in my car, I leant my head back and closed my eyes as tight as I could. I let my mixed feelings wash over me. Scared, excited, shy but most of all happiness. All these feelings pointed to my half-brother Edward, who I was going to see today for the first time in three years.

The car halted so fast my stomach almost flew out of my mouth. I was shocked out of my thoughts and back to real life.

I was tingling all over when I stepped out of the car. From one look up I noticed the day had turned around – just like my feelings. The day had changed from dark and gloomy with clouds of worry fogging up my mind to bright, blue skies with a hint of sunshine. But still (even with a hopeful feeling in my heart) a small cloud was just not shifting from mind. I jumped down into the mud. My shoes splatted but I was only concentrating on keeping my head down for as long as I could (without being noticed). My cheeks felt like they were at melting point and my legs were shaking like jelly.

When I couldn't keep my head down any longer, I slowly but surely tilted it up. My younger brother (Joe) had rushed up to Edward and was confidently babbling away and squeezing him to death. I could not quite hear what he was saying but I was sure that I would not be able to speak to Edward that easily. Joe has always been care-free and confident like that.

Edward was taller than I had ever imagined and he cast a long shadow over the front garden. He had a small but noticeable beard and a sleeve of tattoos down one arm.

He lifted his gaze over Joe and caught my eye. I wanted to rush back into the car and hide there forever but there was something drawing me towards him. Joe finally let go and went to talk to my dad – who was standing in the doorway behind Edward.

Suddenly, I did something very unexpected. I rushed up to Edward and squeezed him till I was sure he would burst. I felt comfortable in his arms like all I had had to do was hug him and it was possible everything would have been ok. I looked into his eyes and smiled "Hello Edward," I said shyly. He stared straight back into mine and grinned till his face almost split. "Hello Emma," he replied. I released him and grabbed his hand, dragging him inside for many more adventures together.

I've learnt that you have to grab the moments while they last and make the most of them. I hope you do too.

Splash!

Picture to yourself a hot, dusty, dirty classroom, in a hot, dusty, dirty school, in a hot, dusty, dirty old city somewhere in the middle of England. It's a baking hot afternoon in July 1976, and there hasn't been a drop of rain for months. In the city, there are standpipes for water at every street corner. In the countryside, fires are constantly breaking out in the parched cornfields. It's a strange time, and strange things happen.

Back in the classroom, flies come in through the open windows and buzz around the heads of thirty children who are flopping listlessly at their desks. I am trying to read them a story, but no one is really listening, and one or two are even nodding off in the heat. Suddenly, my friend, who has the classroom next to mine, pops her head round the door and says, "We're going to the park to find some shade. Want to come?" So we do.

In the park there is a large paddling pool which, miraculously, still has two feet of water in it. The children make a beeline for it, take off their shoes, and dip their toes in the coolness. I hitch up my maxi-dress and do the same. Suddenly, there's a splash. Someone's sitting right in the middle of the pool. It's one of my boys! Did he slip? Was he pushed? Or did he throw himself in?

There's a silence.



All the children look at me, wondering what I will do. I stand there, uncertain. Then there's another splash. Someone else is in! Suddenly I can't do anything but laugh. This is the signal for a spontaneous act of mass immersion. Some fifty children, fully clothed, follow each other into the pool, like lemmings jumping off a cliff. The pool is filled with wriggling, writhing, screaming, shrieking, splashing bodies. It's glorious and exhilarating. The best time ever.

Later, we struggle back to school in a dripping, steaming crocodile, the girls with their long black plaits oozing water and their silky salwar trousers clinging to their skinny legs. It's not until we are almost there that I begin to have a few worries. Will the Head want an explanation? And how will the parents take it?

The children go straight home, and I think it's best if I do, too. My friend from the other class is anxious about the consequences, and I have to reassure her that I will take the rap if there is one, which I am increasingly sure there will be. I spend an uncomfortable evening expecting a barrage of complaints from the parents in the morning. But, amazingly, there was not a single one.

By Felicity Ferguson

Saying Goodbye!

I slowly trudged out of my house. The house I would never again laugh in; never again cry in. The house I would never again eat in; never again sleep in. Mum heaved our suitcases out of the house and into the Grandpa's van. My eyes started watering.

It was a rainy day, as there is always horrible weather in Manchester. We lived on a street with a dead end. Our house was on the right side at the end of the road next to the tall cobble wall. My cousins lived opposite us. I took once last glance at the house I loved, but would never see again.

I didn't understand why this was happening (as I was only 3 and a half) but I knew what was happening,

"Mum, why do we have to leave Dad?" I pleaded, hoping she would change her mind of leaving Dad and stay with him

"Because we are." Mum said sharply. I turned around, Dad was at the front door. I ran across the gravelly path and into Dad's arms.

"Do you promise you will write to me?" I asked Dad.

"Promise." He replied

It felt as if my heart broke in two like a piece of paper being torn to shreds. I was trying to hold my sadness in, but it just came all over me. My sadness gushed out of me and I burst into tears. I squeezed Dad tight.

Why does it have to be like this? I thought.

"Come on Aleena, get in the van" Mum called. I scooted over to her, and I clambered into the van. I shut the door. I looked out the window and I saw Dad waving. I could faintly hear his voice saying Goodbye!

As his voice died away, so did my hope. Would I ever see him again, I thought to myself.

The Melting Sky: I Wasn't Scared

The wind became sharp quite suddenly so we decided to head back to the car. The tread under my feet felt strange as we left the silent beach across the dunes.

We scrambled into the car just as we always did. We didn't know what we were about to see - a memory that will last a lifetime was forming behind us and none of us even knew it. Behind us was the sun; we paid it no mind. Aaron was driving far too fast (as usual) and had the music on far too loud (as normal).



What I saw next took my breath away. I'd never seen something so beautiful in all my life. In the wing-mirror, it looked like the sky was melting. The most amazing colours were smeared across the sky. Oranges, pinks, reds, yellows and purples lit up the air like an artist's palette. As I sucked in a breath, the ceiling to the world was burning bright and proudly. When the others began to notice - no one said a word. Aaron just screeched the car to a sudden halt and we just sat there for a while. At first, it was difficult to turn around and watch the flames in full flight across a losing day's light. A fight it loses every night. Instead, I continued to focus on the wing-mirror.

This was one of the first times that I realised just how vast, grand and awesome the world was and just how small my place (and my time in it) is.

We got out and as I stood there with my arm around my best friend - watching the sky melt together - I felt incredibly fortunate. We were brothers in arms; never to be ended by an ending day but rather brought closer together, forever.

I wrote about this because whenever I see oranges, reds, pinks and purples in the sky it takes me back to that little moment I had in New Zealand all those years ago. I was a lot freer back then - the sheer size of the sky surprised and excited me - I wanted to jump into it, swim around - suck it all in. I guess, when I look at sunsets now, I'm too respectful and afraid of them - that - or I think about how different I've become since then.

By Ross Young