

Postgraduate/Distance Learning Assignment Coversheet & Feedback Form

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For completion by the student:

Student Name: Jane Elizabeth Manley

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Yes/No

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Module title: Writing Workshop: Researching
and Writing to a Single Focus

Module tutor: Dr. Ros Hudis

Assignment title: *An Afternoon Confection*

Assignment due date: 17.01.2022

I confirm that this is my original work and that I have adhered to the University policy on plagiarism.

Name Jane E. Manley.....

Assignment Mark

1 st Marker's Provisional mark	
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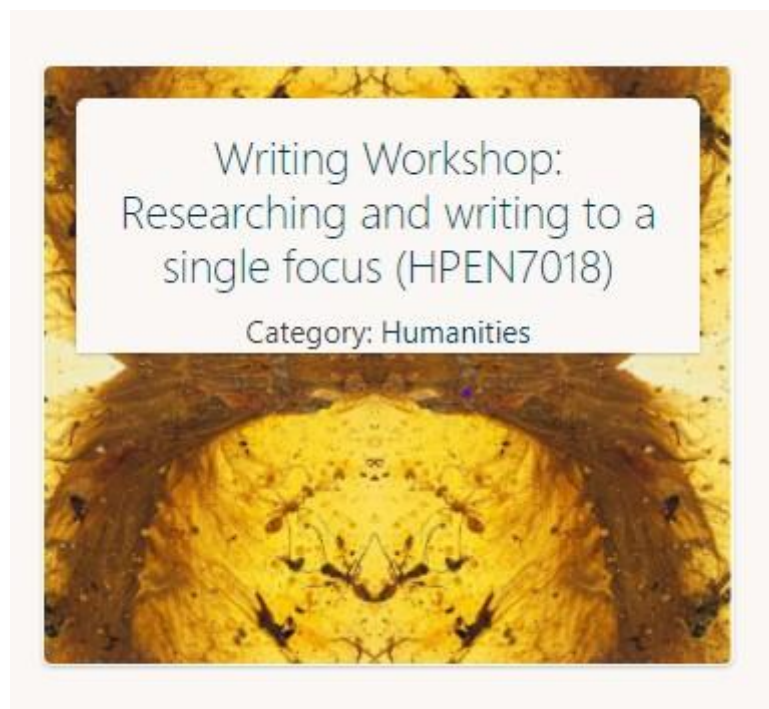
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Date:

Jane Elizabeth Manley

0202616



HPEN7018
Writing Workshop:
Researching and Writing
to a Single Focus

January 2022

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An Afternoon Confection



Weymouth and Melcombe Regis seafront 1857

The Weymouth Perigrination

To walk

Definition; to pass through on, or over on foot

(verb) in the sense of stride

Synonyms

Stride	Promenade	Pace
Wander	Amble	Trek
Stroll	Saunter	Hike
Trudge	Take a turn	Tread
Go	Traipse	Ramble
Move	Toddle	Tramp
Step	Make your way	Jaunt
March	Mosey	Parade
Advance	Plod on footslog	Stretch
Peregrination	Tour	Constitutional
Airing		

On the Beach

I can't remember whose idea it was last night to go for a 'refreshing early morning swim' in November, in the rain, in Weymouth. Positive affirmations bubbled from their mouth; it's good for circulation, will tone your skin, make you feel alive, clear any hangover, relax those muscles, and nauseatingly, spiritually cleanse your aura.

It is now seven a.m., I'm on my own after cleansing my aura, and feel a distinct lack of dopamine or serotonin flooding my parasympathetic nervous system. I am cold, skin blue underneath my extravagantly priced Dryrobe new thermal socks and boots. I cannot swim, and the unicorn swimming aid next to the chi chi Weymouth deckchairs mouths 'sixty odd and you still need plastic around your middle, ha ha'. Despite her cheek and the deckchairs' Sunday supplementness, they make me smile.



Ursula my Unicorn



The Jester

My backside is damp, it rubs on the synthetic lining of the robe when I sit down, polishing dry dimpled skin, extra Oil of Ulay later I promise. I wait to feel the promised natural high, nope, nothing. Fifteen minutes later and sod all, out comes the thermos full of full cream hot chocolate, tastes good. Pondering on the gospel of the health gods, hacks and gurus, I think

I want a cigarette but haven't smoked for forty years,

feel the texture of the packet

listen to the noise your finger makes when tapped on the cardboard

once the cellophane is gone,

I exhale.

On my own on the beach apart from screaming seagulls, and kittiwakes that fight over cold chips and the discarded detritus of last night's partying. As I change from swimwear into dry clothes under the robe, any drone footage would show a giant purple sea creature, heaving and undulating in its death throes, before vomiting out a multi hued being onto the sand.

Mother as you lie discarded on the shore
with amethyst hued carapace
stretched and abandoned on the water's edge,
do not fear for me
my life's adventure can now begin.

Trying to find my bearings, I turn full circle to face the promenade, with luck a couple of friends will be up there, gesticulating some form of apology. Nix, nothing doing, on my own again then. Once my Bluetits (literally) one and only experience debris has been packed up into the holdall, I trudge up the beach towards the hotel. Bending down to retrieve a sock trying to abscond a man's voice enquires,

'Do you always recite poetry to yourself at this ungodly hour of the morning?', a well spoken voice, formal and strangely old fashioned.

'What?'

'Pardon me Madam, how ungentlemanly of me speaking to a bowed head'.

My decrepid back finally straight I look him in the face, it is so bizarre I shut my eyes and open them again. O.K. I'm awake, not hungover or stoned, no film crew around so this is not a cheap reality show in the making, I must have had a stroke and half my brain is non functioning.

'Do you always recite poetry to yourself at this ungodly hour of the morning?'

'What poetry?' I replied to the fancy dress guy who must have won the prize for best costume last night.



George III by Allan Ramsay
painted 1738-1820

Take him out of the frame and that is him, I know there is no sense to this you'll just have to go along with it like I did. I had no idea who he was or why he was there. The beach was still empty apart from the two of us, so there was no one I could walk up to and make my escape. His eyes were very blue with skin even paler than mine, the wig although beautiful was lopsided with mousey hair escaping in curly tendrils. It did not cross my mind he was an hallucination.

'The one about your mother and cigarettes, but I do not recognize who cigarette may be'.

Had I been speaking out loud, no, my words were deafening in my head, but only in my head, and they weren't written down so he couldn't have read them. So this is how Mum and Dad saw the world, they didn't just lie there, the MRI lied. Might as well enjoy the ride until the synapses reignite or finally stop sparking.

'Before this goes any further, who the hell are you, where have you come from?'

'I am George number three, and I come from over there', he pointed to the end of the Esplanade which ran to the left of us.

'One of the flats above the shops or the hotels?'

'No no no, do I look like a man who lives in such hovels?'

'Where down there then?'

'There, on the top of the plinth, the one the grateful inhabitants erected to celebrate my fiftieth centenary, it says so at the bottom'.

I knew where he was talking about now, a very kitsch memorial it is too, all bright cobalt blues and an embarrassment of gold leaf. George has a view along the Promenade to the north east, it must be unrecognizable from when he first stood there.



George III Golden Centenary Memorial

King George III, he looks pretty good up there for a man of seventy one, then I suppose having a sculpture or portrait commissioned was the same as being photoshopped now. Nothing changes does it, flunkies and sycophants to pander to every whim, politicians ducking and diving like eels in a pool. Press reports with untruths proclaimed across the land, vilified and pitied, mad as a hatter, breeds like a rabbit and America has been lost. Poor George.

'Madam, we have not been formally introduced. I am, was when I died, George Third King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland' and Elector of Hanover'.

'What do I call you? I don't know the etiquette', better humour the man, he could be dangerous.

'Take your pick dear lady, George, William or Frederick'.

'I'll call you Billy then'.

'Delightful, Char called me that, so informal'.

'Char?'.

'My liebbling wife'.

'Is she around this morning?'. Hopefully she is and can take him home so he can sleep last night off.

'Not for two hundred years ago give or take a decade has she been around, I miss her'.

He looked so sad, I felt sorry for my companion, aparition, ghost or whatever he was.

'And your name?'.

'Call me Ellie'.

'What sort of name is that?'.

'Elfreda Louisa, for my grandmother, call me Ellie'.

Sitting on an English beach having travelled from Wales
to party with Irish and American family,
which leads to an imaginary conversation with a dead German English King
discussing the nomenclature of my Italian Nonna.
The world is and always has been small.

'Ellie that is not a poem so a statement I presume?' Billy asked.

'In my world it is whatever you wish it to be, but it is impolite to read other people's
thoughts whatever they are'.

'I will try to refrain, but it will be difficult as it is the only human interaction I have left
open to me now'.

'Just don't tell me if you do, then we'll get along fine'.

FFS, I have just told a manifestation of a damaged brain not to read my thoughts, plus it
would seem some of these thoughts are scrambled into some sort of I don't know what. Make
a plan Ellie, do something. I decide to accept it for now, and make the most of this aberration
until the paramedics arrive and take me away to wherever the nearest hospital is.

'Right then Billy, I've got thirty minutes spare until I have to leave the beach, do you fancy
a short stroll?'.

'I am unsure what that is'.

Of course, the man is German.

'Ausflug, spaziergang, wanderung, rundg.....'.

'No no no, stop, I do not know stroll' he interrupted, 'my english is perfect, but eighteenth century english'.

'Do you want to take a walk?.

' Yes, and I want all the words for walk in this time now'.

'Are you sure, there are a lot'.

'My memory is prodigious, tell me once and they will be with me for ever', he said imperiously.

'Stride wander stroll trudge traipse promenade toddle perambulate pergrinate and'.

His face was frowning, eyes widening, he appeared annoyed.

'That is far too many I think, I shall use pergrinate, it sounds, it sounds knowledgable'.

'Fine, but you can't pergrinate in ermine dragging on the ground or white breeches, lose the wig as well I think'.

'There are more befitting clothes in my bathing machine, follow me'.

So I did. There is a very fancy white hut sitting to the side of his plinth, he ran up the steps, bolted the door, and came out ten minutes later dressed as a 1930s holiday maker. Sunday best suit and tie, pork pie hat and brown brogues, surprisingly dapper I thought.



Billy's bathing machine



Billy looking dapper

'Can I leave my stuff in the hut please Billy?', I didn't want to lose my swimming gear and unicorn, or carry them, all I needed was the phone in my jeans pocket.

'On one condition'.

'And what might that be?'.

'My animals need to be peregrinated with us'.

My spectre has pets now, I wonder if they are also spectral, ghostly dogs who answer to Ludwig or Hund.

'What animals might they be, do you have a royal pair of dogs, leopards or alligator then?'.

'Sarcasm Ellie, tut tut, so unbecoming in a young woman', it surprised me how high one eyebrow could be raised.

'The girls need an airing', Leonie, Unity come', he whistled.

And they did, a lion and unicorn, yes, a lion and unicorn, freshly painted and gilded, from the bottom of Billy's plinth. I now realize my brain must be shutting down as I die, the paramedics will be too late. Now let me introduce you to Leonie and Unity, you can see them in the bathing machine picture above if you squint.



Unity



Leonie

You will see them as immobile lumps of Portland stone, to Billy and I they were alive, red blooded creatures, both with a leash between their jaws which he attached to the gold collar. God, I hope we won't need doggie bags.

'No, they are not real Ellie'.

Myths are now reality,
the coils in my brain are alive with legends allegory fable and saga,
Greeks and Romans shoot up synapses
while unravelling my hypocanthus,
the light is bright.

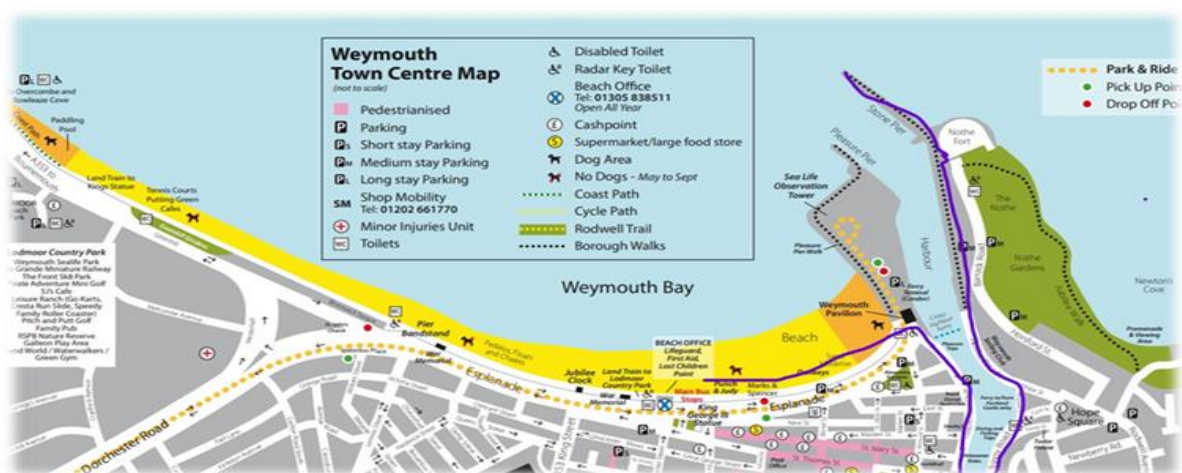
'Stop that and tell me which way we are going', he instructs taking a map from an inside jacket pocket.



Dorsetshyre 1611

'Billy really, you expect me to read this?'.

'Worth a try, I gave up centuries ago', an impressive shrug convulsed his shoulders. I opened the phone, scrolled down and found a tourist map of Weymouth and the walking trails. 'We'll use this'.



Weymouth Town Centre Map with our route highlighted in purple

The Peregrination Begins

Here I am then, an old lady walking along Weymouth's Esplanade at nine thirty in the morning with a dead Hanoverian King in 1930s costume, accompanied by a lion and unicorn.

'Don't worry Ellie, look I'm still on my plinth, no one will see me or the animals, just you talking to yourself', he laughed so hard I expected him to choke. Although I was technically lying on the beach dying, I had some dignity left, so put my earbuds in. Well just the one, the second must have fallen out when I got changed, damn, never mind, it'll still look like I'm on the mobile.

Billy asked me if I knew who the ships in the bay belonged to, his navy, I was informed, had been the best in the world and back in the day he loved going to Portland, the naval base to take the salute.

'Just look at her, wasn't she beautiful'. Not sure I like this development; he reads my mind and now he can put images into my head. 'I loved that ship, one hundred guns, three decks, biggest in the world. Rochefort, St Vincent, magnificent at both battles, a jewel, such artistry in her lines, the Colonial war'. He was back in the past.



HMS Royal George

by John Cleveley the Elder 1757

'That didn't go well did it, you lost'. 'Lost what?'. 'America, the USA, the States, just as well I reckon, you wouldn't like what it's become'. He huffed and walked on. I followed thinking about the three liners moored in the bay yesterday, one of them was the Princess Victoria making a stop before heading to Barbados, wish I was. I'm a nerd, I have a maritime app and

binoculars ok. Failing that, coffee and breakfast in the Sandbar Café would do, my stomach is growling.



Weymouth Punch and Judy

Billy had stopped to watch the Punch and Judy couple put up the stall, a proper old-fashioned candy-striped tent. They wave, and I wonder if someone is inside, manipulating their internal mechanisms. That way only the puppets know who are the humans, and who is carved from wood. My brain is shutting down faster than I anticipated. Never mind, it will give the paramedics time to have an ice-cream before they drive back.

'Leonie, Unity, put them down' screams Billy, as his wayward sovereign pets drag the confused stars of the show towards the sea. For a pair of carved French oak, eighty-year-olds, the noise they make is phenomenal. Yep, I can now tune into the thoughts and voices of inanimate objects, my day just keeps giving. 'Joyce, the wind has blown them down the beach, quick, get them'. As poor Joyce looks confused, I run down and pick them up for her, glaring at the wayward lion and unicorn. They don't get a run out that often, it's bound to happen I suppose.



Punch and Judy Huddled Together on the Sand

We continue past the donkey kiosk and Sand World, then stop outside the Pavilion just before you turn for the pier. He wants to walk down onto the Pleasure Pier, I don't.

'I'm the visitor here, the one who's alive, I get to choose. I want to see the Fort before I go home tomorrow'. I stamped my foot like a two-year-old, or it was it my life flashing before my eyes ready for death? Keep going until you stop woman.

Onto the Quay

'Ellie, of course, I will show you what the harbour used to look like, then we can stroll around the gardens and down to the Stone Pier. The views are exemplary, and with luck the town bridge will be raised on the way back, it's fascinating to watch'. I mumbled an apology for my outburst.

I have no belief in gods or the afterlife,
now I wander paths with a King
a gilded lion and the fabled unicorn.
Am I asleep in a Chaucerian tale
or is this a precursor to hell?

Custom House Quay, full of artisanal cafes, fish restaurants and estate agents, my apologies – real estate brokers or realtors now. The inflated epithet must explain the implausible prices, my widower won't be moving here with the life insurance cover I've got.

'Where did you live Billy, when you were alive that is, did you rent or buy?'.

'Buy, buy, we never purchased Ellie, inherited of course, not here in the town though, too much worry about flooding. Honoured others with our presence instead, we did stay at Williams often though.

'Who was William?

'William, Duke of Gloucester, little brother, one of the many. Built himself a fine, seaside home, bit small when Char and I had all the children with us, the household staff had to be billeted next door. Not over bright my brother I'm afraid, even named the place after himself. Close your eyes for one minute'.

I closed them, as he pulled the visions in your head trick again, mind you what a place to lodge with just you, the wife, fifteen children, and a full complement of servants next door.



Esplanade, Gloster Row & Crescent, Weymouth
1855



Gloucester Lodge now an apartment block
2020s

'Very beautiful we thought, look at it now, people who need to work live there, in apartments, how does one manage in such a confined space. But the view Ellie, the view is sublime, remind me to show you more pictures if we have time'.

The quay was empty of tourists, the coffee shops, restaurants, pubs and galleries still closed. Through the windows, I could see the black aproned staff cleaning and prepping for the visitors who would descend later. What fishing boats are still working had headed out to sea, pleasure cruisers were boarded up for the winter, the street was empty. Billy and I were the only signs of life, I was the only sign of life around I mean.

He asked me if I fancied a swim, when I told him I couldn't he looked disappointed, for all of two minutes that is. 'You don't need to, sit on Unity's back and hold onto her horn, she won't mind'.

That's it then, I'm dead, he knows but is too much of a gentleman to tell me, I don't suppose you can die twice. Unless you believe in reincarnation, and I don't fancy drowning after I've had the stroke, I have no religious, had, no belief about the afterlife, got that wrong though didn't you. Maybe you just keep dying and coming back, don't think I fancy that at all.

'Ellie, be quiet, shut down that overactive brain of yours, do you really believe I would put you in any danger? You are my companion, I merely wish to show you my beloved Weymouth, all of it'.

Into the Water

Accepting my death was much easier than I ever anticipated, hopefully family and friends won't take it to heart too much. I can always leave some sort of sign to say all is well, a feather or rainbow should do it.

Leonie and Unity stand next to a set of stone steps that lead down to the water, quarrelling in Latin I think it is. Billy sits astride the truculent lion; I hesitantly scramble onto Unity grabbing a handful of mane as I can't reach her horn. 'Non ita stricta, non ita stricta, you'll pull it out' she screeches. Bloody classical unicorns, I prefer the Disney version. 'I heard that'.

'Company, on the count of three, one, two, three, JUMP'. And they do, not a gentle hop but a bloody great leap and down into the salty water it, takes my breath away, if there is any of course.

This is how it felt, phantasmagorical, very blue but clear water, the most intense blue. Bubbles of mercurial silver, an intense light radiating out as they burst on our skin with no sound. No effort required as we processed towards the bay, our desire navigated. Fish nodded as we passed, a seahorse saluted, the two jellyfish stand offish.



Unity the Sea Unicorn

Death is a notion in kaleidoscopic colour,
the greys and doubts of life eradicated
when the final breath is done.

Autonomy at last granted to those
who are denied the authorship of their life stories.

'A celebratory poem at last, death has it's bright side for those who still wander as we are able, those souls who cannot wander the earth may disagree', offers a passing flounder. David Attenborough would adore this, I hope he is as fortunate in the afterlife as I appear to be.

For me death is a blast, no gasping, no water up your nose, don't have to squint and 20/20 vision, I recommend it. 'Where are we heading' I shouted to Billy?' Leonie was roaring ahead, get it? Lion, roar, never mind.

' Just around to the Bay, last time I was swimming there, cargo ships were anchored, can't remember what they were unloading. The sound of the sails is so evocative of the old, being alive days'.

It took longer than anticipated, I mean you can walk it in ten minutes. By the time Leonie had stopped to sniff at inviting spots every couple of metres, sunken boat timbers investigated, and three cannon balls on the seabed admired, an hour and a half was gone.

Finally, Billy gestured it was time to surface. Surrounding us was a fleet of ships, the noise was so loud, like sitting in a small cinema near the speakers. Sails cracking, water smacking on wood, animals braying, mooing and baaing, men's voices in every dialect and language you can imagine. Expletives sound the same in every tongue.



The Harbour at Weymouth
by John Thomas Serres 1805

'Well that's not right , we've just come from the harbour, we jumped off the quay, this is way more than artistic license'. Unity and I cantered across the waves until we stood next to him. 'Ellie, Ellie, look at the date, then do the arithmetic'. Leonie was faster than me, 'two hundred and seventeen years ago stupid'. I add dead time traveller to my newly written curriculum vitae. Latin is contagious I'm afraid.

There followed a long monologue from Billy, with frequent interjections from both Leonie and Unity, explaining why it was not wrong. He was there when it was painted, the fey Mr. Serres with his penchant for implausible wigs, and multiple beauty patches daubed for days. Char had a bit of a thing for him he tells me, even after I told her he frequented the molly-house in Cove Row.

'Interesting, but why are they anchored here and not round the corner?'

'Because round the corner as it is now, was not then. It was no more than an inlet with a small stone wall, far too small for these fine vessels'.

'Then why don't' I began. 'Enough, you are not of a nautical persuasion, whereas the sea runs through my veins, I understand'. Unity muttered to me, 'artistic license dear girl, just humour his Majesty'.

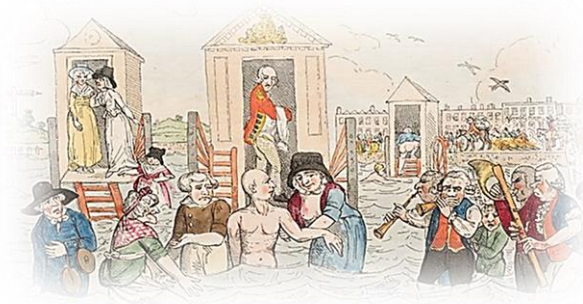
'Do you want to see what went on over on the beach in front of the Royal Crescent over there, Mr. Serres was fond of watching rather than painting the view from our drawing room window'. Very smooth change of subject there Billy boy.



King George's Vacation Etchings

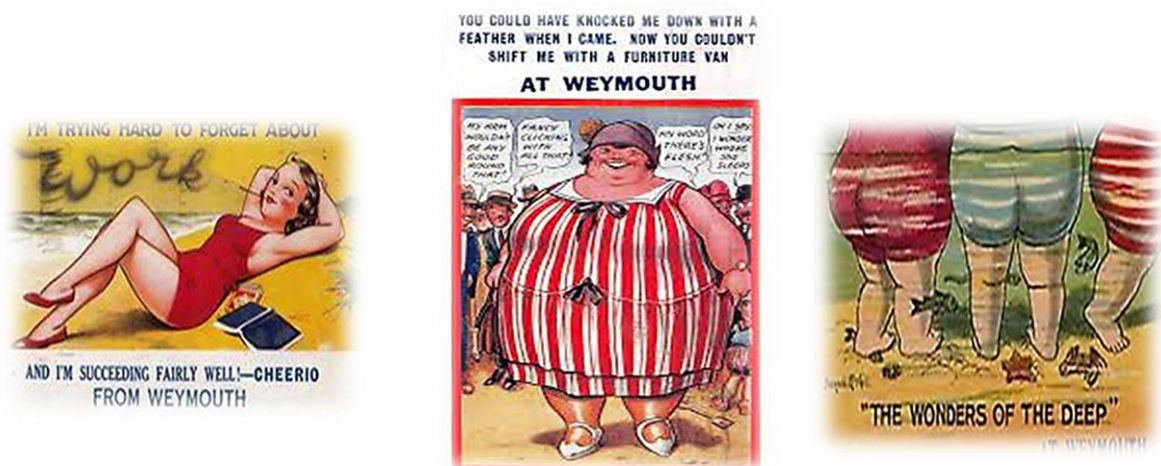
While I told him it looked great fun for the ladies, but swimming costumes and wetsuits are much more practicable, he looked wistful. 'Not fun at all, it was purely for their health, all those female disorders of the body, they are a secret no man wishes to made aware of. Does this remain in your time?'. Nodding, I told him it most definitely did.

'How are delicacies of the mind remedied, are seawater purges, leeches and enemas still administered as in my day?' Of course, poor man, the madness that caused so much upset and trauma to his family and the country. For the first time, I see a picture uninvited, it makes me shiver.



King George is Purged in the Sea at Weymouth

'Enough of this, it was in the past Billy, time for a smile before we go back to the harbour and carry on to the fort. It's my turn to provide the visuals, bit before my time, but you will chuckle. Here you are, Nonna thought they were common, while Grandad sent them to all his brothers'.



'Rusticus' from Leonie, 'for the peasants', complains Billy, 'don't bother again', said Unity. 'Back to the quay then, a quick peek at the Yacht Club, it is the Royal Dorset after all; a unanimous decision made, and we parade along the Esplanade back to Custom House Quay.

Royal Dorset Yacht Club

My short time in the company of royalty must have given me delusions of grandeur, I was anticipating yachts, grand coats of arms and elegant surroundings. It is tidy enough I suppose, but looks like an old chapel, one up from the harbour master's office, not a yacht moored anywhere near it. 'Used to be the sailor's chapel', Billy starts to speak, but is cut off by Unity mid flow. 'Wasn't it just, got to keep the workers away from the gentle folk, much more useful when it was the baths. Should have seen the fun had there, those Maiden Street whores made a killing.'

'Maiden Street, are you winding me up?', a leftist unicorn and Maiden Street housing the prostitutes who serviced the baths. 'No, were you taught nothing about your life at school? We, us', waving a hoof towards Billy and Leonie, 'were under the impression your generation knew everything'. The Disney franchise needs to change its mind about how it portrays unicorns, sweetness and light they are not.

I have a strop and stomp off up the quay away from the three of my companions. A thought stops me in my tracks, I might not be dead after all. It is conceivable I banged my head somehow and concussed myself or, I have suffered an acute onset of dissociative identity disorder. Five minutes later and the new possibilities seem as implausible as being dead, I'll just have to wait and see what happens. I might never find out, so better make the most of it.

Wondering round the chandlers, two of them who sell the same whatever the things are called, I'm bored and missing Billy. 'I know what you would enjoy', he is at my side smiling. 'Give me your arm'. We cross the cobbles and take a right turn into St. Thomas Street, 'I have something in mind for you Ellie, an adventure that will be wondrous, leave a lasting impression on you, there will be no pain'. In front of us is a tattoo parlour. 'Osprey's tattoos, it was the Swansea team you supported, it seemed a perfect fit for you'.

'Why?'

'Why not?'

'They are tacky, meaningless and not for me'.

'Said like a real gentlewoman, but humour me, this is a naval town with a long tradition of such decoration. I can remove it at will if you so wish afterwards. Please humour me'. 'Only if I choose the artwork'.

The shop was empty, as clean as an operating theatre, all the accoutrements of the tattooist's craft stacked in neat boxes on bookshelves. I looked for the pattern books. 'You won't need those' Billy assured me, 'whatever you desire, I can commission, delve deep into your imagination'. Harder said than done, so much art to consider, so many artists I might offend, tomorrow I could meet da Vinci or Van Gogh, nothing is impossible in my new deathly life. Mr. Osprey I'll call the tattooist, inspired me when I started to rummage through his inks. Hidden behind all the dreary black and navys, was a stash of gloriously pigmented coloured ones. Next to his pad of watercolour paper, tubes of gold, silver and opaline oils caught my eye, the magpie in me grinned. 'It is obvious something has spoken to you Ellie, let me see'.

I stared into his eyes to pass my vision over. 'But the gold must shine, and the pigment be iridescent, like dragonfly wings or the aurora borealis.



The Dancer by Gustav Klimt
for the right arm



Delicate Flowers by Kyle Ripley
for the left arm

And they did, wrapped around my arms like vines on a skin smoothed by exotic unguents.

Outside the miracle house, George's golden girls mouthed their appreciation of my transformed arms, we were friends again, I think. 'Shall we advance towards the fort, while your work dries?' enquired my favourite Hanoverian.

'Yes we must, my cousin told me it is worth the walk'.

'Pray tell me, what is their expertise in this military architecture?'

'She was married to a naval officer, had to leave the north and make a new life for the family in Weymouth. He left, she stayed, is still here'. Billy wanted us to pay a visit, but I convinced him it would kill her, and I couldn't have that on my conscience.

A debate on which way to go started, four creatures talking at once. We can swim, back down the quay underwater then turn south around the pleasure pier and across, over the town bridge, get the ferry, walk over the water and tens of variations of the same. Leonie got a naval chart from her collar bag to reiterate her favoured route, large claws tapped at the paper, making holes when she remembered to retract them.



Admiralty chart 2268

'Look' said the golden lion, teeth bared and snarling in a whisper, 'it is just plain to see, if you are of a naval persuasion that is, we only have the one choice. Ellie may not be dead, or her cadaver could be seen walking through the town. Far too risky now the tourists are littering the pavements with their boots, cameras and drinking as they talk. I wish I could savage and eat just one'. She sighed deeply, I think she meant it.

'Could we fly across the water?'. Three sets of eyes rolled simultaneously, although Unity's travelled in opposite directions, it was agreed. I loved to fly, parascending was better than having an engine though, the noise of the wind wrapping around the helmet, birds coming over for a nose at the ungainly apparition who needs to pull strings on a silk wing to navigate, with a landing that makes the shearwaters look graceful. If I'm dead I don't have angel wings, this can only be Hades. Pretty good fun so far, hope it stays like this.

Thoughts before you fly

Cross your heart and hope to die if you tell a lie,
God strike you down with forked lightening for an untruth,
hell and damnation for eternity
the preachers scream in their crow cloaks
But so far death looks sweet to me.

There is a possibility that out there
where I am wired to the machines than read brains,
my story is already told.

Translated into strings of binary code
for viewers on twenty-four-hour T.V.

Take three Portland stone effigies,
one dead, two impossible to believe,
add one cadaver and mix with rigour.
Decorate with a sugar coating and strips of gold when baked,
a confection fit for a King.



Fit for a King, Lion, Unicorn or Cadaver

North Parade and Nothe Fort

'Time to have a go on your own, I will stay by your side to give support and advice should you ask for it', Billy informs me solemnly,' Leonie will fly in front, Unity at the back, like a frigate formation from the French Wars'. What a thoughtful threesome they are. 'Not so much thoughtful as concerned,' said Unity. 'Between Whitewater Rides and Hope Square on the other side, there is a rip in the space time continuum. If you slip through, you're gone for good and despite your woeful lack of Latin, I would miss the chat'.

Under the Town Bridge is our point of departure, Leonie jumps into the air, Billy follows and beckons me, I don't know what to do. 'Just put your arms out towards me and concentrate, look up not down'. What a fantastic sensation, just how it feels in a dream, without being frightened of falling out of the sky. The only noise comes from my whoops of delight, and the three others with me, a cormorant and kittiwake clapped their wings as we passed. 'Hold onto my horn,' Unity instructed, 'the tear is coming up - now'. It looked like a fine purple silver ribbon hanging below a cloud, a beautiful, deadly ribbon, if you see one, move away, fast.

Billy took my hand; we'd be mistaken for Peter Pan and Wendy if we were visible. 'What am I seeing down there, is it where you walked when you could still breathe?' He ticked off a few on his fingers; brothel, brewery, brothel, victualler, brewery, hostelry, barracks, rope makers and more, used to be less prettified than it is now. He certainly didn't approve of all the pastel-coloured holiday houses, even the ones with the blue plaques on stating George 3rd stayed here. 'I had a public house named for me, and of course the family swim pools were just down there next to the pontoon, but live here, absolutely not'.



The George Public House after George's Death



The View the other side during his lifetime

We did a circuit around Nothe Gardens, brown and dingy in the damp November light, then a few loop the loops over Newton's Cove to see if we could scare any dingy crews. We didn't, but a King Charles spaniel yapped at us when I went too low. My first landing was spectacular, right in the centre of the Fort complex, even Leonie was impressed.



Fort Nothe from Barrack Road

The animals went off for a run, these imaginary beasts have far too much energy, Billy and I went to inspect the place. 'Why did you need to build a fort here, was it to protect Weymouth from the French'. 'No and yes' he started slowly as though to a child. 'I didn't but granddaughter did, did you know spoke German? I was appalled when news reached me, all the trouble I went to with her father to embed the correct mother tongue'.

'No reason to get so het up about it, she's an icon now, and in theory we're at peace with the French now, all her forts are tourist attractions and houses'. George in King mode was a grumbler, time to change the subject. 'My turn to show you some views I discovered yesterday when I was still alive, give me your hand'. 'I prefer linked arms, as you see I have no gloves on'.

Nothe Parade runs alongside the base of the fort, then onto the Stone Pier, we slid down the grass and onto the concrete, walking slowly to the end of the pier. On the way he laughed at the instructions for people who fished there, it was good to see him smile. All were incomprehensible to the non-fishing part of society, apart from the one about not casting out onto anyone's boat I suppose.

See what you think.



I had visions of seagulls being caught in nets, wings plucked for feathers to make flies to tempt the perch and tench swimming by. This being Weymouth, they will be able to read the signs and keep out of the way. Or there could have been a spate of pleasure craft passengers being reeled in, the council are remiss in the lack of information offered.

We waved at the boys in the rowing boats as they practiced the oars at arms manoeuvre, don't drop an oar or Leonie will have it away I told Billy. From the point you can see right over Weymouth Bay and the Esplanade, it is sight to behold, I need to get back there.

'Because I need to know, I have to see what has happened to me, if I am staying here, wandering the cosmos as a lost soul, I have to Billy', this mind reading thing is still unnerving me. 'There's a couple of things I want to do first, , with you and the girls in case I do go back'. He nods, positive it will be fine with both of them, he whistles to bring them back.

'Walk across the water from here to the end of the Pleasure Pier with my feet in the water, see the sausage man outside the butcher's in New Street, then drink a banana milkshake in the café behind your plinth'. My list is short so it won't take long.

This time he holds my hand as we jump over the fence and into the water. It is cool on my feet and makes me feel alive, apart from the fact I do not sink, and am talking to a 1930s suited man, with lion and unicorn circling us. There is salt on my lips and the tattoos glimmer when a shaft of sunlight breaks through the clouds. At the other side we climb rather than jump up onto the Pleasure pier, then actually skip down to the Pavilion , like two kids, still hand in hand. A couple of wrong turnings and then Unity finds the butchers, I wish the people in the street could see her, she is so beautiful. Unlike the sausage man, his charm is what he does for Weymouth, makes you smile, some kids cry, and local dogs get extra love and somewhere to stay with the money fed into his tin. Leonie is suspicious and goes up to sniff him.

The End or Maybe A New the Start



'Oy, get than bloody thing off me, go on you heard me, yes I can see you all, stop gawping for crying out loud, still got to pay for a selfie, put the money in or sod off'. We did fast, in case his pal Elvis from next door was as chopsy. I thought it best not to bother with the milkshake.

Back on the beach, my body was gone, nothing to show I'd ever been there. 'Don't panic, lets go back to the bathing hut and have a think', Billy commanded. Two sofas and large dog baskets had appeared, 'Good, they arrived, thought something like this might be needed, let's have some ideas'.

'I'm dead'. 'You cannot prove that' said Billy.

Unity decided I was at the local hospital and my friends had gone home. Leonie was non commital but my friends should be ashamed of themselves.

'What do you want to be, do you want to go home, stay with us until you make your mind up?'.

'I'm not dead, maybe half dead'. 'Where is the other half then?' Leonie demanded, bored already.

I jumped as the mobile pinged in my back pocket, 'Where are you? we're waiting in Wetherspoons' from the non show Bluetit. 'You are going to leave us, it is the correct course of action' he seemed a little sad. Unity nuzzled me with her horn. 'You promise to visit when you can'. 'I promise'. The three of them waved me off.

Thirteen and a half minutes later I was back, for good. The motorcyclist said the sun was in his eyes, I didn't get to the other side of the road.

Billy told me later that my adventure had been a trial run to see if we'd get on together. They knew I was scheduled to die in the next month, and as they all liked me, my time of death was brought forward.

So, if you see me and my amazing tattoos around Weymouth take care, you may be next.

Image Directory

Pg	Image	Information	Accessed
7	Unicorn float	Taken from https://www.amazon.com/	04.01.2022
"	Deck Chairs	Taken from https://www.celfwaith.co.uk/	04.01.2022
9	Portrait of King George 3 rd	Taken from http://www.artnet.com/	04.01.2022
10	King on his Plinth	Personal Photographic Collection	
12	Bathing Hut	Personal Photographic Collection	
"	1930s Suit Advert	Taken from https://fashionhistory.fitnyc.edu/	04.01.2022
13	Lion and Unicorn	Personal Photographic Collection	
14	Dorsetshyre Map 1611	Taken from https://uniquemaps.co.uk/	04.01.2022
"	Town Map	Taken from https://uniquemaps.co.uk/	03.01.2022
15	H.M.S. Royal George	Taken from https://www.royalnavalmuseum.org	29.12.2021
16	Punch and Judy tent	Taken from <u>Weymouth in Dorset - a Royal Favourite Valery Collins (experiencedtraveller.com)</u>	29.12.2021
"	Punch & Judy puppets	Taken from https://paradeantiques.co.uk/	29.12.2021
18	The Esplanade, Gloster and Royal Row 1855	Taken from http://www.rareoldprints.com/	29.12.2021
"	Gloucester House Today	Taken from http://www.thehouseshop.com	29.12.2021
19	A Sea Unicorn by Pegatit 2012	Taken from https://www.renderosity.com	27.12.2021
21	George's etchings	https://georgianera.wordpress.com/	24.12.2021

22	King George is purged in the sea at Weymouth	Taken from https://www.greatbritishlife.co.uk	24.12.2021
“	Saucy postcards	Taken from https://www.postalmuseum.org/	22.12.2021
24	Gustav Klimt The Dancer	Taken from https://www.gustavklimt.net/	24.12.2021
“	Delicate Flowers by Kyle Ripley	Taken from https://www.pixels.com	24.12.2021
25	Admiralty Chart 2268	Taken from https://www.nauticalia.com/	24.12.2021
26	The Castle Cake	Taken from https://thegraphicsfairy.com/	02.01.2022
27	The George Public House	Taken from https://weymouthhistory.org/b	02.01.2022
“	Schooners at anchor in the quay	Taken from https://www.weymouthmuseum.org.uk/	29.12.2021
28	Fort Nothe	Taken from https://www.yourhampshiredorset.wedding/	28.12.2021
29	Fishermen's Warning Signs	Personal Photographic Collection	
30	Hot Dog Man	Personal Photographic Collection	