

Lucid and Liminal Dreaming for Creative Writing:
Interdisciplinary Investigations and Experiments

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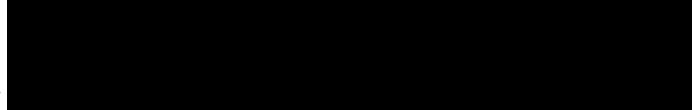
Abstract

This research aims to enhance creative writing practices through dream-focused interventions. It combines the fields of psychology, aesthetics, and creative writing, and consists of four studies. Study 1 reanalysed Naomi Epel's interviews with 26 writers, demonstrating how non-lucid dreams contribute to idea generation, creative problem-solving, and writing processes. Study 2 was an unstructured interview study, which expanded these findings through interviews with 26 writers, investigating the unique benefits of utilising liminal and lucid dreaming in creative writing. The final two studies were experimental and consisted of teaching writers liminal and lucid dreaming induction techniques, combined with creative techniques for dreamwork in fiction and poetry writing. These two studies compared short stories and poetry written before and after such interventions to examine their effects. Study 3 (n = 29) involved an 8-week intervention that took place online to examine how lucid and non-lucid dreaming practice may enhance the writing process for fiction, focusing on symbolism, emotional expression, worldbuilding, character development, and plot development. Study 4 (n = 16) consisted of a 6-week in-person intervention with weekly workshops, combined with sleep lab experiments, to explore the impact of liminal, lucid, and non-lucid dreams, N1 sleep hypnagogic experiences, and targeted dream incubation on poetic creativity. The findings of the four studies support the hypothesis that dreams can serve as a cognitive tool for creative writing, enabling unique associative thinking that leads to creative idea generation and problem solving. The research concludes with an updated Hayes and Flower Cognitive Process Theory of Writing incorporating dream-driven processes, and proposes a new model based on these findings, titled *The Dream-Inspired Model of Creative Writing (DICW)*. The thesis concludes with recommendations to writers for how they can utilise dreams for writing and creativity.

DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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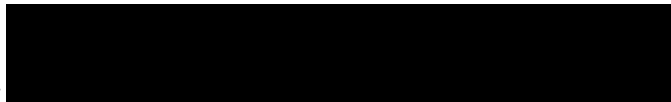


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STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote(s). Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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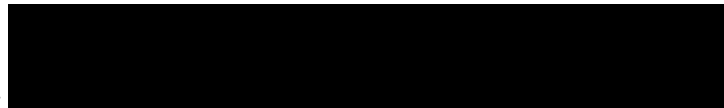


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I hereby declare that I do not have bar on access.

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Definitions and Abbreviations

LD – Lucid Dreaming / Lucid Dream

MILD – Mnemonic Induction of Lucid Dreams (LD induction technique)

WBTB – Wake-back-to-bed (LD induction technique)

REM - Rapid Eye Movement

NREM - Non-Rapid Eye Movement

AUT – Alternative Uses Test (used for measuring creativity in the sleep lab)

Project Story – short story produced by a participant as part of Study 3.

Before poem – poem written before sleep in a sleep lab session as part of Study 4.

After poem – poem written after sleep in a sleep lab session as part of Study 4.

Introduction

The Oxford Dictionary defines creative writing as "writing, typically fiction or poetry, which displays imagination or invention (often contrasted with academic or journalistic writing)." This research will focus on both fiction and poetry and the cognitive processes involved in producing this kind of writing. Subsequent sections in this section will discuss the definition of creative writing and the different cognitive models, place the domain of creative writing within the larger context of creativity and the corresponding cognition, and finally discuss dreams and their current and potential function in creative writing. This will be followed by four studies that will test the hypotheses set out in this section, and a general discussion on the novel approaches of using dreams to improve creative writing and general creativity.

1. What is Creative Writing?

In the literature on psychology research, there are multiple definitions of creative writing, especially concerning cognition involved in producing a piece of creative writing. In psychology, creative writing is often defined as a cognitive and emotional process that involves the use of imagination, originality, and expressive language to convey thoughts, feelings, and narratives. The focus is on how creative writing engages various mental processes, including idea generation, problem-solving, memory, and emotional expression. Key perspectives include Graham Wallas (1926), who outlines a model of creativity that includes preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification. In the context of creative writing, these stages reflect the cognitive processes writers undergo, from gathering and internalising information to the eventual production and refinement of written work.

James C. Kaufman and Robert J. Sternberg (2010) discuss creative writing as a form of divergent thinking – a process of generating multiple, unique solutions to a problem. Their perspective emphasises the role of cognitive flexibility and the ability to make novel connections between ideas. Furthermore, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (2009) presents a concept of "flow" that is relevant to creative writing, as it describes a state

of deep immersion and engagement in an activity. In the context of creative writing, flow is achieved when writers are fully absorbed in their work, losing track of time and external distractions, which enhances creativity and productivity. Finally, Scott Barry Kaufman and James C. Kaufman (2009) provide a comprehensive look at how psychological factors influence creative writing. They define creative writing as a complex interplay of cognitive, emotional, and motivational processes that result in the production of original and meaningful written works. Personality traits, such as openness to experience, and cognitive processes, like working memory and associative thinking, contribute to creative writing.

1.1. Cognitive Models of Creative Writing

As will be elaborated in section 2, creative production, particularly in writing, is not a linear process but involves recursive and nonlinear stages. Early models that depicted writing as a sequential progression (called stage models) have been replaced by more fluid, composition-based models (Skains, 2018). In these models, writers draw upon long-term memory, generate and refine ideas, and develop plans, with these processes interacting to produce a creative text. These are known as hierarchical models of composition.

1.1.1. Cognitive Process Theory of Writing

The most frequently cited model in creative writing literature is Flower and Hayes' (1980) process theory (Figure 1). This theory shifted focus from stage-based models to a process-oriented approach, highlighting the internal mechanisms writers use during composition. Flower and Hayes describe writing as a set of interrelated processes rather than discrete stages. Their model identifies three primary elements: the task environment, the writer's long-term memory, and the writing processes.

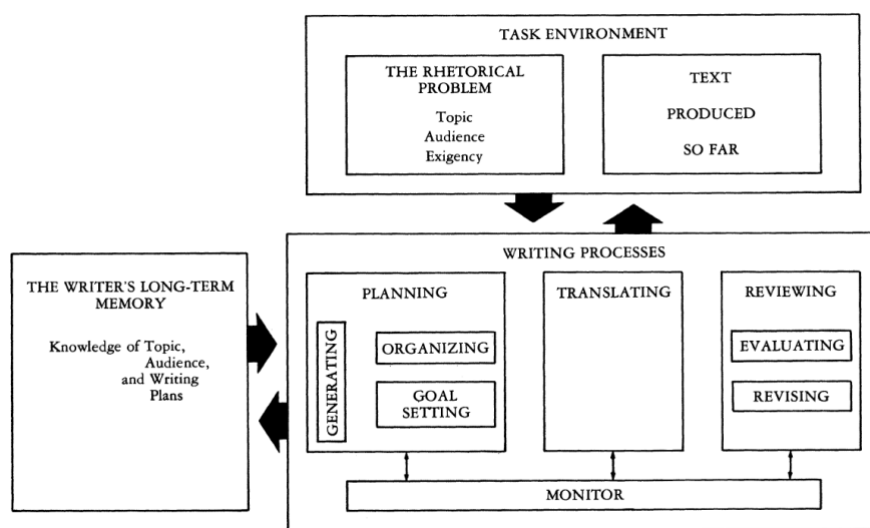
Task Environment: This involves defining the rhetorical problem, identifying the topic, audience, and exigency, and interacting with the text produced at various stages.

Writer's Long-term Memory: This includes knowledge of the topic, audience, and writing plans. Pre-existing knowledge is crucial as it serves as the foundation for new ideas.

Writing Processes: Controlled by a monitor, these include Planning, Translating, and Reviewing, each with its own subprocesses.

Figure 1

Flower And Hayes' (1980) Process Theory.



Flower and Hayes found that writers engage in goal-directed processes, continuously redefining and recreating their goals as their knowledge evolves. Planning involves generating new ideas by accessing long-term memory, organising these ideas, and developing subordinate goals. Translating transforms these ideas into written language, while Reviewing involves evaluating and revising the text. These processes are recursive, allowing writers to cycle through them multiple times during composition.

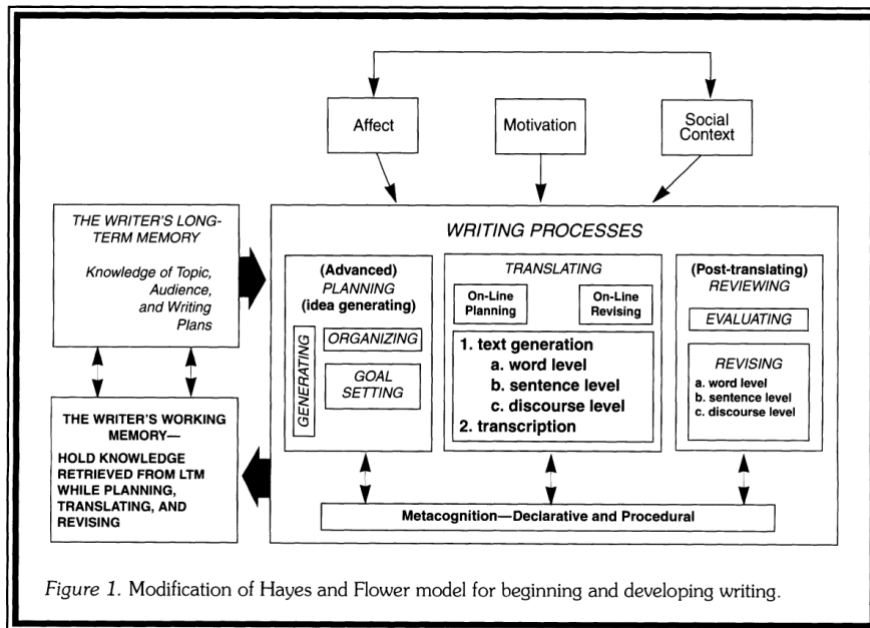
1.1.2. Flower and Hayes' Process Theory Revised

The original process theory by Flower and Hayes has undergone several revisions but remains widely used. Later modifications, such as Berninger et al.'s (1995) model

(Figure 2), expanded the task environment to include text generation and transcription, and emphasised the role of working memory in planning, translating, and revising.

Figure 2

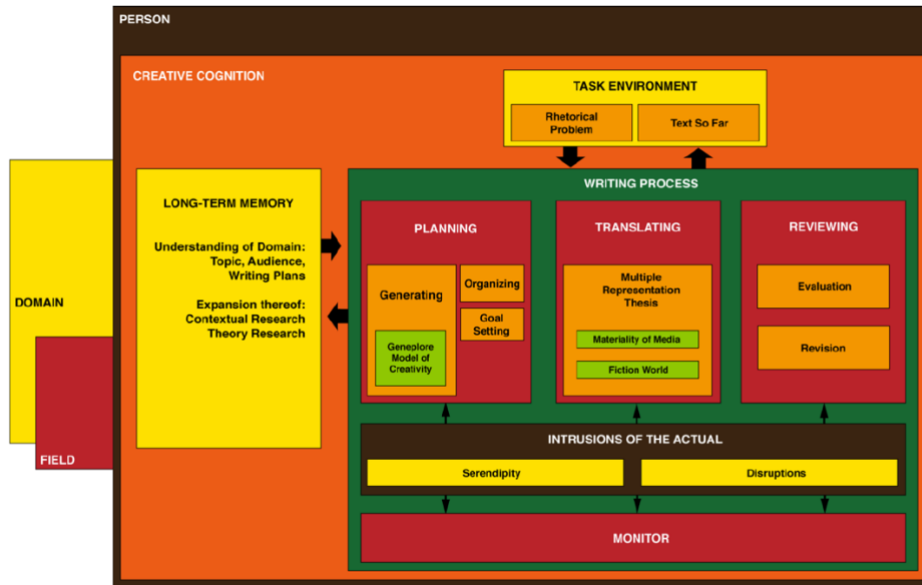
Berninger et al. (1995) Proposed Modification of Flower And Hayes' (1980) Process Theory.



Another modification is Lyle Skains' (2018) Practitioner Model of Creative Cognition (Figure 3), which integrates elements from previous models and adds a complex network of processes. Skains' model emphasises multimodal composition, suggesting that planning processes benefit from various forms of representation beyond language. This model also introduces the concepts of domain and field, which interact with internal processes externally.

Figure 3

Lyle Skains' Practitioner Model of Creative Cognition (2018).



Skains critiques Flower and Hayes for not addressing the origin of ideas within their model, a significant aspect of creative writing. While Skains does not provide a solution, subsequent sections will explore models that offer insights into this origin.

1.2. Creative Cognition

Regardless of the specific origin, it is widely accepted that ideas are generated by weaving together concepts from memory in novel ways. Ward and Lawson (2009) discuss fundamental cognitive processes of creative cognition, which operate to generate *novel* and *appropriate* ideas, the two conditions for creativity (see section 2). In order to guide originality and believability in the creative writing domain, Ward and Lawson focus on the retrieval of knowledge in both the use of abstraction and specificity.

1.2.1. Abstraction

Like many others, Ward and Lawson state that new ideas come from existing knowledge. They explore a number of studies related to science fiction writing and conclude that a writer accesses pre-existing knowledge when designing, for example, a new alien species, and that their imaginary aliens are more original if they think abstractly while creating them (Ward, Patterson, & Sifonis, 2004). However, one's knowledge can be accessed at multiple levels of abstraction, mainly by following the path-of-least-resistance. In other words, individuals choose strong (obvious) associations or basic-level concepts stored in their long-term memory when they create novel ideas. When this happens, science fiction stories can seem unoriginal, filled with aliens or zombies readers are not interested in reading about.

The authors suggest several ways of saving writers from the limits of this almost inevitable path, such as using a technique of building one's alien species based on "alignable differences" between humans and them, or world-building from a particular set of principles. However, these exercises seem very particular to the story-writing task and demand extensive planning. A model of the function of dreaming proposed by Zadra and Stickgold and discussed in Section 3.1.5. might lead to a solution to this problem, with lucid and liminal dreaming serving as a catalyst for the solution. More on this in section 4.1.

1.2.2. Specificity

Ward and Lawson further argue for the second requirement of creative cognition, and that is *appropriateness to the task* or the *believability*. They acknowledge that while abstract thinking enhances originality, relying on specific concepts enhances the believability of an idea. Sticking to the particular structure of a concept retrieved from memory helps maintain its credibility to readers. They illustrate this with the example of designing a new sport that is overly original and thus impractical. However, they also cite a fictional sport called quidditch in J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter, which, despite its originality, works perfectly within the fictional context and is believable to readers. Thus, a fine line is drawn between abstraction and specificity in order to serve creative expression that is impactful and believable by one's audience.

1.2.3. Combining Concepts

Another way Ward and Lawson see an escape from the path-of-least-resistance is by using a writing tool of conceptual combination. This involves merging separate concepts in the writer's mind to generate a novel concept. Their reasons for using this tool are trifold: the tool is readily available to all people, it produces unexpected properties and possibilities that arise when the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, and it can operate at multiple levels of abstraction.

The problem with this method is that it relies on computers or other objective methods not necessarily tailored to an individual's background knowledge. For instance, a computer can generate two completely unrelated concepts in any person's mind, and a writer will be tasked to create a story with those two main motives somehow internally combined. But as Ward and Lawson state, without the background knowledge of these concepts, the significance of the combination is lost on the writer.

2. What is Creativity?

This section discussed creativity models to establish what is needed for creativity and identify ways a dream model can support or improve these processes at the domain-general level. There are numerous definitions of creativity, none of which is universally accepted as the grand theory. As Kaufman and Glaveanu (2019) note: “Like love or happiness, creativity is everywhere and nowhere in academia.” (p. 27). This ambiguity stems from the complex, multifaceted nature of creativity and how we perceive creative thought. Some argue that labelling someone as ‘creative’ is meaningless without specifying the particular domain or field in which they exhibit creativity, such as creative writing. As will be discussed in subsequent sections, creativity extends beyond simply possessing a ‘creative trait.’ The broad consensus is that ‘general’ creativity, spanning various domains, involves generating ideas that are both novel and appropriate for the task at hand (Barron, 1955; Hennessey & Amabile, 2010; Simonton, 2012; Stein, 1953; Runco and Jaeger, 2012; Mumford, 2003; Walia, 2019). In essence, creativity entails *originality* and *usefulness*.

Kaufman and Glaveanu (2019) highlight the foundational framework of creativity research known as “the Four P’s,” proposed by Rhodes in 1961, which categorises creativity into Person, Product, Process, and Press. This framework examines creative individuals, creative products, and the environments that foster creativity. Thus, some cognitive models of creativity emphasise what is needed to be creative (Person or various personality traits), while others focus on the creative process. The present research focuses on the creative process, specifically how we generate creative products (in this case, creative writing). The process involves generating new ideas by making remote associations and combining seemingly unrelated concepts, seeking unconventional solutions to problems without definitive answers (Benedek et al, 2020; Guildford, 1950). These novel ideas must also be useful to be considered creative. Mednick’s definition emphasises this aspect of the creative process, describing it as “the forming of associative elements into new combinations which either meet specific requirements or are in some way useful. The more mutually remote the elements of the new combination, the more creative the process or solution” (Mednick, 1962, p. 221).

2.1. Cognitive Models of Creativity

In 1926, British psychologist Graham Wallas proposed one of the earliest comprehensive models of creativity as a linear process with four stages: preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification. This process involves defining a problem and gathering knowledge, incubating the problem by diverting conscious thought away (e.g., “sleeping on it”), experiencing a sudden Eureka moment, and finally, evaluating and implementing the solution.

Wallas’ model has since evolved into stage and process theories, which view creativity as a cycle of various stages or processes. Modern perspectives favour process theories over stage models (e.g., Park, 2005), focusing on mental processes rather than the work’s progress. In this section, various models of creativity will be explored, which are applicable to all domains beyond creative writing.

Many process theories build on Guilford’s (1950, 1967) Structure of Intellect model, which identifies two types of thinking: divergent (idea generation) and convergent (idea exploration). The Geneplore model by Finke, Ward, and Smith (1996) expands on this, proposing a generative phase where “preinventive” ideas, which are neither creative nor uncreative in themselves, are captured, followed by an exploratory phase to determine their creative potential. More advanced cognitive models relevant today will be examined here.

Some of the models explored below focus on what is needed to be creative, or the first P (Person) of the Glaveanu’s framework, while others focus on how we create, that is, on the Process. The models that focus on personal aspect are studied because the cognitive perspective of those elements can inform the cognitive process, that is, the “what is needed” includes certain processes a person must undergo in order to be creative. Therefore, investigating these can help us form a clearer picture of how we create.

2.1.1. Confluence Models

Confluence models of creativity emphasise the integration of multiple factors in effective creative production, including social and environmental influences. Prominent theories include Sternberg's (2018) Triangular Theory of Creativity, which concentrates on the individual, Amabile's (2012) Componential Theory of Creativity, which examines factors outside the individual (Weisberg, 2020), Amusement Park Model devised by Baer and Kaufman (2005), and Csikszentmihalyi's (1996) Systems Model of Creativity.

2.1.2. The Componential Model

Devised by Teresa M. Amabile in 1983 and detailed in her 2013 paper, the Componential Model of Creativity examines social and psychological factors essential for creativity. On an individual level, these include domain-relevant skills, creativity-relevant processes, and intrinsic task motivation. Socially, the theory investigates the impact of the environment on creative production. Domain-relevant skills pertain to expertise in a specific creative domain. Creativity-relevant processes involve cognitive styles and personality traits conducive to independence, risk-taking, and new perspectives on problems, along with disciplined work habits and idea generation skills. Intrinsic task motivation is what excites or inspires one to write.

Amabile (2012) defines creativity as “the production of a novel and appropriate response, product, or solution to an open-ended task” (p.3). This model further includes the following sub-processes: analysing and articulating problems, gathering information and skills, generating ideas, testing solutions, and communicating them. For the domain of creative writing, these are better defined in Flower and Hayes' (1980) cognitive process theory of writing, discussed in the previous section.

2.1.3. A Triangular Theory

Robert J. Sternberg's 2018 Triangular Theory of Creativity is an attempt to move beyond Amabile's theory. It builds on Sternberg's earlier three-facet model and the investment theory of creativity he had developed with Lubart. Sternberg first devised a model which defined creativity as a confluence of three facets: intelligence, cognitive style, and personality/motivation (Sternberg, 1988). Three years later, Sternberg worked closely with Lubart, and the result of their collaboration was what they call the daughter of the previous theory, the investment theory of creativity. Discussed in three of their papers (Sternberg & Lubart, 1991, 1992, 1995), this theory proposes that people metaphorically "buy low and sell high" when it comes to creative ideas. These two theories eventually gave birth to the Triangular Theory of Creativity.

This model sees creative achievement as a result of defying the crowd, oneself, and the *Zeitgeist*. Defying the crowd involves challenging professional norms, while defying oneself means overcoming personal limitations and habits. *Zeitgeist* defiance challenges the unconscious field-based presuppositions of the time. Sternberg's "Consummate Creativity" or Kaufman's "Big-C" creativity results from combining all three types of defiance, leading to revolutionary works that change the world.

2.1.4. Systems Model

According to this model, creativity occurs when "a person, using the symbols of a given domain [...] has a new idea or sees a new pattern, and when this novelty is selected by the appropriate field for inclusion into the relevant domain" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, 28). This creative novelty either changes the domain, or transforms it to a new one. 'Domain' encompasses a set of symbolic rules and procedures that identify an area of knowledge, such as creative writing, while 'field' represents the individuals who act as gatekeepers for that domain. 'Person' is used to identify the individual engaging in the creative activity, which Csikszentmihalyi notes requires an internalisation of the system — familiarity with the domain and field in which the creative act is engaged. According to this model, an act, idea, or product is not creative unless it is acknowledged by the relevant domain and field (Skains, 2018). For example, a short story is creative when it offers novelty or changes the domain of creative writing *and* is accepted by experts in the field as creative.

2.1.5. Amusement Park Model

Another cognitive model of creativity that responds to the question of domain specificity is the Amusement Park Model devised by Baer and Kaufman (2005). They suggest that this model helps bridge the gap between general creativity and domain-specific creativity, offering a comprehensive approach to understanding creative processes. This model uses an amusement park metaphor to describe the cognitive process of creativity in four stages: Initial Requirements, General Thematic Areas, Specific Domains, and Micro-Domains.

The Initial Requirements stage includes general factors like intelligence, motivation, and suitable environments necessary for all creative processes, irrespective of the domain. The General Thematic Areas stage focuses on themes that serve as intermediate goals for creative activities, which are more focused than initial requirements but not yet domain-specific. For instance, one could be creative in the arts, in literature, or science, among other fields. A parallel is drawn to the type of amusement park one decides to visit, such as a water park or a zoo. And after we decide which amusement park to visit, we choose a particular park. Similarly, a general thematic area is followed by a specific domain within it, such as writing, music composition, or visual art. Finally, a particular ride in a chosen park is a metaphor for micro-domains. For instance, in the domain of writing, one could choose poetry or fiction writing. Presented in this way is a cognitive model that integrates both domain-general and domain-specific views of creativity.

2.2. Associative Thinking

Recent advances in the study of semantic memory, especially in terms of computational models, raise confidence in the associative theory of creativity. Beaty and Kenett (2023) offer a new perspective on this longstanding theory that defines creativity in terms of creating associations between remote concepts in semantic memory (see also Mednick, 1962; Kenett, 2019; Kenett & Faust, 2019). Suggesting

that associative thinking is at the core of creativity, Beaty and Kenett examine its role in driving the early stage of idea generation. They further investigate how this domain-general cognitive ability relates to domain-specific creative expertise. They found that associative thinking contributed to the creative quality of literary works, mainly short stories (Johnson et al., 2022; Taylor & Barbot, 2001) and poetry (He et al., 2022). The focus is on goal-directed associations, employing both semantic and episodic memory, to create original and effective ideas.

Beaty and Kenett call for further research on how free- and goal-directed association contribute to real-world creative behaviour, as well as how associative thinking can be enhanced through learning. It is said that dreaming minds utilise associative thinking based on distinct concepts from memory, producing these remote associations in novel scenarios. Therefore, the following section examines the nature, function, and role of dreams in creativity in order to respond to the requirements of creativity and the specific domain of creative writing. Following this, dreams will be placed in the creative context with the goal of identifying novel approaches of supporting creative writing and the related cognitive processes.

3. What are Dreams?

There is an ongoing debate about whether dreams serve an evolutionary function or are simply by-products of brain activity during sleep. Modern scientific inquiry has shed light on various possible functions of dreams, supported by several prominent theories.

One perspective argues that dreaming might not have a specific evolutionary function and could merely be an epiphenomenon of REM sleep, as suggested by Hobson's activation-synthesis hypothesis (Hobson, 1999; 2009; Hobson, Pace-Schott, & Stickgold, 2000). This theory posits that dreams result from random neural activity in the brainstem during REM sleep, of which the cortex then attempts to make sense by creating narratives. On the other end of the spectrum, some researchers, like Hartmann

(1995; 1998), believe that dreams can offer therapeutic benefits by integrating emotional experiences and facilitating emotional regulation without the need for a therapist. This theory aligns with findings that dream recall and interpretation can sometimes lead to personal insights and emotional healing. Other proposed functions of dreams are multifaceted, encompassing cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions.

3.1. The Function of Dreams

During the IASD 2024 annual conference in the Netherlands, Michael Schredl, Mark Blagrove, Katja Valli, and Kelley Bulkeley discussed this question in a research panel. The question of whether dreaming has a function or simply a benefit, or neither, remains unanswered. This section explores five influential perspectives, two of which look at the function of dreams that might occur in waking life (dream recall benefits and empathy theory of dreaming including insight) and three of which look at dreaming as providing a function during sleep (simulation theories, dreaming as play theory, and the NEXTUP model). These theories and their pros and cons are depicted in Table 1.

Table 1

Theories on the Function of Dreams: Pros And Cons.

Theory	Description	Pros	Cons
Emotional Regulation and Problem-Solving from Dream Recall (Schredl)	Dream recall helps with emotional regulation and cognitive processing. It can also enhance problem-solving skills and creativity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supports emotional processing and self-awareness. - Encourages reflection and insight into personal challenges. - Empirical evidence links dream recall to problem-solving ability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Benefits only apply if dreams are recalled and reflected upon. - Not everyone remembers their dreams regularly. - Mechanisms of how dream recall aids problem-solving remain unclear.
Simulation Theories (Revonsuo, Valli)	Dreams function as virtual reality training for survival (Threat Simulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evolutionary advantage: practicing responses to threats can 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Doesn't explain why many dreams lack threats or social interactions.

Theory	Description	Pros	Cons
	Theory) or social interaction (Social Simulation Theory).	improve real-life survival. - Social Simulation Theory supports emotional intelligence and interpersonal skill development. - Some empirical support for dreams containing more threats than expected by chance (e.g. Valli et al., 2005).	- Some dreams are abstract, bizarre, or unrelated to real-world skills. - Limited empirical testing of direct benefits.
Empathy & Insight (Blagrove)	Dreams enhance empathy and social bonding when shared with others, functioning as a form of storytelling that fosters connection and understanding.	- Empirical studies support the idea that dream-sharing increases empathy. - Reinforces the social function of storytelling in human evolution. - Dream discussions can lead to self-insight.	- Only a small percentage of dreams are shared. - The function relies on waking life discussions rather than the act of dreaming itself. - Lacks strong evolutionary support beyond anecdotal findings.
Dreaming as Play (Bulkeley)	Dreams serve as a cognitive playground, allowing for free exploration, creativity, and self-expression, similar to play in waking life.	- Dreams can foster creativity and innovation. - Provides a safe environment for experimentation and emotional exploration. - Aligns with theories that play aids learning.	- Difficult to measure direct benefits of dreaming as play. - Not all dreams are playful; many are distressing or confusing. - Lack of strong empirical support beyond anecdotal reports.
3.1.5. NEXTUP Model (Zadra & Stickgold)	Dreams explore weak associations in memory to generate new insights and strengthen emotional and cognitive connections. Dreaming aids in memory	- Provides a structured explanation of why dreams feel strange yet meaningful. - Links dreaming to known processes of memory consolidation.	- New model only published in their book and not peer-reviewed papers, not well tested. - The model suggests a cognitive function, but its evolutionary purpose is less clear.

Theory	Description	Pros	Cons
	consolidation and creative thinking.	- Empirical research supports weak association formation in REM sleep. - Explains dream progression across sleep stages.	- Does not directly support problem-solving, only exploration of possibilities. - While dreams generate novel ideas, they do not always produce meaningful insights for waking life.

3.1.1. Emotional Regulation and Problem-Solving from Dream Recall

Around 80% of REM dreams are recalled if one is awakened from REM sleep, and around 50% of NREM dreams are also recalled (Nielsen, 2000; Schredl, 2007). Thus, Michael Schredl proposes that the act of recalling dreams has significant benefits (2003; 2010). Schredl argues that dream recall enhances emotional regulation and cognitive processing by allowing individuals to reflect on and integrate their dream experiences.

Furthermore, Schredl suggests that frequent dream recall can improve problem-solving skills and creativity (Schredl, 2006; 2008). This effect happens after sleep. By reflecting on the symbolic and metaphorical content of dreams, individuals can gain new perspectives on their waking life challenges. This reflective process can lead to a deeper understanding of oneself and one's experiences.

3.1.2. Simulation Theories

Katja Valli proposes that dreams function as a virtual reality environment where the brain can rehearse and simulate various scenarios. These simulations serve an evolutionary purpose by preparing individuals for real-life challenges and threats. These include the Threat Simulation Theory (TST) (Revonsuo 2000; Valli & Revonsuo, 2000; 2009; Valli et al., 2005) and the Social Simulation Theory (SST) (Revonsuo, Tuominen & Valli, 2015; Tuominen, Stenberg, Revonsuo, & Valli, 2019).

Revonsuo's Threat Simulation Theory (TST) posits that dreams serve as a "virtual reality" space where individuals can practice responses to threatening situations, potentially enhancing survival skills. By simulating dangerous situations, the brain can enhance survival skills and prepare for real-life dangers. This theory suggests that the frequent occurrence of threatening scenarios in dreams has an adaptive function, improving an individual's ability to cope with threats in the waking world.

Social Simulation Theory (SST) extends the concept of simulation to social interactions. According to this theory, dreams allow individuals to practice social skills and navigate complex social environments. By simulating social scenarios, dreams help in understanding social dynamics and improving interpersonal relationships. SST highlights the role of dreams in enhancing social competence and emotional intelligence.

3.1.3. Empathy & Insight

Positing a similar social function is Mark Blagrove (Blagrove et al., 2021), who suggests that dreams enhance empathy and social understanding, but only once they are shared with others in waking life. According to this theory, discussing dreams in a social setting enables individuals to engage in natural storytelling with people they interact during the day, with dream serving as a piece of fiction that is explored with others, resulting in empathy about the life circumstances of the dreamer and social bonding.

Blagrove suggests that this empathetic function of dreams plays a crucial role in maintaining social bonds and cooperation. Dreams can provide insight into the thoughts and feelings of others, promoting prosocial behaviour and emotional intelligence. Even though only about 15% of dreams are shared with others (Schredl & Schawinski, 2010), Blagrove suggests that this storytelling aspect might serve as an evolutionary function in terms of social bonding, building on the theory that storytelling is an adaptive evolutionary function (Smith et al., 2017).

In addition, Blagrove found that spending an hour discussing one's dream with others and an expert resulted in insight about the metaphorical references and/or waking life that was previously overlooked by the dreamer. Therefore, Blagrove suggests a similar function of dreaming as does Schredl when it comes to waking life insight. And they are not the only ones that view dreams as fruitful grounds for insight. Analysing and interpreting one's dreams brings to the surface ideas, thoughts, and emotions, as well as new perspectives on recent and/or important events from one's waking life (Hill et al., 1993; Edwards et al., 2015; Blagrove et al., 2019; Pesant and Zadra, 2004; Hill et al., 2007). However, Edwards et al. (2013) suggest that whether the resulting "aha" experience occurs after considering the waking life source of the insight or considering the dream content needs to be further explored.

3.1.4. Dreaming as Play

On the other hand, Kelly Bulkeley (2004; 2008) considers the function of dreaming that might be in place during sleep, rather than after awakening. Bulkeley views dreaming as a form of play. He suggests that dreams provide a space for experimentation, exploration, and creative expression, similar to the functions of play in waking life. Dreaming allows the mind to break free from the constraints of reality, engaging in imaginative and spontaneous activities.

Bulkeley argues that this playful aspect of dreaming fosters creativity and innovation. Dreams offer a unique cognitive environment where the usual rules and limitations do not apply, enabling the brain to explore new ideas and perspectives. This creative play can lead to insights and problem-solving strategies that enrich waking life.

3.1.5. Creative function

Bulkeley isn't the only one to suggest dreams serve a creative function. Both Schredl and Blagrove discuss the connection between dreams and creativity, as well as many others (e.g. Blagrove & Hartnell, 2000; Schredl & Erlacher, 2007; Barrett, 2017; Morgan, 2009). Other models draw parallels between the cognitive processes of the dreaming mind and creativity, such as NEXTUP.

In 2021, Antonio Zadra and Robert Stickgold proposed a model of dreaming called NEXTUP (Network Exploration to Understand Possibilities). This model posits that dreaming serves an essential cognitive function by exploring and integrating various aspects of waking experiences. According to this theory, the brain uses dreams to simulate potential scenarios, helping to process emotions and consolidate memories.

Dreaming is a unique form of sleep-dependent memory evolution, one that extracts new knowledge from existing information through the discovery and strengthening of unexpected and often previously unexplored associations.

(Zadra & Stickgold, 2021, p. 271)

In simpler terms, during dreaming, our brains explore weak associations that our waking minds typically overlook in favour of stronger, more direct associations. According to NEXTUP, the primary function of dreams is not to solve problems but to deepen our understanding of the associations between memories, thus enabling the exploration of various possibilities.

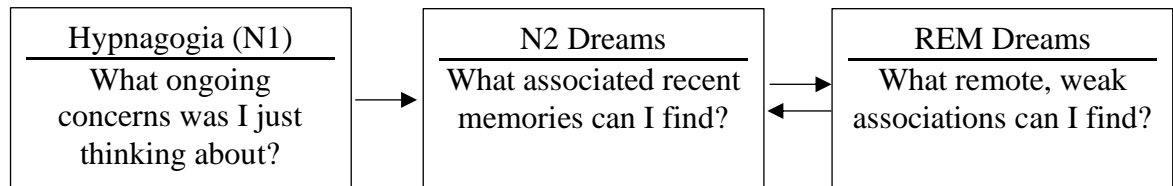
Although dreams are not directly aimed at resolving our immediate concerns, they do highlight emotionally charged issues from our subjective viewpoints. This selection process happens in the early stages of sleep, as illustrated in Figure 4, where certain ideas or memories are chosen for processing in the later stages of sleep. To facilitate the exploration of these weak associations, a conscious experience (i.e. dreaming) during sleep is necessary to create narratives and alternative scenarios, allowing the dreamer to respond to dream events and produce the emotional responses needed to grasp the meaning of seemingly random associations.

Zadra and Stickgold argue that the function of dreams is closely tied to memory processing. Over the past two decades, research has shown how our brains process memories from the previous day during sleep. According to their findings, for every two hours we spend awake, our brains need an hour of processing time, free from external inputs, to make sense of these memories and integrate them meaningfully.

They suggest that our brains have evolved to include consciousness in the form of dreaming during sleep to support this process.

Figure 4

The Different Function of Dreams Across Various Sleep Stages According To NEXTUP (Zadra & Stickgold, 2021).



The NEXTUP model asserts that dreams serve different functions across various sleep stages. As depicted in Figure 4, the early sleep stage, characterised by hypnagogia, produces dreams that are visually vivid and abstract. These dreams are less bizarre and emotional than those in later stages, and they lack the typical narrative structure and self-representation associated with dreams. Zadra and Stickgold argue that hypnagogia plays a crucial role in creative problem-solving by focusing on the concerns from the previous day. N2 stage dreams then target associated memories related to these concerns, leading to the most vivid, bizarre, and emotional dreams with complex narratives in the REM stage. The processing that occurs in this final sleep stage helps us understand the meaning and importance of weak associations between different memory sources. In essence, NEXTUP facilitates network exploration in our long-term memory.

Stickgold et al. (1999) previously argued that REM sleep cognition differs qualitatively from waking or NREM sleep cognition, enabling a distinct kind of associative memory system. They demonstrated that the creation of weak associations characterises REM dreams, akin to creative thinking. Zadra and Stickgold draw a parallel between NEXTUP's function of enhancing memory processing through narrative creation related to ongoing concerns and Bert States' theory that literature and theatre originate in dream states. Both NEXTUP and States' theory suggest that dreams help us explore our memories, aiding in understanding their significance for future possibilities.

Considering this definition of dream function and the standard requirements for creativity (novelty and usefulness), one could argue that dreams are inherently creative. They generate novel ideas by forming uncommon associations that are beneficial for memory and emotional processing, making the process purposeful rather than random. However, whether the ideas produced in dreams are creative in the waking world of the dreamer is another matter. While the dreaming process itself is creative, the ideas generated might not always be useful or deemed creative in the individual's waking life. Therefore, dreaming alone does not guarantee creativity, but it can be an extremely valuable tool in the creative process.

Regardless of whether we see the function of dreams as serving memory consolidation, emotional processing, social or psychological evolution, most dream researchers agree that 'the way' that dreams work is by creating associations between distinct concepts in our memory. Some claim these associations are random, while others believe that they have an evolutionary purpose. However, many agree with Zadra and Stickgold that the scenarios our dreaming minds create by making distant associations largely contribute to the very function of dreaming.

3.2. What are Lucid Dreams?

A lucid dream (LD) is one in which the dreamer is aware that they are dreaming (LaBerge & Rheingold, 1990; Tholey & Utecht, 1987). This is not the same as dream control, as a lucid dream can occur without the ability to control the dream environment and even one's own actions, though it frequently comes with at least some degree of control. In a lucid dream, one has the opportunity to play with life-like events beyond the constraints of the waking world, such as the rational thought, laws of physics, and lasting consequences. Moreover, the line between lucidity and non-lucid dream experience is not clear-cut. There are degrees of lucidity, which seems to be a spectrum rather than a definite stage (LaBerge & DeGracia, 2000). Lucidity is also fleeting, with possible transitions between more lucid and non-lucid states in a single dream.

The wonderful thing about it is that anyone can learn how to induce lucid dreams (LaBerge, 1985), with a high percentage of the population experiencing at least one lucid dream in their life (57.5% in Gackenbach, 1991; 73% in Blackmore, 1982; or 80% in Palmer, 1979; 55% in Saunders et al., 2016). However, only around 20% experience LD frequently (21% in Snyder and Gackenbach, 1988; 23% in Saunders et al., 2016). While lucid dreams offer a playground for extraordinary experiences, from the fantastical to the profound, they also hold potential for personal growth and problem-solving. Although known for centuries, lucid dreaming has recently gained scientific attention and recognition as a skill that can be learned and used to enhance waking life. Many people find lucid dreaming not only intensely pleasurable but also beneficial in improving their everyday experiences, including using LD for nightmare treatment (Brylowski, 1990; Galvin, 1991; Halliday, 1982; Tholey, 1988; Zadra & Pihl, 1992; 1997; Spoomaker & van den Bout, 2006). Though there are some cautions regarding LD induction, explored in detail in 4.2.1., the benefits seem to outweigh potential risks. The focus of this research is the creative benefits of LD, which will be explored in subsequent sections.

3.3. What are Liminal Dreams?

Liminal dreaming refers to the state between sleeping and waking and consists of two phases: hypnagogia (transitioning from waking to sleeping) and hypnopompia (transitioning from sleeping to waking). Liminal dreams often occur in N1 sleep, though they can also occur in wakefulness just before one enters N1, as well as in N2. N1 is a brief stage lasting between one and seven minutes (Patel et al., 2022), and though it is possible to transition back into this stage throughout the night, an uninterrupted sleep will not produce a lot more N1 as the sleeper moves through further sleep cycles. Therefore, hypnagogia and hypnapompia can best be captured when either falling asleep or waking up, or in controlled conditions by interrupting sleep before the sleeper progresses onto other stages of sleep.

4. What can Dreams Contribute to Creative Writing?

Robert Louis Stevenson had “little people” in his dreams create stories in what he called “that small theatre of the brain” that he then sold to millions of people around the world. He believed these “little people,” who created the plot to one of his most beloved books *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, to be more talented than him. Stevenson almost felt guilty for taking all the credit for these literary works when some “Brownie,” as he called the little people in his dreams, did all the work (Barrett, 2001). Stephen King also used his dreams to inspire or move forward a lot of his writing, including *Misery* and *It* (Epel, 1993).

In addition, many poets used dreams as inspiration for their writing. Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s “Kubla Khan” is one of the most famous examples of a poem inspired by a dream, although it was an opium induced dream. He reportedly dreamed the poem after reading about the Mongol emperor's palace and awoke to write it down, although he was interrupted and never completed it as he initially intended. Coleridge himself wrote about this dream-induced inspiration in his preface to the poem (Perkins, 1990). Other poets that used dreams for inspiration include William Blake (Bentley, 2001), Edgar Allan Poe (Quinn, 1998), John Keats (Bate, 1963), and W. B. Yeats (Ellmann, 1989). Examples from music include Ludwig van Beethoven, Paul McCartney and Billy Joel (Barrett, 2001). Finally, there are many cases of scientific discoveries and inventions that changed the world, including two Nobel Prizes that resulted from dreams (Barrett, 2001; Stumbrys & Daniels, 2010).

Whether these brilliant ideas resulted from random neural activity or goal-directed associative thinking, that is, whether these ideas were brewing in the dreamers’ minds or luck stroke at random is a question worth exploring. If these were the result of goal-directed associative thinking, and recent studies in dream research (see previous section) point at this, then novel approaches can be designed for dreaming to be used as a cognitive tool for improving creativity.

Most of the aforementioned examples include dreams that occurred as one-off or at least very rare “a-ha” moments that seem to strike the few lucky ones. Spontaneous

creative breakthroughs in dreams are extremely rare. In addition, most of the creative ideas and solutions we dream of vanish from our memory within seconds of awakening. Finally, much of the dream content is lost in translation as we recall and automatically apply the rational thought to the dream upon awakening.

our recall of night dreams may involve brief conscious reconstructions, new associations, or the reshaping of mental schemas and scripts, but these soon seem forgotten as our attention is attracted by external stimuli or the return to seemingly higher priority mental activity. (Singer & Barrios, 2009, p. 237)

Thus, in order to use dreaming as a creative tool, we must develop methods for focusing dreams and harvesting ideas they provide more purposefully.

4.1. Dreaming as a cognitive tool for writing

As seen in section 1.2.3., the current tools for aiding cognitive processes for creative writers are not ideal. Ward and Lawson's method for combining concepts relies on computer generated random pairs of concepts, which enable writers to generate a unique, unexpected response to unusual combinations, leading them to obtain starting points for their stories. However, this method does not respond to the writer's long-term memory, which includes their background knowledge of the concepts that plays a key role in the cognitive processes. Without a personal connection to the two distinct concepts, a writer could produce an original combination that does not satisfy the other key element of creativity: the usefulness requirement. In other words, the unusual combinations of distinct concepts with which the writer is unfamiliar might be original but rid of personal meaning and thus randomised. As seen in the recent models of creativity, memory plays a crucial role in creative production (Beatty & Kenett, 2023; Benedek et al., 2023). The same problem lies with Pea and Kurland's (1987) suggestion for a number of "cognitive technologies" for writing, who use computer tools to support creative writing processes in the Flower and Hayes' (1980) model.

Dreams, and in particular focused dreams, might be the answer to this problem. Jorge Luis Borges said that “writing is nothing more than a *guided* dream” (Borges, 1979). The creation of the weak associations required for the originality aspect of creativity has also been defined as a function of dreaming by Zadra and Stickgold (2021) in their NEXTUP model discussed in section 3.1.5. Dreams combine distinct concepts from an individual’s memory into new and unusual combinations; when we dream, our brains seem to preferentially search out for weak associates that create unexpected paths, instead of the obvious, strong associates sought out by our waking brains. Thus, the present research hypothesises that the gap between an individual’s long-term memory and remote associations that computer generated tools leave could be closed with focused dreaming. In other words, by telling our dreaming minds what kind of associations to seek out and bringing conscious thought into the subconscious world of these ideas, we might be able to focus our dreams on certain types of ideas and creative solutions. We can focus dreams by incubating a problem or an idea before sleep, consciously guiding our liminal dreams, as well as by inducing lucid dreams.

4.2. Lucid Dreams in Creativity

Examples in literature do not provide a reliable list of writers who used lucid dreams to inspire their creative writing because the term “lucid” has not been commonly used in the wider community for a long time. Therefore, this section will not present examples of such writers, however, Study 2 will focus on differentiating between lucid and non-lucid dreams used in creative writing.

More generally, lucid dreaming has been linked to creativity in various ways. Studies have shown that creativity is highly associated with LD and both frequent and occasional lucid dreamers scored higher on creative personality scale than did non-lucid dreamers (Blagrove and Hartnell, 1998; Blagrove & Tucker, 1994; Stumbrys and Daniels, 2010). In particular, the study conducted by Stumbrys and Daniels (2010) sought to determine whether lucid dreaming could contribute to creativity, particularly in generating original and meaningful metaphors, as well as solving logical puzzles. Their findings showed that lucid dreamers performed significantly better on metaphor-

generation tasks than non-lucid dreamers. However, there was no significant difference between the two groups when it came to solving logical problems. These findings indicate that lucid dreaming can be a valuable tool for creative problem-solving in tasks that benefit from flexible thinking and novel associations.

Bourke and Shaw (2014) found that frequent lucid dreamers solve significantly more insight problems overall than nonlucid dreamers. Other studies induced lucidity for various creative purposes, from idea generation to creative problem solving (e.g. Stumbrys, 2010; Schredl & Erlacher, 2007; Barrett, 1993). For example, Schädlich and Erlacher's 2018 study found that athletes engaging with LD practice improved physical performance, strengthened confidence, gained insights for physical practice, improved flexibility, and positive emotions. Furthermore, the results of their other 2018 study suggest that musicians can improve their skills in lucid dreams and use them for creative and inspirational purposes.

More specifically, Johnson (2017) explored the role of LD in creative writing and found many benefits to LD while writing a novel entitled *Breathing in Colour*. For example, she mentions the benefits of heightened visual perception, the elements of conscious attention and “staying power” of the image that contributes to better recall, in-the-dream experimentation enabled by carrying a creative task inside the lucid dream, seeking new ideas or working on current projects, and sidestepping the inner critic. She used both passive and active approaches, from simple observation of the dream to summoning a character from her novel and dialoguing with them. These findings are discussed in her 2017 book but originate in her 2007 doctoral thesis *The Role of Lucid Dreaming in the Process of Creative Writing*. The work that Johnson did included investigation of the above methods using 25 case studies, including writers, artists, and lucid dream researchers, and further experimental examination of the practical use of these methods using herself as the only subject of the study.

The current research is thus intended to expand on previous research and specifically focus on the use of LD in creative writing by testing improved methods on writers in experimental settings. *Can we replicate the results that Johnson reports on, using a group of creative writers with varying dream recall and LD abilities? Can we apply a*

similar kind of approach to poetry writing? And can the addition of hypnagogic experience further enhance the creative process?

4.2.1. Does lucidity interfere with the creativity or function of dreams?

Before exploring these research questions, the key concern about using LD for creative purposes must be addressed first. Some researchers expressed concerns that lucidity might disrupt the natural processes of dreaming. Vallat and Ruby (2019) argue that lucid dreaming induction could adversely affect sleep and health. They suggest that LD might alter sleep integrity, leading to poorer sleep quality by creating a hybrid state of consciousness between waking and sleep. This hybrid state could disrupt REM sleep functions, essential for emotional regulation and memory consolidation, potentially leading to health risks. Soffer-Dudek (2020) raises another concern, warning that lucid dreaming might blur the boundaries between reality and fantasy. He discusses studies indicating that while lucid dreamers often show increased resilience to traumatic stress and enhanced personality traits, there is still a risk of confusion between the dream world and reality, which could have negative psychological effects.

However, a 2018 study by Schadow, Schredl, Rieger, and Göritz examined the correlation between lucid dreams and sleep quality. They found that lucid dreaming's negative effect on sleep quality disappeared when controlling for nightmare frequency, suggesting that lucid dreamers' predisposition to nightmares, rather than lucid dreaming itself, might impact sleep quality. Additionally, the methods used to induce lucid dreams, such as the wake-back-to-bed technique, which requires waking up before the usual time and then going back to sleep, might contribute to poor sleep quality rather than the state of lucidity itself.

Furthermore, Zadra argues that the potential adverse effects of lucid dreaming on sleep functions are minimal. He points out that even proficient lucid dreamers spend only a small portion of their sleep cycle in lucidity. Typically, lucidity occurs during one REM period of the night for a short time, rather than throughout all REM cycles. He likens it to having a small indulgence in cake in an otherwise healthy routine,

suggesting that occasional lucid dreaming is unlikely to significantly disrupt the overall benefits of sleep. Zadra also argues that lucidity offers a "cognitive push" without fundamentally altering the dream's makeup. While lucid dreaming might activate parts of the frontal cortex associated with critical thinking, planning, and reasoning, it does not change the neurochemical environment of sleep. Norepinephrine and serotonin levels remain low during REM sleep, maintaining the background necessary for the brain's natural processes. Lucidity thus simply allows for more conscious engagement without disrupting the underlying functions of dreams.

Zadra further opposes the idea that lucid dreaming induction contributes to the blurring of reality/fantasy boundaries. "As I used to tell my students: if you're not sure whether you're dreaming or not, you're dreaming. Unless you need medication, when you're awake, you don't have those kinds of confusions, not for very long sustained periods." Stephen LaBerge agrees with this thought, encouraging everyone with a healthy mind to practise lucid dreaming:

...the only people who should not experiment with lucid dreaming are those who are unable to distinguish between waking reality and constructions of their imagination. Learning lucid dreaming will not cause you to lose touch with the difference between waking and dreaming. On the contrary, lucid dreaming is for becoming more aware. (LaBerge & Rheingold, 1990, p. 29)

In 2000, Loo and Cheng conducted two experiments that suggested that people with higher degree of lucidity in their dreams actually have an increased ability to distinguish between internally and externally generated information. This implies that the more the dreamer is lucid, the better they are at identifying reality vs dream state in both their waking and dreaming lives.

Finally, concerns from writers and artists about lucidity interfering with the natural creativity of dreams is addressed. If the dreaming minds create these remote associations because we are rid of rational thought, wouldn't becoming lucid diminish this creative effect? Zadra provides examples from his research and interviews with

other writers, showing that the dream's creative narrative continues to unfold naturally, even when the dreamer is lucid. The creativity in dreams stems from the answers and insights the dream provides, which remain unaffected by the dreamer's awareness. This suggests that lucid dreaming does not hinder the dream's inherent creativity but can potentially enhance it by allowing more direct exploration of creative ideas.

4.3. Dreams as a Playground

There is a strong empirical support for the positive influence of play on divergent thinking and affective processes, as well as other cognitive processes that have been found as key components of creativity (Russ, 2009). For instance, play allows access to primary process thought, which also occurs in dreams and which Freud (1915) described as a primitive system not grounded in rules of logic or reality. It is thought to be closely related to creative thinking as this kind of thinking produces fluid associations filled with affect.

Sandra Russ (2009) discussed a number of studies that show that the involvement of emotion positively influences the broadening of the association process, which in turn facilitates creativity (p. 253). Writers often use their unresolved conflicts or childhood memories filled with emotional tissue in their creative work, which in some way helps them resolve these conflicts. Dreams, Freud (1955) would argue, do the same. Thus, by becoming lucid in dreams, one could harvest the emotional makeup of the dream in a play-like setting and explore it in more detail with the purpose of creating a unique fictional or poetic world. Getz and Lubart (1997) also investigated the impact of affect on creativity. They created an emotional resonance model, exploring emotional attachment to certain memories, which activate one another and contribute to creative problem solving. Focusing dreams in this emotional-exploration direction could therefore contribute to creative expression.

Another concept that Russ discusses is conceptual blending, similar to the conceptual combination discussed in section 1.2.3., and which she speculates has a role in pretend play. Russ uses Deacon's (2006) combinatorial associative exploration that sees

humans as having a unique ability to engage in the kind of play where they can freely manipulate their emotional attachments to different mental representations in a safe space of pretend play. Similarly, dreams can be seen as safe spaces for such exploration, or as mental playgrounds in which mental representations and our emotional connections can be blended, reorganised, and explored freely in a number of combinations. However, dreams without lucidity pose many of the waking-life restrictions. Knowing that one is dreaming opens one up for all the possibilities of safe exploration, whereas non-lucid dreams feel like spaces with much the same restrictions and consequences of the waking life. Thus, practicing lucidity in dreams has the potential for emotionally engaged and vivid pretend play, much more realistic than waking imagination yet with the same freedom of pretend play in one's waking life.

Bulkeley (2009) proposes the very function of dreams is play during sleep, as seen in section 3.1.4. He puts Revonsuo's simulation theory in ludic context and suggests that dreams contribute to the healthy functioning of our creative imagination, basing his theory on the number of similarities between dreaming and playing. For instance, they both provide a safe quasi-real space for the boundless experimentation with alternative forms of concepts that are normally governed by the waking life rules and structures.

By providing a realistic playground with exploratory possibilities beyond those of the waking life, dreams can serve as a cognitive tool for creative writing that closes the gap current cognitive tools relying on computerised methods pose. Creating weak associations and playing with ideas, testing them, and pushing boundaries while seeking out creative (both original and useful) ideas, focused and directed dreaming can provide a more connected and authentic writing experience and opportunities for creative expression.

4.4. Sleep onset as a creative sweet spot

Another kind of dream experience may have a similar potential for creative exploration as LD. Identified as a "creative sweet spot" (Lacaux et al., 2021), liminal

dreams seem to be highly creative. They are characterised by abstract thought encompassing various types of sensory experience, though mainly focused on the visual aspect, with conscious awareness still lingering in this state. It is the state where the waking consciousness and the subconscious world of the sleeping mind collide (see section 3.3.). This state was used by Salvador Dali and Thomas Edison (Smith, 2019) as well as James Joyce (Rice, 2018), and Charles Dickens (Gomes & Nardi, 2021). Other examples include Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, William Styron's *Sophie's Choice*, and E. B. White's *Stuart Little*, the inspiration for which reportedly occurred during hypnagogia (Burkley, 2019). Furthermore, Edgar Allan Poe experimented with hypnagogia and claimed to induce it at will (Smith, 2019). Salvador Dali used the "slumber with a key" technique to induce hypnagogia at will. Thomas Edison used a similar technique with a steel ball and metal plate. These techniques aided a creative nap: they would sit upright in a chair and hold a key or a ball in one hand. Drifting off to sleep, the key or the ball would fall and hit the floor, waking them up just before the ideas would vanish. This would allow them to record their ideas before drifting off to deeper sleep and forgetting them.

While liminal dreams are most commonly discussed in relation to N1 sleep, alternative classification systems such as the Hori system offer a more nuanced understanding of the sleep onset period (SOP). Instead of viewing N1 as a single homogeneous stage, the Hori system divides sleep onset into nine substages (H1–H9), capturing gradual shifts in brain activity rather than an abrupt transition from wakefulness to sleep (Lacaux et al., 2024). H1–H2 correspond to standard wakefulness, while H3–H8 reflect progressively deeper transitions into N1 sleep, and H9 marks the entry into N2 sleep. These finer distinctions help highlight the exact moment at which hypnagogic states occur.

The 2021 study by Lacaux et al. investigated the role of the N1 sleep onset stage in enhancing creative insight. Participants (N = 103) were given mathematical problems that could be solved almost instantly by discovering a hidden rule. During the experiments, subjects engaged in the Number Reduction Task (NRT), where they had to find the final digit of an eight-digit sequence by applying two simple rules. Unbeknownst to them, a hidden rule could significantly shorten the solving process.

Participants were divided into three groups based on their vigilance state during a 20-minute rest period: those who remained awake, those who entered N1, and those who progressed to N2.

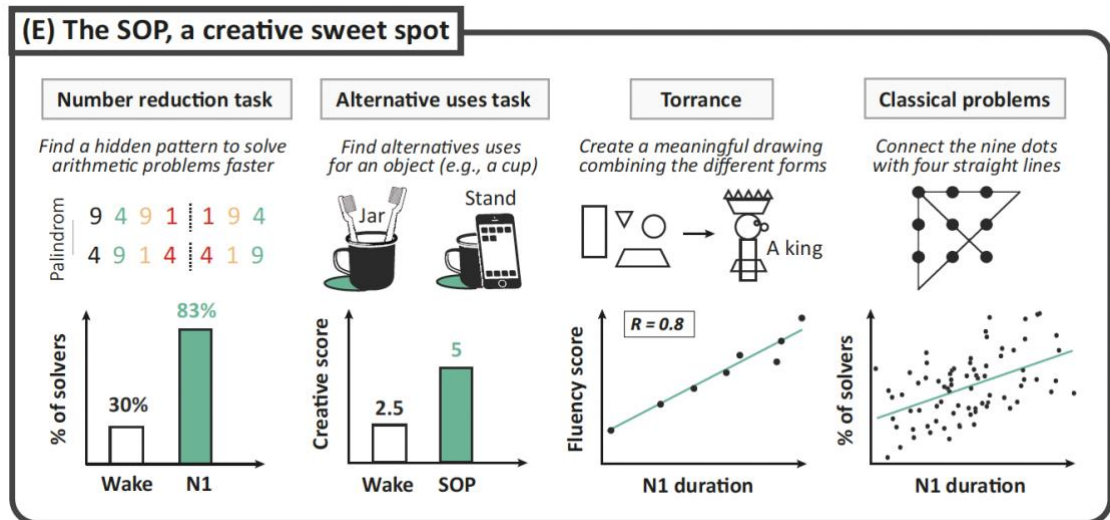
The findings revealed that spending at least 15 seconds in N1 tripled the likelihood of discovering the hidden rule (83% success in the N1 group versus 30% in the awake group), while this creative advantage disappeared if participants reached the N2 stage. The Hori system's classification suggests that this creative advantage likely occurs in the mid-to-late N1 substages (H5–H8), where wakefulness diminishes but conscious access to thought processes remains intact. This demonstrates that the N1 stage, characterized by a blend of wakefulness and sleep, serves as a critical period for creative insights, supporting the hypothesis that it is a unique "creative sweet spot" within the sleep onset period.

Furthermore, Horowitz et al. (2023) conducted an experimental study with targeted dream incubation, which confirmed N1 as a creative sweet spot and a cognitive state with greater associative divergence, with dream incubation further enhancing creative performance. However, dreaming was not assessed.

Lacaux et al.'s (2024) review offers further insights for creative insight and problem-solving (Figure 5) based on the studies from Lacaux et al. (2021), Drago et al. (2011), Schönauer et al. (2018), Vickrey and Lerner (2023), and Horowitz et al. (2023). These findings reinforce the importance of examining sleep onset through finer-grained frameworks, such as the Hori system, rather than relying solely on the broader N1 classification.

Figure 5

Examples of Creativity Tests and Results Reflecting The Role of N1 In Creativity, Taken From The Original Review (Lacaux et al., 2024).

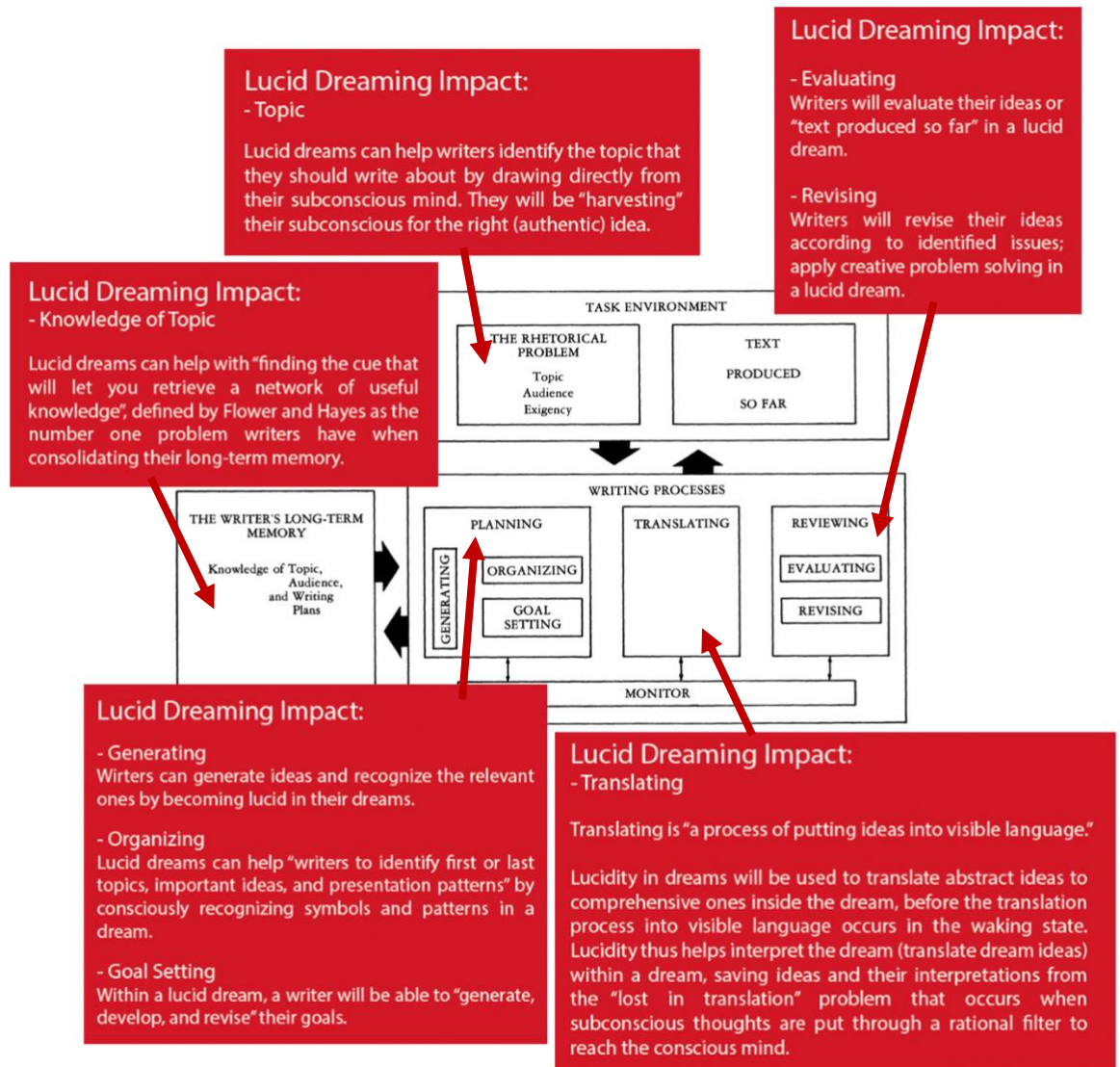


4.5. Incorporating Dreams into the Cognitive Model of Creative Writing

It is hypothesised that dream incubation and focusing liminal and lucid dreams on creative targets can aid the processes and sub-processes of the Flower and Hayes (1980) cognitive model of creative writing. Suggestions for LD in this model are illustrated in Figure 6. The method here is that the writer can identify the topic they should write about in their dreams, and further explore it by becoming lucid. Consciously exploring the symbolic makeup of the dream could shed light on the topic of highest current interest or reveal an original idea which the rational mind might not have thought of, thus forming an authentic idea in the writer's mind. The problem that Flower and Hayes identify with the long-term memory element is the difficulty of retrieving information from it or finding the cue that will enable one to create a network of useful information. As discussed in section 3.1.5., dreams may have a function of creating remote associations, and becoming lucid in one's dreams could allow one to find that cue and explore new networks for the purposes of creative production. Full of symbolic representations, dreams are also a fruitful ground for adapting these associations to the previously identified rhetorical problem.

Figure 6

Suggestions for the Possible Contribution of Lucid Dreaming To The Flower And Hayes (1980) Cognitive Model of Creative Writing.

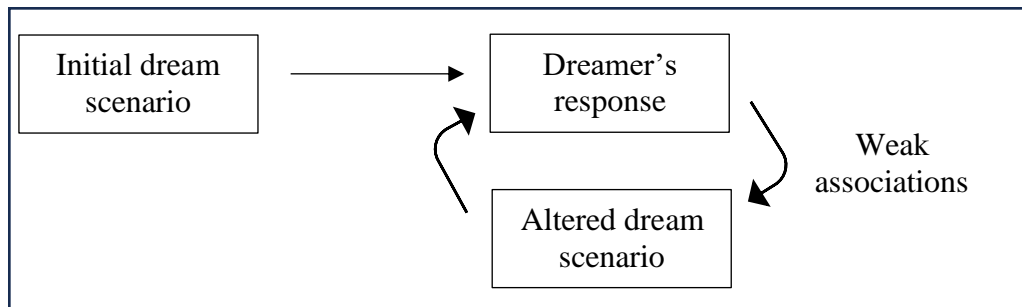


The hypothesis holds that, in the planning process, the writer can use their dreams to generate ideas and recognise ones that are relevant to the rhetorical problem by becoming lucid. Further, the writer can organise these ideas in a meaningful way inside the dream and, consequently, generate, develop, and revise their goals. Regarding this, Figure 7 shows the narrative development loop based on NEXTUP. In this context, the writer would be faced with a dream scenario, and in their lucid state, they would respond to this scenario by engaging with it, exploring weak associations between

different elements of the initial scenario, and alter it by further exploration and engagement with the dream.

Figure 7

The Narrative Development Loop in Dreams Based on NEXTUP (Zadra & Stickgold, 2021).



Translating imagery and other sensations to visible language can be aided by lucid dreams in such a way that abstract, symbolic, or bizarre sensory experiences could be understood within the dream and “translated” into comprehensive ideas before waking. Rather than translating one’s thoughts upon waking, when most of the dream content gets lost in translation to the rational mind, the writer has the opportunity to interpret this content within the world that generated it. Finally, most of the reviewing can be done inside a lucid dream as well, apart from perhaps reviewing the written text. Writers can evaluate their ideas as well as goals by recreating them in a dream and playing them out to test their effectiveness. Revising would in this context happen as the writer imagines different scenarios for their ideas and goals and applies creative problem solving inside the dream. Referring to Figure 7 again, in this context, the dreaming writer would recreate their idea, or scene, or environment, or a character from their story, or a line from their poem, respond to this element by engaging with it, and thus evaluate it, find further remote associations for the revision of the initial scenario, and revise it accordingly.

The hypothesis holds that one of the main purposes of creating, developing and evaluating one’s writing within a lucid dream is to connect the writer with the story and characters. Instead of imagining and putting ideas to paper, the writer lives through their imagined scenario, converses with their characters, and explores their

subconscious playground first-hand. *The writer enters the stage behind the curtains both as an actor and a director.* This first-hand experience and emotional connection with the dream world enables believable settings, characters and plots, and the transference of emotions and symbolic meaning. Lucidity can further align the dreamer with the flow of the dream and redirect focus in order to filter useful associations, hence adding to the creative output.

Study Aims

As abstract ideas, symbolism, and emotion create the natural makeup of dreams and hypnagogic experiences (Domhoff, 2007; Fosse et al., 2001; Foulkes, 1985; Kahn et al., 2002; Snyder, 1970), it is expected that these dream experiences can inspire creative writing with similar attributes. This research will consist of four studies, which will build on each other in order to create a new model of creative writing grounded in dreamwork. The first study will look into the ways famous writers have used dreams in their work, identifying potentially creative dream elements and methods for extracting these for one's creative writing. Study 2 will extend these findings and look into the specific benefits of lucid dreaming for creative writing by interviewing both lucid and non-lucid dreamers who use dreams in their writing. Once these specific benefits and ways of working with lucid dreams are identified, Study 3 will have an experimental design, aimed at teaching a group of fiction writers with varying dream abilities to lucid dream and apply the methods identified in studies 1 and 2 in their creative writing. The short stories these writers will produce will be assessed to establish the impact of such an intervention on fiction writing. Finally, Study 4 will further extend these findings by recruiting poets who will use both lucid and liminal dreams to produce poetry at home, as well in the sleep laboratory with more controlled conditions, where I will also look at physiological aspects and different forms of creativity. The results of these four studies will be used to design a new model of creative writing based on both idea generation and problem solving in dreams.

Study 1: Epel's interviews with 26 writers

Naomi Epel (1993) reports on her conversations with 26 world famous writers who discussed the use of their dreams in their writing process. Sally Hill (1997) conducted a qualitative analysis of those interviews for her PhD dissertation. This section summarises Hill's findings and then provides a more rigorous quantitative analysis of Epel's book than was undertaken by Hill. This is because Hill's thesis uses multiple different categorizations of Epel's data. After summarising these categorisations, I show that there are some inconsistencies in her analysis. Thus, for the purposes of a clearer categorization as well as due to the inconsistencies in Hill's quantitative categories and data, a new analysis was undertaken. However, overall, Hill's findings and conclusions are in accord with the analyses in my study reported in this section. The aim of this study is to check Hill's findings and conduct my own analysis to draw conclusions for my own understanding and provide the basis for Study 2.

5. Analysis

5.1. Epel's report

In *Writers Dreaming*, Naomi Epel presents a collection of unstructured interviews with twenty-six well-known contemporary authors, offering an informal look at how dreams influence their creative processes. In the introduction, Epel describes how the book came about: these casual conversations with writers about their dreams happened while she was chauffeuring them around San Francisco working as a literary escort. Later, she started a weekly radio program called "DreamTalk." But it was only after a personal dream about "standing in a doorway watching an artist working in a basement room" that Epel was inspired to write this book. At first, she reports analysing these interviews and providing her own insights in this book. However, after driving writer Desmond Morris and telling him about her new project, his advice to "get out of the way" and simply let the authors speak for themselves changed the format of her book.

Thus evolved the format for this book, which now consists of lightly edited transcripts of taped conversations, my questions having been deleted to aid the flow. (These were generally one sentence, open-ended questions followed by lots of head nodding, "mmmhmming" and follow-up questions like "what do you mean?" and "how about an example?") Occasionally I have added a word or two for clarification, but mostly what you hear are the writers' thoughts, verbatim. [...] The interviews were fairly free-form. I usually began by asking "Have you ever had a dream that influenced your work?" and let it go from there. I asked about nightmares and recurrent themes, personal insights and precognitive dreams. Sometimes I asked if their characters ever visited them in the middle of the night, or how they thought dreams functioned. (Epel, 1993, p. 3)

These conversations thus explore the various ways in which writers draw on their dreams to generate ideas, solve narrative problems, and uncover deeper insights into their work. For example, William Styron recounts how a vivid dream led him to abandon a struggling novel and begin *Sophie's Choice*, illustrating the profound impact that dreams can have on a writer's creative decisions. Writers like Allan Gurganus discuss how dreams provide a kind of "wisdom" that helps them navigate challenges in their writing.

5.2. *Hill's Analysis*

While Epel's collection provides rich, firsthand accounts of these writers' experiences, it does not offer an analysis across these writers' accounts or a structured discussion on how the dreams were implemented into their writing. Therefore, Hill's (1997) analysis was used to provide more structured data and insights that organised the interviews to examine how common dream-related processes shape writers' creative work. Hill used a modified grounded theory method based on the work of Glaser and Strauss (Glaser, 1978, 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) to

analyse the data. However, upon reviewing Hill’s study, I found certain inconsistencies in how the interviews were interpreted and categorised.

Table 2

Hill’s Analysis of ‘What Dreams Do for Creators’.

Dreams as starting points	Dreams used for problem solving	Dreams influence the choice of course of creative projects
8 (p. 198)	7 (p. 200)	?

Table 2 shows Hill’s analysis of the how the authors from Epel’s book used dreams in their writing. Tables with author names for the first two categories are presented in the appendix in Hill’s thesis, but Hill does not identify the number of authors for the third category nor does she present a list of authors. In addition, the numbers she presents for the first two categories are inconsistent when she refers to them throughout the thesis. For example, on page 170, Hill states that “It was found that dreams provided starting points for creative work for nine authors”, while on page 146 she states that “Eight authors [...] reported 14 dreams that became starting points for their work.” Similarly, on page 172 she states that “dreams provided solutions to a variety of creative problems for six authors” while on page 157 she writes that “seven authors [...] discussed thirteen instances in which dreams provided solutions to artistic problems.”

This study thus builds on Hill’s work by offering a further analysis of the data, providing a more nuanced understanding of how dreams contributed to the creative writing process of these writers and addressing some of the gaps in Hill’s conclusions. Through this analysis, I aim to offer a clearer picture of how writers use their dreams as a tool for creative problem-solving, idea generation, and thematic exploration.

5.3. What dreams do for writers

Hill concluded that “dreams appear to contribute to the creative process in two primary ways: (1) as sources of creative inspiration, implemented either through direct transcription or through more indirect processes involving conscious elaboration and development, and (2) as sources of problem solving, either through the presentation of solutions in dreams or by awakening with no memory of a dream but with an artistic solution in one's mind.” (Hill, 1997, p. 35). Put simply, dreams helped start new creative projects or move existing ones forward. Hill also analysed those dreams that influenced a writer’s choice or course of creative projects by resolving ambivalence around those projects, rather than contributing to the content of the writing piece (Table 3).

Table 3

How Writers Used Their Dreams

Dream provided a starting point for a new creative project	Dream provided new ideas or solutions for a current project	Dream resolved ambivalence around a current project or writing practice	Did not use dreams in their writing
10	21	8	2

For 10 writers, dreams served as starting points for new writing pieces. 21 writers used dreams to move an existing project forward by solving a creative problem or providing a new idea that was implemented in the work either directly or in a modified way as a way of moving the project forward. For 8 writers, dreams revealed something meaningful about the current project or writing practice in general; they provided an insight into the “why” behind a project or directed them toward a specific project, and they revealed why they write or why they write in this particular way. 2 out of the 26 writers did not use their dreams in their writing.

The following breaks down the first three categories and provides further explanation supported by examples for each category.

a) Dreams provide starting points for new creative projects.

“The starting points are varied in nature,” (Hill, 1997, p. 99) and they provide ideas, series of ideas, story lines, visual images, and physiological experiences (see A1). For instance, William Styron’s *Sophie’s Choice* was conceptualised in a vision proceeding a dream, laying down the groundwork for his bestselling book (Epel, 1993, pp. 272-273).

b) Dreams provide new ideas or solutions for current projects.

“Authors report that dreams directly assist or influence work in progress by: providing dreams for inclusion in creative work, deepening the level of creative work, providing creators with new experiences and providing solutions to creative problems” (Hill, 1997, pp. 102-103). They deepen the level of creative work by raising the emotional level, providing context for the story and an unconscious understanding of it, and allowing the author to experience the story (allowing for participation in the story) (Hill, 1997, pp. 106-107). Further, they provide the writer with new experiences in terms of “feelings, thoughts and actions, insights, heightened physiological responses, and participation in situations that are impossible in waking life, new endings” (Hill, 1997, pp. 107-108; see Appendix A2). “Authors report that the solutions take various forms: endings, scenes, images, and insight.” (Hill, 1997, p. 111). Some examples include Art Spiegelman (Epel, 1993, p. 245) and Elmore Leonard (Epel, 1993, p. 149), who report solving problems related to their writing at night. Bharati Mukherjee found the endings to her stories and the novel *Jasmine* in dreams (see A3; Epel, 1993, p. 161). Stephen King went to sleep thinking about the girl from *It*, willing a creative idea as he was stuck with the book that was already seven or eight hundred pages in (Epel, 1993, p. 137). The dream took him to the junk yard from his book and provided him with a scene about leeches coming out of a refrigerator that he put in the book without changing anything about the dream. (Epel, 1993, p. 138).

c) Dreams resolve ambivalence around creative projects or writing practice.

“Authors report that dreams influence the course of creative projects by: resolving ambivalence around the undertaking of creative projects, helping authors set priorities, and influencing the course of creative projects.” (Hill, 1997, pp. 112-113)

Dreams revealed to authors how they really felt about a current project or the desire to start a new project became clear to them in a dream. For example, Leonard Michaels had a prophetic dream that said something about his career as a writer (Epel, 1993, p. 153). The dream revealed what kind of stories Leonard writes and what he was trying to escape. Similarly, Anne Rice’s dream told her to go and write her second vampire novel (Epel, 1993, p. 217). Maurice Sendak talks about dreams resolving ambivalence by helping to clarify an emotional condition: “you might have a dream where your true emotional state is revealed.” (Epel, 1993, p. 233).

5.4. *What writers do with dreams*

As starting points or ideas/solutions for their current projects, writers inspire their story elements by their dreams, as illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4

Number of Writers Who Used Dreams to Inspire These Story Elements.

Plot	Character	Setting	Emotion	Symbolism
21	16	4	9	7

Plot: Writers developed their plots or found larger meaning for their narrative in dreams (see Appendix A4), from dreaming up fresh ideas to moving the narrative forward, changing the ending, and adding new scenes that added to or shaped the plot. Gloria Naylor developed her narratives by taking her daydreams into the night dreams (Epel, 1993, pp. 168-170). Sue Grafton’s dream made her realize that she was to tell the same story from a different angle, from a different character’s point of view (Epel, 1993, p. 60). Anne Rice’s dream about a woman made out of marble that filled her with fear influenced the plot of *The Queen of the Damned* (Epel, 1993, p. 212).

Most of the following elements in one way or another influenced the plot of the fictional piece.

Characters: “Some assign their dreams to particular characters, who then are written as dreaming those dreams in a particular work. Others create fictional experiences based on their dreams and assign those fictional experiences to particular characters.” [sic] (Hill, 1997, pp. 121-122) Some of these writers also developed new characters in their dreams or met their fictional characters in dreams after they had already been born on page. Characters appear literally with the creator (see Appendix A5) or creators appear as their character. Characters further appear indirectly through emotional states that offer authors insight into their characters (see Appendix A6).

For instance, Anne Rivers Siddons’ dreams worked out the problems she had with her characters; a dream provided a scene from start to finish about what was needed to happen with a character in *Peachtree Road* (Epel, 1993, p. 238). Sue Grafton dreamt whole lines of dialogue (Epel, 1993, p. 61). Reynolds Price worked on his characters for several months or even years and he stated that:

Sometimes, when I’m working intensely on a particular character that I’m fascinated by, I’ll find myself dreaming dreams which seem to me to be very appropriate for that kind of person. These dreams seem to be more appropriate to the character I’m writing about than to me. [...] I have literally transcribed some of those dreams and attributed them to the character. I did that in a novel of mine called *Love and Work*, and I remember doing a lot of that in *The Surface of Earth*. (Epel, 1993, p. 201).

King’s dream of a hanging (see A1) helped him create a character in his book *Salem’s Lot*, who he reworked into a vampire that hangs himself.

Settings: As with many plots, settings were inspired by single images and dream scenes. Anne Rice dreamt of a flooded world and people clustered on the tops of Greek temples, a dream which she put in her unpublished novel *Katherine and Jean* (Epel, 1993, pp. 212-213). Three of John Sayles’ dreams turned into a film *Brother from*

Another Planet, incorporating characters (people with antennas in their heads) from the first dream, the fugitive aspect from the second dream about a bigfoot wandering around Seattle, and a Harlem setting from his third dream (Epel, 1993, pp. 220-228). Robert Stone's *Outerbridge Reach* was informed by a dream image of a desolate place that he did not really understand (Epel, 1993, p. 268). Art Spiegelman struggled to imagine a particular garbage pit in *Maus* where his characters were hiding, until he had a dream that provided a clear image of that pit (Epel, 1993, p. 246).

Emotions and sensations: Writers recreated dream feelings, focused on strong sensations from their dreams, and responded to dream emotion. Maurice Sendak's dreams did not help him with the content of his dreams in terms of plot, movement, or even idea. Rather, they matched his work emotionally, like in the design for his production of the opera *Hansel and Gretel*. For Sendak, dreams "raise the emotional level of what I'm doing at the moment. They add color or counterpoint to the work, acting as an almost symphonic accompaniment to what I'm doing." (Epel, 1993, p. 230)

Symbolism: Writers used the symbolism from a dream in their writing or they better understood their work through dream symbolism. Stephen King described his use of symbols from his dreams in multiple stories: "I've always used dreams the way you'd use mirrors to look at something you couldn't see head-on – the way that you use a mirror to look at your hair in the back" (Epel, 1993, p. 134). He believed that for all people, dreams "illustrate the answers to their problems in symbolic language" (Epel, 1993, p. 134). Spalding Gray's dream of a straw boy who burns up and then gets reborn features in *Swimming to Cambodia* (Epel, 1993, p. 80). Gray believed that ashes in this dream were a powerful symbol and that this dream was about an identity quest. Art Spiegelman considered a dream scene in *Maus* that he ended up removing, about his neighbour whose hands had been cut off as he was becoming a father. Spiegelman considered this to be a symbol of lost freedom (Epel, 1993, p. 252).

5.5. How writers work with their dreams

To implement these different dream elements in their work, writers “work cognitively with dream material, editing and shaping images, speculating about dream material, or imposing structure upon it” (Hill, 1997, p. 119). In addition, they consolidate emotions from the dream, make connections to find an underlying theme, and extract from dreams. Some authors emphasise the role of critical sensibility in reworking the dream into a piece of writing, such as Allan Gurganus: “You have to maintain your critical sensibility and not just assume, because it was an extraordinary dream for you, that it will be a dream for other people. Because people need maps to your dreams.” (Epel, 1993, pp. 96; 98-99)

As another writer explains, structure must be given to any event one wants to use in their writing, especially when it comes to dreams:

Dreams may seem chaotic, but one can always create structure. Life really doesn't have all that much structure. I mean books are really putting an awful lot of artificial structure on what often can be pretty structureless. Dreams are just another part of that experience. It's as easy to pull a structure out of a dream as it is to pull a structure out of daily life. – John Nickols (Epel, 1993, p. 186).

Thus, imposing structure and working *with* their dreams, these writers transformed their dreams into pieces of writing by:

1. Creating or associating characters with dreams
2. Reproducing dreams literally
3. Interpreting dreams
4. Describing, changing, elaborating on, and adding to dream details
5. Making dreams more metaphoric
6. Drawing on dreams to enhance the emotional depth of writing

6. What is missing from this analysis?

Because Epel did not conduct a scientific study with writers but rather recorded her informal conversations with them, a lot of the content is not quantifiable. The present study aims to respond to this in order to obtain more rigorous results. In addition, Hill did not make a distinction that is key to the present study: between non-lucid and lucid dreams. Epel also did not seem to have made this distinction, but neither did the writers themselves. For instance, Amy Tan seems to be a lucid dreamer who can change the dream setting “by simply looking down at my feet then looking up again,” (Epel, 1993, p. 284) but the notion of lucidity is never mentioned. As will be shown in the next section, and particularly in the discussion, distinguishing between non-lucid and lucid dreams will provide insight into the potential power of dreams as a tool for aiding creative writing.

Study 2: Interviews with further 26 Writers

The aim of this study was to extend the findings of Study 1. Further 26 writers were interviewed to identify the specific benefit of lucid dreams (LD) over non-lucid dreams for the development of literary works. Starting with a partial replication of the categories I used in Study 1 for general dreams, I extend the categorisations and go further with LD. Results from this study indicate that inducing LD can benefit creative writing processes by providing a starting point for a new literary piece and by helping with a current project, from problem-solving to idea generation, plot and character development, offering first-hand experience in one's own fiction, helping with the reviewing process, as well as resolving ambivalence around creative projects or one's writing practice.

7. Method

26 writers, of which 19 were lucid and 7 non-lucid dreamers, were interviewed on their use of lucid and non-lucid dreams in their fictional writing. The writing was from short stories and novels to poetry, songs, and screenplays. Writers ranged in age (from early 20s to late 70s) and gender (M: 18, F: 8). Ethics approval was granted by the Research Ethics Committee of the School of Psychology. Informed consent to take part was given by all participants.

Participants were sought via writing and dreaming groups on social media, as well as through personal connections with the author of the study. Of those who answered the invitation, writers were selected on the basis of their writing credibility; working and published writers were given preference, but non-professional writers were still included in the analysis. Participants were all fiction writers, and some of them were also poets and non-fiction writers.

Excluded from the analysis were writers who were under a misapprehension of what LD meant, e.g., those who defined waking spiritual or other waking experiences such as daydreams as LD. Where this was the case, participants were given the standard

definition of LD as set by LaBerge and Rheingold (1990), and they were informed about the important distinction between dream lucidity and dream control (in that control is not necessary for a lucid state) as well as degrees of lucidity, in order to help them distinguish between their personal experiences. Nevertheless, there is still some ambiguity or uncertainty about whether some participants were clearly thinking about LD or if they confused this with other types of dream or waking experiences (e.g. hypnagogic, daydream).

Participants were asked about the way they had used dreams in their writing, the way dreams had helped them start or develop their literary works, and whether lucidity in dreams had or could have a further benefit for their writing. Specifically, they talked about whether they had used dreams for new ideas or problem solving, which elements from their dreams they had used (categorised as plots, characters, settings, emotions and sensory experiences, and symbolism), and how they had used them during their writing process.

Interviews were conducted via messages on social media, emails, phone calls, and Zoom calls. Participants were granted anonymity, but in instances where a piece of work had to be referenced, they gave their consent to be named in this paper. Results were obtained using a qualitative thematic analysis in ATLAS.ti software version 22.1.0, developed by ATLAS.ti Scientific Software Development GmbH. Some participants were happy to be identified and therefore their full names were used in the results section, while others preferred to stay anonymous and thus only their initials were used.

8. Results

8.1. What dreams do for writers

Out of 26 interviewees, 25 had obtained a starting point for their next literary work from a dream, while 17 had used dreams to move an existing project forward. For instance, one writer used dreams as starting points for one adult and two children's

books and has a clear plan for his next children’s book based on a dream. Four writers gained a meaningful insight into the choice or course of their projects or their writing practice in general. Writers wrote short stories, sequels to their novels, screenplays, and many poems by both harvesting their dreams for new ideas and by using dreams to overcome a writer’s block and/or move their writing forward. Table 5 shows the number of interviewees categorised for whether they reported a specific benefit from a dream.

Table 5

What Dreams Did for Writers

Dream provided a starting point for a new creative project	Dream provided new ideas or solutions for a current project	Dream resolved ambivalence around a current project or writing practice	Did not use dreams in their writing
25	17	4	0

8.2. What writers do with dreams

From starting points for new projects to ideas for moving the current projects forward, writers used their dreams in various ways to inspire or develop five elements of their literary pieces: plot, character, setting, emotion, and symbolism (Table 6). These are discussed at length in the following subsections. For lucid and non-lucid dreams, writers used whole plots or images/scenes/other elements that shaped or added to their plots (for examples, see B1), characters, settings, emotions, and symbolism.

Table 6

Number of Writers Who Discussed Their Dreams Inspiring the Different Components of Their Writing.

	Plot	Character	Setting	Emotion	Symbolism
Dreams used in writing	22	18	18	10	5

Non-lucid dreamers (n=7) and their use of dreams in writing are represented in Table 7.

Table 7

Number of Non-Lucid Dreamers Who Discussed Their Dreams Inspiring the Different Components of Their Writing.

	Plot	Character	Setting	Emotion	Symbolism
Non-lucid dreams	6	2	3	3	2

Lucid dreamers (n=19) used elements from both their non-lucid and lucid dreams: Table 8 shows which type of dreaming contributed to the writing of the lucid dreamers. Some of the participants did not discuss isolated dreams and the dreams' contribution to their writing pieces, but they rather talked about the contribution from their dreams in general, across multiple dreams and/or creative works.

Table 8

Number of Lucid Dreamers Who Discussed the Different Elements From Lucid and Non-Lucid Dreams Appearing In Their Writing.

	Plot	Character	Setting	Emotion	Symbols
Non-lucid dreams	2	2	3 ¹	1	0
Lucid dreams	5	4 ²	3	2 ²	0
Mix of lucid and non-lucid dreams	9 ²	10 ²	9	4 ²	3

Notes: 1 – It is unclear whether one participant in this group was talking about a non-lucid or a lucid dream. 2 - There was ambiguity about whether one participant in this group was clearly thinking about a *lucid* dream or a different dream state/waking experience such as daydream or hypnagogia.

Many of the lucid dream writers utilized ideas from both their non-lucid and lucid dreams to develop fictional stories. For example, Michael Jecks, an author with a wide acclaim in the UK and abroad, used both non-lucid and lucid dreams to develop over 40 novels (see Appendix B2). Adriana Polito used her hypnagogic vision of a boy floating around her hotel room to inspire the main plot for her novel *The World Within*. After this experience, she used a series of non-lucid and lucid dreams to develop a plot about an interdimensional being who pays a visit to Earth and stumbles across a human woman on the brink of sleep.

*a) Examples of what writers do with their **non-lucid** dreams*

This section will provide examples of non-lucid dreams used in writing by both kinds of dreamers, while the next section investigates lucid dreams.

Plot, Characters & Setting

Some writers dreamt whole plots while others dreamt different elements that they used in their plots. One writer uses “everything” from her dreams: “Plot, characters, setting, world physics and conflicts, even the names. I use the dream I have and think out: How did they get there? Why? What was their drive to get to this point?” (EG).

Another writer used his corny but terrifying dream from high school, about escaping prison, and modified the characters and settings to inspire a novel that he is now turning into a script. One writer used dreams to directly influence 6 songs and incorporated 3 dream sequences into his literary fiction, using many dream elements, including setting, characters, and profound imagery.

Characters are inspired in various ways. Writers take new characters directly from their dreams or attribute certain dream experiences to existing literary characters. For example, one writer has a recurring dream where he discovers the superpower of flight: “As such, one of the characters in my story has a similar recurring dream, learning to fly in his sleep as he builds a spaceship in real life.” Another writer dreamt of a drying lake and used that image of a setting to inspire a fictional story about villagers who suffer the effect of a drying lake (see Appendix B3).

Emotion & Symbolism

Characters and settings in dreams often reflect a dreamer’s emotional state and symbolize something meaningful to the dreamer, such as Adriana Polito’s dream of a “conscious sea” (see Appendix B4). But symbolism is found at many levels. Matt Price, a dyslexic writer, uses his dreams to translate abstract concepts into the language he can understand (see Appendix B5). One writer uses symbolism to support his plot:

In my literature, certain symbols take on profound meaning as I develop and use those symbols over and over again. When I write a dream sequence into my story, the whole point is to give the reader a vague symbolic framework for how the story is going to unfold from beginning to end, or at the very least provide some foreshadowing for a future event. (JRS)

Moreover, the array of sensations unlike anything they perceive in the waking world, including the richness of colour, sound, and dreamers’ own internal emotions, arguably leave the most lasting impact on dreamers. Chris Morgan, Birmingham's Poet Laureate, wrote a number of poems and short stories based on the emotional impact

of his deeply symbolic dreams, such as an anxiety dream about being lost in a hotel, flying over a playground, and being stuck in a bathroom as a young boy with people knocking on his door (see Appendix B5).

Catherine Smith, poet and short story writer, bases much of her writing on her very symbolic and oftentimes bizarre dreams. For instance, she explains her recurring dream about not having prepared for an exam and thus causing the First World War as “in failing to prepare to learn history I somehow inadvertently was responsible for the outbreak.” She writes about this in one of her poems. She describes in detail her emotionally charged dreams that are filled with “intensity of detail,” “almost like they’re in technicolour” with “strong saturation” and thus “quite liberating”. She sees everything in her dreams so clearly that her poetry and stories feature many of these sensory details, including “the lights that were so clear, the sky was navy blue, the stars were vivid, vivid gold.” (Appendix B6)

8.3. Could lucidity in dreams further support creative writing development?

Both lucid and non-lucid dreamers were asked whether they think becoming lucid in their dreams is/can be beneficial for creative writing (table 9).

Table 9

Responses of All Participants to the Question of Whether Lucid Dreaming Can Be Beneficial to Creative Writing.

YES	NO	NOT SURE
22	3	1

Most dreamers considered the ability to gain lucidity in their dreams very useful for further development of their stories. However, a few disagreed. Surprisingly, two of the three negative responses were from lucid dreamers. Mostly, they feared that

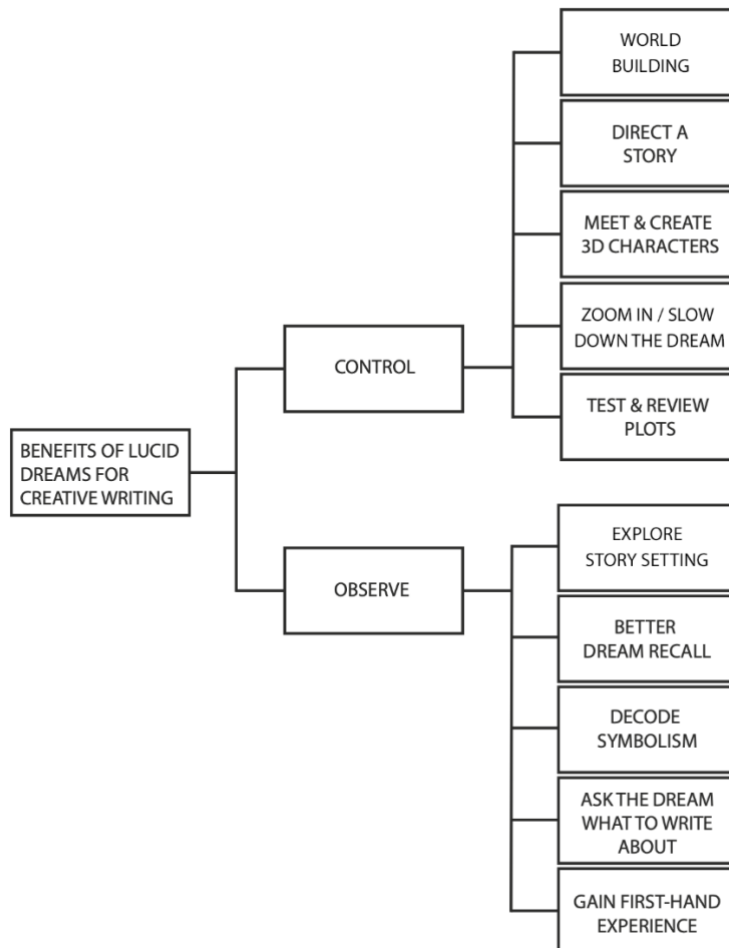
creativity would be diminished by conscious awareness within a dream. Firstly, one writer who described herself as at her “best when my subconscious runs rampant” with her logic getting in the way of good ideas, later admitted that she never, ever lucid dreams. Thus, her concern is based on a belief alone rather than evidence from her practice. Another writer who answered “no” to the above question explained that she finds it hard to have original ideas when she becomes lucid, but then said that she usually forces herself awake as soon as she catches herself lucid dreaming as she finds the feeling of it weird. Finally, the third “no” came from a lucid dreamer who struggles to remain lucid, waking up soon after becoming lucid. Thus, his belief that lucid dreaming would not help him creatively comes from the inability to stay in the lucid state rather than a concern about any negative impact of LD. There was also one non-lucid dreamer who remained neutral as he did not seem interested in lucid dreaming at all. However, 22 out of 26 lucid and non-lucid dreamers expressed their interest in lucid dreaming and recognised the benefits that dreaming lucidly has or could have for their writing (see Appendix B7).

*b) Examples of what writers do with their **lucid** dreams*

This section discusses lucid dreams provided by lucid dreamers to investigate the difference dream lucidity can make for writers. The benefits of LD for fiction writing, beyond the benefits of dreams in general, are multifaceted. Those who use LD for their writing benefit greatly from conscious insights into the world created by their dreaming mind: from increasing dream recall to developing characters inside LD, exploring locations and “turning up” emotions and sensory inputs, decoding the symbolism of bizarre dreams, and jumping in and out of characters, to world building and asking the dream what to write next (see figure 8). Zadra states that “what’s interesting about lucid dreaming is that it allows you to sort of take a step back and pay attention to something that you normally wouldn’t and do actions that you may not have done” in a non-lucid dream.

Figure 8

Ten Benefits of Lucid Dreaming for Fictional Writing, As Highlighted By Interviewees.



Plot

The writers from this lucid dream group develop new plots or test their already-developed plots in a dream environment. Some of them employ no control over the dream, simply watching it unfold as if it were a film, while others try to direct it (see Appendix B8). One writer tests and only slightly influences “the story being told” when he is “in the soft plane of dreamland that's malleable to the touch” by adjusting “with a nudge or a shove, the workings to see how it plays out.” Interestingly, most of these lucid dreamers do not try to impose a great deal of control over their dreams;

rather, they watch it unfold while paying attention to the details. As one writer describes it, “it was like watching a film and then writing the script.”

Owen Palmiotti, a novelist and an award-winning screenwriter/filmmaker, embarked on a 30-day journey through the lucid dream world by building on his waking ideas, reviewing them, and looking at plots from different angles and from each character’s eyes. He used these different perspectives to create other substories, and generally developed his story by continuing the dream from one night to the next (see Appendix B9). Michael Jecks engages in a similar practice of going back into the same dream and replaying it to go down alternative routes (B9). Others used lucidity to explore the dream and better understand and remember the details from the surroundings, characters, and their own emotions.

First-hand experience – Characters, Settings, and Sensations

The ability to gain first-hand experience in a dream is reported to result in believable characters as well as vivid places that come to life on paper as they are easy to imagine and sense.

In many of my lucid dreams I used to have when I was a kid, I would regularly interact with a dream character I called Lyra. When I wrote my first novel, *Dreaming Demons*, I based the main character off the image I had of Lyra, and all of her emotions and how she would react to situations.

(Daegon Magus)

These characters are the most intriguing parts of our dreams according to Dr Antonio Zadra, who has been studying sleep and dreaming for over two decades. He has recently published a novel entitled *The Dreamkeepers* inspired by his many interactions with characters from his lucid dreams, and was interviewed on these experiences for the present study.

Just exploring the environment or asking questions you wouldn't have asked your dream character, and paying attention to their answers, I think you get a wealth of potential creative information that you probably would not have had in a non-lucid dream. (Antonio Zadra)

Experiences shared by some of the writers interviewed support Zadra's statement, as they developed characters through a series of lucid dreams that revealed to them things about their characters they claim they could not have imagined otherwise (see Appendix B10). One screenwriter went to sleep thinking about a friend from college whom he hadn't seen in a couple of decades. His interaction with the memory of this woman turned into a feature film script (JD in Appendix B10). Another writer invited his character into his lucid dreams and went on many Dr Who-ish adventures with him (JP in Appendix B10). JP was surprised when he "found out" how his character "actually" looked like; writing this character for fifteen years, he imagined him visually, but a dream revealed a very different appearance. He continued developing this character in a series of lucid dreams. Novelist Daegon Magus used his dreams to further develop a character from his childhood dreams and introduce her to other characters, worlds, and to see how she reacts to different situations. He then had this protagonist from his novel travel to different worlds and meet a spiritual teacher, which he later incorporated into the novel (Appendix B10).

The potential for meeting and developing realistic characters with unexpected traits in a dream is enabled by the fact that dream characters often seem self-willed and behave and speak as if they have their own sentience. This is exemplified with accounts of two writers whose lucid dream characters tried to convince them not only that they were real but also that the dream was the actual reality (Antonio Zadra and R.W. Harrison in Appendix B11). In addition, Dr Zadra talked about an artist with whom he works, and whose dream characters are tasked with creating his artwork in his lucid dreams. However, these characters refuse to draw for him, break down in tears, or give him a puzzle the meaning of which he must decode in order to get a painting (see Appendix B11).

Similarly, it may be that settings explored in lucid dreams offer more detail and tangible material to navigate than non-lucid dreams. As she plays with the laws of physics in order to create extraordinary new worlds, Adriana Polito claims that her descriptions of places are better when she describes them straight out of lucid dreams: “I think it’s because I’ve been there. So I can describe it really well, because I’ve walked it.” Owen Palmiotti “teleported” to 1763, the year in which his novel was based, to explore the setting and step into the shoes of his protagonist (Appendix B12). Michael Stephenson uses a technique of “slowing down” a dream to focus on the details of the setting or to experience the environment through all senses, producing synaesthesia – a perceptual phenomenon allowing a person to experience one of their senses through another sense, such as hearing colours or tasting music (Appendix B12).

Decoding the Symbolism

The above techniques and awareness of the act of dreaming allow writers to “zoom in” on the story in all its details, but also in all its meaning. For instance, Owen Palmiotti created a story after multiple visits to a dream that made no sense to him at first. “I had a dream of numbers and letters flying at me. And I didn’t understand what it was until I jumped back into the dream a few times over a few weeks.” Similarly, another writer managed to reveal the symbolism of his two-part dream by becoming lucid in the second dream and continuing the story until the message unfolded (JRS in Appendix B13). Another writer, T, used a lucid dream image of a minotaur in a labyrinth which she turned into a story about “somebody ironically trapped in a dream state through their mental health issues, who needs help escaping this labyrinth, which is their own mind and their own traumas.”

Resolving ambivalence around current projects or writing practice

Apart from a direct contribution to the content of their writing, dreams have resolved ambivalence around creative projects or their writing practice for some of these writers. Catherine Smith found that the repeating symbolism of leaving babies on buses in her dreams reflects her relationship with creativity, telling her she should get back to writing (see Appendix B14). In addition, dreams sometimes reveal an idea for *the* story that one *should* write. A stuntman and fresh writer struggled with his writing

until a dream revealed an authentic topic for him to write about, telling him that he was writing the wrong story and revealing the story that only he could write (Matt Price in Appendix B14).

Lucid dreamers don't have to wait for that one dream that may never come on its own, like non-lucid dreamers do. A writer who has been using lucid dreams mostly for his character development said that he recently got into a habit of asking the dream to reveal what he should write (JP in Appendix B14). He uses the common techniques such as the mnemonic induction for lucid dreaming (MILD) and sets an intention for the dream to answer this perhaps most important question of one's writing practice, the question of authenticity.

Catherine Smith's insights as to whether dreaming and, in particular, lucid dreaming could benefit creative writing come from years of experience teaching creative writing to others. Not only could it help her understand the symbolism of her own dreams better and use this to escape procrastination, but she also sees LD as a valuable tool for writers to find their creativity and bring authenticity to their writing. In a way, she believes that LD could break the mechanisms of commercial writing for mass markets and bring some soul into the creative writing industry by revealing why a story should exist and *how only you could have written it* (Appendix B14).

8.4. *Writing Development*

Just like the authors Epel interviewed, some of these writers reproduced dreams literally but most adapted certain elements from their dreams to create a fictional story. One writer truncates a lot of the elements out of a dream to fit his songs, "including only the most essential elements." However, for his stories, he includes "as many elements as possible, because I feel like they are somehow relevant to my interpretation of the meaning of the dream." Other writers find the meaning of their dream stories after the fact. One writer wakes up with a memory of the dream and then wonders about the places and people in the dreamt scenario, crafting her story while awake (EG in Appendix B15). Two writers changed a lot of their dreams, embellished a lot, and added characters to turn their dreams into whole books, while one writer

wrote down her dreams exactly as they were. Chris Morgan took a story straight out of a dream, yet it ended up taking only a paragraph of the story he wrote. Kali Vicci Ravel used her dream about a serial killer and a woman in a world in which no one ages and changed the relationship between her dream characters but kept the meaning of the plot (Appendix B15). Balancing between the two, Catherine Smith actively fights her inner editor while trying to write down the most important elements of the dream first thing in the morning without any “editorial” input or questioning (Appendix B15). Most of the writers either practice writing down some key thoughts from the dream as soon as they wake up or believe this to be an effective practice that they want to pick up. However, of those interviewed, the lucid dreamers seem to be better at this practice than the non-lucid ones.

Lucid dreamers further develop their stories not just on paper, but also in other dreams, as discussed in the previous sections. They use a combination of waking and dreaming techniques to originate, develop, and review their writing pieces.

9. Discussion

This research sought to explore whether dreams and, in particular, lucid dreams can be used as a tool for fictional writing. The findings from interviews with 26 writers conducted by Epel and the 26 writers interviewed for this study confirm the hypothesised benefit of dreams in creative writing, and indicate that lucid dreams can provide additional benefits. Writers have used their dreams to inspire and develop plots, characters, settings, symbolism, and emotional structure of their stories, as well as to influence the choice and course of their creative works. Lucid dreamers have taken this a few steps further, which they claim shows numerous benefits of lucid dreaming over non-lucid dreaming.

9.1. Lucid dreams vs non-lucid dreams for writing

Describing a world which one has walked instead of a world only imagined in one’s head results in believable places and characters and engaging plots. The writer of

Sophie's Choice William Styron stated that “the so-called magic of fiction is to lure the reader into a state of believing. Believing that all this unbelievable stuff actually happened.” (Epel, 1993, p. 274).

These first-hand experiences that dreamers can take into their writing can be prompted and guided in a lucid dream, as exemplified in the results section. Therefore, LD can be a valuable tool for creating characters with their own sentience as well as believable worlds for one's stories. Most importantly, becoming lucid in one's dream could allow the writer to search for their authentic story. It has been shown in the results section that dreams can help creators write more authentically and that lucid dreams can help navigate towards this goal.

9.2. Implications for the Cognitive Model

It was hypothesised that lucid dreaming induction and various methods within lucid dreams could support certain processes described in the most widely used cognitive model of creative writing (Figure 6 in section 4.4.). The 26 interviewed writers claimed many benefits of dreaming which are relevant to these processes, including the process of reviewing. The following are the components of the model that appear to be affected by dreaming:

Planning – dreams generate new ideas, organize them, and help writers set priorities and goals by revealing what they should write next (e.g. Appendix B1; B2; B3; B4; Antonio Zadra and R.W. Harrison in B11).

Translating – this is a process of translating language into written words. However, a process of turning open-ended ideas into concrete concepts, termed “concretization”, has been defined as an essential component of artistic creativity (Kushnir & Orkibi, 2021). In this sense, translating also happens in dreams for some writers, as they decode abstract concepts in their waking heads and turn them into concrete images or sensations in the dream (e.g. Matt Price in Appendix B5). Arguably, this is also what happens when one incubates a problem and solves it in a dream.

Reviewing: by bringing their protagonists into a lucid dream, recreating the story setting, or going down alternative routes, writers evaluate the text produced so far, so

as to test their ideas and revise them “in real time” (Antonio Zadra and MT in Appendix B8; Owen Palmiotti and Michael Jecks in B9).

It is worth noting that the dreaming writer must collaborate with their waking self to establish this cycle of non-linear processes and develop a creative story. Creativity has been defined as essentially a combination of two necessary factors: originality and usefulness or task-appropriateness (Barron, 1955; Hennessey & Amabile, 2010; Simonton, 2012; Stein, 1953; Runco and Jaeger, 2012; Mumford, 2003; Walia, 2019). Originality can certainly come from dreams and can even be nurtured through dreams. However, the usefulness or the quality of a creative piece determined by the recognition from the peers in one’s field is one of the two key ingredients in producing a *good story*. Wallas’ model of creativity (1926) offers further insight here, distinguishing between two critical stages: incubation and implementation. The incubation phase involves stepping away from the problem, allowing the subconscious to continue processing ideas in the background. The implementation stage is the active phase where the writer takes these insights and integrates them into a finished product, refining and presenting their work to meet the standards of usefulness and task-appropriateness.

Future studies should further investigate prevalence (how many writers have ever used a dream) versus incidence (how frequently does this occur) in order to better understand how this model could be revised and applied.

Finally, on the basis of the findings here a revision of the creative writing model can be proposed. As voiced by Catherine Smith, a creative writing instructor, the search for an authentic idea is often abandoned for the appeal to mass markets. Authenticity, or the idea that ‘only I could write this’, lays within every one of us, just like the potential for creativity resides inside each of us. The search for it should thus also be a universal process which comes before the writing itself begins, somewhere around the process of generating and goal setting, and could be revisited throughout the writing process to keep one “on track”. No detailed revision to the model in this regard is proposed in this section due to the complexity of the task and the space constraint of this section. However, this revision will be considered during an experiment with

writers that follows this section, and which involves the teaching of LD induction to writers.

9.3. *What's next?*

The proposed experiment (see below: Study 3) will include guided instructions that will incorporate key fictional writing elements, as well as LD induction training. Unlike other studies, this experiment will not focus only on the combining concepts exercise or character development or creation of a new world. Rather, participants will be instructed to explore their dream and find those elements that they personally can use in their story. This is because, as evidenced in these interviews, some writers' dreams contain vivid imagery and lack characters, while others have strong characters without the intensity of sensory inputs, and so on. We all dream differently, and thus we can all take different elements from our dreams, whether they are fully fleshed-out characters or symbolic, abstract imagery or a simple emotion or feeling, such as of being chased. The experiment will focus on exploring those strong elements in each individual's dream and will take advantage of whatever creative input a participant can get *for themselves*, placing an emphasis on finding the story only they can write.

Study 3: Lucid Dreaming for Fiction Writing

To further understand the role of lucid dreaming in fiction writing and evaluate the methods and techniques writers in Study 2 reported as beneficial for their creative writing, an experimental study lasting eight weeks with a randomised group of writers was undertaken. The purpose of this study was to introduce writers of all dreaming abilities (from those not remembering their dreams frequently and never experiencing a lucid dream to frequent lucid dreamers) to LD induction training with an addition of creative techniques and to assess whether their fiction writing improves after the intervention. The findings of the study are intended to show whether the ‘LD for Creative Writing’ model can work on a randomised sample of writers and not just on those writers who are natural high dream recallers as in Study 2. If successful, this model could then be applied to all writers, introduced to creative writing curriculums, and possibly adapted for usage across creative domains.

10. Methodology

10.1. Participants

Participants were recruited through an online form on the website specifically designed for this study: www.lucidstory.co.uk. Various writing groups across the UK were contacted with the opportunity, which many shared with their members who then registered their interest on the website. They were asked whether they considered themselves a professional/working writer, published writer, or if they were writing as a hobby. In addition, they needed to indicate whether they had ever had a lucid dream, if they were a frequent lucid dreamer, and how good their dream recall was at the time of applying.

Applicants who answered professional/working, published writer, creative writing student, or awarded writer were recruited. Those writing exclusively as a hobby were excluded, with writers for non-creative mediums (e.g. journalism) and some artists

from other domains, but with interest in creative writing, considered for the programme. Both lucid dreamers and those with no previous LD experience, as well as those with good and poor dream recall were recruited in order to get a diverse sample. Participants' characteristics are depicted in Table 10.

69 writers were initially selected, with 23 withdrawing before or straight after the initial workshop. 17 withdrew at different stages during the study for reasons of illness, personal or family difficulties, or discouragement/lack of motivation after seeing no results. Therefore, 29 participants completed the 8-week study. Two out of those 29 writers did not write a short story for assessment. Their data were still analysed but they were excluded from the quantitative analysis of story scores. Participants who withdrew from the study at any stage were not included in the quantitative analysis, with one included in the qualitative analysis.

Table 10

Participant Characteristics

Code	Sex	Lucid dream frequency before study	Type of writer
PNJ	Female	Never had one	Non fiction
PLJ	Female	A few times a year	Creative writer
PS	Female	Never had one	Creative writer
PF	Female	Not recently	Creative writer
PT	Female	Never had one	Creative writer
PG	Male	Never had one	Creative writer
PH	Female	Never had one	Non fiction
PI	Female	Not recently	Non fiction
PA	Female	A few times a year	Creative writer
PU	Male	Never had one	Creative writer
PJ	Male	Not recently	Creative writer
PV	Female	Never had one	Creative writer
PY	Female	Never had one	Creative writer
PK	Female	Not recently	Creative writer
PQ	Female	A few times a year	Creative writer
PL	Male	Not recently	Creative writer
PM	Male	Not recently	Creative writer
PN	Female	Not recently	Creative writer
PW	Male	Not recently	Creative writer
PO	Male	Not sure	Non fiction
PC	Female	A few times a year	Creative writer

PP	Female	Never had one	Creative writer
PR	Female	Not recently	Creative writer
PB	Female	Not recently	Creative writer
PE	Male	Never had one	Creative writer
PZ	Female	Never had one	Creative writer
PX	Female	Not recently	Creative writer
PD	Female	Not recently	Creative writer
PAB	Female	A few times a year	Creative writer

Figure 9

Number of Unpublished and Published Writers That Took Part In This Study.

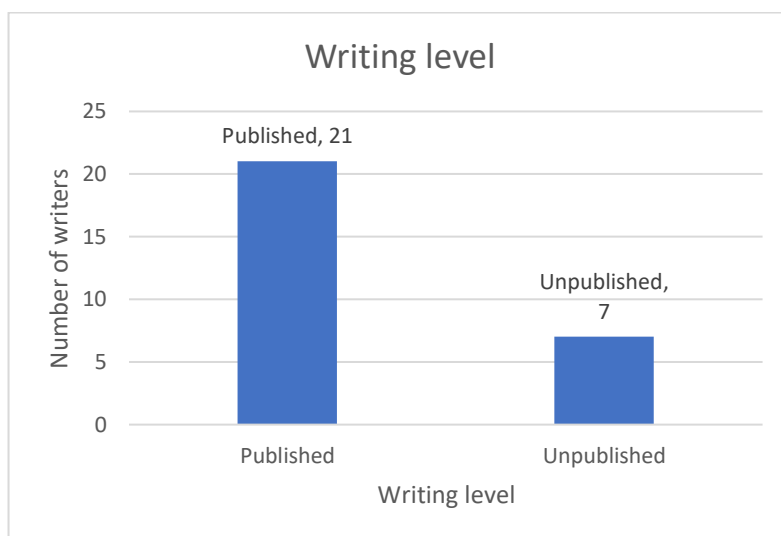


Figure 9 shows the writing level of the 29 participants that completed the study: 25% of the participants were unpublished authors that have either won awards for their writing in competitions or proven their writing ability in other ways.

Participants were asked to submit a recent short story written in the past six months that best reflected their writing. Recruitment occurred every week for 5 weeks. The first participants started mid January and the final participants started the second week of February. A group induction session marked the start of their training. The 8-week programme for each participant was split into two parts: the first four weeks were spent undergoing lucid dreaming induction training at home, while during the last four weeks, they continued the training with added creative techniques, and developed a new short story. They were asked to submit daily checklists every week in order to monitor progress and personalise their training (C1). There was an exit interview with

each participant aimed at collecting insight and personal experiences with the entire process.

10.1. Workshop design: Part 1

The first part of the study consisted of lucid dreaming induction training which participants conducted at home, in their own time. Though Erlacher notes in his 2024 book *Sport and Sleep: Applied Sleep Research for Sports Science* that lucid dream research still lacks reliable induction techniques (p. 69), there are a number of techniques that have had varying success in inducing LD in previous studies.

Tholey's (1983) combined technique was previously shown to yield the most successful results in inducing LD (Zadra et al., 1992; Paulsson & Parker, 2006). This technique requires a dreamer to perform reflection, intention, and autosuggestion before falling asleep. During reflection, one examines their surroundings and checks if they are in a dream. With intention, one imagines being in a dream, and autosuggestion refers to suggesting that one is lucid in a dream. These techniques have been refined in other studies, with *reflection* used as Reality Testing, and *intention* and *autosuggestion* used as the MILD technique.

Stumbrys et al. reviewed three cognitively-based induction techniques: the Mnemonic Induction of Lucid Dreams or MILD (e.g. Edelstein & LaBerge, 1992; Kueny, 1985; LaBerge, 1988); the Reality Testing method (e.g. Levitan & LaBerge, 1994; Purcell, et al., 1986) and Tholey's Combined Technique, suggesting that combined techniques may result in higher reported success rates for the induction of lucid dreams.

The first method, Reality Testing (RT), as described by Purcell (1988), involves regularly assessing one's environment throughout the day to check if they are in a dream. This is done by attempting actions that would be impossible in a dream, such as trying to recall events from earlier in the day or defying physical laws like flying. Through this process, one becomes more familiar with personal "dream signs" – unique, dream-specific oddities that don't align with waking reality and often recur in

dreams. Reality checks are then conducted whenever something associated with these oddities appears during the day. This practice increases the likelihood that, when such an oddity occurs in a dream, the person will automatically perform a reality check and recognise they are dreaming.

The second technique is defined by LaBerge and Rheingold (1990) – the MILD technique, which involves repeating a mantra or affirmation that one will have a lucid dream while falling asleep. This autosuggestion is paired with a visualisation technique, where one imagines becoming lucid in their most recent dream, alternating between these two tasks until they drift off to sleep.

Finally, the Wake-Back-To-Bed (WBTB) technique (Levitan, 1991) focuses on the REM cycle. This cycle occurs roughly every 90 minutes, with REM phases lengthening progressively through the night (Levitan, LaBerge & Dole, 1992). WBTB seeks to induce lucidity during the final and longest REM period by setting a refreshed cognitive intention to lucid dream upon waking. This involves waking up 30–90 minutes earlier than usual, staying awake for 30–60 minutes while thinking about lucid dreaming, and then returning to sleep using the MILD technique. This approach allows participants to avoid carrying the intention through non-REM sleep and reach REM more quickly, maximising the potential for lucidity during this prolonged REM period. WBTB was identified as most effective when used in conjunction with the MILD technique (e.g. Edelstein & LaBerge, 1992; LaBerge et al., 1994).

This mixed approach was used for the present study. Writing a dream journal, which is a key practice applied in this approach, was identified as a technique in itself for this study. Therefore, the present study consisted of four techniques: MILD, RT, WBTB, and dream journaling. During the initial group session, participants were presented with all the relevant information and a set of instructions for this first part of the programme in a handout.

For the dream journal, participants were instructed to record their dreams the instant they woke up, whether this was in the middle of the night or in the morning. They were asked to move as little as possible and think only of the dream while audio recording it or writing in their journal. To help them do this most effectively, they

were instructed to either use their phones or keep a physical journal close to them in bed/on a nightstand or to audio record their dreams on their phones or other devices and transcribe later. They were also asked to record dreams as literally as they could remember them, noting down any events, emotions, or sensations experienced without conscious editing of the dream for the purposes of making sense of them.

Ten common reality checks (RC) were presented as part of reality testing, and these included pushing a finger through the palm of the other hand, reading, and recalling the events of the day in chronological order. Participants were told that quantity matters (ideally at least 5-10 RC a day), but that the most important thing is to truly focus on the reality test when they conduct it during the day and not to just, for example, push the finger through their hand knowing that it won't go through. They were asked to imagine that they were in a dream and to pay attention to the world around them, finding anything out of the ordinary that would indicate that this was a dream. During the course of the study, participants were reporting on their progress and, according to their reports, were instructed to personalise their reality checks. For instance, they were asked to note down any repeating motifs in their dreams and to conduct reality checks in accordance with those motifs in their waking lives (e.g., one participant's dreams frequently featured buses, so she started doing reality checks every time she would see a bus in her daily life – this unlocked her first lucid dream). Some participants set alarms or used a vibrating bracelet to remind themselves to conduct reality checks, though this was done on their own initiative.

The MILD technique was also personalised, with a general instruction pertaining to the visualisation and mantra elements. Participants were asked to repeat “I will remember my dreams and I will have a lucid dream tonight”, worded in the way most natural to them, and to visualise a recent or a repeating dream, picturing themselves becoming lucid in it.

The optional WBTB technique was used by 16 participants, with eight practising it regularly and eight sporadically. Six participants tried the techniques a few times over the eight weeks. List of these Ps can be found in C2. Three participants did not submit their checklists indicating whether or not they used this technique. Other participants

did not use the technique due to sharing a bed with someone and not wanting to wake them up or naturally taking a while to fall back asleep.

Finally, participants were given instructions on how to be lucid in a dream for longer, change a scene, as well as what to do if they found themselves in a nightmare (instructions taken from LaBerge & Rheingold, 1990). To stay in a lucid dream, they were instructed to calm their emotions, look at their hands, stay active, keep the affirmation “this is a dream”, and use the spinning technique – spin with your body and feel the vivid sensation of spinning to stay in the dream or to change the dream scene (LaBerge & Rheingold, 1990). In order to wake up from a nightmare, they were told to withdraw their attention and participation from the dream and to stare at one point for a long time until the dream dissolved (LaBerge, 1990). However, they were warned that waking up from a nightmare might cause a false awakening, and that therefore the best thing to do is to interact with and try to change the outcome of the nightmare, unless it was too unpleasant and the participant was unwilling to face it, in which case the participant should try to wake up.

10.2. Workshop design: Part 2

After four weeks of using the LD induction techniques, there was another group training session. A new handout was given to participants, explaining the additional methods focused on creative intentions, and the creative writing task they were expected to complete by the end of the study. The task included writing a short story inspired by an idea from a dream and developed through an active interaction with the dream. LD induction training continued throughout the second part of the workshop.

Firstly, a creative intention was added to the MILD technique, which then consisted of the following mantra: “I will remember my dreams. I will have a lucid dream. I will find my story tonight.” The last intention changed depending on the stage at which participants were with their story and what the story demanded. For instance, after finding their idea for a short story, participants set intentions to meet their characters in a lucid dream, to solve problems with the plot, understand symbolism, identify themes and emotions, and look for what their story was missing.

Participants were encouraged to actively work *with* their dreams, that is, to not simply transcribe dreams into a story nor to use dreams simply as starting points for their stories. They were asked to look for an idea that captivates them in their first week of part 2, which could be a part of the plot, a character, a place, a symbol, or simply an emotion that permeated the dream. Then, they were instructed to build on that idea by writing during the day and setting new intentions at night. As they were writing their stories, they had to identify what the story was missing and ask for this element in their dreams. If they weren't happy with the ending, for example, they would ask for an alternative ending. If their character had no depth, they would ask to meet the character in a dream or to dream about something that would reveal a deeper layer to their character. And so on. While setting the intention, they were instructed to visualise a portal and walk through it into their story world.

Once in a lucid dream, participants were instructed to actively search the dream environment for new ideas, invite and interact with their characters, explore the story setting, ask the dream for help with a specific problem, and review their story plot. Participants were instructed to work with their non-lucid dreams as well, by recording them in the morning and looking for connections to their story. However, lucidity in the dream would make it easier to navigate the dream and look for a specific answer. They were told to ask the dream for an answer verbally, such as to shout out "give me a clue to XYZ" or to shout out their character's name, inviting them into the dream. Furthermore, participants were told to look through windows or walk through doors/portals/mirrors, turn the corner, and similar, while setting intentions to meet their character or find what they were looking for on the other side.

For example, participants were instructed to invite their protagonist into their LD and interact with them. They were asked to pay attention to the character's looks and the way they talked, walked, breathed, and responded to their questions or requests. To develop their story settings, they were asked to explore the dream environment by performing one or more of the following: zoom in on the details, slow down the dream, change the scenery, try out synaesthesia, or change locations by setting intentions while walking through doors/portals or spinning.

Moreover, participants were instructed to look for the “why” behind their story. Suggestions included: ask your protagonist why they’re on this journey, why this is their story; ask your environment to reveal any hidden or apparent symbols and allow you to see patterns; focus on those symbols and what they represent to you; how does the dream feel: do you feel comfortable in it, does it scare you, is it warm or cold, is the sky clear or dark, do you want to stay or escape; understand the nature of the dream by exploring its settings and characters. All of these were intended to provide deeper insight into the story and their characters’ motivations to drive the plot.

The importance of collaboration between the dreaming and waking self was emphasised. Participants were asked to switch between writing a story and setting intentions for their dreaming mind to help them move the story forward. Writing down ideas from their dreams as true to memory as possible, without their inner editor interfering (read: without rationalising dreams while writing them in the journal to make sense of them), was an important first step. However, while working with these ideas to write the short story, participants were asked to consult their inner editor and their rational mind in order to create a fictional story interesting to potential readers, and to create structure and flow for the narrative.

Finally, participants received instructions for three additional things they could try in their LD, but which were optional. These included:

Creative Workshop

This method was inspired by the LD practice of Fariba Bogzaran, an artist who finds creative inspiration in lucid dreams (Bogzaran, 1991; 2003). Participants were told to picture a place of which they often dreamt and set an intention for this to be their *creative workshop* from now on. They were instructed to go to that place if they became lucid in a dream, and to intend to find inspiration in this place. For example, they could find a fresh story idea, meet their protagonist, or find a box with a solution to their creative problem inside it.

Dream Television

This method was inspired by Alan Worsley’s practice (1998). Once in a lucid dream, participants were asked to look for a TV set, sit in front of it, switch between channels,

change sound level and colour intensity, or make other alterations to the scene or plot. They would then “direct a film” as they witnessed it. They could also walk into a scene by walking through the screen.

Meet a mentor

Meeting a mentor or a guide in a dream sometimes happens spontaneously, but it is also something that can be induced (Morgan, 2009; Taitz, 2014; Waggoner, 2008). Thus, participants were asked to invite into their dream a writer who they admired or another inspirational figure. They could go fishing with Hemingway, have a tea with Agatha Christie, or visit a distant planet with George Orwell (LaBerge & Rheingold, 1990), talk to them about their story, or ask them what they’re working on at the moment, in order to harvest ideas and gain inspiration.

10.3. Group Sessions

Participants took part in weekly group sessions, in which they shared their dreams, struggles or success with their training, and their works in progress. These sessions served as a forum of support, where tips on LD training as well as feedback on written works were exchanged. During the first part of the study, participants only attended one or two group sessions as this part was allocated to LD training at home while most participants were not yet experiencing LD. In the second half of the study, group sessions were attended every week, with a few exceptions. These served as an open forum for dialogue between writers as well as a space to ask questions and receive personalised guidance. Participation was not mandatory but highly encouraged.

10.4. Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was conducted using qualitative data analysis software, ATLAS.ti, following Braun and Clarke’s six-step process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This method of inductive thematic analysis allowed themes to emerge from the data itself without the constraints of any pre-existing theoretical framework. In the following

subsections, I describe the stages of data coding, theme generation, and theme refinement, moving from specific participant experiences to general themes.

Data Coding Process

The coding process involved several systematic stages:

Familiarisation with the data: I began by reviewing all interview transcripts, participant notes, and group session records to gain a comprehensive understanding of participant experiences. This phase focused on recognising patterns in how lucid dreaming (LD) affected creativity, including participants' short stories, the broader impact on their creative practices, and reflections on group sessions.

Generating initial codes: Once familiarised, I conducted open coding by assigning labels to specific sections of text relevant to the research questions. Coding was inductive, with codes emerging from the data, highlighting topics such as increased dream vividness, integration of dream elements into fiction writing, and the influence of group sessions on motivation. By the end of this process, 89 distinct codes were identified.

Searching for themes: Following initial coding, I grouped similar codes to form overarching themes, focusing on recurring patterns that revealed significant insights into participant experiences. Codes related to dream recall, vividness, agency, lucid and liminal, were grouped under the theme "Dreams," while codes about using dream elements creatively and refining the writing process fell under "Creativity." Codes relating to group interactions and training practices were organised within the "Group Sessions" theme.

To ensure coherence, I revisited each theme, examining coded data to confirm that it accurately represented participants' experiences. Themes were merged or refined if they did not capture a significant portion of the data. This process led to a more organised structure where each theme was clearly defined with relevant subthemes. For example, the "Creativity" theme included subcategories like "Starting Points" and "Problem Solving" to differentiate between initial inspiration from dreams and the use of dreams to resolve creative blocks and move stories forward.

Themes were then clearly labelled, with subthemes added to capture nuances. Within the Creativity theme, subthemes like "Starting Points" referred to initial inspiration drawn from dreams, while "Problem Solving" referred to how participants used dreams to navigate creative challenges in their writing.

Finally, the themes and coded data were synthesised into a structured analysis that highlighted how the intervention influenced participants' creative practices. This thematic breakdown provided a framework for exploring the reciprocal influence of dreaming and waking states on creativity within the study.

11. Results

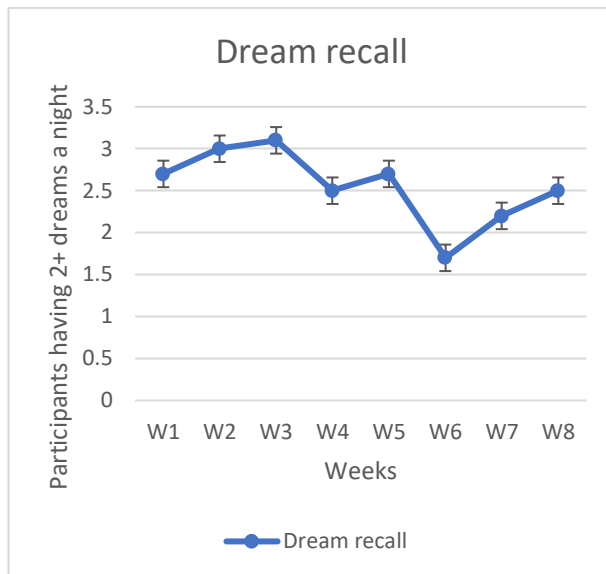
11.1. Quantitative Analysis

11.1.1. Dream Recall

A within-subjects analysis was conducted to determine changes in participants' dream recall over the eight weeks. Mauchly's test indicated that the assumption of sphericity was violated ($p < .05$). Therefore, degrees of freedom were corrected using the Greenhouse-Geisser estimate of sphericity ($\epsilon = 0.60$). The results showed a significant effect of week on dream recall, $F(4.20, 75.53) = 2.62$, $p = .039$, indicating that dream recall significantly changed over time. Figure 10 shows the changes across weeks.

Figure 10

Dream Recall Frequency – Participants Reporting 2+ Dreams Nightly Across Weeks



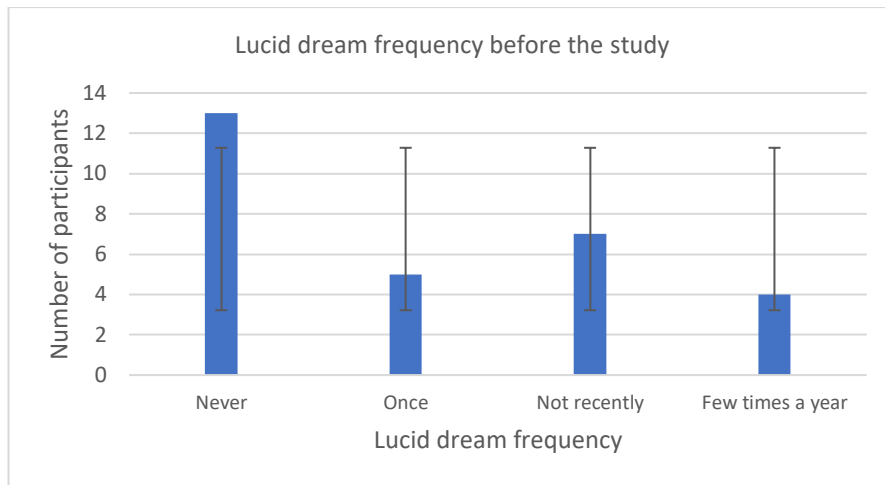
11.1.2. Lucid Dreams

The observed changes in the nature and perception of dreams led to lucidity for 23 participants. This group of creative writers had a higher success rate inducing LD than a previous highly referenced study conducted by Saunders et al. (2017). Of 25 non-frequent lucid dreamers in this study, 83% achieved a lucid dream, while Saunders et al. saw a 45% success rate with their participants.

Out of the 29 participants that completed the study, 13 had never had a lucid dream before the study, five had an LD once in the past, seven used to have LDs but not recently, and four were frequent lucid dreamers with at least a few LDs per year (Figure 11).

Figure 11

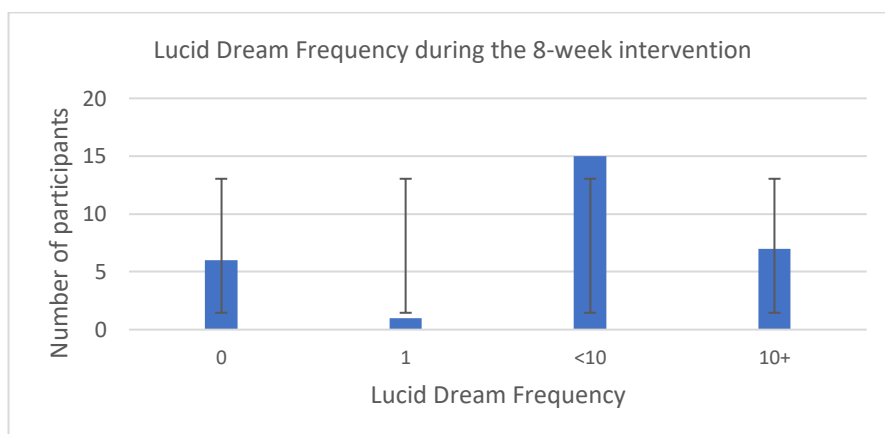
Number of Participants Reporting a Varying Frequency of Lucid Dreams Before The Study Commenced.



After the 8-week intervention, six participants had still not experienced a lucid dream, with one of them experiencing just one LD during the intervention. 15 participants experienced up to ten LDs with seven participants achieving over ten LDs in the eight weeks of the intervention (Figure 12). In addition, three out of the six that had not experienced an LD during the intervention reported their first LD one to two weeks after the study's completion.

Figure 12

Number of Participants Who Experienced a Varying Frequency of Lucid Dreams During The 8-Week Intervention.

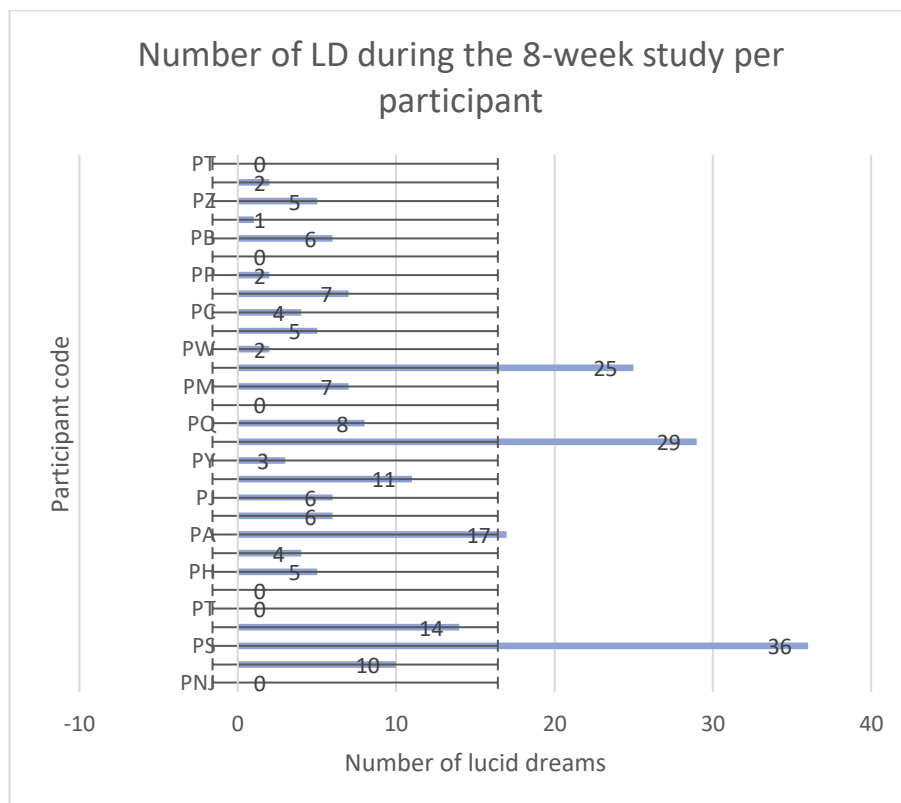


Participants had varying levels of control over their LDs, with some having brief moments of lucidity and others exerting full creative control over them. For example, PV, who never had an LD prior to this study, induced seven LDs in the first three weeks of her training, lucidly entered two of them, re-entered multiple dreams, and managed to consciously transform her dream characters to navigate the dream.

Figure 13 shows the number of LDs achieved by a single participant during the course of the study. The numbers may not be 100% accurate due to the reliance on subjective reports as opposed to observations in the lab. Thus, some of the numbers might be exaggerated while others might be too low, with some LD experiences confused with liminal dreams, which are discussed in the next section. However, every effort has been made to clarify and confirm reported experiences by collecting dream reports where possible, and confirming the definition of a lucid dream and the nature of experience with each participant.

Figure 13

Number of Lucid Dreams Reported Per Participant During The 8-Week Intervention.

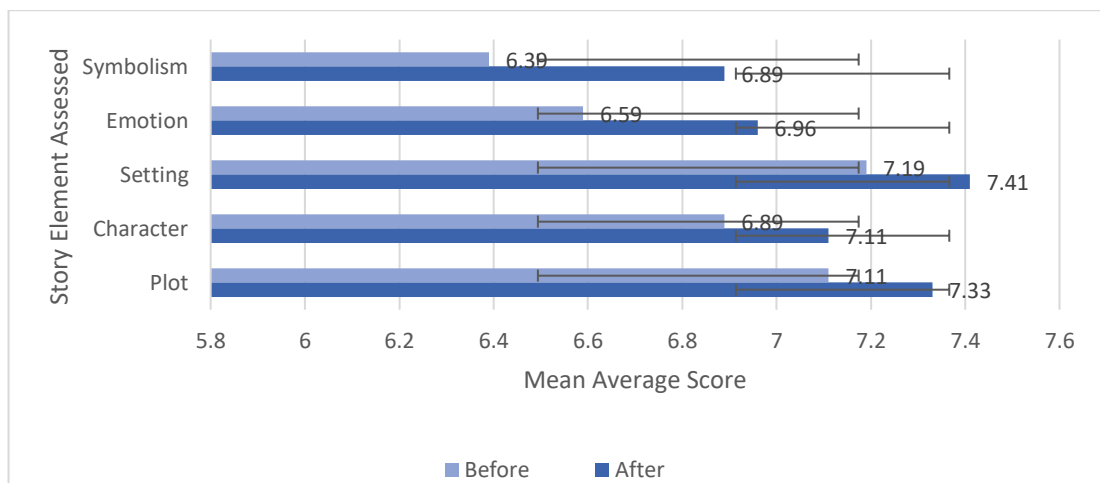


11.1.3. Creative Assessment

To assess their progress objectively, writers submitted a short story before the study commenced and wrote one story during the intervention. Four independent judges, blind to before / after category for the stories, then assessed the submitted stories on five categories. Each category shows an overall improvement for the 29 writers (Figure 14).

Figure 14

Mean Average Scores for Stories Written Before and During the Intervention.



Symbolism was the most improved category (improved by 0.5), followed by emotion (improved by 0.4), and character development (0.22), plot (0.22), and setting (0.22).

However, regardless of the positive subjective reports and the assessment of blind judges, p value shows no statistical significance across categories. A series of paired-samples t-tests were conducted to compare participants' story-writing scores before and during the study across five assessed categories: plot, character, setting, emotion, symbolism, and the overall score. The results indicated no significant differences between the pre-study and during-study scores for any of the categories. Specifically, there was no significant difference in plot scores, $t(26) = -0.78$, $p = .441$; character

scores, $t(25) = -0.40$, $p = .694$; setting scores, $t(26) = -0.74$, $p = .464$; emotion scores, $t(25) = -1.24$, $p = .225$; symbolism scores, $t(24) = -1.08$, $p = .290$; and overall story scores, $t(23) = -0.92$, $p = .369$.

This may be partly due to the following factors. The study was too short to have statistical significance. Two participants had their first LDs a week after the study. A number of participants reported not using the techniques for story development inside LDs because they just wanted to fly and experience lucidity. Some participants only used one dream to inspire the story and did not manage to get further dreams to develop it. Having just one story at baseline and one post-training; ideally several stories per person would be needed to assess creativity objectively.

For these reasons, a qualitative analysis was undertaken to process the results of this study. The following sections present findings gathered from the participants' weekly reports, group sessions, and one-on-one interviews, mainly concerning the short story they were writing for this study.

11.2. Qualitative Analysis

Through a structured coding process, three overarching themes—Dreams, Creativity, and Group Sessions—were refined into distinct themes, each offering insight into participants' experiences and evolving practices.

The first overarching theme, Dreams, encapsulated participants' changing relationship with their dreams, particularly in terms of recall, vividness, and the sense of control they developed. Within this category, the theme of Lucid Dreaming focused on participants' experiences with inducing and navigating lucid dreams, supported by a quantitative analysis of their reports. Another theme, Liminal Dreaming, explored participants' engagement with dreams that occurred in the transitional states between wakefulness and sleep. Techniques such as morning writing and Wake-Back-to-Bed (WBTB) writing were frequently mentioned as tools for working with these liminal states.

The second overarching theme, Creativity, examined how dreams served as a catalyst for participants' creative expression, inspiring new ideas, creative breakthroughs, and innovative problem-solving approaches in their writing. Within this theme, several key themes emerged. Starting Points highlighted how most participants used dream imagery, characters, or scenes as the foundation of their stories, often generating ideas they might not have conceived otherwise. Problem Solving revealed that many participants intentionally used dreams to address specific creative challenges, such as resolving plot issues or refining character development. The theme Dream Elements Used in Writing captured the direct incorporation of dream components—imagery, titles, characters, settings, symbolism, emotions, themes, perspectives, and entirely new concepts—into participants' narratives. Another theme, Mentors, reflected how some participants encountered guiding figures within their dreams, who provided inspiration or narrative direction. Additionally, The Writing Process emerged as an important category, detailing how participants' dreams influenced the flow and structure of their storytelling, often unlocking creativity or encouraging alternative writing approaches. Lastly, the theme Writing Dreams into Stories explored the challenges and strategies involved in transforming dream experiences into coherent fictional narratives.

The final overarching theme, Group Sessions, emerged from codes around collaborative discussions in participants' LD practice and creative processes. These sessions provided both technical guidance on LD training and a creative space where participants could share insights and refine their narratives. The theme Dream Influence highlighted the ways in which group discussions helped participants deepen their understanding of their dreams, personalise their LD techniques, and exchange strategies for enhancing dream recall and control. Meanwhile, the theme Creative Influence reflected how feedback and discussions within the group sparked new ideas, strengthened participants' writing, and fostered connections between dream experiences and storytelling.

All participants followed the LD induction training combined with setting a creative intention for using dreams (as per the programme's instructions) and liminal states (spontaneous) for creative inspiration. Some participants experienced disruptions in

their training, which might have had an impact on their success inducing LD as well as on their creative exploration (Table 11).

Table 11

Participants Who Experienced Significant Disruptions in Their LD Induction Training.

Health problems	Busy at work	Bereavement
5 (PS, PU, PV, PW, PK)	1 (PF)	2 (PI, PJ)

Note: For Detail, See C3.

Regardless of the disruptions, the 8-week intervention had a reported impact on the following areas of the participant’s lives:

1. Dreams
2. Waking life creativity

The following sections explore each of these areas in detail.

11.1. Dreams

While following the LD induction training and conducting a creative task, some participants’ nature and perception of their dreams changed over the course of this intervention (Table 12).

Table 12

Number of participants that reported increased dream control and insight from dreams for waking life situations.

Control	Insight
14 *8 of which positively influenced nightmares and anxiety dreams	7

Note: See C4 for list of Ps and evidence.

Control

With more involvement in their dreaming lives, the level of control and agency in some participants' dreams increased. Fourteen participants reported dreams with an increasing agency throughout the study (list of Ps and examples in C4). For example, PV's control over her creative dreams allowed her to shape her characters and focus on the details of the dream (C5). Others experienced varying degrees of control in both lucid and non-lucid dreams, recognising a more active role in their dreams.

Nightmares and anxiety dreams

This increased agency affected some participants' recurring nightmares and anxiety dreams. This was true for eight participants (list of Ps in C6). PH's lucid nightmares are a good example of this transformation in attitude.

I had two lucid dreams. My first ever. Both were nightmares. One of the reasons I was attracted to the course is because I have recurring nightmares where I usually wake up screaming. But this time I was aware that I was dreaming. I told myself I was dreaming and it stopped. I said the words 'stop it'. I went into another dream which turned into a second nightmare... I felt that familiar 'this is it' sensation. But then I remembered I was dreaming and said out loud 'don't be ridiculous'. I woke up disoriented, but not terrified as I usually am, and not screaming. (PH)

PU also overcame his recurring anxiety dreams by becoming semi-lucid in one of them. In this dream, PU quit his old job and regained the sense of control. Changing the outcome and taking agency resulted in the changing nature of this recurring

dream: PU was no longer powerless but in charge of things this time around (C7). Similarly, PW had multiple work dreams where he decided to finally walk out of the workplace, reporting that "these dreams are heading in the right direction."

A similar effect was observed in non-lucid dreams as well. PAB reports a vivid dream, normally one that would become a nightmare, but she was able to guide the dream and remain in control (C8). PN recalled a dream that would usually make her anxious but this time, she didn't feel anxiety or worry: "It was like I was observing the scenarios, taking part in them but not feeling bothered or upset, which was interesting." PX noticed her tendency to dream of potentially dangerous or frightening situations in which she now remains calm, especially when it comes to her claustrophobia, which she has managed to acknowledge in dreams and still act effectively in adverse situations (C9).

For the first time ever, instead of allowing the sea to drown her as in previous dreams, PY actually asked for help and survived the drowning. She reports becoming more involved in her dreams since the LD training, while before she was more passive and observant in dreams. Overcoming this recurring anxiety dream of drowning helped PY discover her voice: "The only two moments of lucidity – provided the story and revolutionised my life. I can survive traumas." This effect therefore spilled into her waking life, in which she reports an increased sense of agency as a result of this change in her dreams.

Insight

Single dreams, themes emerging from multiple dreams, and the intervention as a whole had a transformative effect on some Ps' waking lives. Seven participants reported an insight into waking life events (beyond the creative task) from dreams during this intervention (list in C10).

For example, PR hadn't realised she was carrying feelings of guilt and shame relating to a particular event in her life until she started having dreams that she characterised

as “useful and processing.” In one of those dreams, PR had an interaction with her old mentor, which helped her process these emotions and find peace. Similarly, PO reported “glimmers of self-awareness and self-understanding,” with the whole process “making things clearer every day.” PF reports a lot of ‘a-ha’ moments throughout the study and recalls a lucid dream that provided an insight into a waking life issue:

In the dream, I start thinking about finding another job myself, one that’s more challenging. I decide I don’t want it because this one is easy, and I can write because I’m not stressed. I have a moment of lucidity when I realise this is a possibility in real life not just in the dream. (PF)

Apart from revealing aspects of their waking lives, dreams offered some participants answers to their waking life problems. PA had one vivid, long, and detailed dream that concerned a couple of issues she was dealing with in her daily life, validating them to her: “I was then able to address these issues with a sense of determination to find a resolution.” She reported having difficult and embarrassing dreams from which she learnt by becoming conscious of these feelings (C11). One such dream provided a transformative insight: “I worked out what had been troubling my waking life. The dream had helped me to discover what it was.” PH reports on a lucid dream that gave her the answer to a puzzle she had been looking for all her life. The dream features a symbol associated with a sense of elation and importance, which kept evolving through her dreams, spinning and swirling around and featuring all around the dream environment (C12).

Aside from direct insights into certain waking-life situations, the intervention had a positive effect on some participants’ approach to waking life in general. PU, who is a practicing Buddhist, now carries his dreams through the day and reflects on them. He reports becoming more philosophical in his ‘background thinking’, and more relaxed and thoughtful in daily life, with dreaming taking him to a deeper domain.”

On reflection I notice a subtle shift in consciousness this morning after 3 hrs awake. I notice a deeper sympathy/empathy for others and am more detached

from world politics. I feel the LD project is having influences other than the answers I'd hoped for. (PU)

Vivid, unusual, detailed, and interesting

Table 13

Number of Participants Who Reported Increased Vividness, Unusual Dreams, and Detailed Dreams.

Vivid	Unusual	Detailed	Interesting
11	7	5	7

Note: See C13 for list of participants and evidence.

This shift in dreaming came with the changing nature of some participants' dreams (Table 13). Eleven participants said their dreams were becoming more vivid, seven mentioned experiencing more unusual dreams, five recognised increasing detail in their dreams, and seven found them to be more interesting during the course of the study (for list of Ps and detailed examples see C13). PA stated: "I think my dreams have been much more vivid and detailed than before the training. [...] My dreams now are particularly vivid and symbolic, which I am very pleased about. [...] Dreams now seem more purposeful."

PV evidenced a similar change in her dream journal, noting a difference between the first two weeks and the final two weeks: "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."

Day 13: Nothing significant happened really but this whole process has made me realise that all my dreams are quite dull and monotonous in terms of the world I'm in when dreaming. There's not been many dreams with vibrant

colours and exciting/happy moments. They've all been quite stressful, moody, monochromatic dreams. But maybe that's always been the case, but I've never noticed it before. I don't know if that means anything.

Day 42: My dreams have been extremely vivid and bizarre lately which I love. I've been finding them entertaining and not mundane and dull like previous weeks. (PV, from dream journal)

Similarly, PI reported multiple fun and meaningful dreams after a long period of "dull dreams full of anxiety." (C59)

Reporting a shift in her dreaming, PI noticed that her dreams usually feature just her, whereas now dreams started to revolve around other characters in more interesting settings. PW experienced a similar shift, as he began "dreaming as an observer in the more interesting story-like dreams" (C14). Similarly, PR experienced a change in the narrative structure of her dreams, moving from a flat storyline to more vivid and detailed dreams she described as "3D, in depth dreams": "Very complex, long dreams. My dream recall is getting better, and one [dream] was a film I was producing!! Definitely getting more creative in my dreams."

These increasingly vivid, complex, and involved dreams often led to increasing degrees of lucidity for some participants.

11.1.1. Liminal dreaming

Participants sometimes confused their experiences, unsure of whether they had a lucid dream, a liminal experience, or a mix of both. This was partly due to the fact that this study did not focus on liminal experiences, hence this concept was not introduced to the participants, and partly due to the unclear nature of these states. Upon discussion and analysis, it was concluded that 13 participants reported liminal experiences throughout the study. For a list of Ps and examples see C15.

Liminal experiences were determined through writers' reports such as "not sure if I was dreaming or imagining," "as I was drifting off to sleep/waking up but not fully awake/asleep," "not sure if I'm lucid or awake," "I stayed in bed and followed the dream through in half-awake state," and similar. For example, PLJ's dream report illustrates what was analysed as a liminal experience:

I decide to go to sleep thinking about intentions, and perhaps what I would like to dream about. I imagine myself walking through a field of lavender on a gentle hillside. I visualise looking across to hills opposite and an old church like building at the bottom of the lavender field... Then I don't know whether I am dreaming or imagining... A woman who is a similar height to me comes over to me. (PLJ)

These experiences were coded as liminal dreams and categorised accordingly. However, for many, this was not a clear-cut case when it came to the creative influence of these states. Some participants reported a mixture of liminal, lucid, and non-lucid dreams combined with waking imagination that produced a short story written for this study.

11.2. Creativity

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

Even though the focus of this study was on producing a new fictional story, some participants were inspired for other work as well, including other forms of writing as well as other creative domains. In addition, some writers felt inspired on a personal level not relating to a single writing piece, and they felt a positive shift in their writing practice.

Most stories written during the intervention were described as original by the independent judges, as well as some authors clearly having fun with their writing, making it fun to read. Judge 2 commented on PG's project story: "Emotion shown through all characters. Development and intensity communicated with clarity."

The structure was also positively skewed for some writers. For example, PL's story written during the intervention was scored much higher than his previous stories, with a particular comment on structure: "Mr Enigma stands out, with more control of the writing, quirky humour and a more satisfying short form structure that works. (Judge 1) However, structure was impacted negatively in other instances, such as PP's story assessed by Judge 1: "[The story] has lots of descriptive language, probably too much and some of it doesn't hit the mark. It seems to start off with good intentions but then becomes somewhat rambling – with the randomness of a dream." Furthermore, Judge 4 commented on PNJ's story: "With regards to the structures of this story, more signposts can be helpful for the reader to follow the plot of the story."

Sensory experiences in dreams translated well on page for many participants. As hypothesised, some writers reported being able to better present their story world to the reader if they experienced it first hand in a dream instead of waking imagination. Judge 2 found this in PF's project story: "The setting is believable and very well written – this reader can smell and feel that room, that wardrobe, that body. Very sensory."

Some characters were also better developed, overall, in stories written during the intervention than those written before the study. For instance, Judge 2 assessed PJ's project story as: "The narrator, his dialogue and the richness of descriptions all add to his believability and authenticity."

Not all participants managed to achieve a lucid dream, or the techniques inside LD to develop their stories. Nevertheless, the intervention alone aided the production of novel ideas, inspired writers, and helped progress their writing.

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. (PY)

Some participants used their dreams as a starting point for their stories, as well as for creative problem solving relating to their stories. Table 14 shows how many participants out of 27 that submitted their stories used their dreams for starting points and how many for problem solving.

Table 14

Number of participants who used dreams as a starting point and/or for solving problems around their project story.

Starting point	Problem solving	Neither
24	23	1

Note: list of Ps in C16.

11.4.1. Starting points

Four writers used multiple dreams as a starting point for their story, one used a liminal experience, and five used an LD as a starting point. Six writers reported solving problems related to their story in a liminal state, while others received answers in their dreams (table 15).

Table 15

Number of participants who used single or multiple non-lucid, lucid, and liminal dreams as starting point for their project stories.

Non-lucid dream	Lucid dream	Liminal dream	Multiple dreams	Multiple LDs
15	3	1	3	2

Note: list of Ps in C17.

Most participants got an idea for their story from a single dream, with some combining multiple dreams as a starting point. PQ’s story was prompted by a dream about a pilot, which starts the project story (a girl wanting extra experience, with a desire to step outside the norm), and then evolves through ideas from other dreams. These participants recognised dream ideas as creative upon waking up and recording them. Some participants also developed their story idea by taking some aspects of their dreams, directly or indirectly, and thinking about them creatively while awake.

Others, like PB, appreciated the dream’s creative potential whilst inside the dream (C61). PH used two of her dreams to start two different short stories (C18), and so did PL (C19), PC (C20), and PX (C21), among others. Several writers also used their dreams to start poems as well as novels.

Stories they would not otherwise write

For some writers, dreams provided different starting points from their usual story ideas. Increasingly intense and interesting dreams pushed eight writers (list of Ps in C22) to write stories they would not usually write, differing in the style of writing and/or the theme they explored in their stories. For example, PNJ wrote a story about a wedding in a cemetery. The idea came to her in a dream rich with symbols and imagery that inspired her to write “the weirdest story yet.” Similarly, PT combined elements from two different dreams to form an idea of a kind of story she normally does not write. From multiple dreams about people being hunted and targeted, PI got an idea for a detective/small town murder story in which a woman has to clear her name and go into hiding. She said: “I would never have had an idea like this in real

life!” Based on bizarre dreams, PV reported writing ideas of which she said her normal functioning brain would not have thought.

11.4.2. Problem solving

Apart from starting points, 23 writers (list in C16) experienced dreams that produced solutions to certain problems with their stories or other writing, depicted in Table 16. PLJ would wake up with ideas about how to move her writing forward. For instance, a very symbolic dream (C23) informed a lot of her writing and revealed that a novel she had been writing had a plot hole. The dream gave her an idea to resolve this: at least one of the characters from her novel needed to have a secret.

Table 16

Number of Participants Reporting A Dream Featuring and/or Providing Solutions For Their Project Story.

Dream	Lucid dream	Liminal state	Combination
9	4	5	4

Note: list of participants in C24.

Setting intentions

Participants mostly set creative intentions to help them further develop their stories and problem solve as their stories progressed. Setting a creative intention was the primary technique participants practised alongside their LD induction training. A minority of participants did not practise it, with some trying it out only a few times during the course of the intervention. 15 participants reported receiving a direct answer to their intention in a dream, and twelve reported indirect responses upon analysing their dream reports (table 17). Six participants, including those who did not practise this technique, did not report receiving an answer to their intentions in dreams.

Table 17

Number of Participants Who Received A Direct or Indirect Answer To An Intention Set Before Sleep.

Direct Answer to Intention	Indirect Answer to Intention	Neither
15	12	6

Note: list of participants in C25.

Some participants visualised their stories or read through parts of them before sleep as part of their intention setting. PV, for example, visualised going through an archway each night and eventually dreamt of a story title and emotional structure (see example in 11.4.5). PR, though not experiencing lucid dreams, saw her intentions fulfilled in multiple dreams. Her dreams responded to her request for insights on Star Trek scenarios, meeting mentors, and connecting with characters from several of her stories (example in C26). PU set intentions to help him progress the seagoing memoir that he had been writing. A lot of his dreams responded both directly and indirectly to his intentions by providing dreams about ships and his time in the navy (C27).

Another example is PG’s story. On February 8th, PG had an idea for a story about a man having an affair. On the 10th, he woke up with an idea that the story would be told by three people, each telling their own version of the story. But PG wasn’t sure what the story was about, what the ending was supposed to look like, and what the mood of the story was. He struggled with the mood for weeks. On March 10th, after a group session in which we discussed using the concept of dreaming in writing, he decided to let the reader choose their own ending by letting his character dream three different endings. He then woke up in the morning of the March 13th and discovered what the story was about: “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.

Whereas PG thought about the challenges in his story from the beginning and the ideas stewed in his dreams, PH was halfway through her story when she realised that she

had a plot hole. She went to dream wanting to be lucid and wondering how her story character was going to do something. In the dream about a girl with a foreign friend who called her Zui (which is where she got the name Zoe for her protagonist), she put a recorder in a kitchen cabinet - the dream told her that her character was going to bug the cabinet, which got her out of the plot hole in her story (C28).

Unhappy with her ending, PN then went to sleep asking for a different way to end the story. Following a dream featuring a character from her story putting the poster on the inside of her cupboard while drifting off to sleep, PN woke up with a solution:

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 puggle out.

(PN, see also C29)

Similarly, PQ wasn't happy with the whole of her story once she finished it; it just didn't move her. So one night, she went to sleep setting an intention by thinking about the story. She had a lucid dream about someone who wanted to change into a moth. PQ spoke to them, bringing into conversation her story, and telling them she wasn't happy with it. The next day she rewrote almost the whole story working this angle of one of the characters turning into a moth. This brought a very symbolic, layered narrative with a surprising ending (C30).

Liminal problem solving

Problem solving and the process of story development happened in the liminal state, between waking and dreaming, for some participants. For example, the idea for PG's story came from a liminal state, which he over the following weeks developed both in dreams and liminal states. See C62 for an excerpt from PG's dream diary that illustrates this.

Similarly, PS used the liminal state to flesh out a story that originated in a lucid dream: “I decided to lie in bed and follow this dream through in my half-awake state.” PP often struggled with plotting her writing, and expanding and exploring stories in this state was very helpful for that. She built both plot and feeling by imagining the story while drifting off to sleep. A lot of her interactions and building rapport with the story character happened in this state, and so did mapping out the whole story (C31). Similarly, PN received phrases and lines that served as a starting point for a children’s adventure story. She also got plot ideas that enabled her to evolve her stories in this state (C32).

PF used this state to write poetry and unblock some work issues on which she was stuck, work on plot point problems, or move work in progress forward. In the morning, before she would fully wake, she would allow whatever was rolling in her head to stay there, drifting in this between space and creating poems which she would then record as soon as she’d open her eyes (C33). It was sometimes hard for her to tell where one poem stopped and the other started. She also described “sliding in and out” of dream scenes. Similarly, PI describes going in and out of dreams and having a lot of conversations with herself while waking up, which was sparking her imagination.

This practice spontaneously developed by the above participants became the “morning writing” technique introduced to the rest of the participants in early weeks of the intervention.

Morning writing

As seen from some examples in the previous section, the ideas generated in the liminal state often prompted participants to write. For example, PF unblocked the focus for a new book and wrote the first draft in one sitting inspired by the liminal state. She woke up with a clear vision of what it should be called and “the basic content just spilled onto the page.” Some of PLJ’s story was inspired by morning ideas as well. For example, after a dream about a friend, she woke up with an idea for a trainee counsellor character who was going to help get things a bit wrong in the story. PN used morning writing to develop her stories based on ideas and insights from lucid and liminal

dreams (e.g. C29; C32; C34). While some discovered the morning creativity following a dream or a liminal state spontaneously, others practised it as per the instructions given to them for this study (C35).

WBTB writing

The morning writing technique was further refined by some participants during their WBTB awake time. The wake-back-to-bed technique requires the dreamer to wake up early in the morning and spend some time awake before returning to sleep. The awake period could be spent any way participants wanted, but they were encouraged to write during this time. PX would often go back to bed and drift off during the WBTB, describing this time as fruitful for getting her in the creative space. PD also used her WBTB awake time to write as it made her very focused, and she felt freer to be creative before all the daily events started happening. Further, PK and PQ wrote in the morning hours, with PQ using the half hour awake time during WBTB to write with “much greater clarity of thought.” She wrote a flash fiction one morning, met a character and wrote it into the story another morning, and reported many productive WBTB sessions since. She found a lot of useful metaphor and phrases during the WBTB time, which she used to significantly edit her short story.

11.4.4. Dream elements used in writing

From starting points to problem solving, participants used their dreams to inspire different aspects of their writing, with some reporting an abundance of ideas and/or different kinds of ideas than before the intervention.

Ideas

Some participants reported an increased inspiration for creative writing. For example, PV reported the abundance of ideas driving her to write more than ever before.

Writing the dreams down has definitely been such a helpful thing and when I go back and read through the journal, I'm amazed at how much interesting content I've gathered from the past week. Definitely a great source to be creative with.

(PV)

Similarly, PLJ found inspiration by looking at her dreams, describing it as “shaking your brain and not knowing what the hell is gonna come out. Like shaking a box of M&M’s...” PLJ’s detailed dream gave her an idea for a story as well as urgency to work on her novel in progress (C36). PI experienced “loads more ideas since the start of the training,” especially character related. PW reported that he had gone from one extreme to the other; whereas before he was closed off to new ideas, this process had opened him up to the whole universe. As exemplified by these participants, most writers in this study found that the simple act of writing dreams down aided the creative process, as the recorded dreams lingered with them instead of disappearing into the background.

The ideas gathered in dreams started or progressed a story, with dreams forming different parts of the story. In addition, most of the time, participants used certain elements from their dreams in their writing, instead of incorporating the whole dream. Table 18 outlines the dream elements used directly or indirectly in the writing of the 27 participants who submitted a short story written during this intervention.

Table 18

Number of Participants Who Used A Dream To Inspire or Develop A Particular Story Element.

Imagery	Name / title / phrase	Character	Setting	Symbolism	Emotion	Theme	Perspective	New concept
26	18	24	21	21	20	22	2	3

Note: list of participants in C26.

Most participants used multiple dream elements to develop their story, such as PC (excerpt from story and the corresponding dream report in C20), PH (C18), and PK (C37).

Imagery

Dreaming is pervasively visual, which is why dream imagery influenced many elements in some participants' writing, including influencing characters, settings, plot, and story titles. For example, PJ used the image of a lantern that he was holding in a dream to inspire the title of his short story – Lantern. As a painter, PJ also used dream imagery in other creative domains, including a lucid dream that he described as “unsettling and transformative, its impact lasting several days.” This dream in which PJ worked on a painting helped him finish a very Dali-like painting in real life (C38).

Most participants used dream imagery directly, like PJ. PZ wrote the skeleton of her story around an image of a woman that occurred in a dream, and on which she built by setting intentions and getting another image. Two dream images ended up in her story in the end: 1) a very vivid image of a woman in a dress walking backwards; and 2) a man in a trench coat walking across the room. The man in a trench coat was the first image on which PZ built her story, with the image of a woman responding to her creative intention to find out more about this man. This image of the woman reportedly transformed her story. Similarly, PN actively asked for imagery to develop her story in a liminal state:

I decided to ask my subconscious for pictures, when I'd just woken up. I got an image, wrote a sentence, got the next image, wrote another sentence and so on, till a story emerged. When I'd completed it, I realised it would make an ending for a children's adventure story. Now I have to write the beginning and middle!!

(PN)

On the other hand, PNJ found that spontaneous imagery in dreams gave her a fresh source for finding and developing story ideas: “I had a dream that I was on a gardening

course and some of the imagery from that dream found its way into my finished story, especially the light through the trees and the smell of wild garlic.” This statement suggests that PNJ used other senses as well, in this case olfactory, to enrich her story.

Name / Title / Phrase

After the visual, auditory experience is the second most prevalent in dreams. In 2020 study by Fosse and Larøi, participants reported auditory impressions in 93.9% of their dreams, with the dominant type being other people speaking. Certainly, in the present study, most participants experienced auditory impressions (often provided by dream figures), which they used both as starting points and for problem solving relating to their project stories.

For example, PE’s story was inspired by a phrase he got from a dream: “he’s there but not there,” handed to him by a dream character. Even though he was used to using dreams for inspiration, he would normally only use them as starting points. This time, PE wrote the ending of his story based on this phrase, and knew where the story was going while writing it, which was unusual for him. It’s worth noting that PE published an episodic novel some months before and never planned on a sequel, but after writing it, he realised that this story belonged to that sequel. This all came from that single phrase in a dream.

Five writers received a character name directly inside a dream, while three participants found a title for their story inside a dream (PV was given a title and character name by a mentor-like figure inside an LD, PJ received it in a form of an item a character was holding, and PH saw the name of a cafe in a dream which then became her story title).

Lines and phrases came to some writers directly in dreams, while others experienced them in the liminal state. For example, PF described ‘waking up dreaming’: “I could hear scratching and had words in my head – ‘attics’, ‘reviewing’, ‘you always make sure you’re okay’.” She noted that these words related to the character from the story she was writing.

Similarly, PN was continuously getting lines/phrases which she would repeat in the dream in order to recall upon waking. It is unclear how many of these instances were lucid dreams and how many were liminal. These dreams also seemed to respond to the creative intentions set before sleep. One night, PN asked for the first line for her next novel, after which she reported a scene introduced by a dream 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...” At this point, PN reports being aware that she was dreaming of a beginning of a story, followed by the phrase: “He flung open the door, she sat cowering in the corner.” The phrase was immediately recognised as describing a character PN had been writing through all her novels. A lot of the phrases PN was taking from her dreams related to characters she was writing. Below is an excerpt from her dream journal that illustrates this:

Asked for more detail for characters. Woke 6.40. Dreaming of phrases. Had phrases in my dream, knew I wanted to write them down. Woke enough to write 1st phrase. Then dozed off. Then got another phrase, then woke enough to record it. Then dozed and wrote in this way, waking more each time till awake. The latter phrases were describing the characters in the story. Mainly dialogue. (PN)

In other cases, participants reported hearing phrases that quickly vanished from memory upon waking. In one of PJ’s dreams, a character shouted a title for his story, which he did not record and could not recall later.

Characters

As exemplified above, visual and auditory dream elements were often provided by dream characters, but they were also used to shape story characters by some participants. In addition, some participants set intentions to meet their story characters in a dream.

After setting this intention, PG visualised a door inside a dream, intending to see someone walk through this door. He saw a character from his story, which helped him describe the character's face in terms of his emotions, leading to a deeper understanding of his personality. As PG wanted to learn about his character's motivation to have an affair, understanding his personality led to a better understanding of the character's actions.

PN also asked to be introduced to her protagonist, and woke up with a portrait of a young man: "TOS popstar? His face was in black + white but he had coloured, delicate flowers round his head. Keeping that in mind, I started to write and wrote the first part of a story." On another occasion, PN woke with a character from WW2 and a clear date that was presented to her in a lucid dream. PV also took a character from a lucid dream, who held a mini fridge as a suitcase, and who became a cook in her story. Similarly, a woman from one of PB's dreams inspired quite a different story from her other writing (C39). On another occasion, PB also dreamt of a character who she knew over 40 years ago, and who became the missing link in the genetics in her novel.

For PK, a dream clarified who her protagonist was. Initially, she believed the story revolved around the spider, but after setting an intention to connect with the old woman in her story, the spider appeared in her dream and told her, "no, it's not me." Later, another dream revealed the old woman as her protagonist in Goddess form (C40).

For some participants, dreams introduced unexpected characters and symbolic answers to their intentions. In a lucid dream, PI asked a boy if he would be a character in her book, only for the boy to turn into a girl upon opening a door. Similarly, PX asked to meet her character – a wise medic woman – in a dream but instead encountered symbolic bird imagery that provided a deeper understanding of her character. Birds became a source of both real and symbolic power for the medic woman in PX's story. She also incorporated other dream elements, like a badger/dog she reimagined as a golden coyote, into her narrative (C21). PB, who felt stuck with her novel, dreamt she didn't need to speak Gaelic to understand her Gaelic-speaking character. The dream revealed that, in the character's time period, women were often

silenced, suggesting that PB should narrate through documents and archives rather than her character's voice (C41).

Others received creative inspiration other than that for which they asked. For example, PN asked for a character idea and instead dreamt of a family with whom she discussed a vivid scene: "It was like we were exploring the scene without getting involved with any characters because we were separated by being in a car." This led PN to focus on exploring the dream's location rather than specific characters.

Settings

This tendency for dreams to offer indirect inspiration extended naturally to settings, which sometimes emerged vividly even when characters did not. 21 participants inspired their story settings from dream in this study. In one lucid dream, PN journeyed through two distinct scenes: a countryside that then transformed into a rocky seaside where a character placed something on the rocks. She walked through these settings and felt that she was being "guided through the dream." This dream provided her with a very clear scene, which she wrote on waking.

Similarly, PQ's dream that featured an elephant sanctuary became an important location in her story. A Kenyan reserve that provided a backstory actually helped PQ move her story forward when she was stuck with it (C42). PLJ also got one of the main locations for her story from a dream, noting specifically that the second paragraph is almost word for word from dream journal (C63).

As evidenced in this example, dream settings did not just provide a physical description of scenes for stories. PLJ's house was weeping, and she could feel its heartbreak as she explored the space in the dream. Therefore, dream settings also often provided an emotional backdrop for some writers.

Emotion

Both characters and settings frequently contributed to an emotional makeup of the story. For example, PQ's story was grounded in the idea of loneliness, which came from a dream and inspired one of the main characters. In another one of her lucid dreams, she was interacting with a pilot character, whom she was asking questions. She kept the dream going through choice and described it as exhilarating. The feeling of excitement and awe followed this dream throughout the day, which inspired the beginning of her story and the other character's motivation, providing depth to an emotional narrative.

One of PL's dreams that featured Hitchcock on a train indirectly gave him emotion – it was going to be a horror story with a happy ending, just like the dream. On the other hand, an induced dream gave PN a way forward with her story in progress. PN asked for more layers and a greater depth of emotion in her story, after which she received lyrics to a song in a lucid/liminal dream. She incorporated the lyrics in the story, giving it greater depth (C29).

For other participants, emotions in dreams triggered poetry: PB, PX, and PC transformed emotionally charged dreams into poetic works (C43). Dreams often had a lasting emotional impact, indirectly shaping writing beyond specific projects. For instance, PA experienced dreams "full of feeling," which subtly influenced her writing style throughout her creative process.

Symbolism

The same can be said of symbolism. As the most improved category assessed by blind judges, dream symbolism influenced writers' project stories as well as their creative practice overall. PLJ reports on a dream permeated with symbols, mostly telling her something about her writing practice and encouraging her to challenge herself, play with ideas, and be freer and more daring in her writing (C23). Therefore, symbolism in dreams might have had a more lasting effect on some writers than other dream elements.

Others transferred dream symbols directly into their writing. PNJ's dream about a man going round murdering trees, leaving an invisible spot of energy where the tree had vanished, inspired a story featuring trees that are powerful and full of knowledge (C44). PS had a lucid dream about flying in a murmuration with fairy lights. After setting intentions to revisit the characters from this dream, she had lucid fragments in which she saw archetypal figures in a Greek temple, with Carl Jung guiding her through this symbolic world – details that became integral to her story (C45). PH's evolving dreams of a rotating symbol inside cabinets inspired a short story. However, within a single week, she wrote 8,500 words inspired by this dream symbol, turning it into a novel instead. This was prompted by the symbol's repeating and increasing emergence in her dreams.

Themes

Some participants recognised these repeating motifs – mainly symbolic representations of certain ideas – by reflecting on their dreams over a longer period of time. Thus emerged themes that prevailed in multiple dreams, inspiring some of these participants' stories. For example, PLJ kept dreaming about strange, unknown houses, making her wonder who those houses belonged to. This inspired a story about lost houses and people who needed to find them through dreams (C46). Similarly, PY noticed that most of her dreams revolved around sea and survivors, which prompted a story about a Titanic survivor (excerpt from story in C47). PD also noticed her dreams increasingly featuring water, boats, and islands, which was the theme of the book she had been writing.

More indirectly, PF realised that her recurring dreams of rescuing people reflected themes she often explored in her writing, offering new 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. PK couldn't report on anything specific within this dream that made her realise this. She described it as simply coming to the understanding within the dream after seeing a character who revealed to her why she was doing what she was doing. In this sense, the dream enabled PK to see her story from a different angle.

Perspective

For some participants, therefore, dreams shifted their perspective on their stories, offering new angles to look at the themes they wrote about. For others, dreams provided a physical perspective within the story setting needed to better understand the narrative.

After a powerful dream, PF found clarity on a story with which she had struggled for a long time. She was attempting to tell a story someone had shared with her in the past, but from a factual perspective, she couldn't grasp the motivations behind this person's actions. Hoping her dreams would provide insight, she set an intention to understand the character's behaviour. Then, a dream answered with a new perspective. In it, she viewed the scene from above, as if she were outside herself, with a bird flying by, symbolising her usual viewpoint of looking in through a window. This shift in perspective encouraged her to see the story from a distance, letting the character be himself without her own assumptions getting in the way. This dream opened a path for PF to write the story from the character's point of view, capturing him as he truly was (C48).

Embodying a different physical point of view, PX also had vivid dreams that allowed her to see her characters from multiple perspectives (C64).

New concepts

Finally, dreams introduced entirely new concepts. PW, for instance, dreamt up brainless beings called Golems, which he incorporated into his story (C49). PK's magical world featured dream-inspired translucent golden tubes that characters floated through, adding a fantastical touch to her narrative (C40).

Dreams therefore introduced participants to their characters, settings, and plot by providing 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.

11.4.5. Mentors

To aid with their creative requests, nine participants (list in C50) successfully asked their dreams to offer guidance by providing a mentor figure inside a dream. PV's mentor, an unlikely old woman in black, gave her the key to her story.

11/3: Started developing my story. Had an idea of what I wanted to write but wanted more guidance. Set an intention to meet a mentor and get some help with the story. Nothing specific. Any help or advice I was open to it. 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 but for emotion/symbolism in the story. (PV, from dream diary)

The word *Charmolypi* means *nostalgia* in Greek, which added a deeper layer to PV's story by transforming her character's motivation, the place that she goes to, and most of all the plot. 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. PV had previously seen this old woman in black

as a menacing figure, but the dream shifted her perception, making her see the figure as a helpful guide.

Similarly, PH's dream responded with an unlikely mentor figure. 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. PX dreamed of a university professor she admired, who simply said, "You won, didn't you?" leaving her intrigued. 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 (C51).

11.4.7. *The writing process*

Dream figures and other dream elements inspired most participants' stories, novels, and poetry. However, beyond their creative products, the 8-week intervention produced a positive shift in the way some participants approached their creative writing process as well (Table 19). Some participants noticed that the source of their ideas was now coming from within rather than externally, making them feel more connected to their writing, and daring to explore new avenues they wouldn't have otherwise explored in their writing.

Table 19

Number of Writers That Felt the Intervention Unblocked or Significantly Improved Their Creativity and Inspired A Different Approach To Writing.

Unblocked / significantly improved creativity	Different approach to writing
18	14

Note: list of participants in C52.

Unblocked creativity

For some, this process unblocked their creativity. PB felt that her attitude towards writing improved, renewing her motivation to write, and that her level of creativity is now better than it had been in three years. Unblocking the focus for a new novel, she felt that her “creative mind gave me permission to now write.” PH felt that she is now “tapping into my subconscious a lot and it’s all pouring out creatively.” Similarly, PA found that her writing came easier with setting intentions, and that she was “given a more proactive relationship with subconscious.”

This process “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 (C53) even when not priming her dreaming mind. PB realised her creative block after a night of three dreams, including one where a character affirmed her as a writer and challenged her to start her novel, giving her the motivation she needed. Similarly, mostly blocked before the study, PG found that he started to write again, describing “this state of early morning relaxation given over to free thinking is certainly 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)

This bleeding over of dream creativity into waking life helped some writers renew or rediscover their creative voice. Before the study, PS had primarily focused on logical projects like medical anecdotes, with little room for creativity. The intervention helped her reconnect with her creative side, granting her the freedom to explore ideas without restrictions and to embrace the process more fluidly. Similarly, PF rediscovered her creative self after years of ghostwriting for others. Once, she had deliberately stopped dreaming to avoid recurring nightmares. Now, however, she actively welcomes her

dreams, finding even the uncomfortable ones meaningful as they reveal insights and encourage her to create for herself.

I cannot tell you how empowering the workshops have been and how much the techniques have improved my writing. [...] Trusting myself to dream, rather than being frightened of them, has allowed me to trust myself more as a writer. I'd lost confidence in my natural style after a particularly bad experience and this research has reconnected me to something. (PF)

“Waking up in a creative mind” after a long time, PF said that she has now embraces a more lyrical and metaphorical writing style. Therefore, not only did she unblock her creativity, but her approach to writing changed as well.

Different approach to writing

For some, the process encouraged them to approach their writing differently. For example, PP found the imagery, symbolism and ideas from dreams to be “tapping into a different creative unconscious layer than usual.” For PN, the intervention helped her transform her writing with more characterisation and emotional depth. PJ also changed the way he approached the project story for this study; whereas he never used to write in the first person, a dream prompted him to “step into it” while writing the story based on this dream, thus inspiring him to write in the first person.

Some participants also felt freer in the way they approached their writing. PQ used to adhere to a specific structure in her writing with a beginning, middle, and end. Through this process, she started to write short pieces and recognise their worth regardless of the structure. Similarly, as a predominately poetry writer, PX found herself writing within a “different narrative framework.” Dreams helped PX loosen up some of the logic she used to impose on narrative structure, and work with indirect connections a bit more: “They gave me a slightly different view of everything on a symbolic level.” Further, this process enabled PLJ to realise that she overcomplicates things in stories.

Similarly, PNJ reported that the writing of her project story felt quite free, whereas her writing previously felt forced: "I'm feeling connected to it, it feels sparky and lively."

11.4.8. Writing dreams into stories

Creative writing is not a linear process. Therefore, for most participants, writing stories from dreams was a 'back and forth' process. Editing happened while recording dreams, setting intentions, and working with dreams during the writing process.

Working with dreams

After recording their dreams, participants chose which ideas to incorporate into their writing and how. PA, for instance, jotted down dream ideas each morning, later reviewing her notes and 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!" Editing ideas continued during the day, while at night, further refinement came through intention setting and engagement with dreams.

Recording dreams and recognising their messages was vital in this process. For example, PW gradually decided to trust his dreams and look into them before dismissing them as irrelevant.

I know where [the story] is going thanks to some very useful dreams. Before I would have dismissed them as unconnected to my story, but my mind seems to be able to refine them and get useful elements for the story I'm working on. [...]
If I read them correctly, I can see that I'm being fed useful ideas. [...] I seem to be seeing potential in my dreams now and I think I've learnt to look at them more constructively. [...] I do feel I have turned a corner. (PW)

Expanding the dream

Working with dreams sometimes meant revisiting them in order to further explore dream ideas. For example, PN dreamt of a dragon-like creature in a scenario that became the ending for her children's adventure story. She then went back to sleep on another night, imagining this creature until she fell asleep. Following a lucid dream, she recorded the beginning to the story (C34). Similarly, one of PJ's complex lucid dreams became a short story after he continuously expanded it in the liminal state: "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 carpark, feel the rain."

Equally, PP used a portal technique to re-enter her dream that inspired her project story, which allowed her to re-run and develop scenes, adding sensory details each time (C54).

While these participants set intentions and consciously re-entered their dreams, others did this spontaneously. For example, PH wrote a story about a ruined road which she saw in one of her dreams. She then dreamt about it again twice in different scenarios, describing the journey as going a bit further every time.

Combining dreams

Rather than expanding the same dream, some writers built on their ideas by combining multiple dreams. PL turned one of his bizarre dreams into a humorous short story. He first got the ending for the story, and then he had to invent a story that led up to that ending. This built on another dream he had previously had. Both dreams were about a tortoise, with the latter one involving a man in a long coat who "flashes" someone with a big tortoise hidden under his coat. PL wrote a story about a robbery with a crocodile instead of a tortoise, but kept the humorous and bizarre element of the dreams (C19).

Dreams thus provided ideas, however, writers had to decide how to turn them into stories.

Working with stories

Deciding which dream elements to include in their stories and how to approach this integration was a challenge for some participants, and it often included an active editing process.

For example, PZ received answers in dreams that inspired her story, deciding that the two dream characters were going to be her protagonists. However, their purpose in her story wasn't going to be same as their purpose in the dream, deciding that she had "a lot more questions for my dreaming self" in order to figure this out. Then, four days later, she reported: "I got the answer to my question about my protagonist. Also, there was music playing - a particular piece that my father used to play on the clarinet. And something about a recipe."

A lot of these dream elements ended up in PZ's story, shaping and driving it (short story illustrating the content of these dreams in C55), yet a lot of the dream detail was trimmed down and left out of the story just as well. PLJ went through a similar process after receiving three different ideas that she wanted to merge for the story. She cut down a lot from these dreams; for example, she initially had the character's friend meet the narrator in the dream, but she cut that part as she realised the story was getting too complicated. PLJ changed the concept of the story three times until she defined her narrative.

Similarly, PM's dream about camping left him with inspiration but also the realisation that it lacked a plot and consisted of contradictory and unrelated events. Heavily editing this dream while writing it into the story, PN kept the elements and events from the dream while creating a narrative around them, giving a more purposeful role to a background character from the dream (C56).

Some writers, like PNJ, found it challenging to balance the dreamlike qualities of their stories with a coherent structure. For these writers, editing involved both creative and structured approaches, using dream content to preserve a surreal tone while ensuring narrative clarity.

The Cyclical Process

For some participants, writing stories from dreams became a dynamic, cyclical process of setting intentions, recording dreams, analysing dreams, and editing drafts in waking life. This iterative approach allowed for a continuous exchange between the subconscious and conscious mind, where dreams provided ideas, and conscious editing refined these into coherent stories.

PK's process exemplified this method (C40). She would identify story needs through free writing, set specific intentions at night, and adapt her story based on dream responses. For instance, she first asked her dreams to provide a story idea, which produced a dream with children turning over stones in a war-torn city and another dream with a grandmother guiding a child underground. While writing this story, she requested insight into her protagonist, which revealed different roles her characters had, and even specific story details, like translucent tubes for character transport inspired by dream characters travelling in transparent balls.

Similarly, PN used dreams to explore and refine her narrative. She dreamt of her protagonist – a young pop star – then repeatedly asked for insights that would bridge her scenes and clarify his role. PN's dreams then unexpectedly transformed her protagonist into a former pop star, revealing that the man is now old, and adding new layers to her plot such as a complex relationship with another protagonist – a young woman who now cares for him, and who also appeared in PN's dreams. She even recreated her story ending in a lucid dream (C57).

In both cases, participants cycled between dreaming and waking to shape their stories. Mornings or moments just before sleep became key times for capturing and editing dream insights, while daytime provided space for creating structure.

11.6. Group sessions

Participants took part in weekly group sessions on Zoom, where they shared their experiences, dreams, and creative works in progress, as well as their personal journeys in LD training. These sessions resulted in insight relating to the writers' creativity and dreaming. However, the main focus of the sessions was to discuss the LD induction techniques, personalising these, and offering advice to those struggling to see any progress in their own practice.

11.6.1. Dream influence

Some participants expressed feeling overwhelmed and putting too much pressure on inducing an LD, "wanting it too much," which was prohibiting their success and making them tired both at night and during the day. We talked about taking breaks from the programme in these instances, such as taking a night or even a week off and not doing the training until they felt rested again. WBTB, for example, was encouraged only in those participants who did not experience any adverse effects on their daily life. A few participants reported taking breaks and seeing greatly improved results after the break. Sharing their experiences helped put other participants at ease, knowing that it was possible to see results if they didn't force the process and just enjoyed it. They were instructed to try to have fun with it as much as they could, and not to force anything because lucid dreaming, just like creativity, shouldn't be forced, and putting pressure on it would only have the opposite effect. For example, PNJ took a 3-day break from the training and reported sleeping a lot better afterwards. Mainly, group sessions served to boost the morale and motivate those who were not seeing much progress, and this proved very helpful to a number of participants. For example,

PB said: "I found it so encouraging to hear everyone's experiences and can sympathise with so many aspects."

Personalising Techniques

The MILD technique was used by everyone but in different ways; for example, poor sleepers and those who took either too long to fall asleep or fell asleep too quickly were instructed to start their MILD at different times. E.g. those who took two hours to fall asleep were asked to start the MILD technique only when they started drifting off to sleep. Those who fell asleep instantly upon touching the bed, reporting not enough time to do the MILD, were instructed to start it as they were getting ready for bed. Reality checks were also personalised for each participant, with the group giving advice to each other on their own practice and sharing tips.

Some of the participants created a WhatsApp group to keep the discussion going outside our weekly sessions. They discussed reality checks and their personal struggles with remembering to do them, so they started to set alarms every two hours or used a vibrating bracelet that reminded them to conduct reality checks, however, these methods did not prove successful. In one of our group sessions, we discussed getting into the mindset to actively and consciously test reality rather than relying on external reminders as they were not producing results for those who tried them. In their group chat, participants also discussed struggles with recording dreams in the morning either due to their partner being asleep or waking up too much after turning on the light. The suggestion was made by one participant to buy a pencil with an LED light on top of it, which helped some of the participants write their dreams in the dark.

I was trying to make notes in the dark. I now have a write-in-the-dark pen with a little LED light in it. This was a suggestion made by someone in our new WhatsApp group. (PW)

Dream interpretation

The group sessions also provided an opportunity to delve deeper into the meaning of participants' dreams. We spent some time unpacking and analysing dreams that participants struggled to interpret. For instance, PF shared a dream in which she was trapped in a loop on a train, unable to move past a bend (C58). The group worked together to understand the recurring nature of this dream, suggesting that PF set an intention to explore why she was unable to move forward. The collaborative nature of the sessions helped participants gain new perspectives on their dreams, allowing them to interpret recurring symbols or unresolved themes.

11.6.2. Creative Influence

The creative writing element of the study was also enriched by the group sessions. Participants had the opportunity to share their work with the group before each session, receiving feedback and advice that helped refine their writing. One common issue the group identified was the tendency to transcribe dreams verbatim, which made stories feel more like dream journals rather than structured narratives. PM offered feedback, noting, "They were all pretty good, but I felt that they needed to be 'disciplined' to exclude a lot of irrelevant stuff that occurs in dreams, but distracts from the main narrative." These discussions helped some participants recognise when their stories needed more editing to transform dream-inspired ideas into cohesive plots.

Sharing creative work and receiving feedback also sparked new ideas for some participants. PS, for example, was struggling to understand the purpose of a temple in her dream. During a session, she had a breakthrough and realised that the story was about helping terminally ill individuals. Similarly, PU, initially stuck with his memoir, experienced a shift after hearing others' experiences. He realised that the dream images he had been dismissing were actually meant for a short story, not his memoir. This unlocked his creative flow, and he completed the skeleton for his story in just 20 minutes during the session. Days later, he shared, "Stimulated by the recent Zoom, I wrote a story today."

For other participants, the group discussions led to insights that helped clarify their creative direction. PW realised that two dream ideas he had been holding could be

linked together into a single story. PY, initially uncertain about the connection between her dreams and her writing, suddenly recognised a theme involving the sea and survival. After sharing a dream about overcoming a nightmare, she was able to clarify the plot for her story:

I just wanted to let you know that in the last few minutes, my whole story plot has come to me. I know what I am going to write about – wow. Just talking like this and listening has brought clarity and unlocked the outline for me. (PY)

In some cases, the influence of the group extended beyond inspiration; it also facilitated personal self-discovery. PF, for instance, reflected on her recurring dreams of rescuing others, which she connected to both her work and her personal needs. This realisation deepened her understanding of herself as a writer, noting:

A lot of my dreams are about rescuing people. That's partly my job, partly what I write about and partly my need to be rescued. Another realisation for me is that trusting myself to dream, rather than being frightened of them, has allowed me to trust myself more as a writer. (PF)

On the other hand, PC's lucid dream was inspired directly by a topic discussed in a group session, illustrating the bidirectional nature of the influence.

These group sessions played an important role in shaping participants' work with their dreams and creative processes, offering valuable insights that influenced both their lucid dreaming practice and creative development.

12. Discussion

This study explored how lucid dreaming (LD) influenced participants' creative processes, particularly in the context of writing stories derived from dream content.

The results revealed that the participants experienced a variety of creative breakthroughs and insights through dreams, and group sessions significantly contributed to sustaining motivation, refining LD techniques, and fostering a collaborative creative environment. In the following discussion, I will interpret these findings, highlighting key insights, identifying limitations, and suggesting directions for further research.

12.1. Dreams and Creativity

The results of this study indicate that creative individuals may have greater success with lucid dreaming (LD) induction than non-creatives. In a previous 12-week study by Saunders et al. (2017) using a mixed approach, a random sample of 56 participants with limited or no prior LD experience (reporting one or fewer lucid dreams in the past three years) showed that 45% of participants in the experimental condition had at least one lucid dream. In comparison, the current study used an 8-week intervention with 29 participants, of whom 25 reported one or fewer LDs in the past three years. 83% of those 25 participants achieved at least one LD during the intervention. These findings suggest that creatives may achieve a higher success rate and/or induce LDs more quickly than non-creatives, aligning with earlier studies that found a correlation between lucid dreaming and creativity (Barrett, 1993; Blagrove and Hartnell, 1998; Blagrove & Tucker, 1994; Schredl & Erlacher, 2007; Stumbrys, 2010; Stumbrys and Daniels, 2010).

Beyond LD induction success rates, the study provided various benefits for participants. With the study's primary focus on fostering creativity, most participants created at least one short story, and many developed other creative works, including poetry and visual art, influenced by their lucid and non-lucid dreams, LD induction training, morning reflections, and liminal experiences. This influence extended beyond individual works to their writing voices and creativity as a whole. The effects of this creative boost even spilled into other areas of work and personal life.

Participants applied a structured model to draw creative ideas from dreams, directing their dreams toward specific stories or topics they wished to explore. The overall

process provided new starting points, solutions to overcome blocks in current projects, and clarity on current or future creative directions. Many participants reported that their writing processes had shifted, with some experimenting with narrative frameworks and exploring ideas they might not have considered previously. Some participants also became more aware of their tendency to overcomplicate stories or omit emotional depth, while others felt an increased connection to their writing and a greater sense of freedom with themes and structures. The less experienced or non-fiction writers found their creative voices and began exploring their creative sides, which they found especially rewarding. For some, the process cultivated a proactive relationship with the subconscious, resulting in a deeper connection to participants' writing.

Most stories developed during the study were described as original by independent judges, and some authors demonstrated a playful approach that made their stories enjoyable to read. Out of the five categories in short fiction writing, symbolism showed the most improvement across participants, followed by emotions. This aligns with Blagrove and Lockheart's (2023) observation in *The Science and Art of Dreaming* that dreams tend to be more metaphorical and less literal than daydreams, resulting in higher exploration-insight scores. Additionally, Hartmann's theory that dreams contextualise dominant emotions or emotional concerns supports the finding that participants' stories were particularly high in symbolism and emotion.

Qualitative results were derived from a thematic analysis of interviews, group sessions, daily checklists, and emails with participants. Achieving statistically significant changes in quantitative measures would likely require a longer study with a larger participant base, as well as an analysis of multiple pre-study and in-study works from each participant. This study also revealed two primary challenges:

1. Maintaining motivation and commitment over several weeks until tangible results are achieved.
2. Developing a method to effectively integrate dream material into creative work, guiding participants to work with dreams in a narrative form.

12.2. Challenges

12.2.1. Motivation

One major issue with LD induction methods is the time it often takes for them to be effective. This delay can lead to decreased motivation, resulting in less focused practice and, consequently, lower chances of achieving an LD. For instance, if a participant does not genuinely believe their finger will pass through their hand during a reality check, this disbelief may carry over into dreams, rendering the technique ineffective. Many people give up after a few unsuccessful attempts, discouraged by a lack of early results and failing to notice progress in their non-lucid dreams. This problem was reflected in the significant dropout rate in the first part of this study. Since LD induction depends heavily on individual commitment and focused practice (e.g., performing reality tests attentively, conducting the MILD technique with intention, and recording even partial dreams), low motivation remains a central issue in current training models. Starting with almost 70 participants and ending with under 30 highlights this challenge.

Group sessions helped address this issue by offering shared experiences and fostering a sense of community, especially valuable for those struggling to persevere after weeks of no results. Participants benefited from realizing they were not alone in facing challenges, and hearing about others' successes provided encouragement. Those who joined the WhatsApp group gained additional support by sharing experiences and strategies even after the training.

Introducing technology, such as smart watches running LD applications, could also enhance motivation. These apps can prompt reality tests, track sleep cycles, and guide the WBTB technique, allowing for a more tailored approach to each participant's needs. Although untested, this technology shows promise for supporting LD training, especially by providing early feedback and reducing the time required for participants to see results, and it might be implemented in future studies.

12.2.3. Working with dreams, not for them

Another major challenge is teaching writers to use dream content effectively. While dreams are often deeply meaningful to the dreamer, they may not resonate with others in the same way, much like recounting life events without a narrative structure. The highly immersive nature of dreams makes them intensely personal, and dreamers can become overly focused on their vivid experiences, leading to a potential loss of narrative coherence and a fixation on details that may only interest the author. Allan Gurganus captured this challenge when he stated: “You have to maintain your critical sensibility and not just assume, because it was an extraordinary dream for you, that it will be a dream for other people. Because people need maps to your dreams” (Epel, 1993, p. 96).

This challenge was evident in the present study. For example, one judge assessing a pair of stories (with “Moths” written during the intervention and another written before the study) commented on the story’s structure and potential:

Moths shows a lot more promise although not necessarily fully realised. The structure was promising but not consistent from start to finish. However, there was a lot yet to be tapped in this story – lots of potential with distinct, interesting characters. Good use of dialogue and characters evolved – with work could be a really good short story. (Judge 1 on PO’s project story)

To address this, the LD training model could incorporate a stronger focus on editing and crafting dream-inspired content. Extending the study duration – an additional four weeks, for example – would give writers more time to refine their dream-based ideas and revise their stories. Participants like PG expressed a need for more time to let stories sit before revisiting them, which was challenging within the study’s timeline. Adding extra time could improve the overall quality of work produced and allow participants to engage with their dream practice more effectively.

12.4. Limitations

While the study provides valuable insights into the role of lucid dreaming in creative writing, several limitations should be acknowledged:

A mixed method was used instead of a rigorous experimental intervention. Several aspects were not experimentally controlled, including the WhatsApp group, the influence of group feedback on the production of short stories, and the exact impact of non-lucid, lucid, and liminal dreams on the production of each story. There was no dedicated control group because the major interest was to show that dreaming increases the creative writing process.

The sample size was limited, and all participants were self-selected individuals interested in lucid dreaming and creativity. This may have influenced the results, as participants were likely more motivated and open to the benefits of LD for creativity than a more general population.

Participants experienced varying degrees of success with LD induction techniques, which impacted their ability to access and use dream content consistently. Those who struggled with LD training might have been unable to explore dream influence as deeply as others, which could have affected the diversity and richness of insights.

The findings rely heavily on self-reported data, which may be subject to memory recall errors or personal biases. Since participants were interpreting their own dreams and creative progress, these subjective experiences might not accurately capture the objective impact of dreams on creativity.

The supportive role of group sessions is evident, but it's possible that some participants felt influenced by peer feedback in ways that may not have reflected their authentic creative process. Individual differences in openness to group influence could have affected how participants interpreted both their dreams and their writing.

12.5. Future Research Directions

Building on these findings, future research could expand on the following areas:

Further research should conduct RCTs to investigate specific effects of dreaming compared, for example, to a Virtual reality practicing group.

To better understand the broader applicability of LD as a tool for creativity, future studies could recruit a larger and more diverse sample, including participants with varying levels of interest in LD and creativity.

Future studies could include a control group that does not engage in LD training to compare the creative outcomes of LD-trained participants with those who do not practice LD, helping isolate the effects of LD on creativity.

Frequent lucid dreamers: Studies involving frequent lucid dreamers could explore the potential effect of creative techniques integrated into the lucid dreaming practice, as this specific group of participants could engage with them more effectively.

Refining the model: Future research should explore a more personalised approach to LD induction by tailoring techniques to individual needs. Providing participants with more structured approaches to integrating dream content into narratives may also help those who struggle with balancing dream structure and story coherence. Additionally, integrating liminal states and morning writing techniques in a more structured manner could yield valuable insights into nurturing creativity.

Longitudinal studies: Long-term studies could track how ongoing LD practice influences creative development over time, allowing researchers to observe whether the benefits seen in this study are sustained and whether they lead to lasting changes in creative output.

Analysis of group dynamics: Future research could explore the role of group dynamics in more depth, examining how group feedback and social support impact the creative

process and LD success rates. This could involve varying group formats to assess which support methods are most effective.

In summary, this experimental study builds on Johnson's (2007) earlier exploration of lucid dreaming techniques for creativity, which she initially tested on herself. Here, these techniques were applied in a structured group setting with writers, revealing lucid dreaming as a promising tool for creative development. While participants experienced notable benefits, future research should address the challenges identified, as well as replicate the study in controlled settings, to further examine the effectiveness of this approach.

13. Follow ups from Study 3

Several participants reported back about a year after the study's completion (Appendix C60). PD continued to have fairly regular lucid dreams, "often really good ones," improving her ability to recognise dream signs and use them as lucidity clues, and remaining in a lucid dream for longer periods of time. PM hasn't had much luck with further lucid dreams, but he has continued to use his dreams for creative inspiration in his writing. PF has also been producing a lot of creative work, publishing a few pieces since the study. She reported having "some interesting, intense dreams that have come out of nowhere. This is something that hasn't happened for years so I'm sure it's been triggered by the lucid dreaming practices." PJ sent a new painting he had "dreamed in portions and set down in oils on canvas" (Figure 15).

Figure 15

“Urania: The Lucid Phantasma,” Painting Dreamt and Produced By PJ.



On the other hand, PN’s busy life prevented her from writing the novel using lucid dreaming, which she had been meaning to do ever since the study. Similarly, PW had not managed to continue his LD training due to his busy life and hot nights.

Study 4: The Effects of Dreams and N1 sleep on Poetic Creativity

This study aims to extend the findings of Study 3. As emotion and symbolism were identified as the most improved categories in Study 3, this study will look into poetry writing – the form of creative writing characterised by emotion and symbolism. It will further explore liminal dreams and utilise this state for creative writing, as this was reported as a fruitful state often producing creative ideas with increased flow in Study 3. Weekly workshops will take place in person this time, with a more structured design and creative tasks aimed at promoting creativity and sustaining participants' motivation in continuous LD training. This design was prompted by a high dropout rate in Study 3 due to decreased motivation. Finally, two sleep laboratory sessions will be integrated into the intervention with the aim of better controlling conditions for lucid and liminal dreams for a better assessment of creativity, look at physiological aspects of these states, and further motivate participants by providing them with quick and direct experiences they might struggle to induce at home.

14. Methodology

14.1. Participants

In collaboration with Taliesin Creative that is part of Swansea University, call for participants was printed in poster format and advertised around campus, local galleries and creative centres in Swansea, and circulated electronically to Creative Writing students (PhD level), participants of the previous LD for Fiction Writing study, and creative writing groups in South Wales. Finally, this study was advertised at INTROBIZ EXPO, Swansea & West Wales Business Network event days before the study commenced in order to reach the desired number of participants.

There were two categories for writers in this study:

Writer: published and/or PhD in Creative Writing

Hobbyist: writing as a hobby or a beginner

8 participants in this study were Writers and 8 were Hobbyists. Out of these 16, three were also practicing therapists or counsellors working with dreams. Participants' characteristics are depicted in Table 20.

Table 20

Participants' Characteristics.

Code	Sex	Had an LD before study	Type of writer
P1	Female	No	Creative writer
P2	Male	Not sure	Creative writer
P3	Female	No	Creative writer
P4	Female	Yes	Creative writer
P5	Female	Yes	Creative writer
P6	Male	Yes	New writer
P7	Male	No	Creative writer
P8	Female	No	Creative writer
P9	Female	No	Creative writer
P10	Male	Yes	Creative writer
P11	Male	Yes	Creative writer
P12	Female	Yes	Creative writer
P13	Male	Yes	Creative writer
P14	Female	Not sure	New writer
P15	Male	Yes	Creative writer
P16	Male	Yes	Creative writer

There was a varying degree of dream recall and lucid ability among participants, from Ps that almost never recall their dreams to those who recall multiple dreams every night. None of the Ps were frequent lucid dreamers, with a number of them having experienced a lucid dream at some point in their life. For six participants, even after the study's completion, it is difficult to say whether what they had experienced in the past can be categorised as a lucid dream; this is either do to their personal confusion and/or vagueness of their description or due to poor recall of an experience from a long time ago.

Some Ps worked with dreams in their writing in the past. For example, P11 turned a "very lucid dream" that he had into a short story, which was shortlisted for a prize.

P15 wrote a story, which was initially included in his novel, about climbing trees with Donald Trump that came from a dream. P5 reported taking an idea from a dream for her novel, and missing a profound connection she had used to have with dreams:

Many years later I decided to try again and since then I wrote two novels, one of them was inspired by a dream I had many years ago, and the dream is quite central to the novel. Before, dreams used to be a big part of my life and I would remember a lot of them, they would give me insight and guidance, but lately I'm finding it hard to remember them and I miss them. (P5)

P9 also considered dreams to be an important part of her life, with turning them into songs and poems helping her with stressful times in life. As a counsellor, she uses dreams in her work too. But interestingly, dreams are so important to her that she lets them guide her in important decision making, such as adopting a child:

I adopted my first child through a dream. At the time I was debating should I or not adopt him and the dream was about standing at the top of the mountain and I jumped, took a leap, it helped inform my decision. (P9)

P6 recalls a lucid dream from his younger days, which brought him some enlightenment. He also recalls what he calls "prophetic" dreams from that time in his life. Similarly, P14 used her dreams to reflect on her waking life, comparing the repeating motif of being stuck in the mud and the lack of control of her own actions to her feelings in waking life; "wanting to be involved and do so many things, but for one reason or another," not being able to. (P14 had a freeing experience in one of the workshop exercises working with a liminal experience – see the results section).

14.2. Sleep Lab Study – Part 1

All participants took part in the first sleep lab session aimed at inducing a lucid dream.

One to two participants at a time came to the lab at varying times of the day, with a preference for a 9am start due to the likelihood of getting into REM within the allocated timeframe. Each session took 90 minutes, with some lasting up to 120 minutes if a participant struggled to fall asleep. The aim of this session was to induce a lucid dream in which a participant would seek a poem.

Participants were asked not to have more than six hours of sleep the preceding night or drink tea or coffee in the morning. At their scheduled time, they were welcomed to the lab and taken into one of two bedrooms, after which they were given the Alternative Uses Test that measures creativity and two minutes to complete it. Following this, each participant was given five minutes to write a poem without any kind of prompt. After these tasks were completed, participants were taken back to the control room to have electrodes put on their head. During this process, participants were introduced to the study in more detail and explained the procedure, as well as practice the left-right eye signal.

Before going to sleep, participants underwent a training in cueing for 20 minutes, following the guidelines of Michelle Carr (2023), with an addition of a creative cue. This included what's called "lucidity cues" – red flashing lights and beeping sounds – played at one minute intervals. The red lights above the participants head in the bedroom flashed twice, while the beeping sounds were played simultaneously, as opposed to Carr's study which played them separately. Following this, a prompt "look for your poem" was played through the speaker. Participants were instructed to signal left-right three times with their eyes, and they were reminded to do this once inside a lucid dream. They were also told to take note of their surroundings and anything that might be different from their normal waking experience. After 5 minutes, the cues continued without these instructions or eye signals, with the participant free to start falling asleep. Participants were reminded to look for a poem if they find themselves in a dream, as well as to signal with their eyes.

To monitor their sleep stages, participants were connected to polysomnography equipment, measuring brain activity and eye movements. Monitoring EEG in the next room online, we were looking for rapid eye movements to detect REM. We used

Trackit™ 18/8 system (version 2.8.1.17, Lifelines Ltd, UK) with impedance levels set at $< 8 \text{ k}\Omega$. Electroencephalography (EEG) placement followed the standard 10–20 system with sensors at F3/4 and M1/2 derivations, a ground electrode placed on the forehead, and a common reference at CPz. Electrooculography (EOG) electrodes were applied above the right outer canthus and below the left outer canthus. PSG data were scored following standard American Academy of Sleep Sciences (ASSM) guidelines (Iber et al., 2007).

Once in REM, participants were sent both the auditory and visual cues immediately upon the detection of rapid eye movement. If eye signal was detected following the cues, participants were given 1 minute to experience the dream, after which they were awakened and asked for a dream report. If they did not signal, cues were sent every 15 seconds until either an eye signal was detected or the participant woke up. If a signal-verified lucid dream (SVLD) was achieved and there was still time left in the session, the participant went back to sleep to try and achieve another dream.

The questions they were asked on awakening:

- Were you asleep just now before I walked in?
- If yes: Did you have a dream?
- If they signalled in REM: do you remember signalling with your eyes? Did you see the cues in the dream? What happened after you signalled?
- Were you asleep at any point since getting into bed here?
- Did you have a dream? If so, can you describe it (+ follow up questions)?
- Do you think that the dream had anything to do with the poem you wrote before going to sleep?
- If no dream reported: do you think you had a dream but just can't remember it or do you think you didn't dream at all?
- If they didn't fall asleep: what was keeping you up?

Following this report, participants were asked to stay calm and relaxed, and given 5 minutes to write a new poem¹, again without giving any particular prompt. After this, they were given another AUT with a different word.

The questions they were asked after completing poem & AUT:

- Do you remember anything more about your dreams?
- How did it feel writing this poem as opposed to the poem written before sleep?
Do you notice any differences in the process of writing?
- Did this poem have anything to do with the poem before sleep?
- Did this poem have anything to do with the dream you were having?

14.3. Sleep Lab Study – Part 2

13 out of 16 participants took part in the second lab session aimed at inducing hypnagogic experiences for creative purposes. This session lasted 90 minutes or 5 awakenings from N1, whichever came first.

To monitor their sleep stages, participants were again connected to polysomnography equipment, measuring brain activity and eye movements. N1 was marked when alpha waves disappeared completely over a 30 second window, and slow eye movements (SEMs) appeared. When a participant entered this stage, they were allowed 60 seconds before awakening. If there was a sign of N2 sleep, marked by sleep spindles and K-complexes, participants were woken up even if their 60 seconds was not up. This was done in order to harvest the potential of N1 sleep that seems to vanish when N2 is reached (as per Lacaux et al. findings described earlier).

The first part of the session was identical to the first session. The second part was also the same minus the training in cuing and eye signals. There were no lucidity cues this time; instead, participants were introduced to a different design.

¹ Some participants chose to sit at a desk and turn on the light, while some participants were comfortable staying in bed and writing under the minimum light of the red LEDs above their head. The latter was preferred so as to limit wakefulness.

Participants were given a notepad and asked to keep it within reach next to the bed. They were told that when N1 is reached, they would be given 1 minute in this state, after which they would be woken up. This was done by flashing red lights, but if these didn't wake up the participant, then an alarm sound would be sent through the speaker. Upon waking up, they were asked to record in writing whatever was going through their mind, whether it was a hypnagogic vision, a phrase they heard, bodily sensations, or an involuntary idea, with a special note not to narrativize their experience or turn it into a poem at this stage². They were told that after five such awakenings, the session would end and they would be given five minutes to write a poem based on any or all of those recorded experiences. At this stage, they were asked to just focus on recording their experiences as accurately as possible. Because hypnagogic experiences can occur before sleep onset, participants were also told to record any strong visions they might have when still awake. However, participants were warned not to record all ideas they might have, but to only ask for the lights to be switched on if they are having a clear hypnagogic vision³.

At the end of the session, participants were asked to immediately write a poem for which they were again given 5 minutes. After this, they were presented with another AUT that contained a different word. Finally, the experimenter entered the room and asked the same questions as in the first session, with the exception of lucidity cues and with an addition of whether they felt asleep or awake before each N1 awakening.

14.4. Assessing Creativity

Poetic creativity can be assessed in different ways, focusing on various elements of poetry writing. For example, Chaudhuri et al. (2024) examined the role of clarity, aesthetic appeal, felt valence, arousal, and surprise in predicting the creativity judgment of poetry. For this research, I chose to test categories that might be relevant to dreaming.

² One participant did not follow this procedure even after multiple reminders.

³ One participant did not follow this procedure, asking for lights every minute or so. After multiple such awakenings, she was asked to try to sleep without waking up so as to achieve N1.

Three independent judges, who either had a PhD in Creative Writing or experience teaching and assessing poetry, were recruited to assess the ‘before’ and ‘after’ poems based on a predesigned assessment scale. On a scale from 0-10, judges were asked to assess the poems on the following categories:

- Emotion - how well the emotion is expressed;
- Symbolism - originality of symbolism, how well symbolism communicates to the reader;
- Shape / form - the way in which ideas and images find the best shape or vehicle to express them;
- Flow - how well a poem flows/moves from one image/idea/feeling to the next.

They were given an explanation of what the study was about, as well as the time constraint of 5 minutes. Thus, they were asked not to mark down a poem that might seem unfinished, but to try to assess what is written given the time constraint. Poems they were given were all in a random order so as to ensure blind assessment.

For the AUT scoring, two psychology students were recruited and given simple instructions on how to assess participants’ creativity scores (see instructions in appendix D1). They were not told which words were done before and which after sleep so as to ensure blind assessment.

14.5. Weekly Workshops

Six weekly workshops were held in person in Taliesin Creative on campus, every Sunday at 10am. Participants were asked to commit to all six workshops because the workshops were building on each other. However, one participant dropped out after the first workshop, with three others joining at different stages. They were allowed to participate if they committed to the process with the sleep lab study being optional.

Week 1: The Creativity of Dreams & Lucid Dreaming

After the general introduction into the study, the sleep lab, and the aim of this research, all participants signed consent forms. The study was given ethics approval by the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee. Participants were presented with the participant information sheet, as well as a lucid dreaming handout and some lucidity props. These included bookmarks with “Am I Dreaming?” lettering, details on common reality checks, and other instructions.

We started with a discussion about dreams and what dreams mean to each participant, as well as their writing journey. Edgar Allan Poe’s “A dream within a dream” poem was read out, and some famous poets who used dreams in their writing were introduced. Some of the science behind this was also introduced, explaining to participants that they can use dreams for both new ideas and problem solving.

Participants were then given the first exercise.

Exercise: Think of a recent dream and focus on the central image or feeling from this dream. Use this element as a starting point and expand on this image in your poem. Share your poem and dream with the group.

During the second half of this workshop, participants were introduced to lucid dreaming and the mixed methods approach they were to utilise in the following weeks. This included keeping a dream journal, conducting reality testing, the MILD technique, and an optional WBTB technique. Participants were given a handout with these instructions to take home. They were also given homework.

Homework: Record your dreams and look for dream signs (repeating motifs or themes across dreams); write a poem in the morning hours upon waking up and after recording dreams.

Week 2: Sleep Incubation & Dream Interpretation

The “sleep on it” idea was introduced with St. Paul Boux’ example of hanging a sign on his bedroom door before retiring which read: “Poet at work.” This was followed by a discussion on whether participants ever woke up with a solution to a problem, a

“eureka” moment, or with an original idea that seemed to appear out of the blue. Then we discussed waking up or falling asleep with lines of poetry in our heads. Kubla Khan and Ted Hughes ‘The Wound’ were given as examples and discussed. Previous studies that looked into sleep incubation were discussed.

Exercise: Read through your dream journal from the past week and identify any recurring motifs or ideas. Choose one motif to focus on and incubate it as a starting point for your creative process. Engage in a breathing exercise or guided meditation to clear your mind. Following this, write a poem that feels deeply personal and authentic to you. Afterward, share your poem with the group, discuss its possible meanings, and revisit your dream journal to identify any connections between your dreams and your poem.

As homework, participants were then instructed to add a technique to their MILD: “I will find my poem.” They were asked to phrase it in any way that sounded natural to them. Finally, a discussion on the meaning of dreams through history concluded this week’s workshop.

Week 3: Interpreting dreams (through poetry)

This week started with a creative exercise aimed at working with the emotional element from dreams. This exercise was inspired by Jung’s Association Method (1910), as described further in the results section.

Exercise: Begin by selecting a dream from your journal and identifying emotionally charged or meaningful words within it, circling them. List these words and refine through word association into a single word, which becomes the poem’s title. After a five-minute meditation to incubate the title, write a poem.

We set these aside and discussed Dora’s dreams next (Freud, Bell, & Robertson, 2013). Two dreams by "Dora" (Ida Bauer) in Freud’s 1905 case study, *Fragments of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria* were presented. Participants were asked to interpret two of Dora’s dreams without context, which served as an introduction to the importance of knowing the context for interpreting dreams. Freud’s interpretation was then introduced.

Next, the Ullman method was used to interpret one participant's dream in a group. The Ullman Method of Dream Analysis (Ullman & Limmer, 1999) is a structured group approach to exploring dreams, emphasising collaboration and the dreamer's autonomy. Participants work together to uncover possible meanings, beginning with the dreamer sharing their dream in detail. The group then provides feedback, which can briefly include their own associations and projections while respecting the dreamer's perspective. This method encourages multiple interpretations, fostering insight while keeping the dreamer's feelings and context central to the process.

Participants then paired up to interpret their own dreams with a partner. Finally, they revisited the poems written earlier in the session to identify any connections between their poetry and the dream interpretations discussed with their partner.

Week 4: Liminal Dreams

The session began with a recap of the lucid dreaming training and a group discussion. Participants were introduced to the concept of "liminal dreams" or hypnagogic experiences, with examples from poets like Becquer (Bate, 1963). Freud's idea of poetry as a condensation of multiple meanings or allusions (Burke, 1939) was discussed, along with creative techniques such as Thomas Edison's and Salvador Dali's sleep methods (Smith, 2019), which are explained further in the results section. Findings supporting the creative potential of the sleep-onset phase (Lacaux et al., 2021) were also shared.

Exercise: hold a pen in your hand, close your eyes, incubate a poetic idea, practice breathing meditation, and take a brief nap (instructions provided in D2). Upon waking or stirring, open your eyes slightly and write your poem.

The session also introduced the N1 sleep lab experiment, with participants receiving steps for practicing hypnagogic drop-ins at home. The value of morning writing in a semi-sleep state was discussed, and its integration with the Wake Back to Bed (WBTB) technique was suggested for those practicing lucid dreaming.

For homework, participants were tasked with writing a poem each morning in a half-asleep state and experimenting with the napping technique to document hypnagogic experiences.

Week 5: Working with dreams and not for them

Henry James, Allan Gurganus, and John Nickols were quoted on using dreams in writing and editing. In addition, a step-by-step exercise was introduced to participants (D3), which was an accumulation of the exercises from previous weeks. It included working with dreams, incubation, morning writing, and editing.

Exercise: In a small group, read your dream-inspired poem aloud. Listen as the group shares their interpretations of its meaning. Then, explain your own perspective on what the poem represents. Together, discuss whether the intended message was effectively communicated, identifying any dream elements that may detract from the message or emotion and those that should be emphasized. Use the group's feedback to revise and refine your poem.

Week 6: Recap

This workshop was a recap of the preceding weeks, with a discussion on any lucid dreams and other significant dreams experienced over the course of this study. Final poetry was shared with the group and interpreted, giving feedback to those who asked for it.

14.6. Exit Interviews

Participants were asked to book a 60-minute interview that took place on Zoom upon completion of the study. This was a structured interview with questions about the whole process, workshops, sleep lab, and their takeaway in terms of creativity and other aspects of their life. Alternatively, participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire with those same questions (D4). All participants were asked to also complete an HSP scale questionnaire (Aron & Aron, 1997), and submit any poems and corresponding dreams written during the course of the study.

14.7. Analysis

The analysis of this study was conducted using a combination of quantitative methods in JASP (0.19.0; JASP team, 2024) and qualitative coding through Atlas.ti. Thematic analysis (for details on this method, see Study 3 methodology) was performed to uncover patterns and insights across participants' experiences during the **Six-Week Intervention**, the **Sleep Lab Study**, and the study's **Overall Impact** on creativity and waking life. Each key theme was further divided into subthemes, with additional layers of coding and code groups to represent specific phenomena.

Key Themes and Subthemes

Six-Week Intervention This theme summarises participants' engagement with lucid dreaming (LD) induction training, creative workshops, and poetry writing at home. Subthemes include:

- **Training:** Focused on LD induction techniques, with codes such as *LD training* and *dream recall*, and Creative Techniques, with codes such as *morning writing* and *dream incubation*. This subtheme tracked participants' varying success in incorporating these practices into their routines.
- **Workshop Exercises:** Presented poetry and dreams shared in weekly workshops. Codes like *exercise poem* and *dream element in poem* made up this subtheme.
- **Home Poetry:** Explored participants' application of learned techniques to their personal writing. Codes such as *lucid poem*, *poem from dream*, and *poem found in dream* revealed how participants integrated dream content into their home writing practices.

Sleep Lab Study The sleep lab sessions were analysed to understand the role of controlled LD and hypnagogic states in fostering creativity. Subthemes included:

- **Lucid Dreaming (LD) Session:** Analysed qualitative outcomes of attempting LD in the lab.

- **N1 Session:** Presented quantitative results of hypnagogic experience across different stages of sleep and participants' reports on whether they felt subjectively asleep or awake during these experiences.
- **Hypnagogia:** Explored the types of hypnagogic experience reported by participants, with codes such as *visual* and *auditory*, and *poetry in hypnagogia*, as well as the nature of the hypnagogic experience with codes such as *disconnected imagery* and *multi-step process*, and the influence on the hypnagogic content with a coding group *influence on hypnagogia*.
- **Waking Life Continuation:** Explored participants' own analysis of connections between poems and their dreams in the lab, with codes such as *before-after poem*, *before poem-dream*, and *after poem-dream*, with the codes referring to the poems written before and after sleep/dream in the lab sessions.
- **Challenges:** Codes included *problems falling asleep*, *time distortion*, *recall problems*, and *creative challenge*.
- **Lab Experience:** Subjective reports of the experience in the lab were analysed, with codes as *enjoyable*, *interesting*, and *creative*.
- **Creativity Scores:** Involved quantitative analysis of AUT and poetry written before and after sleep.
- **Writing Process:** Codes such as *flow*, *clarity*, and *connection* examined the differences in participants' creative outputs before and after sleep.
- **Lab Influence on Intervention:** Explored the effect of the lab sessions on participants' at-home creative practices, with codes like *lab influence*.

Overall Impact This theme synthesised the creative and personal changes reported by participants, with subthemes including:

- **Dreams:** Analysed the evolving relationship with participants' dreams, the influence on dreams, and the emerging themes, as well as lucidity experienced by participants in this study. Codes included *profound dreams*, *purposeful dreams*, *deepened relationship*, *waking life influence*, *recurring theme*, *lucidity clues*, *lucid dream*, and *creative dream*.
- **Creative Process:** Tracked shifts in participants' creative approach, mainly with reference to their writing, emphasising *fluidity*, *freedom*, and *inspiration*. Other codes included *emotion*, *symbolism*, *flow*, and *other creative work*.

- **Waking Life Impact:** Extended beyond creativity to examine broader life changes, with codes like *agency*, *control*, and *therapeutic*.

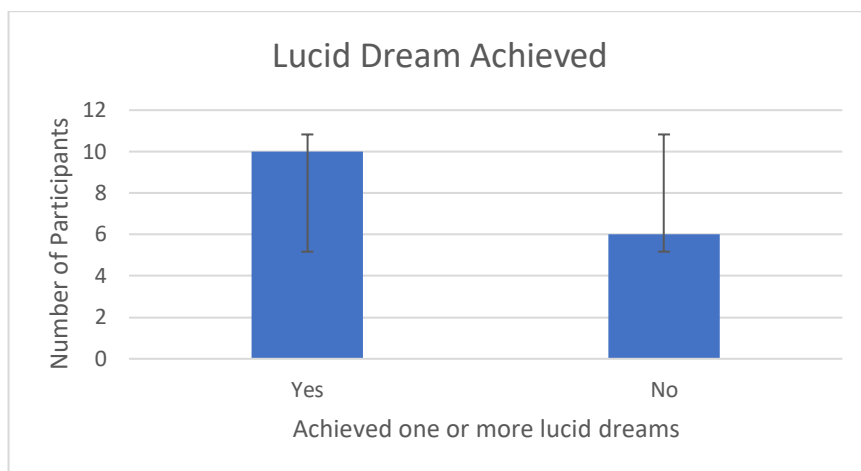
15. Quantitative Analysis

15.1. Lucid Dreams

Ten out of sixteen participants (62.5%) reported experiencing at least one lucid dream during the six-week period (Figure 16).

Figure 16

Number of Participants Who Achieved At Least One Lucid Dream During the Course of the 6-Week Intervention.



15.2. Sleep Lab Sessions

The sleep lab study consisted of one session aimed at inducing a lucid dream and one focusing on hypnagogic experiences in N1 sleep.

15.2.1. Lucid Dreaming Session

During the Lucid Dreaming (LD) Induction session ($n = 16$) and the consequent repeat session ($n = 4$), nine participants reported not having slept at all, with 14 reporting at least one instance of drifting off, no matter how briefly (Figure 17). Some of these participants reached REM, but most drifted in and out of NREM (Figure 18). For instance, P5 said: "I was kind of drifting in and out... I kept feeling like I was going

into sleep and then I'd come back out. It was like, you know, waves. So I don't think I was fully asleep.” Reading their EEG, we recorded only four instances of wake condition (W) throughout, with five participants reaching REM at least once, and 14 reaching NREM only, out of which many were very short instances of N1, explaining more subjective wake reports than were recorded in EEG.

Figure 17

Percentage of Participants Who Reported Feeling Subjectively Awake or Asleep At Least Once During The 90-Minute Nap In The LD Session.

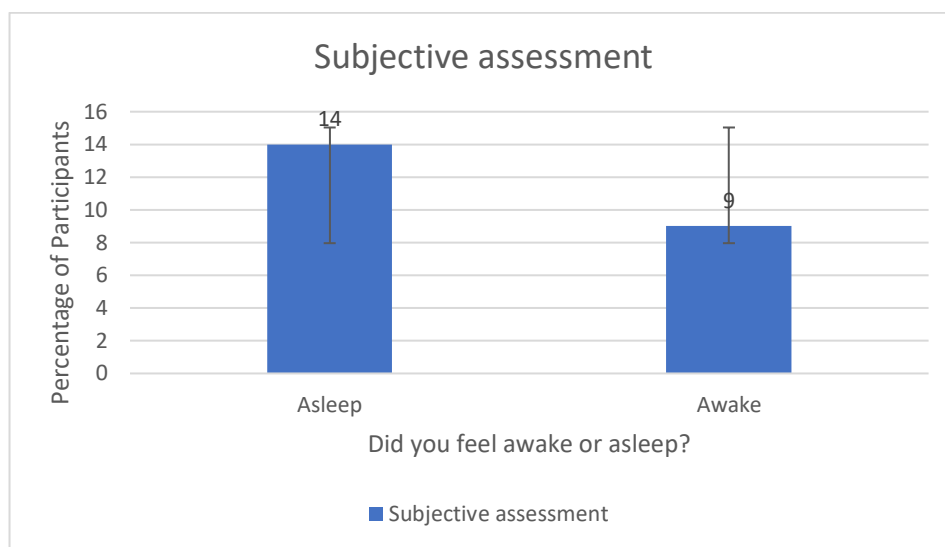


Figure 18

Percentage of Participants Who Remained Awake Throughout The Session or Entered NREM Or REM At Least Once During The 90-Minute Nap In The LD Session.

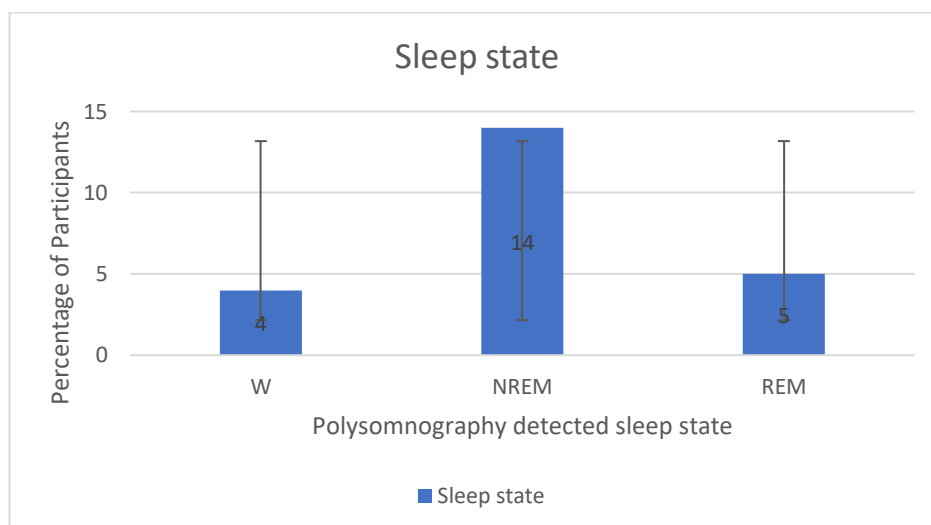
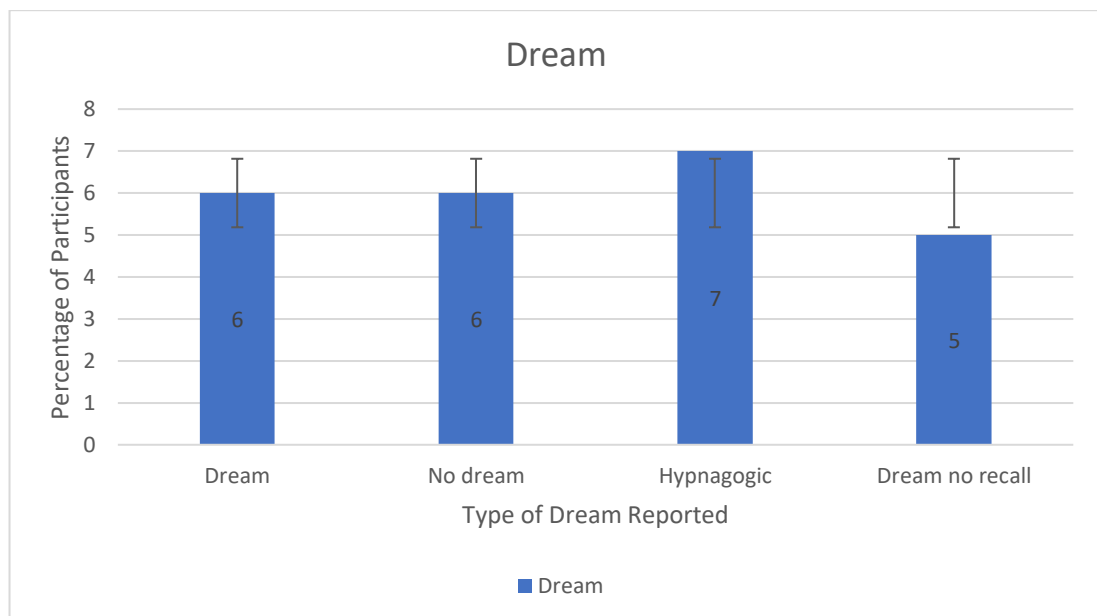


Figure 19 shows participants reporting various dream and hypnagogic experiences in this session. Seven participants experienced hypnagogic imagery or other hypnagogic sensations. Six participants reported not having a dream nor a hypnagogic experience. Eleven participants had a dream, five of which could not recall the contents of any dreams, and two of which were very brief instances of signal-verified-lucid-dream (SVLD).

Figure 19

Percentage of Participants Reporting A Recalled Dream, A Dream With No Recall, No Dream, Or A Hypnagogic Experience In The LD Session.



Some hypnagogic experiences evolved into fully-fledged dreams. For example, P2 described a series of "very short dreams" that transitioned into a more complex dream, blurring the line between hypnagogic visions and dreaming. More narrative-driven dreams also emerged, such as P11's vision of a hot air balloon shaped like a man's face in a desert (D38). These complex, narrative-like scenarios were classified as dreams by the researcher, upon data analysis, while simpler experiences were identified as hypnagogic.

Finally, there were a few instances of a confused state, where the participant's report either was not consistent or did not match the EEG report. For example, P4 went into REM, after which she was sent the lucidity cues. Upon receiving these cues, P4 signalled with her eyes, marking an SVLD. However, upon waking up, she claimed that she was awake throughout and that she did not signal, even though EEG clearly read four left-right eye signals.

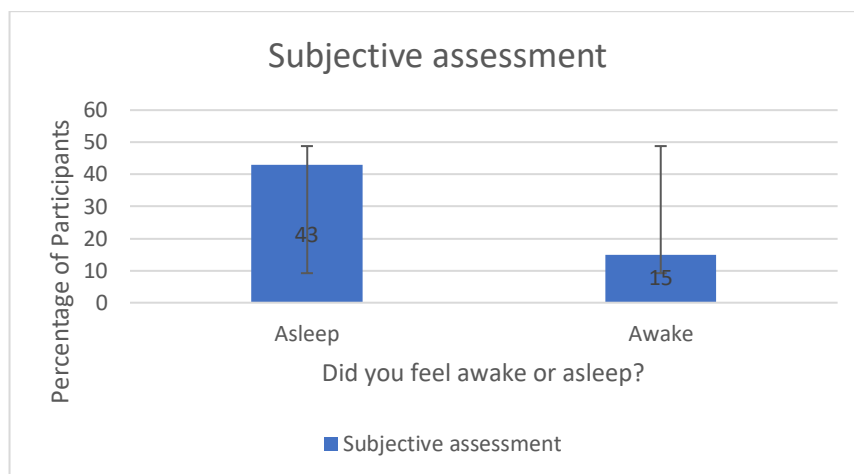
15.2.2. N1 Session

The N1 session (n = 13) aimed for up to five awakenings or 90 minutes in bed, whichever came first. During this time, participants felt subjectively asleep at least once in 43 instances, with 15 instances of feeling awake, regardless of whether they entered N1 or not. Four participants felt subjective awake throughout the session with no instances of falling asleep, as assessed subjectively.

Regardless of how they self-assessed, only one participant did not manage to enter the N1 stage of sleep, remaining awake throughout the session. The rest of the participants achieved N1 one or more times. Figure 20 shows that participants achieving N1 sleep self-assessed whether they were awake or asleep differently.

Figure 20

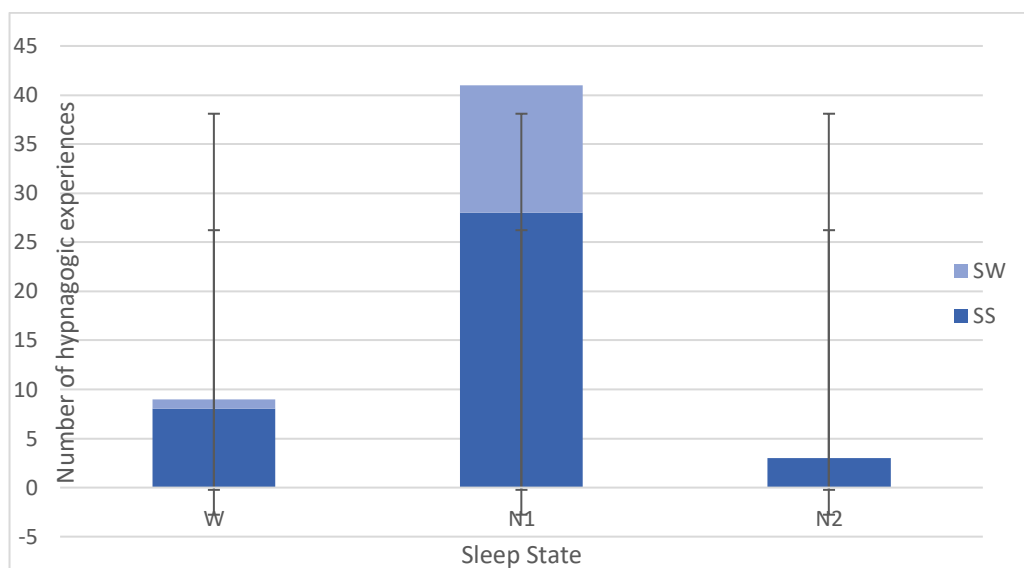
Percentage of Participants Who Reported Feeling Subjectively Awake or Asleep Across Each of Their N1 Awakenings.



There were 46 N1 awakenings, 3 N2 awakenings (one participant across three awakenings, who went into N2 before the minute in N1 was over), and 9 W awakenings (where a participant reported a hypnagogic experience and requested for the light to be switched on). Interestingly, out of those nine, eight felt subjectively asleep with only one feeling subjectively awake, indicating that a hypnagogic experience in a wakeful state produces a subjective feeling of being asleep. All N2 awakenings produced a subjective feeling of being asleep, while around two thirds of those in N1 felt subjectively asleep. Not all N1 awakenings produced a hypnagogic experience, though majority of them did (41/46). Figure 21 shows the number of hypnagogic reports across sleep stages and participants' self-assessment.

Figure 21

Number of Hypnagogic Experiences Reported In W, N1, And N2 Sleep Across All Participants, Including Subjective Reports of Feeling Awake (SW) And Asleep (SS).



Note: SW: Subjective Awake; SS: Subjectively Asleep.

Out of the total number of awakenings, 53 reported a hypnagogic vision, two reported a full-fledged dream, one reported no dreams or visions, one reported a dream but could not recall its contents and one had a hypnagogic experience that faded from memory instantly on waking. Even though there were 15 instances of participants reporting feeling subjectively awake when the lights switched on, only one of them

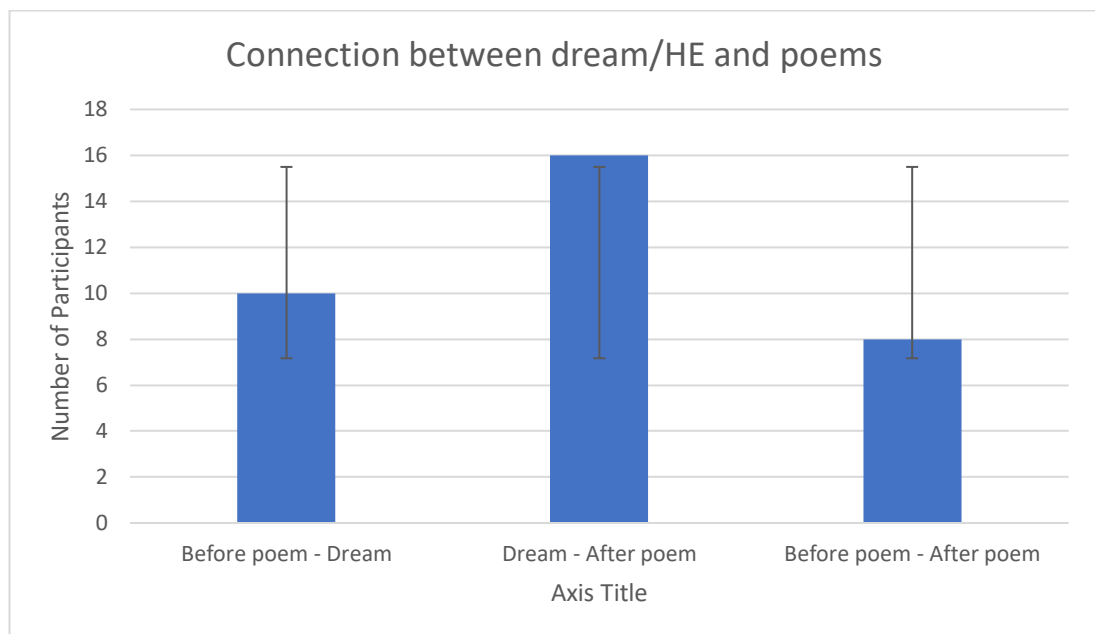
reported having no dream at all, with all others reporting either a dream or a hypnagogic experience.

15.2.3. Waking Life Continuation

Aside from conscious thoughts turning into dream-like experiences, participants noticed a connection between poetry written before and after sleep and the corresponding dream experience. These experiences, in part or fully, were influenced by the poem written before sleep for seven participants. All participants included part or all of their dream experience in the poem written post-sleep. Six of them had aspects in common between their “before” and “after” poems, indicating a continuous exploration of the same or similar themes throughout the experiment. Figure 22 depicts these connections.

Figure 22

Number of Participants Identifying a Connection Between Their Before And After Sleep Poetry and Between Their Poetry and Their Dream and/or Hypnagogic Experience.



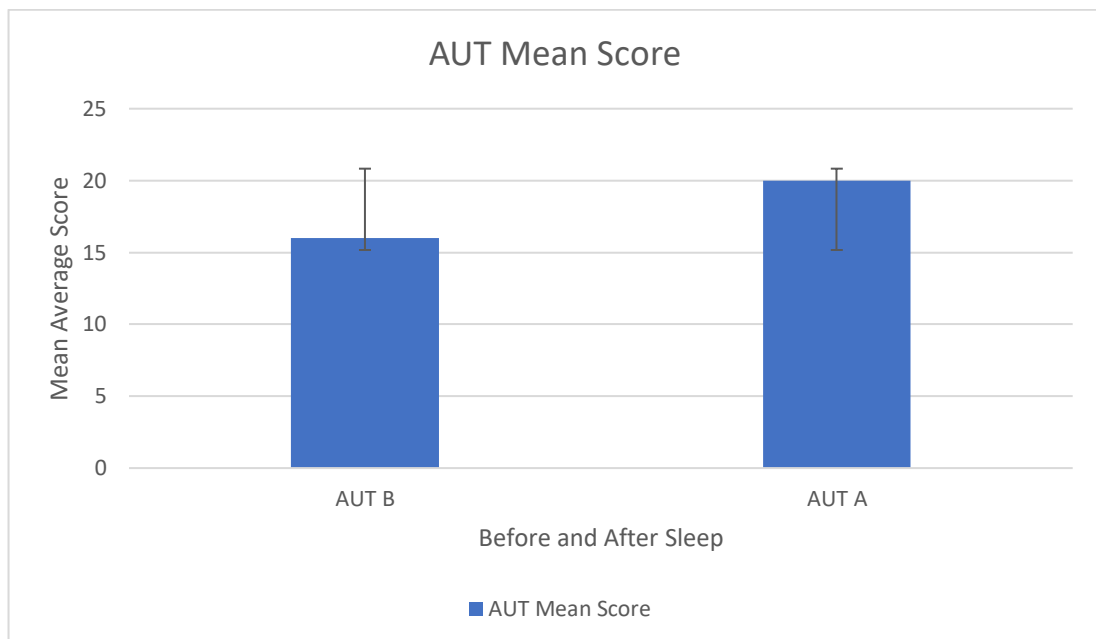
15.3. Creativity Scores

15.3.1. Alternative Uses Test

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare the mean AUT scores before and after sleep across both sessions combined. The results indicated no significant difference between the pre-sleep (AUT B) and post-sleep (AUT A) scores, $t(15) = -1.07$, $p = .303$. The mean AUT score before sleep ($M = 18.04$, $SD = 7.39$) was slightly lower than the mean score after sleep ($M = 19.55$, $SD = 7.93$), but this difference was not statistically significant.

Figure 23

The Mean Average Score for All AUT Items Across Participants Before and After Sleep In Both Sessions Combined.

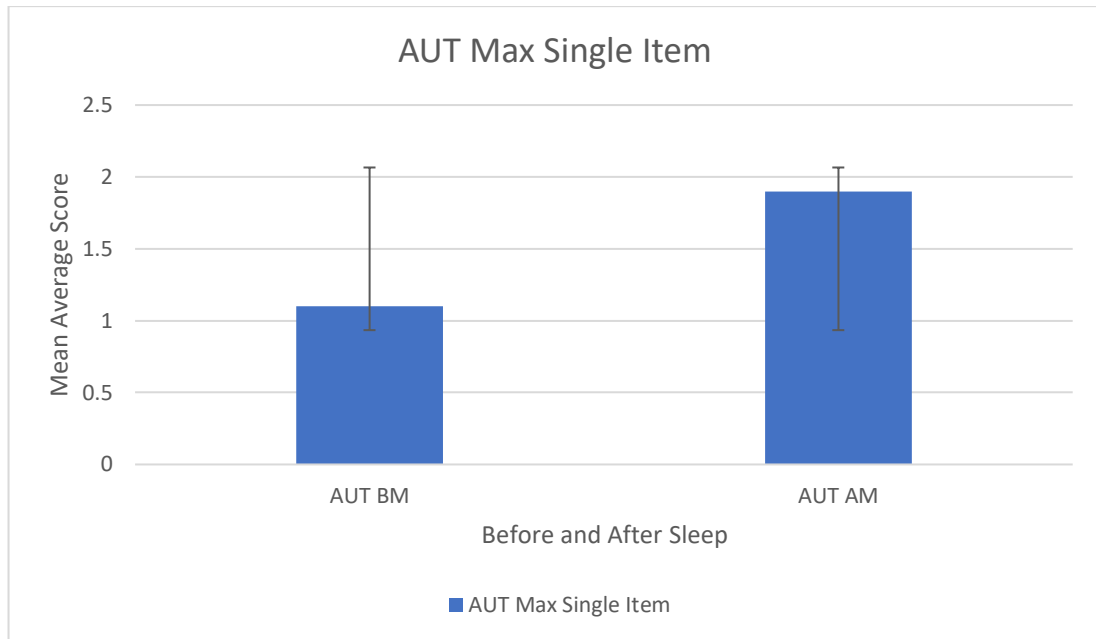


Although not statistically significant, the creativity scores blindly assessed by three independent judges show a small improvement in creative thinking during the Alternative Uses Test after sleep. However, a paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare the maximum single item AUT score before and after sleep across both sessions combined. The results indicated a significant difference between pre-sleep

(AUTBM) and post-sleep (AUTAM) scores, $t(15) = -3.57$, $p = .003$. This indicates that the most creative answers were given after the nap (Figure 24).

Figure 24

The Maximum Single Item Score Across Participants Before and After Sleep In Both Sessions Combined.

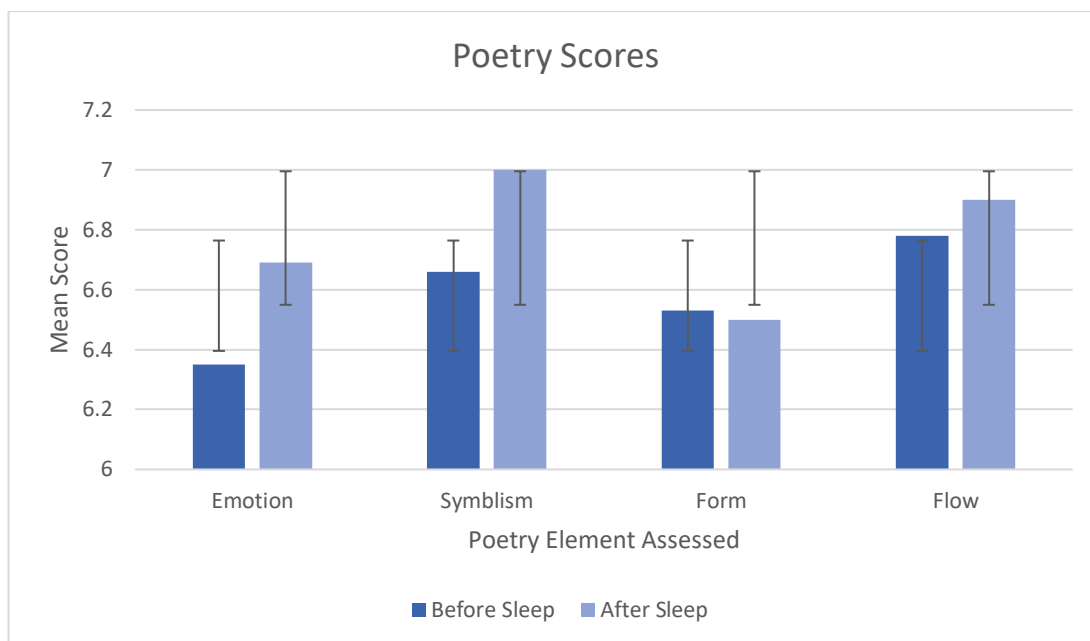


15.3.2. Poetry Scores

Independent judges assessed poetry written before and after sleep across both sleep lab sessions, finding an improvement across the tested categories (Figure 25). Poetry written before and after sleep in the lab was evaluated on four criteria: emotion, symbolism, form, and flow. Three independent judges scored the poems blindly on a 0–10 scale, finding that after-sleep poems were more emotional and symbolic, while form remained unchanged and flow improved slightly (a 0.2-point increase). Interestingly, while participants often reported improved flow (see further sections), this subjective assessment was not strongly reflected in the scores. The improvement in emotion and symbolism aligns with participants’ reports of emotional processing and symbolic imagery during sleep.

Figure 25

The Mean Average Poetry Scores Across Participants and Lab Sessions For: Emotion, Symbolism, Form, And Flow.



An intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) analysis was conducted to assess the reliability of ratings across assessors for all lab poems. The results indicated a low level of agreement among raters, $ICC(1,1) = 0.125$, with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.052 to 0.204. This is precisely why I had all judges assess every poem, enabling me to calculate the mean score as a more objective measure. This finding underscores the importance of having multiple raters.

16. Six-Week Intervention

The key part of the six week intervention was the lucid dreaming induction training combined with creative techniques for utilising lucid, non-lucid, and liminal dreams for poetic expression. These techniques were introduced to writers in the weekly workshops and tested quantitatively and qualitatively in the sleep lab. This section presents the results of the LD induction training and creative techniques, workshop exercises, and poetry resulting from these techniques outside the workshops during this intervention.

16.1. Training

16.1.1. Lucid Dreaming Induction

Participants faced challenges maintaining daily training due to busy schedules, life disruptions, and personal concerns like sleep quality and mental health (D5). Table 21 shows that while some participants consistently followed the LD induction and liminal dreaming techniques, others partially engaged or struggled to integrate the practices into their routines (D6). A few participants reported benefits from breaks to refocus (D7), but overall, motivation and consistency varied across the group. P2 and P13 did not agree to be interviewed at the end of the study, thus their data are missing from this and most further analysis, apart from their reports during the intervention and their sleep lab contribution.

Table 21

Participants Who Conducted LD Induction Training Regularly and Partially.

Regularly	Partially	No data
3	11	2

Recording dreams presented a challenge for some participants, with two participants reporting that audio recordings helped them overcome this (P14 and P4). Some participants reported that the structure of weekly workshops helped them keep up with the training, such as P10: “I really found that it was helping me to have the workshop, to have the regular meetings. To get the new exercise. I think all this was really motivating and keeping me engaged.”

Instructed to not only record the plot of the dream, but to probe it with questions about the plot, about emotions experienced in the dream, and other details while recording the dream, some participants reported a more detailed recall (D8). Six participants reported an increased dream recall overall, with eight feeling more control in their

dreams and/or waking lives as a result of the intervention (list of Ps and examples in D9). Some expressed a deeper connection with their subconscious and the breaking of the barrier between the two worlds – dreaming and waking – which reportedly contributed to dream recall. For example, P6 described his dream self reaching out to him and reminding him to remember the dream:

I wake up after dream, as I've been programmed to in this course, and part of me thinks oh sod it, but then it's like my dream self is saying no you got to get up and write it down. It's not my conscious self doing it, it feels like it's coming from the dream world. Like the lucid self coming out into the conscious self, like the other way around. (P6)

This deeper and more active engagement with their dreams aimed at contributing to the participants' creativity. To further aid this, participants were introduced to creative techniques which they were instructed to implement into their LD induction practice.

16.1.2. Creative techniques

The creative techniques introduced to writers in weekly workshops helped some participants find starting points for their poetry, with some using the techniques at home for further exploration. For example, P14 usually struggles with starting points for poetry, but reports that the creative techniques for dream exploration helped her get started with her writing at home. P10 struggled with the time limitation in both workshops and the sleep lab, but he found the techniques very useful for working with dreams and poetry at home (D10). On the other hand, P6 considered these exercises and the training at home as “dummy runs for the liminal laboratory experiment,” which then allowed him to delve deeper into creativity.

The specific exercises practised in these workshops will be presented in section 16.2. However, the key creative techniques integrated into the LD induction practice were

the morning writing technique and creative dream incubation, developed in Study 3 of this research.

Incubation

Dream incubation included going to sleep with a certain creative intention or poem in mind, asking the dream to provide ideas or solutions for their creative writing. Table 22 shows the number of participants who used this technique.

Table 22

Participants Who Reported Using the Dream Incubation Technique

Used dream incubation	Did not use dream incubation
11	3

Note: full list of participants in D11.

While some participants incubated poems they had started writing in weekly workshops with the aim to further develop them, others chose to incubate a specific word and then work with the dream on that in the morning.

For example, P3 incubated an idea of “fire”, wanting to progress her previously written poem. The recalled dream initially had nothing to do with the idea of fire, but the participant decided to start writing with this dream in mind regardless. After writing and reading her poem, P3 realised that both the dream and the poem referred to a symbolic meaning of fire – the energy in the dream and poem metaphorically represented fire (dream report and poem in D12).

P3 notes that the poem evolved out of bits of the dream, becoming meaningful afterwards. The poem reflects on how inspiration fades, using the metaphor of a fire. The once strong and bright fire that sparked creativity is now nearly gone. Fumbling with the grate symbolises the difficulty of trying to bring that creative energy back. The poem explores themes of missed chances, unfinished ideas, and the ongoing

search for inspiration, reflecting on the theme in the dream of being late and missing chances.

Whereas P3's poem explores the metaphorical aspect of the incubated dream, P10 wrote from waking ideas rather than a specific dream. He incubated the word "Wilderness" and recorded a poem in the morning, not reporting any specific dream that inspired it but the words coming in through the liminal state.

Poem:

*In the wilderness,
you are with the other
moving in mysterious ways
in the wilderness
you see the other side
no man's land
everyone's land
wearing only what's needed
let loose your instinct
to smell the ash
to dance in the desert of your quest*

Morning writing

Table 23 shows the number of participants who used the morning writing technique.

Table 23

Participants Who Practised the Morning Writing Technique

Yes	No
8	6

Note: full list of participants and more examples in D13.

Participants were instructed to write poetry in the early hours upon waking up and straight after recording their dreams, some of which were liminal. For instance, P10 wrote multiple poems in the early morning hours in a half-awake, half-asleep state (D14). Some reported greater clarity of thought, focus, and flow in the morning, such as P14, who reported having better ideas and her writing process being smoother in these early hours. Similarly, P8 stated that writing in the morning makes her more inspired and relaxed, as she is “more in touch with her unconscious.” P1 also found morning writing to be a “very easy and effortless way to write daily.” This would often be quite an automatic process, with writers working with the flow and understanding the meaning of their poetry post hoc (example in D13). Others, however, found it difficult to concentrate in the morning.

16.2. Workshop Exercises

All participants attending each of the following weekly workshops partook in the exercises presented in the following sections. These exercises were developed for the purpose of these workshops, and aimed at getting participants engaged with their recent dreams and creative expression of those dreams.

Week 1: Dream as a starting point exercise

Participants reflected on a recent emotionally charged dream, incubated it, and then engaged in a relaxation exercise to identify a “key” element of the dream. Different starting points from dreams for their poetry were discussed among participants, from dream imagery to symbolism. Participants then wrote poems inspired by the emotion of their dreams.

P3 illustrated how a mundane dream, like driving an old Land Rover, can evoke strong emotions and yield a meaningful poem.

Dream:

I was in an old land rover that a farmer had lent me which was full of old increments and broken things. I needed to get somewhere and get the vehicle back to him, and he also needed refuelling. I didn't know if it was Diesel or petrol. In any case, I forgot, and so I promised to drive it on empty to the nearest motorway services, even though this was an area that was unfamiliar to me. And I also noted that the land rover had white doors for some reason.

Reflecting on the feeling she had while sitting in this car, P3 wrote the following poem.

Poem:

I don't know

I don't know

I don't know what I'm doing here

I don't know what I forgot

or why I must make good my forgetting

there is urgency

and desperation

an urge to get going now

to put things right

to honour my promise

to move, to act

but I can't

the one thing I do know

is I must go back to what's real

leave the chaos and the broken pieces

of this unfinished dream

even if I never know

Similarly, P4 wrote a poem about driving, taking the metaphorical meaning of being in a back seat in a dream she had had prior to this workshop.

Poem:

Driving From The Back Seat Of My Own Dream

I am trying to forge a way

I am meant to be in control

*Aren't those my hands
on the steering wheel?*

*But I am obstructed within the walls
of my own yearning
and I have given over
my sight, my vision.*

*I fear to trust
his judgement, his deductions, his decisions.*

*Why can't I see for myself?
Why am I driving from the backseat
of my own dream?*

*I am delicate with my words,
exacting and pleading -
"Be careful,
I can't see from back here -
you will need to be my eyes."*

Another participant shared a starting point from their dream, which was a bright, vivid image that evoked emotion. This exemplified a different approach to writing poetry

from dreams than the example above, which used the emotion from a dream to inspire poetic imagery.

Dream:

The dream was based on an image I took of Rhosilli Bay just about a week ago. The pasting colours in it were just wow. If anyone asked me if I dream in colour I'd say absolutely as this proved it to me. I can't do it justice cause the picture was just... I wish I could've painted it.

Poem:

*Sunrise in pastel shades
Water colours and press embrace the waves
Yellow's below through clouds above
A picture threw peace and love
light and color, through waking dawn
shine to remind the day's moon
Rhosilli Bay in rainbow views.
For my pillow case, it's imprint fused*

Similarly, P2 used dream imagery as a starting point, which wasn't as aesthetically pleasing but more so symbolic: "The dream itself was weird with a stairway and I could see the horses."

Poem:

*A narrow wooden bamboo stairway
Spiriling upwards, leading the way
It's not yet clear as a day
What it's trying to say or portray
But here I am
Suddenly standing on a platform
Observing or spectating a shape or a form*

There appear to be men racing horses

With the power of ferocious forces

The exercise and subsequent discussions highlighted the importance of transforming dreams into creative works that resonate with readers, rather than simply transcribing them. Writers were encouraged to focus on the emotions and key elements of the dream that left a lasting impression, using these as starting points for their poetry. Emphasis was placed on the individuality of the process, with no single formula for dream-inspired writing but the importance of dream motifs with personal meaning.

Week 2: Dream signs exercise

With Week 1 exercise working with a single dream as a starting point for poetry, Week 2 focused on dream signs from multiple dreams (LaBerge & Rheingold, 1990). By this point, participants had been keeping a dream journal for a week. They were asked to read through their dream journal and familiarise themselves with any patterns, emotions, and ideas that came through in their dreams, following which they incubated an idea to find a poem based on these insights. After being guided through a breathing exercise, participants were given five minutes to write a poem based on this reflection.

As a therapist who had not been expressing himself creatively before this study, P6 wrote his first ever poem during this exercise. From the start of the study, P6 noted many dreams about Israel, attributing this common theme to his past lover moving to Israel just before the start of the study. He did not provide a specific dream report; instead, he reported taking the overall theme and feeling from these dreams to inspire a poem (D15).

Furthermore, P11 described a poem resulting from this exercise as “much more automatic, making an effect, symbolic, and flowing much more” than his previous writing. Even though P11 said he had “no idea where it came from or what it means,” he acknowledged that it was obviously about a journey and travelling, which he identified as a prominent theme in his dreams since the start of the study.

Poem:

*Walk, barefoot
Seashells
The distance is immaterial
It's immaterial
where we go
for we are all of the hive
and are of the street with no name
where the people meet
Ascension Day.
We aspire
we walk
the beach at sunset
We rise to it.
The smell of the salty air
This is us
where we are
a higher plane
On the beach we aspire to our
Ascension Day.*

Similarly, P4 found the poem written during this exercise to be “more automatic, almost coming through rhythm rather than thinking about it.” Her poem reflected on the dream images of an opening through the forest, similar to P8’s vision of walking through the forest. Both of their poems can be found in D16.

For some participants, this exercise was helpful for bringing forth the different sensations from the dream, unlocking synaesthesia. For example, P1 experienced a hypnagogic image of a six-year-old girl along with other strong visions, emphasising the synaesthetic effect these visions had. The multi-sensory experience resulted in the following poem:

Poem:

toothpaste

*she is six years old
she is dressed in red
a tattered frock falls
to her muddy ankles*

*she is lying on the dirty floor
she is floating
she is ignoring
the sounds of rain on the roof
her parents pleas for her to
come inside
for her to wake up /
get up / open her eyes / wipe
the tears from her sandpaper cheeks*

*indistinguishable from the rain
that falls so violently
onto her faded frock*

*she has chapped lips and small bones
eyelashes soft like rabbit fur
as dark as the candlelight shadows
that dance across her bedroom walls*

*she is six years old
she is dressed in red
swimming through sequins
and broken bangles and
instant noodle packaging
the rain tastes like toothpaste
as she blinks her eyes open*

*and smiles the smile
of a child in the rain*

Through this exercise, participants therefore identified emerging themes and dream signs from their journals, working with imagery, symbolism, and sensory experiences while incubating a creative intention.

Week 3: Association exercise & Dream interpretation

This exercise focused on dream emotions and is grounded in Jung's *Association Method* (1910). Jung designed this method to uncover unconscious complexes by analysing reaction times, responses, and emotional indicators. It involves presenting a participant with stimulus words and recording their immediate verbal response. This method was refined here for the purposes of creative dreamwork.

Participants were instructed to choose one recent dream from their dream journal. They were given five minutes to circle emotionally charged words and phrases from the dream report, and then write them into a list. Following this, they were asked to write down the first thought that came to their mind combining two by two words from the list, until they were left with one word. This final word was to be used as the title (starting point) for their new poem. Participants were then guided through a meditative breathing exercise for ten minutes, incubating the title word and the prevailing feeling from their dream. Upon opening their eyes, participants were instructed to write a poem in five minutes.

Most participants expressed surprise with the title word they got from the association method. P8 had a dream "about feet," which led her to the title word "God", and a poem that incorporated many elements from her dream while giving it a new and deeper meaning.

Dream:

I was barefoot and my feet were cold and I felt embarrassed. I was walking through a spaceship, the floors and walls were metal. I went to a counter to get shoes, a long metal counter in a large echoing space, and the assistants were flirting with one another. The man was suggesting the girl go out with him. She was called Dawn. I was ashamed and worried.

Association exercise

barefoot	toes	earth	
embarrassed			
cold	empty		God
spaceship			
worried	life	heaven	
ashamed			
shoes	purple		
Dawn			

Poem:

*My feet are cold against the metal
and I am grateful for the chill.
Without it I would not be here.
I would float along these passages
like a mote of dust.
Dust. We have dust in space.
It was my first surprise,
that and the darkness.
You have no idea of darkness,
how thick and implacable without the sun.
Son. I left my son behind.
He didn't want this journey.
He was my sacrifice, my blood.
Blood. I have cut the sole of my foot*

*on a shard of metal.
But I still walk,
watching through the small triangles
that are the eyes of this ship,
for the sign that we are there.
There, in the nebula,
or there in that galaxy
that is so distant it appears as a star
like any other.
There are no others,
only myself waiting for a dawning.
And like every human before me,
not just waiting but searching.
And if we travel far enough we will find it
and know it, whatever it may be.*

As evidenced, a lot of P8's dream content found itself in poetry lines, with no direct mention of "God" but a profound feeling of searching and the depth of the universe. Others did not share their poems, but some expressed uncovering a deeper layer of their dream through this exercise.

Dream interpretation

In the second half of Week 4 workshop, the group discussed Freud's work with Dora's dreams (Freud, Bell, & Robertson, 2013) and the importance of the waking life insight for dream interpretation. Subsequently, the Ullman method for interpreting dreams was introduced by analysing one participant's dream together, as a group. P5 shared the following dream:

Dream:

I drive past a place every day that I would like to live. The weather's always gloriously sunny. There's an inlet of white, blue water and a harbour rising up the hill, houses look coordinate to tallinate. One day I decided to stop the car and have a look. There's

a derelict shed blocking my path down to the place and go inside its dark and cobwebby.

I look around and I can see a hole at the back of the shed. It's very small, but I managed to crawl through. I can see before me now a wide expanse of shallow blue water, really clear, with people splashing about. I decided to go for a swim in the water. I find it hard at first by my stroke, and I realize that I'm neither under or on top of the water, but I'm swimming in the middle of pure white light. I feel free under tease. Suddenly I realize the light goes on forever, and I understand the concept of infinity. The realisation fills me with joy and peace.

Then someone touches my hand and pulls me back to earth.

The group engaged in interpreting the dream, asking P5 questions about specific details of the dream. They inquired about her interactions with people in the dream, the significance of the shed, the emotions associated with swimming in the light, and the moment of being pulled back. P5 described her fear while crawling through the shed, the initial difficulty swimming, and the overwhelming joy and understanding of infinity when submerged in the light.

P10: What was going through your head when you were going through that hole? And then you said, you forced yourself through?

P5: I was scared. When I was going through the shed, it was dark and creepy, and I really wanted to get to the other side. And I could see this hollow. And I looked round, and I could see, there was no other way down to this place. So I knew I'd have to go through. Crawl through this hole. I had to get down on my hands and knees to get through it.

When asked about her emotions in the dream, P5 responded: "I suppose that the initial feeling of being that uncoordinated was notable, because then, when I did get swimming and turned into the light. It was such a beautiful feeling and feeling ease. Yeah, that, that was worth it."

The discussion further included participants offering different interpretations of the dream in a "if it were my dream" scenario. Some viewed the shed as representing a

subconscious or shadow self, while others related it to life struggles and obstacles. The participants explored the themes of overcoming challenges, finding inner peace, and taking the dream as a symbolic journey toward self-discovery.

Taking in different projections, P5 revealed that the dream occurred during a time of personal contentment but was triggered by a series of dreams related to spiritual experiences. She described the dream's impact on her waking life, bringing about a more positive and hopeful perspective, even though she maintained an agnostic stance.

Finally, the dreamer and the group drew connections between the dream elements and P5's waking life. The discussion also touched on a similar dream P5 had (second dream can be found in D17), emphasising the recurring theme of remembering something forgotten and the profound emotions associated with that remembrance.

The experimenter encouraged participants to consider the dream's context in P5's waking life and explore the common themes of remembrance, joy, and longing that appeared across multiple dreams. The interpretations provided by the group add layers of meaning to P5's initial understanding of the dream, offering insights into the quest for self-discovery.

Finally, P5 shared the poem that she based on this dream in the first part of the workshop and before the group interpretation. During the exercise, she circled the following words and was left with the word "remembrance" as the title of the poem:

Word association:

<i>Sunny</i>	<i>joy</i>	
<i>blue water</i>		<i>understanding</i>
<i>splashing</i>	<i>peace</i>	
<i>swimming</i>		<i>remembrance</i>
<i>pure</i>	<i>heaven</i>	
<i>white light</i>		<i>God</i>
<i>forever</i>	<i>insight</i>	
<i>Infinity</i>		

The following poem was inspired by this exercise:

Poem:

Remembrance

*We have forgotten everything
Our understanding
Our joy
The light, the love
The liberation
One day you may catch a glimpse
To tease you
But also give you hope
That one day
We will be swimming
In the light that goes on forever
And crying
With remembrance*

Realising that the group interpretation of her dream led her to the theme of “remembrance,” just like the association method conducted prior to the group discussion, P5 found meaningful connections between the poem and the dream interpretation. P5 said: “It’s like I’d always known and I’d forgotten. And then I realised again.”

P4 also shared a poem she wrote through the association exercise before interpreting her dream (D18) with a partner allocated in the workshop.

Dream:

It's a sci-fi scenario with broken communication between two ships. The mother, a recurring figure in my dreams, is trying to prevent the mission due to its perceived danger.

Interpretation:

The dream is interpreted as reflecting a broken or missing communication between the dreamer and her mother. The dreamer, as an observational entity, is unable to interact or change the dream's course, symbolising a lack of control in a situation. The dream is associated with a real-life theme of communication difficulties, particularly with the dreamer's mother. The dreamer also notes the recurring theme of their mother in dreams.

Poem:

Scream

*A world of broken glass edges;
on an infrared horizon
a volcano erupts -*

*Would there be too much danger
in speaking freely?*

- the signal is broken -

*Life and knife
to death,
or sharp words
to break the silence
that once broken
can never be made whole again.*

Signal received,

*reluctant, agreed -
a scream cannot be heard in space.*

The poem titled "Scream" explores the theme of communication through metaphorical and vivid imagery. The central theme revolves around the paradox of expressing oneself freely (screaming) and the inherent danger or consequences associated with it. The lines "a scream cannot be heard in space" reinforce the idea of communication breakdown or the inability to convey emotions effectively. The dream and poem both centre around the challenges and consequences of communication. Furthermore, P4 found that both the dream and the poem tie into her personal and professional experiences, connecting the difficulty in expressing emotions, particularly anger, with the broader context of working with high-risk individuals struggling with similar issues.

The creative process allowed for a different perspective on the dream, emphasising the emotional intensity and the potential danger of expressing oneself. Finally, P4 expressed that the poem offered a deeper insight into the dream and its meaning, helping with a different approach to both the dream interpretation and poem:

I found the exercise to work towards it also very helpful. And the different words that it kind of broken down into. I never would have thought that scream would have been the word I would've ended up with. So I liked the paradox of that with being in space. (P4)

Week 4: Liminal exercise

Moving on from working with night dreams, Week 4 focused on inducing, incubating, and harvesting hypnagogia. This exercise was inspired by Dali and Edison's napping techniques (Smith, 2019) as well as Clare Johnson's lucid writing technique (2017). The Lucid Writing Technique combines elements of lucid dreaming and creative writing to access subconscious material for storytelling and self-expression. By

entering a relaxed, hypnagogic state, writers allow images, memories, and ideas to flow freely, capturing them without censorship.

Participants were introduced to the napping technique: they were instructed to hold a pencil in one hand, lean back in the chair and close their eyes, with the other hand resting on the desk by a piece of paper or their notebook. During a relaxation exercise, several participants experienced hypnagogic imagery, feelings, and other sensations, with one participant dropping the pen. They were given five minutes to write a poem straight after opening their eyes, keeping still as much as possible and opening eyes only slightly, just enough to see the paper in front of them.

P11 fell asleep and dropped the pen only minutes into the exercise. He raised his head slightly and started to write, uninterrupted, for a few minutes.

It was very visual. I could see the gravel path, the pool. I'm tempted to think it comes from, at one point I had great interest in the American civil war, and the first flag of the Southern states was called the Bonnie Blue Flag. So it must've been there somewhere. I think they were just flashes, but they were very, very vivid. I remember going up the gravel path and greeted this character who was in uniform with the white gloves, it was very, very clear. The Bonnie Blue Flag is actually a rebel song from the South and one of the first lines of it is we are the sons of toil, land is our own. (P11)

Poem:

*I drove up the gravel path
I passed the pool
full today.
He was there to greet,
the austere face, the white gloves.
'Here we are' he says*

'Sons of the earth '.
'We have made this land our own'
I agree but he is forceful.
He goes on
about the sons of toil.
He wants to raise the flag.
It is our flag but it is of protest.
The Bonnie Blue Flag is ours and it will remain so.

It is clear that P11, writing automatically inspired by the hypnagogic visions, implemented both the imagery (e.g. gravel path, white gloves, Bonnie Blue Flag) and the symbolic meaning of the song that came to him in this state.

P8 did not drop the pen, however, she also reported a vivid vision consisting of a dusty light “that was just falling from the sky. Northern Lights, and that's where it started.” She also reported seeing a man from a previous night’s dream, to whom she felt connected in this hypnagogic experience. She wrote the following poem as the result of the vision:

Poem:

I've never seen the Northern Lights
but I would know them.
The dust of red and green,
the coldness.
I've never seen the devil but I would sense him.
No heat, not the writer's fear,
the believer's vision of burnt stone and bism.
Abysmal
He would be a man you don't notice at the start.
Listening, knowing,
ready to turn your best intentions into dust

This ‘indefinable’ light was experienced by P7 as well. Similarly, P9 had powerful and emotionally charged visions during the liminal exercise without dropping the pen:

I didn’t go to sleep, but I did see a blue poppy, and then the centre of it changed into a picture of an eye, and then lips, and then, I found that really emotional, I was crying a lot. That exercise brought a lot of grief in me. But then the poppy, the roots went into the earth, and then I saw a badger’s claws and the tunnels, and then flowering bulbs. Basically, it was about loss, about going back to the earth and coming back to life. The image of the stupa with the eyes of the Buddha, that’s what came to me then. (P9)

P9’s poem can be found in D19, clearly incorporating all of the content she reported experiencing in this hypnagogic vision, as well as the emotions that followed it.

This exercise provided participants with another way to induce dream-like states without needing to go to bed for the night, and gain creative starting points for their writing.

Week 5: Editing exercise

Now that participants learnt various techniques for harvesting dreams and hypnagogic experiences for creative ideas, we discussed working with these ideas creatively in terms of “working with dreams and not for them” concept identified as an important area of creative dreamwork in Study 3 of this research.

For this exercise, participants were split into smaller groups of three or four. They were given twenty minutes to read a dream and a corresponding poem to their group and use the Ullman method to interpret both, giving feedback to each other on how to improve the poem to bring out the essence of the dream and clarity to the reader. This was first exemplified with P11’s poem and dream report read to the larger group.

P11 shared a poem (D20) written during one of the lab sessions, about a nostalgic moment in a park during early autumn, where he read Keats to someone while lying on the grass. The group discussed the potential meaning of the poem, suggesting themes of loss, melancholy, tenderness, and the changing of seasons. The group questioned P11 on the time of year the poem was set in, relationship to the character in their poem, and the feeling rather than content itself. The poem was then connected to P11's recurring dreams about traveling and moving on, with the group proposing that he could highlight the sense of autumn in the poem to convey a deeper message about the loss of youth. P11 agreed with the interpretations and acknowledged the potential for improvement in highlighting the autumn theme in the poem.

Some participants found that reading the poem before the dream report made it easier to identify which elements of the dream were effectively conveyed in the poem and which aspects might confuse the reader without the context of the dream.

Because I know the background, when I heard from the group, I realised that it wasn't really that clear to people what it was about. The suggestions were that I should bring out my emotions more, so that's what I was trying to do. And also, it was a bit abrupt in places, it needs to be fleshed out more. (P5)

The poem that P8 wrote during the liminal exercise (presented in Week 4 above) was discussed by her small group. She had previously expressed uncertainty about where the idea of the devil in her poem came from, stating that it "just popped up." The feelings "frightened" and "sinister" were brought up by the group, helping P8 understand what her poem was about, as she had previously been unsure. She worked on the poem in this workshop, as well as after incubating it at home for a few nights (edited poem in D21). P8 expressed satisfaction with this edited version of the poem:

I prefer the language. I think the imagery is a bit richer. The idea of the devil I liked. I liked the first one, so I haven't changed that very much. I just made it a little bit more personal. (P8)

Even though the idea of the devil did not come in the liminal state, once P8 started writing about the dusty light that she experienced, her automatic writing led her to the idea of the devil, which, upon group discussion and incubation, guided her to a more personal poem.

I think that would be what the devil is, you know, he wouldn't come with his full tail fire going. What do they say? The road to hell is paved with good intentions.

He'd take your well-meaning actions and twist them. (P8)

P7 also shared a previously written poem with his group and received helpful feedback, which he then implemented in the new version (D22). With the lighthouse being a prominent symbol taken from a dream to write the first version of the poem, the group's feedback revealed to P7 that it didn't come out as strongly in the poem. They suggested he focused more on this symbol from the dream to really bring out the message and symbolism from the dream. Whereas it only featured in one line in the first version, the revised poem is all about the symbol of a lighthouse. P7 noted that he was happier with this new version.

Similarly, P4 read the first version (D23) of a poem based on the following dream:

Dream:

This dream went on for quite a while - something about being on a campus, and being the only girl in the boys' dorms because they didn't have room in the girls'. And then it was time to move to the girls' dorm because they had space, and packing everything up. And some of the things I had were like frozen cherries, and like a cherry hair conditioner that my mum had given me. My mum had given me quite a lot of stuff, and she came to help me move my stuff to the other dorm.

Group feedback:

The feedback was around the theme of gender, it's important so to bring it out a bit more. I felt really averse to the pink cause I really don't like pink, and when I'd gone through and highlighted things, I kinda stopped at the point when all of the pink imagery starts, I didn't really wanna keep it in, but it's kinda what the whole poem is based around.

Revised poem:

Defrosting

There was no place for me
in the female dorm.

I kept to myself,
Silent
among the boys

until it was time
that there was a place made for me
that I could call home.

My mum came to help me move
(like she always did) -

there were
bags
and bags
and bags
of things to move;

some things
my mother had brought -
this fresh start of mine
a chance to gift
what she was ready to discard.

What was mine,
and what was hers?

a bag of frozen cherries,
slowly defrosting;
a bottle of hair conditioner -
whole
blood-clot cherries
floating, suspended
within the pastel pink paste.

The group's feedback helped P4 bring out the main theme from the dream into the poem without the restrictions of personal aversion toward the theme itself. Her dream about being a girl in the boys' dorms and having to move to the girls' dorms reflects a situation where her gender stood out; something that had increasingly been the subject in her waking life. The dream might symbolise a journey of navigating gender identity and personal belongings, resonating with the group's feedback and emphasis on gender-related elements and the complexities of what to keep, discard, and accept.

This was the final week in which participants engaged in creative exercises. Week 6 that followed included a general discussion and reflection on the whole process rather than a practical session.

16.3. Home Poetry

Participants were encouraged to use the techniques learned in this process to write poetry at home. The following sections offer examples of poetry written outside of the lab and workshop setting, outlining the use of certain creative techniques introduced in this study. The poetry written at home was inspired by hypnagogic experiences, dreams (single dreams, multiple dreams, dreams that couldn't be recalled, and poems found in dreams), and lucid dreams (Table 24).

Table 24

Number of Participants Who Used A Liminal Dream, Dream, Or Lucid Dream At Least Once To Inspire A Poem At Home.

Liminal dream	Dream	Lucid dream
4	7	3 (P9, P11, P16)

Participants reported using emotion, symbolism, and themes across dreams to inspire poetry (Table 25).

Table 25

Number of Participants Who Used Emotion, Symbolism, or Themes from Their Dreams to Inspire Poetry At Home.

Emotion	Symbolism	Themes
10	8	7

Note: full list of participants in D24.

16.3.1. Inspired by liminal dreams

Four participants used a hypnagogic/hypnopompic experience to inspire a poem at home (lit of Ps and further examples in D25).

Some worked with hypnagogic imagery as they were falling asleep at night, while others gained creative ideas in the morning, using the morning writing technique. Others used the napping technique introduced in Week 4 workshop to get creative ideas and further develop their poetry.

For example, P8 used the napping technique at home, receiving hypnagogic imagery as starting points for new poems. After experiencing hypnagogic visions, she wrote automatically, in “autopilot”, without actively thinking about her writing. Examples

include being in space, floating around, and seeing a bright light, which P8 described as resembling the film 2001 A Space Odyssey. This poem can be found in D26.

Another hypnagogic imagery P8 reported while conducting the napping technique is cows in the mist, the motif present in many of her hypnagogic experiences. P8 believes that this ‘mist’ is the result of “the sense of light being dispersed” whenever she reaches the liminal state. The imagery of cows in the mist was accompanied by a strong emotion, which the poem reflects: “The feeling that followed the imagery was, I suppose a sadness, really. That these little heifers, they just don't know what's coming next. And they just find you fascinating, and they just stare at you.”

Poem:

*The breath clouds above the herd
heifers not yet milking,
no creatures older than a year.
And their mothers ragged in the barn,
morose, attached to pumps that drain them,
or gone for burgers.
We don't milk the old and young together.
We say it's easier to manage but I wonder.
Do we mean it's easier to fool them?
Don't let them speak, tell what they know,
or show in the brown reflection of their yes
what this life means.
The heifers watch as I layer the hedge.
Some piss. Some chew.
I am a point of fascination
in the brown green stop and shove of their day.
Not their captor. Not death.*

Other participants used the liminal state to edit their previously written poems, rather than inspire new ones. For example, P6 went to sleep setting an intention to work on the poem he wrote in one of the workshops, with which he wasn't fully happy: “It

didn't feel genuine, it didn't feel quite right." He reported waking up in the middle of the night with a sudden inspiration to work on this poem, after which he rewrote two lines and added another two. This resulted in a completed poem with which he was much more satisfied (D15).

16.3.2. Inspired by dreams

Seven participants used imagery, symbols, feelings, ideas, and phrases from their dreams to inspire and/or develop their poetry (see D27 for list of Ps and multiple dream reports + corresponding poems). Phrases were sometimes told to them by a dream character (e.g. D28), by an internal voice, or presented in writing. Some participants wrote poetry in a half-awake state based on the dream (e.g. D29).

Themes and motifs from multiple dreams

Participants also used common themes from their dreams, identified upon reflection on their dream journals, to inspire new poetry. For example, P14 had repeating dreams of various narratives about an overprotective mother (D30), which she used to write the following poem:

*Mother oh mother
place a hand on my shoulder as I struggle to paddle
let my legs slip and my arms flail
whisper warm as I tumble and crash
mother oh mother let me fall and hurt
kiss my bleeding head and caress my scraped knees
mother ohh mother let me fall unhurt.*

Similarly, P15 noticed a theme of running away from things in his dreams and the "unnecessary violent" narratives. He used the overarching feeling from these dreams and the underlying message, as interpreted by the participant himself, as the inspiration for two poems (poems and dream reports in D31).

Poems found in dreams

Six participants (P4, P5, P8, P9, P12, P14) found lines of poetry inside their dreams, which may have been influenced by workshop exercises (e.g., setting the intention during MILD to “find a poem tonight”) and the sleep lab experience, during which participants were given a cue to “look for a poem” inside a dream. However, Table 26 shows that not all of them recalled the words after waking up from the dream.

Table 26

Participants Who Found Lines of Poetry In A Dream and Remembered Them Upon Waking Up.

Remembered the words	Did not remember the words
P4, P5, P14	P8, P9, P12

The experimenter shared her experience finding a poem inside a dream, but upon waking up only remembering that it was very deep and symbolic, with words “love, just like poetry is...” and the rest of the poem vanishing in front of her opening eyes. Following this, similar experiences were reported by the participants.

For instance, P14 shared a lucid dream inside which she saw poetry written all over a famous artist’s walls, who was sleep talking while his wife was recording his ideas.

I had a very interesting dream in which I was self-aware of how I got there. It was a dream about an artist slash poet whose drawings and sculptures were out on the wall and in the dream he was sleeping and sleep talking and his wife was helping him write down his dreams so that he could write the poem. *I don’t remember the words or the lines*, but I do remember that they were using different techniques; example is say 3 words that relate to a word he remembers from his dream. (P14)

In week 6 at the end of the study, P5 also reported finding a poem inside a dream, but forgetting it immediately upon waking up.

I found a poem. It was my friend's birthday, and I didn't have any cards. And I looked through some drawers and I found a card. On the front there was a really profound poem. And I thought I can't give him this because I want to keep it this, it's too good. But in the end, I decided it was more important to give the card. But unfortunately, when I woke up, I couldn't remember what the profound thing was. (P5)

P5 reported another dream in which she was reading out a poem she'd written, but all she could remember when she woke up was that it was about freedom. She noticed that in dreams, "words that are written disappear easily" so she suggested that if one achieves a lucid dream, they should have someone recite the words to them instead in order to recall them on awakening.

Similarly, P4 reported a number of instances where she found written poetry in hypnagogic visions, as well as dreaming of a poem and finding "a few great lines" but she felt that if she were to roll over in bed to record it, she would wake up fully. Unfortunately, this meant that she lost the lines once she woke up⁴.

On the other hand, three participants successfully remembered the poetry lines from their dreams. In what was described as a vivid dream, P8 heard a phrase that formed a poem. She took the feeling from a vivid dream she had, along with a character and the symbolic image of her twisting in pain (D32).

It just popped out and it kept repeating: repose, pose... That's just the way it came out. And when I looked at it, I thought blimey, you've got a structure there,

⁴ In contrast, P4 recorded many poetry lines in the N1 session in the sleep lab, where she was woken up during the hypnagogic experience.

woman, you've got a poem! [...] The feeling that I had from the dream was that this friend of mine was in extreme pain and the pain was so bad it kind of twisted her. That was the idea of twisting your body and your face being twisted by pain.

(P8)

For P9, the dream did not just provide a poem, but also the experience of writing it. The full dream report and poem can be found in D33. P9 said, "I dreamed I was writing a poem in Welsh & heard the first two lines in my dream. In my dream I also saw a cockroach eating an ant."

Furthermore, P12 received the line *I would have climbed on the roofs of neighbouring houses* from her otherwise unrecalled dream, from which she created the context and the consequent poem in Russian (D34).

No dream recall poems

Four participants (P3, P9, P12, P14) wrote a poem straight after a dream they could not recall (for examples, see D35). For instance, P9 only remembered a few motifs from her dream, which she then reimagined and wrote into a poem even though she could not remember the dream's narrative. She states that the poem is "more insightful than creative," perhaps due to the interpretations of the remembered motifs.

P3, who often wakes up with a word from a no-recall dream lingering on her thoughts, woke up one morning with a word that she "couldn't catch." This prompted her to write the following poem:

Catchword

*once within a dream
I hung upon a word
soundless, unheard
but ripe with meaning*

*a mysterious encryption
that I can't ignore
heavy with significance
that I can't retrieve*

*an otherworldly byword
that I must decipher
or else miss out on
this ethereal disclosure*

*by effort and stealth
I strive to grasp
this arcane graffiti
that glows insistently*

*then all at once the letters fade
the poem that might have been
is lost in the walls of the dream
where memory cannot penetrate*

16.3.3. Inspired by lucid dreams

Three participants (P9, P11, P16) reported using lucid dreams as starting points for their poetry during the course of this study.

For P16, the night after the final workshop brought his only fully lucid dream of the study, which he described as highly symbolic. Following this dream, P16 wrote a poem he considered to be “more interesting than other poems I had written recently.” Interestingly, this dream and the resulting poem were thematically, emotionally, and symbolically similar to his hypnagogic experience and poem from the sleep lab, although P16 himself did not connect the two. Both the lucid dream and the

hypnagogic vision (which occurred weeks later, as P16 participated in the sleep lab after the study had officially concluded) featured an old man with “a face full of wrinkles” and the dreamer attempting to uplift the man’s spirits by telling him that being old isn’t so bad. These motifs were directly reflected in both of his poems (see D36 for poems and corresponding dream reports).

The poem draws inspiration from various elements of the dream, incorporating imagery, emotions, and symbolism. Both the dream report and the poem can be found in D36. The dream features an encounter with an old man with a white beard and hair, wearing a long green coat. The poem directly references this imagery with lines like “peer into the wizened face” and describes the old man’s face as “lined with mistakes and regrets.” Further, in the dream, P16 becomes lucid, realising that the old man is, in fact, himself. The poem reflects this self-realisation with lines such as “I am you,” emphasising the continuity of identity between the older self and the present self. Both the dream and the poem explore the theme of aging and the perception of time. The dream suggests that the old man is not truly old, and the poem emphasises that the old man should not despair, as there are still opportunities to live fully and embrace life. Finally, the dream ends with a sultan-like figure. The poem similarly refers to meeting “wiser men,” suggesting a quest for wisdom or guidance in both the dream and the poem.

The overarching emotion is also taken from the dream into the poem. The dream describes a rising sense of elation and ecstasy while trying to reassure the old man. The poem captures this emotional intensity with phrases like “full of life” and “I so desire to live.” Both convey a strong desire for a fulfilling existence. In the dream, P16 decides to fly, experiencing a sense of freedom. The poem incorporates this idea with lines like “Will away up and to the breaking sky.”

Similarly, P9 used the imagery, the emotion, and the symbolism of her lucid dream to inspire a poem. In the dream, P9 holds an alarm clock that feels physically heavy in their hand. Upon waking, she discovers she is holding her mobile phone, and the dream connects to a workshop exercise (napping technique) involving holding something that, when dropped, inspires a poem. P9 notes the significance of her dog’s wagging tail as a second alarm clock and reflects on the metaphorical treadmill of daily

responsibilities. The dream touches on the tension between creative pursuits and mundane duties. Full poem and further analysis can be found in D37.

17. Sleep Lab Study

17.1. Hypnagogia

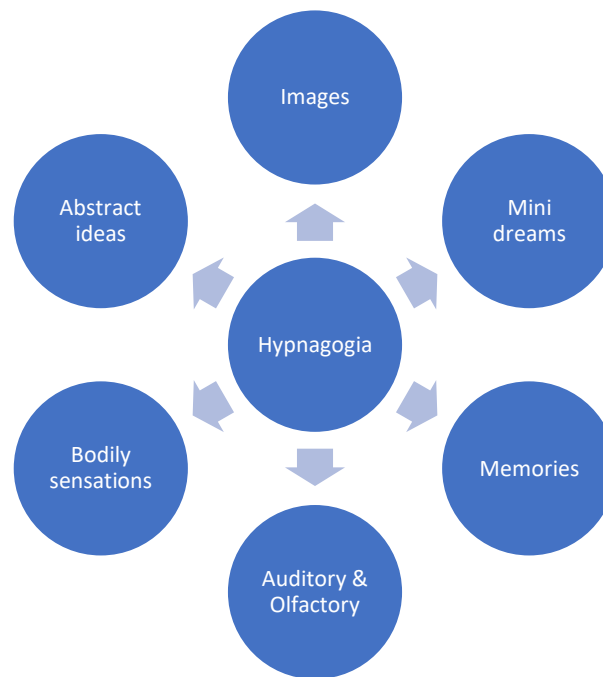
As opposed to a complex scenario outside one's immediate awareness – classified here as a dream – hypnagogic experience was classified as simpler thoughts, sensations, and visions described as involuntary. For example, P10 described one hypnagogic experience as: “It was in my thoughts, and it wasn't produced by me consciously. It wasn't part of my thinking.” At times, some participants found it hard to distinguish between the two experiences.

17.1.1. Hypnagogic manifestations

Hypnagogic experiences emerged in both sessions across participants. They were primarily visual in nature, with some described as auditory, olfactory, and somatosensory, including bodily sensation of falling, numbness, heat, and OBEs (Figure 26).

Figure 26

Manifestations of the Hypnagogic Experience Across Participants and Sessions.



Imagery

Hypnagogic imagery ranged from still visuals to more complex mini scenarios. P3 saw still images of toys and cardboard boxes, while P10 described flashes like “a hand clearing a wooden board.” P4 had guided imagery, exploring visions like “an x-ray view of a pocket with objects” and eating a mushroom. Others experienced uncontrolled visuals, such as P6’s sequence of storks, hyenas, and surreal underwater scenes. Emotional imagery was also common:

P3: Faces made of grass, string, and stone, with expressions of surprise.

P16: A wrinkled old man’s face evoked thoughts of aging and acceptance.

P9: Abstract imagery like upside-down planes, crocodiles, and a lantern-wielding man created a blend of emotions and meanings (see full dream report in D39).

I had a few visions. I had a really brightly, intensely, vividly coloured picture of some houses. Yellow, blue and red. It was just a flash of an image. I don't know

where it came from, it went away again. And I saw the rock and I saw a summer that I'd experienced when I was about 19. (P5)

Some imagery connected to each other or formed narratives, like P8's vision of purple sheep, a bright light, waves washing people away, and an enormous bee morphing into an orange (see full report in D40). Similarly, P4's evolving vision included a snail shell that shrank her down, following which she walked into the snail shell, which provided her with a feeling of safety.

Mini dreams

Mini dreams were defined as transitional scenarios with more complexity than flashes and morphing imagery, yet less complexity than dreams, which is why they were classified as a hypnagogic experience rather than a dream. Five participants (P8, P1, P4, P14, P2) reported these mini dreams in N1. P1 described them as "the beginnings of a dream" (example in D41), while P14 called them "short scenes, faint and not vivid." P2 likened them to "looking out of a car window at high speed," with content difficult to recall due to rapid transitions.

At that point, I remember thinking ok, this is going into a dream. I was a bit more aware. But yeah, they just felt like really short scenarios like the very beginning of a dream. I was picking up the details, and then the thing [alarm] would go off. (P4)

Some descriptions of these "mini dreams" include "someone found a cure for illness and people were happy" without any further detail, hinting at the lack of complexity of the scenario, yet with some narrative quality.

Memories Resurfaced

Hypnagogia often evoked sensory-rich memories experienced as still imagery or mini dreams. P10 recalled lying on his parents' bedroom floor with sunlight streaming through, describing this vision as "a mystical, magical, abstract connection to a childhood memory" (D42). P6 experienced symbolic imagery tied to emotional memories relating to his past relationships, like a buzzard dropping a feather, symbolising hope (D43). P5's imagery of her mother crocheting a bed cover inspired both her poem and a reflective connection to her mother's passing.

Auditory, Olfactory & Somatosensory

Seven participants reported auditory experiences, like abstract phrases, environmental sounds, or snippets of songs (examples in D44). Two participants experienced olfactory sensations. P6 smelled the waves crashing and P12 smelled the winter.

Before finding out that I'm a fox, I first smelled the winter; it's like the snow but the good one. I mean everything is good, but it was enlightened winter, daytime and no wind, so it smelled like frosty and foresty. – P12

Two participants (P4 and P12) felt tactile sensations like pine needles and a deer's breath.

Bodily Sensations

On the other hand, five participants (P14, P7, P4, P6, P12) experienced sensations *in* their bodies rather than outside of them. These bodily sensations included feeling the cold or warmth in their body, falling or warping, and floating, some akin to out-of-body experiences (OBEs). P14 described waking suddenly after "falling into darkness," and floating, which P12 linked to a sense of drifting in the universe. Similarly, P7 experienced a "warping" sensation, a bodily feeling which he likened to being "sucked through a vacuum."

Abstract ideas

Some hypnagogic experiences were idea-like rather than sensory for six participants (P13, P5, P16, P10, P2, P12). For example, P12 recounted floating in the universe before entering a profound dream of unity with a “root family” that wasn’t visual but rather “idea-like.” P13’s dream of a fountain symbolised “falling into formlessness” (D45), which gave him a sense of exploration and “trying to grab onto things” that didn’t feel substantive but rather abstract.

P12 had a profound experience of a ‘root family’ that was not visual. P5’s vision inspired thoughts about family succession (D46). P10 envisioned splitting personalities after seeing himself as a separate entity (D47). Seeing himself at 109 and 33 at the same time through various facial expressions, P16 understood his vision as representing the simultaneous passage of youth and age.

17.1.2. Creative hypnagogia

Three participants (P16, P5, P4) found direct lines of poetry either as words or as imagery presented to them in the hypnagogic experience.

P16 dreamt up a whole poem while in bed: “It kind of was more formed in my head. I remember [the poem] being almost composed as I was coming out of [sleep].” However, he expressed frustration with forgetting the lines too quickly after waking up. Similarly, P5’s experience featured lines of poetry emerging from hypnagogic imagery, including the colours of the wool her mother used, which reminded her of her passing.

Finally, P4 reported multiple instances of vivid hypnagogic experience in which she found lines of poetry (D48).

My brain thematically got into a line of thinking of places where it would find words or a poem... splitting rocks and finding it inside them, chopping wood and finding it inside the wood... and then a phrase came up: ‘written on the bones,’ which became the title [of the after poem]. (P4)

For P4, who also participated in Study 3 of this research, hypnagogic states in the lab inspired ideas and connections for her fiction writing. One session linked the story she wrote for Study 3 to a waking-life event, prompting her to take action in waking life (D49). In another, she gained structural insights for her short story collection (D50).

17.1.3. Structure across awakenings

Participants described varying degrees of connection between their hypnagogic experiences from separate awakenings, ranging from fragmented flashes to multi-step progressions.

Disconnected Imagery

Some participants experienced disjointed visions with no apparent links between them. For instance, P9 recounted a series of unrelated and abstract images between awakenings from a single awakening:

Two elderly people seated at a round table in a foyer. A reindeer and antelopes feature in a picture on the wall. He comes to me and my head towards the painting. In a plane upside down, I feel momentary anxious. (P9)

Similarly, P14 experienced fragmented flashes during N1 that followed a loose thematic thread but lacked coherence, as reflected in her notes from a single awakening: “Dog in India / calling out for student ambassadors in India and AK74 / calling to play with a monkey in a party hat / ‘are you a student ambassador?’”

While these fragments had connecting threads like *student ambassador* and *India*, they did not form a continuous narrative.

Narrative Continuation

On the contrary, P12 reported a rare case of continuity between awakenings, describing imagery that seemed to evolve smoothly:

Between the first and the second [awakening], there was an image of me being a fox. And when I fell asleep again, it was a game, like the continuation of the image of a fox, like the continuation of the journey. It just happened, it's not like I was trying to. (P12)

Multi-Step Progressions

Some participants described hypnagogic experiences as cumulative, with later awakenings bringing together earlier flashes into a coherent vision. For example, P4 experienced a “multi-step process” that culminated in an all-encompassing thought, which was “like the answer to all of the thoughts and imagery.”

Thus, for some, initial visions were fragmented, becoming more elaborate in later awakenings.

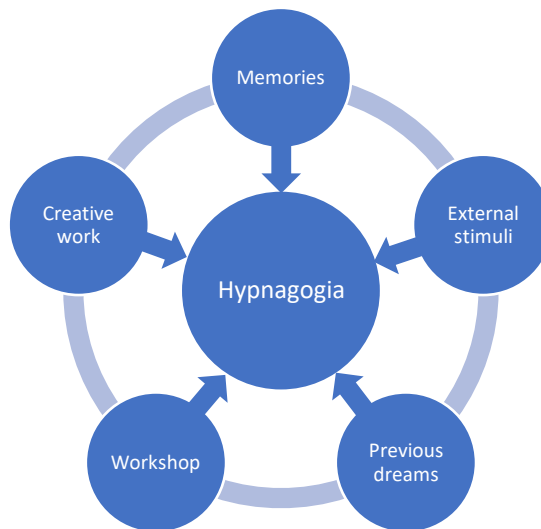
At the beginning, it was very fragmented. A little bit of this, a little bit of that. The images would quickly change to something else. But towards the end, they became more like scenarios, more complex with movement – one thing happened after another, and I could see the progression. (P8)

17.1.4. Influences on hypnagogic content

Various aspects of participants' waking lives influenced the hypnagogic content in the lab setting (Figure 27).

Figure 27

Influences on Hypnagogic Content in Both Sessions.



Emotional Memories: P10 and P6 relived significant emotional moments in a hypnagogic state.

External Stimuli: Real-world sounds and sensations often shaped hypnagogic content. P14 heard crackling noise in her dream, mirroring a beeping lucidity cue. P2 incorporated an alarm sound into his experience, while P9 included overhead footsteps. P16 connected the sensation of head electrodes to imagery of wrinkles, and P4 associated coldness with a vision of an ancient burial site.

Previous Dreams: P2 experienced a direct continuation of a previous dream.

Workshop Discussions: A conversation about the Civil War influenced P13's imagery, linking it to another participant's creative work from a weekly workshop.

Creative Projects: P4's research on an Estonian folk tale inspired imagery like ancient coins in hypnagogia.

Conscious Thoughts: Waking thoughts often transitioned into hypnagogic content. For example, P8 visualised sheep while trying to fall asleep, which turned purple and jumped into her arms.

17.2. Waking Life Continuation

Aside from conscious thoughts turning into dream-like experiences, participants noticed a connection between poetry written before and after sleep and the corresponding dream experience. These experiences, in part or fully, were influenced by the poem written before sleep for seven participants. All participants included part or all of their dream experience in the poem written post-sleep. Six of them had aspects in common between their “before” and “after” poems, indicating a continuous exploration of the same or similar themes throughout the experiment.

Before Poem - Dream connection

Poems written before sleep influenced dream or hypnagogic experiences for 10 participants. Influences included:

Imagery: Breathing underwater (P6), animals (P9), nature (P1), moonlight (P13). See D51 for examples.

Sensory Inputs: Smell of sea salt (P11).

Ideas and Themes: Connection and belonging (P14), travel (P11).

Emotions: Feeling lost (P7), fear (P8).

Style: Nonsensical dialogue (P15).

Before Poem – After Poem connection

Eight participants noted that their before poem directly influenced their after poem, often through connections made in dreams or hypnagogia. These included:

Imagery like animals or the sea (P9, P6).

Ideas and themes of connection and movement (P14, P11).

Emotions such as fear and being lost (P8, P7).

Dream – After Poem

All 16 participants incorporated their dreams or hypnagogic content into their after poems, drawing on:

Imagery: Examples include breathing underwater, buzzard flying down and dropping a feather, lover's face as a child, a crocodile, hyenas, and storks (P6), wrinkled face and numbers 33 and 109 (P16), a woman in a veil walking in the desert (P11), crashing waves (P8 and P9), ancient coins (P4), toys in empty spaces (P3), and animals like crocodiles or foxes (P6 and P12).

Memories: P10 wrote about childhood moments, and P6 reflected on a memory of walking in the woods, both re-experienced in hypnagogia.

Sensory Inputs: Smells (e.g., pine, salty water) and auditory phrases shaped poems (P4, P10, P12).

Abstract Ideas: Participants explored concepts like "half body, half nothing" (P6), time (P1), and cyclical time (P13).

Emotions: Fear (P6 in an African bush), grief (e.g., P9's dream of reconnecting with her deceased son), and frustration (P15).

Bodily Sensations: Hypnagogic feelings like warmth (P4) or warping sensations (P7) inspired several poems.

Themes: Travel and movement were recurring motifs for P11 and P9, with interconnectedness highlighted by P14 and P12.

Many participants acknowledged potential connections they may have missed due to the fleeting and fragmented nature of hypnagogic experiences. For instance, P12 noted she would need to revisit her notes and poems to uncover deeper links, stating, "intuitively, I'm sure there might be some connection."

In addition to incorporating direct dream and hypnagogic imagery, some participants used the lab experience itself as inspiration for their before and after poems, writing about states like being on the brink of sleep, navigating the in-between, and journeying through the dream world.

17.3. Challenges

A number of challenges impacted the effectiveness of the two sessions for some participants. These included problems falling asleep and reaching REM and time distortion experienced between lucidity cues and wakefulness in the LD session, and recall problems and challenges writing poetry with a tight time restriction following sleep in both sessions.

Problems falling asleep

Most participants struggled to fall asleep and reach REM in the LD session, with only 5 instances of REM across 20 sessions. Some reported having too much sleep before coming into the lab, others reported daily worries on their mind, and some felt that external factors such as being hot or cold kept them awake (examples in D52).

Highly Sensitive Persons

Previous studies did not experience this kind of a problem with their participants. In those studies (e.g., Carr et al., 2023) participants did not struggle to fall asleep and reach REM. This ease of falling asleep is the usual finding for nap studies that recruit students (e.g., Reid et al., 2022). For this reason, participants in this study were given the Highly Sensitive Person Scale questionnaire (Aron & Aron, 1997; reproduced also at <https://hsperson.com/research/measurement-scales-for-researchers/>) to determine whether a group consisting of creative people as opposed to the general or student population might score higher on sensory processing sensitivity. The speculation was that such a difference might affect the ability to fall asleep in a new environment, and especially in a controlled lab environment. Aron & Aron's (1997) scoring system was used, which states that when a person scores 14 or more on the 27-item HSP scale, they are categorised as highly sensitive. 13 participants completed the questionnaire. 69% of those participants scored highly sensitive on this scale, while in the general population only 15-20% meet this criterion of highly sensitive persons (Aron & Aron, 1997). Therefore, this may have been the reason why the LD session was not effective in inducing lucid dreams for poets and literary creatives.

Time Distortion

Another challenge was time distortion experienced by some participants, mainly the two participants who signalled they were in a lucid dream but became confused about it upon waking up. P14, who remained in REM for two minutes after receiving the cues and giving the eye signal, felt that she woke up immediately after the signal.

Participant: How long was it between left and right [eye signal] and you coming in the room?

Experimenter: Two minutes.

Participant: Uh, it felt like two seconds. It felt like zero seconds, to be honest.

Experimenter: So do you think you had a dream then after you signalled?

Participant: Probably. Why don't I remember it? Oh, that's really frustrating. I don't know what happened...

Experimenter: So you can't remember any content of the dream or anything like that?

Participant: No, and it didn't feel like time passed.

Interestingly, even though P14 reported waking up after the cues, she had to be physically touched to be brought out of sleep, as she was not responding to the experimenter's voice.

P2 also seemed confused about whether he continued the dream after the cues or not, and how quickly he woke up, even though he was given two minutes after the LR eye signals.

Participant: It happened very quick, I mean I was aware of the dream, then it just disappeared.

Experimenter: And for that very brief moment, were you aware that you were dreaming?

Participant: I would say 80% after I saw the cues.

P2 described a dream in which a conversation between two people was happening, mentioning a person that had passed away. When the cues came in, P2 thought that he might have woken up with them, but in reality, he signalled with his eyes and remained in REM for one minute, after which another cue was sent and P2 signalled again, with the second signalling potentially waking him from the dream. When told this, P2 said: “I remember the two cues, yeah, but they were one after another one... I felt like there wasn't a big gap in between.” His experience does not correspond to physiological reality, in which one full minute passed between the two cues.

Another example of time distortion was reported by P15, who reflected on the training period before the 90-minute nap:

The feeling of time disappeared or sped up. There was one point where before it stopped altogether, and again this was because of falling asleep or something, that the signals came very close together at one point. It was one straight after another. The light and the beeping tones. It happened and then it happened again instantly. Later on, I realised it stopped, but it felt like a long time passed. (P15)

Recall Problems

This confusion of states was prominent in both sessions, but more so in the N1 session, where participants were hovering between wakefulness and sleep. This is reflected in the participants' reports about feeling subjectively asleep or awake presented in section 17.2. For some, this ‘hovering between the states’ helped with dream recall, while for others, the struggle to remember dreams remained.

Nine participants reported this difficulty recalling dreams and hypnagogic experiences in at least one session. Some participants remembered having a dream but not its contents, or had partial dream recall that left out the key part of the dream related to the creative task.

I found myself in a scene on a cruise ship. It felt like I had just solved or figured something out, like I'd cracked a problem. But when the light came on, I could only recall that much—I couldn't grasp the crux of it. I couldn't remember what the problem was, and that was really frustrating. Maybe it didn't even make sense, and that's why I can't recall it. (P4)

However, the LD session that took participants' dream report only at the end of the 90-minute nap had more instances of the dream recall problem than the N1 session, which allowed writers to record their dreams and hypnagogic visions as they were happening. For example, P7 could not recall any dreams in the LD session, while in the N1 session, he recorded brief experiences after every awakening (5/5) (D53). Similarly, P10 experienced a difference in dream recall between the sessions.

I was dreaming but I couldn't hold on to things. It just seemed like really busy, and loads was going on, like my mind was jumping around from one thing to another so it's kind of hard to hold on to something. (P10 in LD session)

Similarly, P10 said in N1 session: "I didn't move. I tried to just collect my thoughts and just stay with the experience. And then I reached out to get the notepad. And that was better."

In contrast, P14 found it more difficult to recall the contents of her experience in the N1 session. She claimed that it was easier in the LD session for her to remember a dream that had more depth and detail as she could focus on the key events from the dream, whereas "in the liminal space, it's difficult to backtrack because there is nothing substantial to grab onto."

Finally, one participant who entered N2 before the minute was over in N1, could not remember the content of the hypnagogic experience. In three out of five awakenings, P8 reported losing memory of the hypnagogic vision, suggesting that by entering N2, the hypnagogic experience fled. This aligns with previous research (Lacaux et al., 2021) and supports the validity of the napping technique introduced to participants in the Week 4 workshop.

Creative challenges

Difficulty remembering dreams, while prompted to take creative inspiration for their writing from dreams, negatively impacted some participants. In addition, some participants reported issues with the time restriction – five minutes from waking up – for recalling dreams, working with them, and creating a poem from them. Seven participants reported this issue with writing the after poem, with some having too many ideas from the sleep experience to creatively express them in just five minutes (D54).

I think I would have needed a bit more time. Yeah, the time is like a bit of a pressure because you can't really make sense of it properly in five minutes. I think that's a bit short to write a poem and to sort of drag everything out of your head that's in there from your sleep. (P9)

Two participants expressed dissatisfaction with the after poem because of this time restriction and the complexity of dream ideas, and three considered their poems unfinished with greater potential of dream ideas if given more time.

It's not quite coming out exactly as I want, and I want to spend a bit more time on it. And there's other ideas that I was sleeping off that I didn't properly devour. I would develop that more if I had time. (P16)

Adding to this challenge, P10 felt a decreased cognitive functioning in the LD session and the repeat of that session. He reported feeling drowsy and heavy, with his mind 'going blank', and mentioned the difficulty of being creative on a tight deadline. However, he felt differently in the N1 session (D55).

17.4. Lab Experience

Despite these challenges, most participants reported having an enjoyable experience. A number of participants made a comparison to the usual feeling of anxiety that follows the struggle to fall asleep, while in the lab, they did not feel this pressure, but instead enjoyed the relaxed state. For example, P6 said, "It's quite interesting how I had no frustration of not being able to sleep particularly because I was in this really, really relaxed place, which is just totally fine, enjoyable, it's like a reverie. It was ease, more ease."

The experience was described as interesting, informative, creative, and cathartic across both sessions for nine participants (list of Ps with examples in D56). For example, P9 had a dream in which she reconnected with her deceased son: "That was very powerful, it was very moving, it was probably very therapeutic to cry."

However, the N1 session was more enjoyable than the LD session for four participants, reportedly due to the N1 session not requiring participants to reach REM and allowing them to linger in light sleep. There was no pressure to fall asleep past N1, with immediate results (hypnagogic visions) for before or just after reaching N1. In addition, the familiarity with the lab environment may have made participants feel more relaxed, especially in light of the HSP scores across the group. Some also found the N1 session easier to work with creatively.

I would say it was more fun than the previous one because every time I thought that I'm not going to make it, I'm not going to fall back to sleep, then suddenly this alarm went off. And I'm like, what, so quickly, like so fast? Though I

remembered all the images, but it was kind of like, I quickly dived into them, but didn't fall asleep. And when I fell asleep, then the alarm went off, so it was just like, yeah, interesting mixture. (P12)

On the other hand, one participant found the N1 session more difficult than the LD session. List of Ps with examples can be found in D57.

17.5. Creativity Tasks

Changes in creativity before and after sleep in the laboratory setting for both sessions were assessed in two ways: scoring the alternative uses test (AUT) and the poetry written before and after sleep.

17.5.1. Alternative Uses Test

The ease of generating creative ideas after sleep varied, with some participants finding it easier to think of innovative uses for certain objects. With the AUT objects mixed between sleep conditions across participants, overall, the creative process improved after sleep.

For instance, P10 described imagining more abstract uses after sleep, like using a paperclip as a painting tool, which he felt wouldn't occur to him normally. Similarly, P8 devised unconventional ideas, such as grating a brick to create an abrasive cream. She credited this to a more sensory-driven thought process after sleep.

I can't imagine coming up with that if I was more consciously thinking about it.

I was just letting them come. Whereas I think before I was trying to think. This time I had pictures. So before, I was like, 'oh what could you use a padlock for?

A padlock for a lock for...' And this time I just saw the picture of it happening.

So it was quite different. It was more visual, and with the grating, I heard it as

well. So it was more like *things being presented to me* rather than me looking at a thing and turning it around. – P8 [emphasis added]

However, four participants felt the word or creative process was easier before sleep.

Finally, two participants integrated the Alternative Uses Test into their poetry. P4 used AUT words in both sessions to inspire poems, while P9 noted the test influenced her dream perception and later poem:

Seeing birds nesting on the waves [in the dream], and then waves, the alternative meaning of waves, you know you can wave to somebody and then you can have waves. So there's two meanings and I think that was influenced by finding alternative words for padlock before sleep. (P9, see also D58)

17.6. Writing Process

Across both LD and N1 sessions, some writers preferred the poems they wrote after sleep (D105), and the writing process subjectively improved 27 times, with three instances of reporting a worsened process and two reporting differences that could be taken as neither positive nor negative (table 27).

Table 27

Subjectively Reported Writing Process Improved, Worsened, or Stayed the Same For Participants Across All Sessions.

Improved	Worsened	Neutral
27	2	3

Note: full list of participants in D59.

For instance, P15 characterised the after poem as more random compared to the before poem, lacking a logical structure. However, the participant did not consider this to be a negative, hence categorising the writing process as ‘neutral’. One ‘worsened’ example is P10’s case, who described a shift from spontaneous pre-sleep writing to a contemplative post-sleep process. Despite finding the after process reflective and quieter, it was marked “negative” due to interpretive ambiguity. On the other hand, P16 noted that trying to recall dream content disrupted the flow of writing the after poem, but still found the after poem more interesting than the before poem. His case was therefore marked as ‘neutral’. Similarly, P3 struggled in the N1 session due to unclear hypnagogic experiences, affecting their ability to write cohesively. Her writing process in this session was therefore marked as ‘worsened’ while the reported flow in the LD session marked it as ‘improved’.

Themes and Starting Points

Internal vs External

Most participants noticed a shift from structured, object-based writing before sleep to a freer, emotion-driven approach after sleep. P13 noted that his after poem began with a clear purpose, enabling more cohesive expression, while P10 found his after poem introspective compared to the externally focused pre-sleep poem. P6 described the post-sleep poem as more authentic and reflective, highlighting internal experiences over external descriptions. Therefore, some after poems often explored more introspective or existential themes compared to before poems, which tended to focus on external observations. P10 said: “I would say that the poem earlier was more descriptive of the outer world, whereas now probably more descriptive of the inner world.”

Describing his before poem as “writing it for an audience,” P6 mentions a similar realisation. He described his after poem as more authentic and reflective of his internal processes (D60). It is worth noting that P6 scored much higher on his after poems than before poems.

Emotional and sensory starting points

Possible due to this internalisation of themes, participants described the starting points of their after poems as more sensory and emotion-driven compared to the image-based focus of their before poems. For example, P4 noted her after poem prioritised feelings over objects: "The emotion is coming first rather than starting with a thought about an object and then trying to create or explore the emotion behind it."

Similarly, P9, reflecting on a connection with her deceased son, and P5, who experienced an overflow of emotions, reported heightened emotional resonance in their after poems.

Purpose-first writing

This process often enabled participants to begin with a clear purpose rather than searching for meaning during or after writing. P13 explained this shift:

Writing the after poem, I found it easier to articulate my thoughts. While the first poem was based on recent thoughts, the second had a clearer message from the start. Instead of starting with random imagery and trying to find meaning afterward, I began with a purpose in mind. This approach felt more purposeful and allowed me to write more cohesively. (P13, see also D61)

Most participants thus reported easier starting points for before poems, as dreams or hypnagogic imagery provided ready-made prompts (e.g. D62). For example, P4 usually struggles to make a start on a poem, whereas she reported an unusual ease in the sleep lab due to the dream content serving as a starting point. Some participants also recognised starting points and themes they would never have thought of if it weren't for the dream (e.g. D63)

First-Hand Experience

This internalisation of the writing process often stemmed from the greater emotional depth and authenticity after directly experiencing dream scenarios. For instance, P14 felt her poem flowed better because she “was there” in the dream. Similarly, P8’s vivid vision of crashing waves, which had never experienced as powerfully in waking life, allowed her to write with more emotional power than waking imagination could achieve.

Abstract and unusual

Experiencing unusual dreams inspired some writers to create more unusual poetry. P6’s hypnagogic experience helped him create a poem rich with abstract imagery, while P14’s helped her create an “abstract and deep” context for the poem – something with which she usually struggles (D64). Similarly, P9 noticed “more freedom to dream weird and wonderful things” which led her to a more creative approach, making unusual connections in her writing (D65). Finally, P1, who usually struggles to write cohesively straight after sleep because of the unusual dreams, reported that the lab poem written after sleep made much more sense of the dream-like ideas than usual (D66).

Flow & Rhythm

The way participants explored these starting points and themes from dreams also changed. Seven participants directly associated their post-sleep writing with a greater sense of flow (D67). P6 described the after poem as feeling “free flowing” and spontaneous compared to the contrived nature of the before poem:

This [after poem] feels more like a free flow. Not quite sure what I’m going to write next and writing it anyway. Just more spontaneous, more flowing, and a bit more of an exploration. It’s slightly more exciting, more interesting. I feel much more fluid writing afterwards. Less censored, I think. (P6)

Similarly, P5 noted the after poem “flowed out” without overthinking, contrasting with her usual struggles as a self-described perfectionist: “This time I was determined not to let [perfectionism] get in the way, and it was easier to do that.”

Enhanced visualisation ability emerging post sleep for some participants also contributed to this sense of flow. P1 shared that creating new images felt more automatic: “It was easier to create new images in my head and then write them down. That felt more natural because I wasn’t thinking about it too much. It was easier to write.”

This shift toward “less thinking” reflects a decreased influence of rational thought, enabling a more unconscious, spontaneous process characteristic of flow. As P9 described: “When your conscious mind steps in and senses what you’re doing, it sort of stops the whole process. You’ve just got to trust and go with it, then censor it afterwards.” P4 similarly reported feeling “less judgment/self-censoring” during post-sleep writing, while P8 was surprised at her inability to recall what she had just written, describing it as a more instinctive process (D68).

This spontaneous style also enhanced the rhythm of after poems (D69). P8 described writing while “half-conscious,” drawing rhythmic inspiration from waves she vividly experienced in hypnagogia, incorporating their sounds and feelings into her poem. Similarly, P4 noted that her after poem felt more musical, inspired by a song she heard in sleep. In both sessions, P4 found her after poem had better rhythm and structure because she was “letting it write itself” rather than imposing a structure.

The need for rational interference

However, due to this highly spontaneous and internalised process, seven participants expressed the need for “editing” or the interference of the rational mind post hoc (D70). Some worried that their poems would not be comprehensible to the reader unfamiliar with their dream experience, hence posing a need for this conscious intervention while keeping the unique idea, emotion, and symbolism that emerged

from the dream. P2 said: “I should use the conscious mind, let's say, to rationalise it, frame it in a way that it can be passed on, that can make sense to others.”

17.7. Lab influence on the intervention

Participating in at least one sleep lab session influenced the process of the six-week intervention for most writers, mainly by improving the motivation and engagement in the process by providing tangible results in the lab and revealing the creative potential of this intervention.

The night after her sleep lab session, P5 experienced her first semi-lucid dream, in which she started to question reality. Other participants noted similar effects. P11 and P15 reported heightened consciousness and self-awareness in dreams following their lab experience, while P14 found the lab helpful for visualisation and thinking about lucid dreaming (D71).

The lab sessions also boosted creativity for some. For example, P11 noted an increase in the number of poems he wrote after the session. For others, the lab enhanced their ability to apply workshop exercises at home. P4 said, “The lab session showed me how I can apply the exercises straight away to make it easier to write. It gave me tools to overcome writer’s block when writing a story or start a poem.”

18. Overall Impact

This section presents the combined reported impact of both the six-week intervention including weekly workshops and the sleep lab sessions on all sixteen participants.

18.1. Dreams

18.1.1. Evolving relationship with dreams

All 14 participants who provided feedback at the end of the study reported a positive change in their dreaming as a result of the intervention. This included a more profound and purposeful relationship with their dreams, as well as a feeling of connectedness.

For example, P5 re-established a relationship with her dreamworld that she used to have as a child, which was very rewarding to her. P16 also revived his interest in his dream life which he hadn't explored in years (D72). Similarly, P3 reports feeling quite connected to her dreamworld now, with an "option to connect with it" whenever she wants to.

P6 also described discovering a more profound relationship with his subconscious, facilitated by his newfound ability to relax and remain "with the sleep" in the morning hours rather than feeling stressed or anxious as before.

There's a linkage to my dreaming world—it's linking up. I suppose it's a feeling of continuity, an inner world that's always there and runs quite deep. It's very, very deep, and it's been there as long as I have, which is more than just the surface—a lot more. It's a feeling of much more groundedness, ironically, because the dream is anything but grounded. But by having this dream world, there is a constant—a groundedness in ungroundedness. It's a paradox. The dream world that you've re-inspired me to explore has reminded me again of this reality and its insubstantialness. It also reflects the synchronicity that happens—something beyond our cognitive understanding. It's like an undercurrent, like water you're tapping into and playing with, just exploring those undercurrents. (P6)

Similarly, feeling more in touch with her subconscious, P8 found her dreams more meaningful now as opposed to before the study: “Just reading them, I feel like they are deeper; they feel more connected. They feel more purposeful in some way.”

As participants’ relationships with their dreams evolved, so did the nature of their dreaming. Several participants described an increased awareness of their dreams and a shift in how they engaged with them. For instance, P14 reported a heightened awareness and an improved ability to interpret and interact with her dreams. P15 noted a deeper connection to his dreams, which reshaped how he viewed them:

I think it was important for me to be able to think about dreams as something I could use a bit more, and not feel they would just sort of get in the way or that I'd wake up in the morning and think nothing will be so exciting now in the day after an exciting dream, and I'm not going to write anything as interesting as that dream. So it's nice to be able to do that, you know, feel like I can perhaps integrate them a bit more in my waking life. (P15)

P15 thus found a way to work with his dreams creatively, which changed his perspective on dreaming. For others, this evolving relationship with their dreamworld directly influenced their creativity. P1 observed: “I am more perceptive about how my dreams relate to my waking life and see them as a tool for creativity.”

18.1.2. Influence on dreams

Becoming more perceptive of the connection between their dreams and waking-life events, some participants noticed how the content from their daily lives influenced the content of their dreams. P15’s dream (D73) reflected influences from both his recent article on the topic of consent and a character from his third novel. The character, described as someone “who talks the most sense,” appeared in the dream in a heroic role, mirroring the type of role he had assigned to this character in his novel.

P4's mental preoccupation with exploring arts and crafts as a potential side hustle influenced one of her dreams (D74). This dream featured a gallery shop resembling her former workplace, filled with crafting tools. Additionally, her waking-life search for a van often appeared in her dreams. On another occasion, P4 wrote a poem on the theme of gender inspired by a dream (D75). This led to more gender-related dreams, which P4 attributed to her recent experiences of coming out and reflecting on how her relationships with family and friends have evolved in light of her sexuality (D76).

Several participants noted that the TV shows and films they watched before sleep influenced the content and themes of their dreams (D77). For instance, P8 observed that sorting through her dad's belongings in the attic, which included UFO magazines, influenced her dreams and writing, leading to a recurring theme of spaceships and space (D78).

Three participants reported that background music often influenced the content of their hypnagogic experiences during weekly workshops. External stimuli also played a role during lab sessions, as described in the section on sleep lab results. At home, common influences on hypnagogic experiences included the sound and tactile sensation of alarm clocks, interactions with pets, and creative thoughts.

18.1.3. Themes

As participants took a more active role in engaging with their dreams, they began to identify recurring themes and motifs that emerged across multiple dreams. This process, encouraged as part of the intervention, involved analysing their dreams to recognise these patterns and using them as creative inspiration. Seven participants (P4, P5, P6, P8, P11, P12, P14) successfully identified patterns and used them creatively.

The themes that participants identified varied widely in content and nature. For instance, P5 noticed the motif of water recurring in almost all her dreams, which she interpreted as representing different emotional states (D79). P4 identified a theme of

gender, which influenced her writing by making her more conscious of avoiding heteronormative portrayals in her stories and characters. P11 recognised a recurring theme of traveling and moving on, which emerged both in his dreams and writing without his conscious awareness. Reflecting on this theme not only inspired his creative work but also encouraged personal growth (D80). Similarly, P12 observed a motif of “constant search on road trips” that appeared in various dream scenarios, prompting her to consider perspectives she hadn’t explored before. P8 found the theme of space and spaceships appearing consistently in both her dreams and her writing, connections she only realised upon reflection (D78).

18.1.4. Lucidity Clues

For some, identifying these dream themes and motifs brought them closer to achieving lucidity, aligning with Stephen LaBerge’s model of lucid dreaming training through dream symbols. For example, P6 frequently dreamt of flying, and his progression toward lucidity through these dreams was particularly notable. Initially, he hid his flying ability from other dream characters, as he subconsciously believed that if they noticed, they would tell him it was impossible, and his ability would disappear: “This is a secret that I think if I let people know, then it’s going to be dissolved. I won’t be able to do it in the dream world.”

Over time, however, P6 grew more confident and began to fly openly in front of dream characters, realising that his ability wouldn’t “dissolve” (D81). This marked a shift in his dream awareness and control. Soon after mastering his “flying experience,” P6 reported recognising a dream as being “on repeat” while still inside it: “The dream reminded me of another dream that I had before, like oh yeah, that’s what happened in that other dream. But I never remembered consciously that it was a dream.”

Recurring themes and motifs thus often served as lucidity clues for participants. For example, P4 experienced a similar sensation, describing a feeling that her dream “relates to something else I have dreamed” while still dreaming, suggesting a low degree of lucidity. She also noted an experience familiar from a previous study (Study 3 of this research):

I've been having that thing that I had in the previous workshop, where my dreams are joking with me or playing around with me and dropping me clues that I'm in a dream but I'm not working it out at the moment. (P4)

Six participants (P3, P4, P5, P6, P10, P16) reported experiencing lucidity clues – signs inside a dream that this might be a dream. While for some participants this led to a lucid dream – P14 reported having “loads of lucid dreams” as the study concluded – others did not achieve full lucidity. Instead, their accounts suggest they experienced “semi-lucid” dreams, marked by heightened awareness within the dream state over the course of the six-week study. These “semi-lucid” dreams consisted of one or more lucidity clues.

Lucidity clues were defined as dream elements that prompted the dreamer to question whether they were dreaming or as signs recognised upon waking that could have served as such clues. For example, P10 did not achieve lucidity despite noticing these clues upon waking: “There was a couple of instances that the dream was strange, and I should have picked up that this is a dream. There were odd things, like my friend was talking without her mouth moving.”

In contrast, P3 recognised clues within the dream itself, edging closer to lucidity. She noted “two parts” of her mind in conversation inside the dream: one engaging with the literal meaning of the dream while the other tried to decipher its motifs and representations (D82). P3 described noticing significant dream elements that “felt like a clue, a clue to lucidity—it wasn't a clue to anything else.” For example, she reported noticing a dream element that appeared unusually realistic—a picture displayed on an iPad shown by a dream character. Its vividness made her question the dream's reality, helping her achieve lucidity.

Similarly, P5 reported questioning the reality of a dream with a series of dreams featuring increasingly intense lucidity clues. One such dream presented her with cartoon-like fires:

I dreamed that I went into a small convenience store and was browsing the aisles when I noticed that people were behaving oddly in that they were being natural instead of being filmed for a tv show. This made me question the reality of the setting. Later in the same dream I went downstairs into my living quarters and saw two huge fires burning side by side in two grates. I noted that they looked unrealistic, like cartoon fires, and I felt that something wasn't quite right. (P5)

However, some participants achieved lucidity by recognising recurring motifs and themes in their dreams. For example, P13 noted a repeating theme that, upon waking-life reflection, he noticed in his dreams as well:

There's a kind of recurring thing that happens in my dreams when, if I wanted that pen, I could kind of pull my hand out and the pen will just kind of fly and land into my hand. So that's a recurring feature, and at points my sleeping brain goes, *hang on, that's like magic or that doesn't make sense*. And that will then prompt the awareness that I'm in a dream. (P13)

18.1.5. Lucid Dreams

Some participants faced challenges distinguishing between lucid dreams, regular dreams, and hypnagogic experiences. However, the number of participants who achieved an LD was considerably lower than in study 3, likely due to the explicit focus in this study on defining and working with liminal states. Unlike the earlier research, where such states were not strictly differentiated from lucid dreams, this study provided clearer boundaries. That said, there remained some confusion, particularly around hypnagogic visions and waking thoughts. For instance, P2 noted: "Sometimes when you're falling asleep, it's hard to say if you're dreaming or if it's a thought in the background."

In some instances, participants even struggled to recall the details of their reportedly lucid dreams, possibly due to their brevity or the tendency to awaken almost immediately after achieving lucidity (D83). For example, P15 recounted having multiple lucid dreams but being unable to remember their content:

Sometimes, I'm conscious of being in a dream. It could be once a week even. But I'm not sure if that's actually the case or not. Even though I knew that they were very, very clear at the time, and long and oh, it feels like a lifetime sometimes. But actually, when I wake up, I can't remember anything. (P15)

Despite these occasional uncertainties, the majority of cases in this study were clear.

However, dream recall remained an issue for some. Two participants also reported a lack of control during their lucid dreams. P14 described a lucid dream where the dream itself seemed to resist their attempts to conduct reality tests:

I recently had a lucid dream, but the dream then wouldn't let me do a reality test. I did multiple, but each time, either what I saw shifted and wouldn't let me do it, or something else would happen. But I kind of realised if something like that was happening, then I must be dreaming. That's the most I remembered from that dream. (P14)

P16 remembered the content of his lucid dreams but could not stabilise them:

I had a few moments of dream lucidity where in dreams I was with a woman who wasn't my partner, and therefore realised I was dreaming, however these didn't turn into stable lucid dreams, or I woke up. (P16, example in D84)

Over time, participants began to gain more control over stabilising their lucid dreams and influencing their actions within them. Upon completing the study, P14 reported a

breakthrough: I have become fully lucid in some dreams this week! I am able to interact with people, I can change the environment slightly. I'm really excited to keep developing this skill.” (more in D85)

Similarly, P15 experienced a lucid dream immediately after the study's conclusion, recounting that it occurred “the very night I sent you my last email” (D86, also D87).

18.1.6. Lucid Creativity

Four participants (P9, P11, P14, P16) successfully used their lucid dreams creatively. While most participants worked with their dreams post-sleep in their waking state, P11 uniquely leveraged lucidity within the dream itself to identify creative elements: “I had a few lucid dreams. In them, I'm aware that I'm dreaming. I've had a few lucid dreams before, but through this course, I actually thought inside a dream, “Yes, I could use this creatively.”

P9 achieved her first proper lucid dream, which, although brief, was profoundly creative. She described the dream as follows:

I am on the edge of a room where a dance lesson is being delivered by a white-haired old man leaning on a stick. I am one of the dancers at the side of the room, invisible or partially visible, just a part of my face and maybe my body, as I am a dancer in a painting by the artist Degas—a dancer at the side of the room in the painting. I am asleep and in the dream, but I can also hear my husband snoring as I am in the dream. I then wake up excited, thinking, “This is my first proper lucid dream.” (P9)

P9 recognised the painting from the dream, saying that she studied it 40 years ago, and sharing excitement about seeing it again in a dream. This dream inspired P9 to write a poem titled *Inside the Painting*, exploring the exploitation of young girls, which she

linked to the dream imagery. The poem reflected: “So, what does this dream mean to me / As I watch from the edge of the stage?” (full poem in D88).

Another participant, P14, experienced a lucid dream in which an artist was sleep-talking, reciting lines of poetry to his wife, who was recording them. This dream directly inspired creative work and is detailed further in section 15.3.

The participants’ experiences highlight how dreams became a meaningful space for personal insight and creative exploration in this intervention. Many used their dreams to uncover recurring themes, symbols, and emotional connections for creative purposes, while others achieved lucidity and directly engaged with their dream content. These interactions provided tangible material for creative writing like poetry. The following section then explores how these dream experiences influenced participants' creative practices in waking life.

18.2. Creative Process

All fourteen participants who provided feedback at the end of the study expressed a greater level of creativity and positive changes in their creative process as a result of this intervention.

I feel like my writing’s got better as a result of doing the workshops. I feel like it’s become less formulaic in a way, like I guess, my favourite thing has always been small detail and describing small detail, or finding interesting ways to phrase things that’s different. I feel like my writing has become a little bit more connected to emotion. But also I feel like I’ve got better at editing as a result, weirdly. Maybe the connection to that creative side feels stronger or less blocked. (P4)

Seven participants noted heightened productivity and an abundance of creative ideas, four discovered or reconnected with creativity, and four changed their approach to writing (full list and examples in D89). For instance, P9 reports “at least 40 poems from dreams - so many I could not work on them all,” in comparison with the occasional poem in the weeks preceding the study. P10 reports a different kind of approach to working with creative ideas:

I just found a completely different way of creating or writing something. I really am intrigued. This whole process, and having dreams as an inspiration, and trying to work with the feeling and the story and the images of the dream. And all these sort of communication with subconscious, I just think it's a superb idea and very interesting. So yeah, very different to whatever I've done before. The way of working with the ideas is different. (P10)

The key reported changes in the creative process were the writers’ approach to emotion and symbolism as well as the flow of the writing process (table 28).

Table 28

Number of Participants Who Directly Mentioned Emotion, Symbolism, and Flow as Key Improvements in Their Creative Writing.

Emotion & Symbolism	Flow
7	10

Note: full list of participants in D90.

18.2.1. Emotions & Symbolism

As the two most improved categories for poetry written in the sleep lab as assessed by the independent judges, seven participants also emphasised emotion and symbolism as some of the key improvements in their overall creativity at the end of the study.

P4 reports a newfound ability to make a stronger connection between symbols and emotion and tap into this symbolic way of thinking even when awake, as a result of workshops and exercises she was practicing during these 6 weeks:

It's also like opening up to kind of symbolism a little bit more as well. Even just during the daytime writing, it's easier to tap into that kind of symbolic kind of place. Rather than making logical symbols or symbols that have been used a lot of times, it feels like it's easier to tap into symbols which are personal because it is coming from a place that's linked to emotion rather than rational thought. (P4)

P16 also notes that the writing he had done during those 6 weeks has “more surreal elements and use symbolic language.” He attributes this to writing down dreams more frequently, which in his case are often bizarre and symbolic, noting that “trying to describe dreams as they were experienced was in a way a creative process in itself.”

18.2.2. Flow

For ten participants, the dream-inspired writing process felt more automatic, free-flowing, and effortless. P8 and P9, for example, did not remember writing certain poems when reading them afterward, hinting at a very automatic and ‘unconscious’ creative process. Similarly, P11 described the experience as “much more automatic” with improved symbolic depth, which contributed to his creative flow.

Reflecting on the immediacy of thoughts that went into her writing, P8 noted that *her poetry grew increasingly creative* throughout the study, with her final poem becoming her favourite. She attributed this progress to writing “almost unconsciously” and connecting more deeply with the emotions she experienced in her dreams, which she believes would not have been possible otherwise.

This is just taking very immediate emotions and images direct from the unconscious without consciously filling the unconscious first. So it's interesting, because it's more random. And maybe for that reason the stuff has come out of it that I would never have written. (P8)

Similarly, P4 shared: "I'm feeling a bit more connected when I am writing. Connected to being able to get into that kind of very creative, emotional kind of writing quite quickly." P3 experienced a very similar shift in her approach to writing: "I can just launch into something and see where it goes without having too many preconceived ideas about what it's going to be like or what it's going to look like."

Finally, this change in the way participants approach their writing resulted in more enjoyment while engaging with the creative process for these writers.

I enjoyed this process actually cause sometimes I edit things too much. And then it was really interesting to work with this process of just letting things flow and not be too precious around the details. So, yeah, I noticed that. And I enjoy working like that. (P10)

18.2.3. Other Creative Work

Four participants (P3, P4, P8 (D106), P15) inspired creative work beyond poetry through this intervention. This included novels and short stories. For example, P4 solved problems and gained new ideas for her short story collection and its structure in dreams and hypnagogic experiences, receiving reassurance to pursue this collection which she had previously doubted due to the lack of ideas (e.g. D91; D92).

There was that transition between the horse walking through the portal from one story into another [in a dream]. And so I did have an idea about whether I could

do that in the story collection that between each story from a different country there would be some kind of interlude. Transition. That some kind of symbolic, almost dreamlike character dives into a lake, or this horse going through the portal. (P4)

P3, who incubated the idea of fire produced a dream that gave her an idea she inadvertently incorporated into her new novel (D93). This novel that revolves around two different voices in one's head as a representation of inner conflict also linked to her description of two distinct voices appearing in her dreams around lucidity clues (D93).

18.3. Waking Life Impact

Beyond their creative writing, many participants experienced changes in other aspects of their waking lives.

18.3.1. Creative Life

This creative impact bled into some participants' daily lives, with three participants directly reporting a more 'creative life'.

It's been transformative. The idea of creating like we're creating our lives anyway, from our thoughts, everything is created from ourselves. And to turn that into poetry is putting that lyrical feeling to it. Like playing, putting a joy into the experience of life as well like this is a poem. *A life is a poem*. All lives are poems and they're intertwined and it's just emphasizing the beauty. (P6)

P6 reports experiencing a shift or a “wakeup call” in terms of living creatively, while P10 describes it as a “lifechanging change” as this process became an important part of his life.

I am experiencing openness when I travel. I am just more aware of things and more receptive. I can just appreciate the beauty and everything; I got to a point where I could see that everything is beautiful in front of me. The people, things. So you know, that's not really normal. I'm just noticing the difference in me, what that does to me, just traveling and becoming more open and more perceptive. Yes, it's just really wonderful. It's really an amazing feeling. And I haven't had it for a while. [...] I think, it has really opened me up to completely different ways of looking at dreams and also other things. I think it has changed me this process. [...] I'm more curious. I mean, I'm naturally curious, but I'm really cultivating this curiosity now. And I think that's part of creativity. Yeah, I think I've been doing it a lot recently and definitely this whole process with the dreams workshops, I would say definitely has made a difference. (P10)

Similarly, P9 found her writing to be “much more prolific and creative” because she has reached “a deeper layer of feeling and understanding” in her waking life. Living more creatively thus relied on the insight gained from dreams for these participants.

18.3.2. Insight

Participants report gaining insights from dreams by reading through their dream journals and identifying themes and repeating motifs, reflecting on their feelings about certain dreams, as well as reading through their dream-inspired poetry. For 11 participants, certain dreams or the intervention as a whole provided insight for their waking lives (e.g. D94). For example, P6 found reassurance from his dreamworld

about the place that he is in currently in life. On the contrary, P3's dreams gave her an insight into where she was at creatively, revealing that she was "not being all that purposeful" (D95; D12). Similarly, the theme of travelling found in many of P11's dreams as well as writing influenced his desire to further develop in life.

P9 gained valuable insights into her ancestry and ADHD traits (D96). A dream and subsequent poem reminded her to create her own legacy through music and poetry (D97). She reported a "massive increase" in control, particularly in her understanding of her ancestors, which improved her relationships with friends and family in Belize (D98).

Analysing her dreams, P8 realised that she is constantly searching for a new meaning in her dreams, which she found to be a reflection of her waking life search after having to close down her business (D99). Similarly, P9 incubated a problem with her family, and a symbolic dream told her that she needed to relax more (D100). Similarly, P14's deepened relationship with her dreamworld offered her insights into her waking life:

It was sort of accidental before. Dreams happened and they were sometimes interesting, and I just got on with my life. I find them more intriguing now and see them as a source of information when I am trying to understand myself better. I use them as a way to process information. It is more of an active than passive relationship now. (P14, example in D101)

P16 found that feelings of uncertainty about the future permeated his dreams in symbolic forms, while these dreams also revealed to him something important about his emotional state of which he wasn't aware (D102). The anger that he identified in prevailing dreams that featured constant confrontations (D103) and that is linked to the current world affairs is similar to that identified by P14, who kept dreaming of violence. Similarly, P9 frequently had dreams that reflected her frustration with the current state of the world, which she wrote about in her poems.

P15 also received a deeper insight into why he was dreaming certain things, which in turn contributed to his understanding of his creative tendencies:

I think I feel better about my dreams in that they can be more productive and that perhaps they can tell me more about myself and about what I can write. Just paying more attention to them helps. [...] I don't often approach a story or book with a clear intention of conveying something specific. I just write and let it unfold, interpreting the meaning afterward. However, I think the workshop has encouraged me to reflect more consciously on my writing process. Now, I ask myself: what do I really want to express? Why am I writing this, and what am I really interested in? This shift in perspective is helping me use the insights from my dreams more purposefully. By interpreting the recurring themes in my dreams, I'm understanding the reasons behind my writing. This process is making my work clearer and more purposeful, and it's helping me understand my motivation which is, in turn, helping me make my writing more accessible for readers. (P15)

Similarly, P8 reported writing a story workbook with all her ideas from dreams and analysing why she liked these ideas to understand her creativity better.

Poetry offering further insight

Four participants (P3, P4, P5, P10) experienced the opposite effect, reporting that a poem gave them a deeper look into the dream, which came upon reflection on the dream-inspired poem. For example, P5 wrote a poem about a dream that featured her mother.

The counterpane

*Vivid red, yellow, green and blue
Its colours pierce the gloom
I watched you make it
With your crochet hook
Round and round you went
Round and round
Ignoring me
Until it hurt your arms to hold it
Now its weight is pressing down
On the remains of your life
I sit and hold your hand
Outside a bus rumbles past
As it recedes
I hear your rattling breath*

Only after reading her own lines from the poem – focusing on the “Round and round / Ignoring me” lines – did P5 realise the extent of the emotional significance in that dream and, consequently, her own waking life feelings about her late mother.

A dream about my mother, who died in 2009, gave me an insight that it was OK to think about less than perfect elements of her character, whereas before I had always put her on a pedestal and felt guilty if ever had a thought about what seemed to me as a child to be character flaws. I dreamed about a bedspread she had crocheted many years ago. I wrote a poem as result of this about an eight-year-old me nagging my mother to crochet me a doll’s blanket, but never getting my wish. (P5)

P10 understood the strong feeling that he had in the dream, the feeling of longing, only after writing a poem around that dream, recognising that this strong emotion is what made him remember the dream in the first place (D27). Similarly, P3 found that “what

comes out is not necessarily what you think it's going to be about" as she wrote poems based on her dreams (e.g. D12).

18.3.3. Agency

Seven participants (P1, P5, P7, P12, P14, P15, P16) found that increased insight and control in their dreams gave them agency in waking life. For example, P5 shared: "I have a slightly increased control over my dreams, and the improvement in dream recall has added an extra awareness or dimension to my waking life."

Before the present study commenced P14 reported recurring dreams of being stuck in the mud and unable to move or do anything, which she considered to be a reflection of how she felt in her waking life.

things are happening around me, I want to be involved, and I want to do so many things. But for one reason or another, I just don't feel like my body or my mind is able to do what I wanted to do. (P14)

During an OBE-like experience in a hypnagogic state, P14 felt a separation from her body, which gave her a feeling of control:

I kind of had a moment of reconnection where I realised that my body is something I can control and that I have the ability to interact with the rest of the world now that I have this body that I can use, I can interact with this physical thing and so I can interact with other physical things too because I have control over this body. Reconnecting with the sense of touch, invisible touch. (P14)

At the conclusion of the study, P14 reports having increased control over her day-to-day life. P7 claimed the same: "I have a better level of control in my waking life as I am able to accomplish my daily plans quicker."

Therefore, for some participants, the effects of this intervention extended beyond the creative benefits for their waking lives.

18.3.4. Therapeutic application

Apart from personal insight, participants working with therapy also gained ideas for their work with clients. P4 gained an insight into her counselling work in a liminal state, where “different ways of accessing therapy were being told to someone.” She also dreamt of “3 drawings or posters stuck at the bottom of the stairs - it looked like there were done with pastel, like the kind of images you’d see made a lot in my art therapy course.” This whole process thus helped P4 redefine her approach with therapy (D104).

In waking life, therapist P6 utilised some of the thinking from this process in his work with clients. He discussed incorporating experiential and visceral techniques into therapeutic practices, particularly in the context of dreamwork, using visualisations such as portals or windows to aid in dream exploration and emotional containment. He said, “I think what I might do is work with dreams in a more visceral sense rather than talking about dreams, acting them out more. That would be really helpful to actually do some empty chair work with dream characters.”

He mentions the concept of a "window of tolerance" in trauma therapy, where individuals can only process trauma within their capacity, highlighting the importance of creating safe and contained spaces for emotional exploration, for which he claims the portal from the MILD technique is very beneficial (D105).

18.4. Group influence

Seven participants (P4, P5, P7, P8, P6, P10, P14) directly reported that being in a group helped them engage with the process, with group feedback helping them

progress their writing and group discussions interpret their dreams. They were motivated to continue their training, and the sense of community made the whole experience more enjoyable and inspiring.

Somehow, being in the group made a big difference as well. You're being in it together. It's a bit like that saying, you know, you're kind of conspiring together. It enforces the field. There's less cynicism. My internal cynic and less into external cynics. So there's more energy in that area to help as a support. (P6)

I just wanted to share that when I was done writing and I looked up and everybody was quiet, focused writing, it was so beautiful. I could do this all year long, gather here and talk about dreams and write together. (P10)

18.4.1. Similar poems

Interestingly, some participants wrote poems around a similar theme both in workshop exercises and in the sleep lab, without any direct influence to cause this link.

P6 and P4's sleep lab session occurred at the same time. They reported feeling very similar after their session, with "our particular energies disappearing into the subconscious." P6 said: "We both wrote poems afterwards, which are very similar poems. So we must have had a similar journey when we touched base with each other in the dream world."

Two other participants reported a similar experience and poems as P4 on different occasions in the weekly workshops. In fact, P8 and P4 wrote similar poems based on similar hypnagogic and dream experiences twice, with the first instance being after a liminal exercise in which they were both walking through a forest, and second involving a dream on which they based their poems, with both being about a spaceship and a son. Finally, P3 wrote a "driving" poem during the same exercise as P4.

Therefore, certain similarities were identified in some participants' dreaming and creative experiences, possibly based on the shared space in which they dreamt and created poetry.

18.5. Post-Study Continuation

Participants were interviewed several weeks after the study's completion. Many reported difficulty continuing the process after the study ended as they were missing the structure they had during weekly workshops, but all expressed the desire to further engage with their dreaming creativity. P14 said, "I will be using my dreams more for my writing and feel justified in trying to remember them and write them down now!"

Three participants had specific ideas from the sleep lab sessions and workshops that they intended to develop further, with some using the incubation technique to progress their other writing such as novels in progress and short story collections. Others had specific ideas emerge in this study that they hadn't had a chance to work on yet:

It's something I'm kind of on a bigger scale incubating. Thinking, yeah, I'm gonna probably draw into this. There's another [poem idea] I've got sort of half in my mind to write as an exploration of another relationship that's left me with some unanswered questions. And I think writing a poem about that would be really, really helpful. (P6)

19. Discussion

This study aimed to investigate how dreams, lucid dreams (LDs), and hypnagogic states could serve as starting points for poetry, and how the addition of creative techniques might further fuel poetic creativity. Over a six-week intervention involving

16 participants, split evenly between professional writers and hobbyists, various methods were employed to delve into the interplay between dreams, N1 sleep, and creativity.

19.1. The Creative Potential of the N1 State

This study supports the findings of Lacaux et al. (2021), who identified the hypnagogic state as a fertile ground for creativity, referring to it as the "creative sweet spot." Participants in this study consistently reported that hypnagogic experiences provided novel ideas, often described as fleeting but rich starting points for poetry.

The exercise of capturing hypnagogic imagery in the sleep lab and during the napping technique demonstrated the potential of this state to generate ideas with minimal conscious interference. For instance, following a hypnagogic experience, participants often entered a "flow state," writing automatically and later reflecting on the symbolism and emotional resonance of their work.

These findings align with the creative potential of the N1 state highlighted by historical figures like Salvador Dali and Thomas Edison, who used techniques like the "slumber with a key" to capture fleeting hypnagogic ideas. Their approach parallels the methods used in this study, where participants deliberately engaged with the hypnagogic state to generate creative material. As Lacaux et al. (2021) demonstrated, the N1 state supports new connections by breaking away from conventional patterns of thinking. In this study, participants' poetry often drew directly from the imagery and emotions experienced during N1, showing how this state can inspire original and meaningful creative work.

These results underscore the hypnagogic state as a valuable resource for creativity, providing practical ways to explore and develop artistic ideas.

19.2. Fiction Writing vs Poetry

Those who took part in both studies, study 3 on fiction writing through the use of dreams and study 4 on poetry writing, drew a parallel between the two.

P8 noted that poetry is more akin to dreaming and more of a fruitful ground for creatively expressing dreams than is longer form writing:

I think with the poetry for me it was more powerful. And I do think that's because for me poetry is kind of like a moment of emotion or a moment of image. *And that's what dreams are, they're kind of moments in time.* I think that with novel writing it would be different, because it would be about exploring an idea for a story. For me, *the immediacy of the connection between the dream and the poetry was obvious.* Whereas I think, with trying to find a story idea, it was less obvious. [In the previous study] I was working on the story, and I needed an idea for how to do something in the story, and the dream presented it to me obliquely. But I had to actually sit back and notice. So it's a different way of using dreams, story writing. The difference with the poetry is, I can immediately see and feel the connection. It was not so bleak. I think flash fiction can work as well, and I think I did a couple of flash fiction pieces. (P8)

P3 adds that writing poetry from dreams is more enjoyable:

I liked the consistency of doing something every week and writing something every week. Because a poem can be quite quick, and then you can go back to it and go back to it and go back to it. But a story takes longer to develop into something, and so, I quite liked the concentration of doing it week after week,

and getting more ideas for more poems, and the impetus of that was really good.

(P3)

Further, P3 found the study 4 in-person workshops much more engaging as compared to the online sessions in study 3. P8 notes that perhaps the shorter duration of study 4 was the reason why she didn't go as deep into lucidity as in study 3, and P4 acknowledges making the process less of a priority in study 4 with no specific reason given for this.

19.3. Limitations

Several limitations impacted the outcomes of this study, influencing both the data collected and the creative results produced:

19.3.1. Mixed-method approach

A mixed method was used instead of a rigorous experimental intervention. Several aspects were not experimentally controlled, including the influence of creative tasks in workshops and group feedback on the production of lab poems. There was no dedicated control group because the major interest was to show that dreaming increases the creative writing process.

19.3.2. Sleep Inertia

Unlike studies such as Lacaux et al. (2021), which allowed participants up to an hour post-sleep to recover from sleep inertia, this study required participants to complete creative tasks immediately upon waking. Participants often reported feeling groggy or cognitively sluggish during these tasks, which likely affected their ability to fully engage with and articulate the creative ideas arising from their dreams or hypnagogic experiences. The absence of a recovery period may have disproportionately impacted the assessment of creative performance, as participants' potential was evaluated under

suboptimal conditions. Future iterations of this research could include a structured post-sleep recovery period to mitigate this issue.

19.3.3. Study Duration

The six-week intervention was notably shorter than the eight-week intervention used in Study 3, which may have limited participants' time to develop and refine the practices introduced. Lucid dreaming, dream recall, and the integration of creative techniques often require consistent practice over an extended period. Some participants reported feeling rushed or struggling to build momentum with these practices, which may explain the reduced frequency of lucid dreams and the incomplete incorporation of techniques like morning writing and dream incubation. A longer intervention period could provide participants with the time needed to establish these practices as habits.

19.3.4. Lucid Dreaming Training

Fewer lucid dreams were reported in this study compared to Study 3, likely due to the dual focus on liminal states and lucid dreaming. Participants were introduced to both techniques, but the emphasis on hypnagogia and its creative potential may have diluted their efforts to master lucid dreaming induction methods. Moreover, the shorter study duration and creative exercises preceding an established lucid dreaming practice may have further disrupted participants' ability to achieve and sustain lucidity in their dreams. These factors suggest that future research might benefit from more clearly delineating the focus of interventions, either targeting lucid dreaming or hypnagogic creativity, depending on the research objectives.

19.3.5. Time Constraints

Time constraints for poetry writing during workshops and sleep lab sessions limited participants' ability to fully develop their creative outputs. Writing tasks often had a strict time limit, which, while helpful for encouraging spontaneous creation, may have restricted participants' ability to refine or expand their work. Additionally, the tight

schedule of the study, combined with participants' outside responsibilities, may have contributed to varying levels of engagement. Allowing more time for creative exploration and follow-up sessions to refine initial drafts could yield more comprehensive insights into the relationship between dreams and creativity.

19.4. Suggestions for Future Research

To address the limitations and build on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed for future research:

19.4.1. RCTs

Further research must conduct RCTs to investigate specific effects of dreaming compared, for example, to a Virtual reality practicing group.

19.4.2. Extend Intervention Duration

Participants consistently reported that the six-week duration of this study was insufficient to fully integrate lucid dreaming practices and creative techniques. Extending the intervention to at least eight weeks, or ideally three months, could provide participants with more time to internalise the methods introduced. This additional time would also allow for a more structured program, such as dedicating the initial four weeks exclusively to inducing lucid dreams before introducing creative writing techniques.

19.4.3. Modifying Sleep Lab Study

This study required participants to complete creative tasks immediately upon waking, potentially hampering their ability to recall dreams clearly and engage fully with the creative process. Future research could implement a recovery period after waking, allowing participants up to an hour to transition from sleep to wakefulness, similar to

the protocol used by Lacaux et al. (2021). This adjustment could improve cognitive clarity, enhance dream recall, and facilitate higher-quality creative outputs.

In addition, future studies could provide participants with more time to reflect, write, and refine their creative work after waking. An alternative approach could involve allowing participants to write poetry immediately upon waking, without first recording their dreams. This method might enhance creative flow by leveraging the liminal state between sleep and wakefulness. Repeated N1 awakenings without dream recall but with direct engagement with the creative task could also allow participants to iteratively develop their ideas during the session, fostering a more dynamic engagement with the hypnagogic state.

Finally, participants in this study often reported difficulty falling asleep in the lab, particularly during lucid dreaming sessions. Future research could address this by creating a more relaxed and natural environment in the lab. This might include adjusting room temperature and lighting for comfort, incorporating mindfulness and relaxation exercises to ease participants into sleep, or extending sessions to overnight stays to allow participants to progress through natural sleep cycles, increasing the likelihood of REM sleep and successful lucid dreaming. Pre-screening participants for whether they habitually nap, and using the Highly Sensitive Person (HSP) scale, could also help identify individuals less likely to experience sleep difficulties in the lab setting, improving the overall success rate of lucid dream induction.

19.4.4. Longitudinal Studies with Repeated N1 Sessions

The study revealed that participants found N1 sessions particularly enjoyable and creatively stimulating, as this stage allowed for multiple awakenings and brief but vivid creative insights. Future research could investigate the effects of repeated N1 sessions over an extended period, exploring whether sustained engagement with this sleep stage enhances long-term creativity. Longitudinal studies could track changes in creative output and problem-solving abilities, providing deeper insights into the unique cognitive benefits of N1.

By addressing these recommendations, future research could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the interplay between sleep, dreaming, and creativity, ultimately advancing both theoretical knowledge and practical applications in artistic and cognitive fields.

Researcher's own dreams relating to the experiments

Below are examples of dreams directly relating to my research, which I have personally had since the start of my research, from the design phase of the first study I conducted through to the analysis of my last study. Below the dream reports I provide a categorisation of these dreams (Table 29). These dreams show my own application of the use of dream methods that I was teaching participants, and they give evidence for the metaphorical nature of dreams and for the relationship of dream content to recent waking life (Malinowski and Horton, 2015, Edwards et al. 2013; 2015).

20.1. Dream Reports

UNDATED: Before first (interview) study/during lit review:

Dream 1:

I dream of how to connect the three directions I was thinking of taking my PhD in. A-ha moment and the solution appeared crystal clear – this is what I should do. It made perfect sense in the dream. Solution vanished upon waking.

January 2023

This preceded the first experimental study for fiction writers. I intended to test the techniques I was going to teach my participants.

Dream 2 (lucid):

I arrive at a bay, sandy beach, vastness of the ocean stretching from a large cove. As I turn the corner around a large rock and arrive at this bay, I become lucid and decide to dive into the water. As I dive in, I head for the seabed. I grab the sand from the bottom and feel the immense sensation as the sand slips through my fingers. I rub the sand on my face, my senses are intensified.

I then decide to find my next story by finding a protagonist with a story worth writing. A vast array of beautifully strange creatures extends in my view in the ocean. Corals, colourful fish, and other weird creatures not found in nature swim through the ocean. I swim alongside them and, by touching each of them with my hand, I understand their story; it's as if I can tell their whole story just by touching them. It's a mesmerising experience, but I am not finding THE character or THE story that I want to tell. So I come out of the water. On the surface, I see two giant black birds above me carrying something over the ocean. I look over to the bay, where there is now a stage in front of some big rocks. A number of wise old men queue in front of the stage, coming onto it one by one and telling their stories to the ocean. I listen to each of them; they are all interesting and I consider writing some of them. But none of them grip me; they are not my stories.

Then I finally come up to the beach and I look over to the corner of the cove, a cave-like part of the bay, where a little boy maybe 8 or 10, sits on the sand with a piece of paper in his hands. His father sits next to him. The little boy is rehearsing his speech to tell to the ocean; he is not nervous like the wise men, he knows he has the right story to tell. I immediately know that this little boy is my next story.

I write a short story inspired by this dream (D107).

28 October 2023

This is a day before the start of the final experimental study focused on poetry. I intend to test my methods in a dream.

Dream 3 (lucid):

I become lucid in a dream with a very unstable environment. The scene keeps changing as I try to stabilise it. I look around the dream, trying to find an idea for a poem to write. I look in a window behind the curtains, under some vases or something, under objects, inside of them, but everything in this dream is so mundane and uninspiring. Finally, I look under a big kitchen table, and there, in the floor, a mushroom grows. A small, cute little mushroom yet so powerful, that inspires me to think about the

cycling nature of life, of the earth, thinking how mushrooms are the source of life and the cleansers. I know this is my poem.

6 November 2023

This is the night of the first sleep lab session of this study.

Dream 4:

We started the first session in the lab, everything is going well, the participant has a lucid dream. But I have to pop out for some reason, there are a few other people in the lab who work there, like assisting with the study. They wake up the participant but they forget to give her a piece of paper to write a poem. So even though she has a lucid dream, it's completely wasted because these people mess it up for me. I'm quite anxious about that.

Waking life note: This probably just represents my worries that I'll fail and mess something up with the study.

18 November 2023

Dream 5:

Dream within a dream. I had thought in the dream that I'd woken up from a liminal state with some visions and imagery, but I was actually in the dream testing this state [because in 2 days we're starting the N1 lab sessions]. Then the next time I woke up from N1 with nothing, and finally the third time was something else, like a third option. So the idea was that you can wake up from N1 with: 1) visions, 2) nothing, and 3) sounds or something (not sure now), something completely different. Right in front of me I could see the text with these three options and bullet points, it was quite clear to me in the dream. I wanted to take a mental snapshot, like this is exactly what it should look like in my thesis.

So in this dream, I believe that I'm waking up from NI three times, while in reality I remained in a dream.

30 November 2023

Dream 6:

I come down to the lab and Mark isn't there yet. I prep two participants but for one of them I couldn't find the AUT (Alternative Uses Test). I look around and suddenly realise that the computers are missing as well, and all of the papers are missing. Some people come in through the door, showing new students around, so I tell them that we're in the middle of the study, they apologise and leave. Then the technician comes in and says the computers are missing and I say I don't know if Mark is coming even as we've both had covid.

2 December 2023

It's Sunday, the morning of my last workshop of study 4.

Dream 7:

I am up on a mountain with a small group. It is Saturday, and tomorrow is my final workshop, just like in real life.

I have a dream (within this dream) in which I read a paper that used cues in a sleep lab, which inspired me to change my method. With two participants that day, after taking their reports in the lab and with their eyes still closed, I send the beeping sounds and flashing lights and tell them that they can get ready to go if they wish. This prompts them to have loads of hypnagogic imagery and both write another poem before going, even though they were not instructed to do so.

I tell Mark about this and he's happy that it worked but says that we should've been doing it from the beginning, but of course it only occurred to me now. The results might be inconsistent now.

Then I'm somehow on this mountain and we're making our way back. But a huge storm comes in, forcing us to go back to the cabin and wait. Panicked, I ask one of the

men whether we'll be back by the morning as I have my workshop and can't miss it. He tells me yes, but he sounds unconvincing. I am surprised by the storm but at the same time, I'm thinking that I should've known it was a possibility and shouldn't have gone on a mountain the day before my final workshop.

When I wake up, I immediately recognise the storm as a representation of my cold, which had been worrying me as I feared missing the final workshop, which would negatively affect my study.

6 December

Dream 8:

My supervisor is a woman who tells me my funding is running out, but I can continue my PhD at NYU. I'm not happy about that because I don't want to live in New York and Cashew wouldn't like it there either.

7 December

Scoring AUT the night before this dream.

Dream 9:

Scoring AUT in a better way that is more efficient. But I don't remember what the system was. I woke up with the words "padlock" and "jumbled up" in my head. In the dream I had one more word to analyse, I was waiting in anticipation for the scoring to show whether it was effective or whether I got the results that I wanted.

UNDATED but during this period

Dream 10:

In a dream, I see the structure of a poem written by Keats, clearly see the text. It had rhythm and beautiful thoughts/ideas. Woke up with only “love, just like poem, is...” and the rest vanished.

19 December

Dream 11:

I'm explaining to someone how these participants from my present study are more motivated to induce lucid dreams because the workshops are in person, while in the previous study that was online Ps were dropping out and not doing the training properly. Although I don't know if that's true, I feel like in reality the opposite might be true.

21 December

Dream 12:

I was reading my novel which was at the stage that it is at in waking life. But most of it was handwritten and a lot of it I couldn't decipher. This reflects my current waking life struggle to decipher handwritten poetry from my participants from lab sessions. Then a film director I know wants to do a live reading of my novel, but I tell him it's not ready, yet he insists. Then he skims through it and realises that there's not enough dialogue in it, which is strange as there is lots of dialogue in the actual novel. Then he made a jumper with some text from my novel on it. [...]

I feel that I got some insights into my novel, but I forgot this content of the dream. I woke up excited that I dreamt of my novel for the first time, wanting to record the dream, but something happened and I fell back asleep before I recorded it?

28 December 2023

Dream 13:

My lectures have started but I booked in sleep lab at the same time. P6 is in the lab, doing the NI session, but the lab looks very different. He insists on sitting in the room with me and not going to the bedroom. He quickly wakes and writes down a sentence. We decide he should go to the bedroom after all. He wasn't doing it properly. The bedroom looks like my parents' old bedroom. I draw the curtains and prepare to give him instructions about writing down only hypnagogic stuff as I doubt that he understood before. Someone else is there, a helper? They tell me it's already been an hour. I ask P6 if he's in a rush as we'll need to start the 90 mins again as he hasn't been sleeping, he says it's fine. P6 wants a duvet and water, but I can't find a duvet anywhere.

2 January 2024

Dream 14:

I was conducting a study with I think 5 participants although not sure about the numbers now. They're all in separate bedrooms and I put a folder in each of their rooms. Actually I think there was more like 10 of them. In their folders, which were all the same, there were so many different parts, almost like a presentation. It started with a poem that one of them wrote based on a dream, it included a very lengthy explanation but I feel like it was more profound than just what's going on, it was going deep into dreaming or something. There was a lot of other parts but I can't remember what they were now. I remember in the dream that I had to copy, I had to edit a lot of it, and I had to copy it to put it in other folders. And then the participant that wrote that poem I put in their folders asked me not to include it because they didn't want to share it.

When I woke up I felt like I got an answer to something, like **this is the study that I should have designed**, it kind of encompassed all that I've been doing so far. But that's just the feeling that lingered, I don't have any tangible content that I can remember.

5 January 2024

I am writing a novel with the main character Scarlett and her therapist Tobias. Scarlett is a mental patient, she has repressed a memory of killing a woman and some preceding events. I'm stuck, unsure of what to do with her character halfway through the novel. I'm trying to understand Scarlett as I'm writing her in this novel.

Dream 15 (liminal):

I see Scarlett sitting in Tobias' office, looking at her hands. I come up to her and ask her: "who are you?" She has this menacing face that screams at me. She says, "Everything you know is a lie." I ask "why" and she says, "Because I'm lying." I ask her, "Do you know that you're lying?" She says, "no." She doesn't know that she's lying.

I guess this means that everything that she's telling Tobias is a lie, but she's not aware of it.

I ask Scarlett, "What do you want me to do with these poems that Seren [another character] wrote?" and Scarlett says, "Burn them!" I ask why, and she says, "Because they are a way to the truth, and I don't want to know the truth." I guess the truth is buried within her.

I ask her, "Who is Jean Marcel [another character]" and she says, "I don't know." I say, "Tell me, who is Jean Marcel," and she says, "I don't want to tell you." I ask why, and she says "I don't want to tell you, stop asking me. Don't ask me that." I push, "Come on, tell me" and Scarlett retreats in herself, physically, she becomes smaller, and she goes mute. Again. She won't talk.

Background: The novel starts with Scarlett being mute, unwilling to talk, and Tobias manages to break through and get her to talk. In this dream, Scarlett goes mute again; I've pushed too far with my questions, it seems!

8 January 2024

Dream 16:

Better version of AUT that tests actual creativity. There are 4 or 5 categories and they all ask a different question. The first one had 3 examples to which you had to provide

an answer to the question, and all 3 had something to do with cars. But the questions were more logical and each tested a different type/aspect of creativity.

Can't remember the questions now!

29 January 2024

Dream 17:

P14 blamed me for not sending them dream analyses yet, they were expecting it from me and it's been days since she sent me her dreams. I try to explain that that wasn't the deal anyway, they were supposed to send me their analyses if they had any and I didn't need to send them anything.

9 February 2024

Dream 18 (lucid):

I was falling in and out of it. When I became lucid I would start flying, but then I'd start waking up. However, it seems to me now that it was false awakening and that I was still in the dream, I just couldn't control it, like I couldn't fly, so I just thought that it wasn't a dream anymore.

*There were these creatures, all over town, not zombies but people trying to attack me, I don't know what they had against me or who they were. I would fly away from them and they would fly after me because suddenly they could fly as well and then I was realising that this is a dream and I could just outstretch my arm and say "be gone" and push them away, and they would go away. The more I tried to stay in control, the more I was reassuring myself that I can do it because this is a dream, I was successful. But it was very hard to maintain that control, they kept coming after me. I was really, really **trying to change the scene and leave them behind and go and do my creative stuff, go and find a poem.***

I managed to change the scene – I found a box that was filled with different stuff. But it was mundane stuff, like a baseball glove and stuff like that. I changed perspectives I guess, as I was now a man and I was going through this box, one by one through the

items, trying to find the thing that would be my next poem or a story. My next creative idea. I got to the end of the box and I didn't find it, everything was just mundane, it wasn't interesting enough. Then I had a reflection, I realised that this was perhaps because I was a man, maybe I should've been myself. Then I would find the thing that I should be writing about, but because I was someone else, I couldn't find it.

The day before, I was giving an interview on female entrepreneurship where we exchanged stories about how men are portrayed as successful and woman not as much, and men trying to tell us how to do our jobs etc. so that seems to have influenced my dream.

23 March 2024

Dream 19:

I was late for the lab. I was on time at first but then I got stuck looking for the lights and the speaker etc. I also went to the wrong building, and I was trying to find the sleep lab. But it all looked different and I was like what happened to our lab? Until I realised that it was the wrong building.

Dream 20:

In this dream, P16 messaged me about a dream that he had at 3pm about the sleep lab. He said that in the dream, in the sleep lab, he became lucid, and everything was great, it was successful.

4 April 2024

Dream 21:

In this dream, one of my participants was telling me about the dream they were having, in which they found a poem written on a leaf. They could see the shape of it, structure, all the words, but when they woke up they forgot the words.

12 April 2024

Dream 22:

I could see a lot of text, I think they were poems, although they didn't read like poems but they were structured like poems. There was loads of them and they all had the same form. There was just so much text. I remember thinking in the dream that I really had to focus to read all of that. I think I was aware that I was dreaming because I was thinking I really have to focus to read this so that I can remember it when I wake up and record it. Of course I didn't do that, but I remember focusing on the text, it was quite eloquent, the words and the sentences were very much like philosophy. But then I remember there were quite a few instances where the sentence didn't make sense or had some bogus words. I recognised that this was because it was a dream, that it doesn't really make sense. So I was really trying to sharpen my focus and figure out what it said. But I couldn't remember upon waking up.

Dream 23:

There was a little girl left to do my study. I didn't really need her now, but an extra participant for my study can't hurt. She was quite creative and she drew well. Someone else, this woman was giving her a test, the AUT, but she was giving her the wrong instructions. The word she gave her was "kissing" which was first of all the wrong word because we haven't used it on anyone else. Then she asked her to draw kissing and she was showing me how nicely she drew it. Then I told the woman that that's wrong, so I explain to the girl how to actually do it. But I overcomplicated the explanation and the girl was confused. But in the end the little girl got it, but I gave up on it because I'd already analysed the results for the AUT and I knew that one participant wasn't going to make a difference.

22 April 2024

Dream 24 (dream of hypnagogia):

I'm in the woods and I'm hearing a made-up song with male voice in my head. And then a woman's voice takes over and changes the melody. I can hear it very clearly, proper hypnagogia. It's resonating from the centre of my head, inside. I remember

thinking in the dream, wow this is proper hypnagogia, so I close my eyes while walking to focus solely on the voice, and it just resounds through my head. I'm thinking how am I experiencing hypnagogia while awake, like fully awake and walking. I remember wanting to write about this for my PhD.

6 May 2024

Dream 25:

In the morning, started as hypnagogia and turned into a dream.

I was sitting in a willow tree, waiting for someone. I created a whole poem in this dream, but it was a very cheap poem; everything rhymed. I'm sitting in a willow tree / Come and get me / thirty three / ... Every line rhymed and I'm not sure if it made much sense, I don't think it was a very good poem.

But it's interesting that I keep dreaming about poetry now that I'm analysing this study. It's also interesting that P16 dreamt up a whole poem in the lab previously, reporting also that the poem wasn't very good because everything rhymed too much, and also reporting dreaming of the number 33, which must have influenced my dream now.

28 May 2024

Dream 26:

Loads of dreams between awakenings.

Explaining to a man (judge?) my concept or why he should sign up for my study. There are loads of other people presenting theirs, but mine is really good. It's about lucid dreaming. I tell him we're all putting down our names so that it's your initials plus LD, so LRLD for me, for example. He keeps being rude and interrupting me, I don't understand why as he's given everyone else a chance (reminds me a bit of that poster presentation for PGR conference 2 years ago). I can't remember what I was telling people why they should join but it was good.

Dream 27:

Loads of writings as well. Rewriting a film I watched yesterday in Pocket FM style, writing closing paragraphs. Upon waking up still thinking that it's very good writing. But didn't record it because I can't do anything with it as it's just a rewrite, not original.

20.2. Analysis

Table 29 illustrated the categorisation of the above dreams.

Table 29

Analysis of the Researcher's Dreams Relating to This PhD Research.

Type of dream	Problem solving	Anxiety	Reassuring	Creative	Lucid	Hypnagogic
Dream number	1, 5, 7, 9, 14, 16	4, 6, 7, 8, 13, 17, 19, 23, 26	11, 20	2, 3, 10, 12, 15, 18, 21, 22, 25, 27	2, 3	15, 24

I had a lucid dream preceding each of my experimental studies, in which I intended to test the technique I would be asking my participants to implement. The first such dream (Dream 2) happened right before the experimental study focused on fiction writing, in which I lucidly explored the dream world in search of my next story. I later instructed my participants to try the same method once inside a lucid dream. The second such dream (Dream 3) I had was right before the final study focused on poetry writing. Becoming lucid in this dream, I searched the environment for my next poem. I later instructed my participants to try to do the same in their dreams. In addition, during the final study focusing on poetry writing, as I taught my participants to induce liminal states and work with them creatively, I also practiced this technique to help me move the novel I am currently writing forward (Dream 15).

Some dreams (e.g. dreams 10, 21, 22, and 25) helped me inform my methodology with the participants, especially in the final study focused on poetry writing. For example, having a dream in which I clearly saw a poem written before my eyes, I found that the words vanished too easily upon waking up. Discussing this with my participants in a weekly workshop, I found that written words in dreams tend to a) not be recalled on waking and, b) not make much sense, be cheap, or not very creative. Thus, we should look for visual, symbolic, and emotional ideas inside dreams, which we should then express creatively in writing on waking, rather than looking for a direct text inside a dream.

Other dreams, such as Dream 18, gave me a different kind of insight. In an attempt to find a poem to write, this lucid dream showed me that authenticity matters the most when creative expressing oneself, in that the dream was refusing to give me a good creative idea while I was embodying another dream character instead of myself. It showed me that, in the search for an authentic idea, I can't find such an idea while being someone else. I have to be myself to find the idea I should be writing about. This was very symbolic and meaningful to me.

Finally, I had 9 anxiety dreams, mainly relating to the sleep lab and workshops, in which I feared failure or something going wrong. In contrast, I only had 2 reassuring dreams that told me everything was going well with my experiments. This was somewhat surprising because I didn't feel like I was very anxious about the studies in waking life. I also had multiple dreams in which I would work out a better way of doing things for my studies, from a better design of the first study, to a better analysis method of my final study. However, solutions tended to disappear on waking.

General Discussion

21. The Models

21.1. The Dream-Inspired Model of Creative Writing (DICW)

The four studies conducted for this research served to develop, refine, and test a new model of creative writing that uses dreams, LD, and liminal experiences in combination with waking life techniques as a novel cognitive tool aimed at closing the gap other current models pose for both creative writing and creativity. The gap lies in the inability of current cognitive tools for creative writers to integrate personal memory and meaningful associations, which dreams, through their ability to combine distinct concepts from an individual's memory into novel and meaningful combinations, may help address.

At the core of the present model lies associative thinking, proposed by Beaty and Kenett (2023) as the key component of creative thinking, as it allows one to make remote associations between distinct concepts in memory. The more remote these associations are, the more creative they appear to be. Dreaming minds create more remote associations between concepts than do waking minds, according to Hartmann (1996, *Dreaming*) and also Zadra and Stickgold's (2021) new model of dream function called NEXTUP. This suggests that the ideas we have in dreams tend to be more creative than those we have in waking imagination. In addition, according to Lacaux et al.'s recent studies (2021; 2023), sleep onset or the land between waking and dreaming seems to host the most creative thinking processes of our brains, the so-called "creative sweet spot."

To better understand the connection between dreams and creative ideas, Naomi Epel's informal interviews with 26 world-famous writers in *Writers Dreaming* (1994) were analysed. Hill's (1997) analysis was also considered, but, due to some inconsistencies, a more rigorous analysis was conducted that kept Hill's original classification. It was found that these writers used their dreams to inspire new ideas, from novels to poetry and comic books, as well as to move their existing literary works forward, creatively

problem-solving various issues with their works in progress. However, all of these accounts seem to have been spontaneous workings of their dreaming minds rather than using any particular techniques that could be applied to other writers. In addition, no distinction between lucid and non-lucid dreams was made in these interviews, with some cases implying lucidity but never directly mentioning it. Therefore, it was not clear how lucid dreams might differ from non-lucid dreams in their application to creative writing.

To further examine the specific role of lucid dreams in creative writing, a further 26 writers found through various writing groups online were interviewed on their use of LD in their (mainly fiction) writing. Combined with insights from Clare Johnson's (2007) research, a set of in-dream techniques was identified for the creative application of LD, such as inviting fictional characters into the dream and interacting with them in order to better understand them and therefore to write their voices more authentically. Other techniques included world-building, directing a story, slowing down the dream to focus on the details, testing and reviewing plots, exploring the story setting, improving dream recall, decoding symbolism, asking the dream what to write about in order to find authentic ideas, and gaining first-hand experience in one's story world. Some of the interviewed writers reported a very active relationship with their dreamworld, which aided their creative writing. For example, upon recording their dreams in the morning, they would inform their written work, think about it before going to sleep, work on it in dreams, and then further inform their writing in this non-linear process. These writers had very good dream recall and were frequent lucid dreamers.

The next study was designed to test these reported techniques on a sample of writers to understand whether such a model could be applied more widely in order to develop it as a cognitive tool for all writers. The eight-week programme that incorporated a mixed approach to inducing LD and creative dream incubation tested these techniques on 29 writers of varying dreaming abilities. The results of this study outline the potential of this model for a broader application in the writing community. Writers managed to use their dreams as starting points for new short stories (with an addition of poetry, novels, and other writing forms), as well as for creative problem-solving relating to their works in progress. However, it was found that a revision of the model

was needed, as some of the techniques reported by experienced lucid dreamers were not possible to implement for writers who were struggling to induce their first lucid dreams. Therefore, simpler and more flexible techniques are needed for inexperienced lucid dreamers, over a longer period of time, while the relationship with their dreamworld is still being built and explored. Finally, key findings of this study included benefits beyond the creative writing they were producing for this study; writers experienced a shift in their waking-life thinking, with openness to new experience, and a deeper relationship with their subconscious, as well as a new side to their general creativity as they found their creative voice and explored new avenues in their practice. Their writing process changed as well, and they found more inspiration in the morning hours after waking up from a dream. Writers also experienced insightful dreams that informed their waking life beyond their creative practice, with some participants reporting that the LD induction training had a positive impact on sleep and on other aspects of their lives that they deemed important. Some writers in Study 3 succeeded in developing a proactive practice of merging their dreaming and waking thinking to produce a short story in a cyclical process reported by writers in Study 2, suggesting that even inexperienced dreamers might be able to accomplish this advanced stage of the proposed model. Waking-life editing and working with the dreamt ideas was identified as another key component needing to be implemented in the model in order to make it more efficient. The benefits of incorporating liminal dreams and group work were also new findings that needed further exploration within the context of this model.

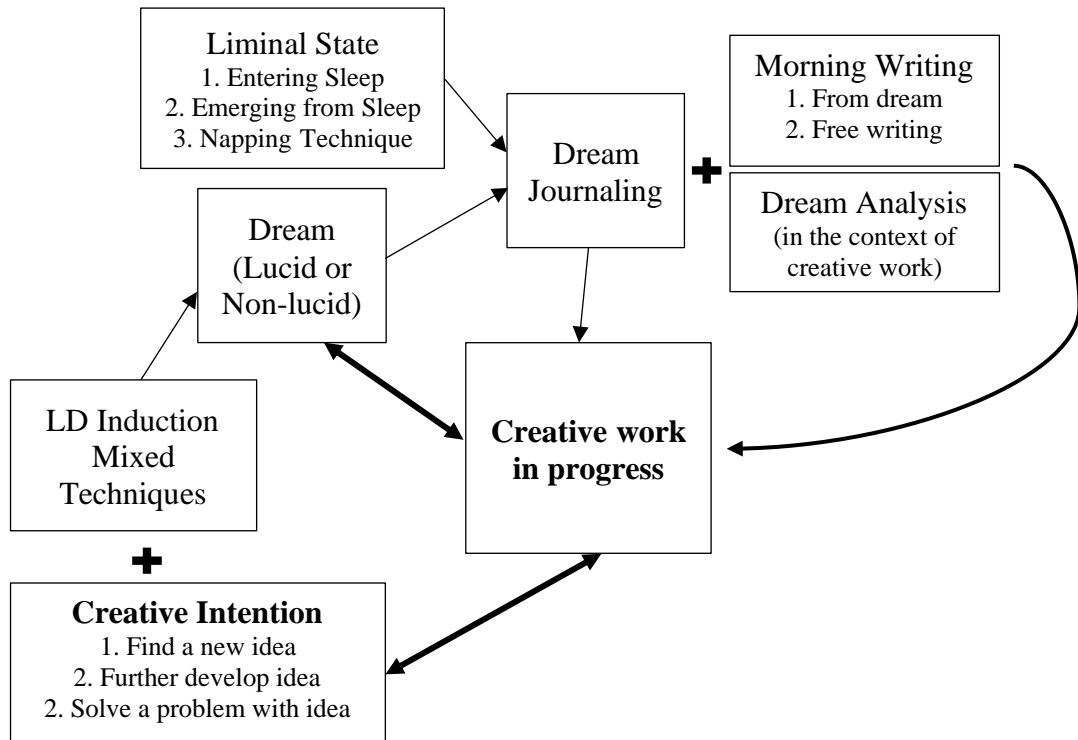
The final study – Study 4 – thus refined the proposed model based on these insights. With the results from study 3 pointing at the potential of dreaming for improving the symbolism and emotional makeup of creative writing, study 4 aimed at testing the model for poetry writing, considering the symbolic and emotional nature of poetry. In addition to LD induction training, practices for inducing liminal states were also introduced, alongside weekly group sessions redesigned to focus more on the creative practices, as this was reported as beneficial in the previous study. Finally, certain techniques were tested in a sleep laboratory to both support the LD and liminal induction process as well as to gather quantifiable results in a more controlled setting. This study revealed that poetry written after a dream or hypnagogic experience is more symbolic and emotional compared to poetry written before sleep. In addition, the

writing process after sleep, as well as after the six-week intervention, was improved in terms of flow, rhythm, exploration of new avenues, the nature of starting points, and the creative approach. Both experimental studies – Studies 3 and 4 – showed that dreams often bypass the internal censor that operates during wakefulness, allowing for more genuine and uninhibited creative expression. Furthermore, the non-linear and often illogical nature of dreams encouraged a more fluid and expansive approach to creativity. Moreover, participants reported a positive shift in other aspects of their waking-lives, with some claiming to have gained a more creative perspective on life in general. Both conditions for creativity – originality and usefulness – were satisfied and improved post sleep and after the whole intervention.

Therefore, the revised model proposed at the beginning of this research is depicted in Figure 28. It is suggested that this model can be applied to the wider writing community, with the possibility of extending it to other creative domains, such as music composition and visual art. Depending on the level of one's dreaming ability, certain aspects of this model could be refined, with the more experienced dreamers setting specific intentions and looking for specific answers inside their dreams, and the less experienced dreamers keeping their intentions general and non-specific, taking bigger leaps and being more free with the creative interpretation of their dreams relating to their writing.

Figure 28

The Dream-Inspired Model of Creative Writing (DICW).



The Dream-Inspired Model of Creative Writing (DICW) proposes that the idea generation, revising of ideas, and their development all happen in a dream state, which is then translated to the waking mind in a gradually conscious process. The model is based on a combination of conscious and unconscious processes, which must happen together, in a more or less linear but circular way, with conscious guidance of the unconscious and vice versa. The steps one should take in this model are outlined below.

1. The writer should first engage in a lucid dreaming induction practice, which should be active throughout the creative process. LD induction mixed techniques include reality testing, WBTB (optional but very effective if used in combination with MILD), MILD, and dream journaling. This model proposes a few additions to this established practice. Firstly, the writer should try to induce lucid dreams without using it creatively. The length of this practice depends on the individual's progress with the

LD induction training. It is proposed here that the writer should wait until they have at least one lucid dream per week before moving onto the next step.

2. A creative intention should be added to the MILD technique once the writer has experienced one LD a week for three consecutive weeks. This time will allow one to learn how to stabilise the lucid dream and experience all the fun activities, such as flying, before performing a creative task in LD., The writer should set a creative intention to find their new idea, to develop their existing idea further (e.g., invite a character from their story into their dream and interact with them in order to further develop this character; search for a location for their story; look for symbolic representation of the concepts from their writing, etc.), and to problem solve (e.g. find a new ending for their story; rewrite lines from their poem, etc.).

2.1. In a lucid dream, the writer should actively repeat this intention and interact with the dream to work on the creative task⁵.

3. As the writer is drifting off to sleep, they should remain consciously aware of this transition into the dream, noticing any hypnagogic experiences as they are falling asleep. This state can be used to enter a lucid dream as well. The writer should think about their creative writing in this state, noticing any ideas that might be connected to their writing. The writer can record these ideas if they offer insight, solutions, or novelty, or they can choose to follow the experience into a (lucid) dream.

4. Before fully waking, the writer should stay in bed, with their dream, and remember the intention they had set before going to sleep. The writer should try to remain in the liminal state for as long as possible, thinking about the dream(s) from that night and any liminal experiences they are witnessing in the context of their creative writing and the creative intention they had set. Waking up, the writer should record their dreams, liminal experiences, and morning thoughts in a dream journal. The dream should be

⁵ Some of the advanced LD techniques for creativity, such as asking dream characters for ideas and giving them specific tasks, or recreating a scene from a story, may not be possible for inexperienced lucid dreamers. Therefore, these are not included in the DICW model, as in order to practice them, one would need to develop their LD skills to a higher degree first.

recorded⁶ as remembered without conscious and rational intervention, i.e., rationalising the dream and trying to make sense of it. Dreams have their own logic, and the writer should not try to impose the waking-life logic on the dream while recording it. Doing so runs the risk of missing or misinterpreting important messages from the dream if their so-called ‘inner editor’ intervenes too early.

4. Once the dream and liminal experiences are recorded, the writer can practise the morning writing technique. This should be free writing, i.e. writing without stopping or lifting the pen, and without any conscious guidance. The writer should start with one minute and build it up over a few weeks until they reach ten minutes of uninterrupted free writing. This is an optional activity.

5. Later in the day, the writer should read back through the recording of their dream and liminal experience and analyse it within the context of their creative writing for which they set the intention. Dreams are symbolic representations and, especially if one is an inexperienced dreamer, the connections might not be obvious. Making remote associations between distinct concepts, ideas are creative and oftentimes novel, but this means that they might not be obviously linked to one’s creative work. Therefore, a conscious analysis of both the written work and the dream report should be conducted to identify any potential ideas, answers, and insights from the dream relating to the writing in progress. If no connections are identified, but the writer is currently working on other creative writing for which they did not set an intention, they should look for connections between the dream report and their other writing. This practice should especially be done at the end of the week, when multiple dream reports should be combined and analysed.

5.1. Where possible, once a week or once a month, the writer should partake in a group activity where they should share their writing and dreams for feedback from the group. This practice aids motivation and maintains one’s interest in the practice, and it offers further insights into both dreams and the writing that the writer might have missed on their own. If a group setting is not

⁶ Tip: If possible, make an audio recording of your dream with your eyes closed. If writing it down instead, do not pay attention to punctuation or repeating words; this doesn’t matter at this stage and will only divert you from the already-fleeting memory of your dream.

possible, the writer should share their dreams with a partner, friends or family, in order to identify any connections between dreams and their writing that they might have missed in their own analysis. Ullman's method for dream interpretation is advised.

6. With the insights from the dreams and liminal experiences, the writer should work on their creative writing, implementing ideas, developing the writing, and revising where necessary. The revising part of the process is conscious and should include rational thinking or the so-called 'inner editor', with one's audience in mind in order to convey their dream ideas in an appropriate way.

6.1. The creative writing that emerges from a dream experience can also be analysed to further understand the symbolic language, emotion, or the message that the dream offered. This interpretation through creative expression can also benefit from group engagement.

7. The writer should read their creative writing before going to sleep and identify the key aspect of their work in progress on which they wish to work. Following this, an intention should be defined (e.g. "I will better understand my protagonist tonight.") and phrased in an easy-to-remember way.

8. Going back to step number two, the writer should set their creative intention as part of their MILD technique while falling asleep, following the other steps in order.

An inexperienced dreamer and every writer who is first introduced to this model should spend more time practising step number one before moving onto the next steps. In addition, not all steps need to be followed, especially not in the beginning of this practice, and the creative intention does not need to change every night. If the writer wishes to spend multiple nights incubating a certain idea or working on a certain problem, or if they cannot recall any dreams in the morning, they can repeat the same intention as many times as they find necessary. Similarly, the writer does not need to analyse their dreams every day but can do so at the end of the week instead, if the daily practice proves to be tiring or overwhelming for the writer. The most important thing while practicing these steps is that the writer enjoys the process and has an emotionally

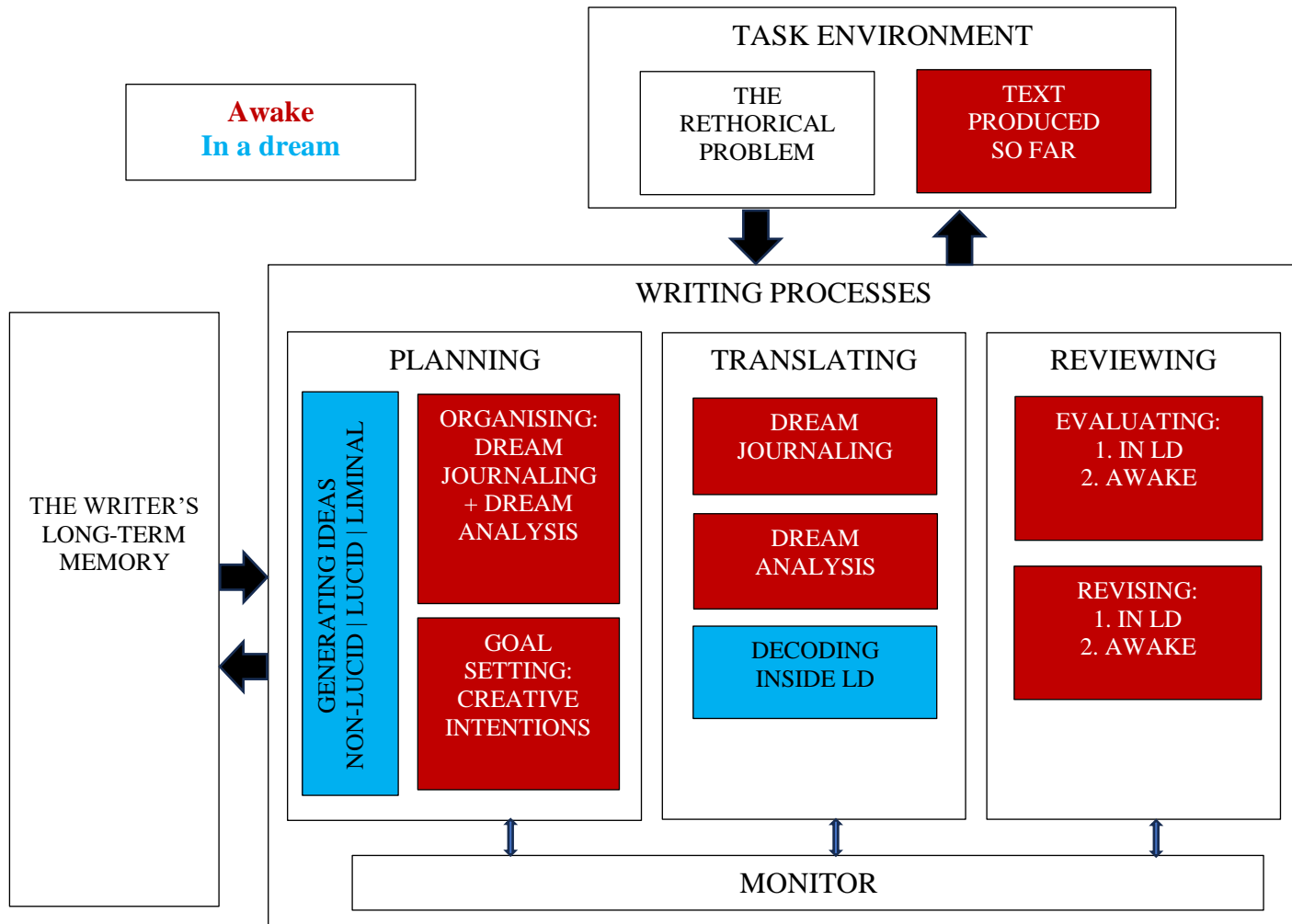
or otherwise satisfying experience. If the process at any point becomes daunting, the writer should simplify the steps or take a break. Without the enjoyment, positive results are unlikely to happen, and forcing the experience (both dream and creative) may not yield results. In this research, participants who embraced a playful and exploratory attitude reported higher satisfaction and better creative outcomes.

21.2. Cognitive Process Theory of Writing Revised

The most widely used and cited cognitive theory of writing is Flower and Hayes (1981), which has since been revised multiple times, yet none of the revisions are as popular as the original model. This revision does not change the original processes that Flower and Hayes' theory proposes, but it suggests a different approach to these cognitive processes. The DICW model suggests that one planning process and one translating process should happen in the dreamworld. The two reviewing processes, two planning processes, and most of the translating process takes place while the writer is awake, with the possibility to review the creative work in an LD as well. This way, there is a true collaboration between the conscious and the unconscious, with the more rational processes taking place in the waking world. Figure 29 illustrates the proposed revision.

Figure 29

The Cognitive Process Theory of Writing Revised according to The Dream-Inspired Model of Creative Writing (DICW).



Goals for the rhetorical problem are set while the writer is awake. They formulate an intention, such as “I will find an idea for my new story tonight,” and they implement it before going to sleep, as part of the MILD technique. These goals are actively revised based on new insights and the progression of the text produced so far. Prompted by the creative intention set by the writer, idea generation happens in either a non-lucid or a lucid dream or in a liminal state. These ideas are then translated (e.g. from an abstract dream image to written language) as one writes them down in a dream journal. They are further translated during dream analysis, when the writer makes sense of the symbolic representations and the dream language in their waking hours. Translating of dream ideas and concepts into language can also happen inside a lucid

dream, when the writer becomes aware that they are dreaming and consciously attempts to decode the dream message by zooming in on the details, asking the dream for an explanation, through felt experiences, or by interacting with the dream environment. Upon waking, these ideas are organised in a dream journal and through dream analysis. Finally, the two processes of reviewing can take place in both states. The writer engages in creative problem solving and evaluates their ideas in the waking hours, as an original idea generated in a dream needs to be assessed for the usefulness requirement in order to be creative. In other words, a dream idea must be assessed for its appropriateness for the task, that is, the creative writing for which it is intended. It can then be applied, rejected, or revised depending on the results of the evaluation. In a dream, the writer can become lucid and evaluate the ideas that they were writing in their waking hours. For example, they can recreate a scene or interact with a character to evaluate the emotional impact or effectiveness of their written ideas. Based on the outcome, the writer can choose to accept, reject, or revise this idea inside the dream.

21.3. The Therapeutic Model

Hartmann (1995; 1998) believed that dreams can offer therapeutic benefits by integrating emotional experiences and facilitating emotional regulation without the need for a therapist. This view aligns with findings that dream recall and interpretation can lead to personal insights and emotional healing. According to the emotional regulation theory of dreaming, we experience and process emotions, especially negative ones, at night in various dream scenarios (Zhang et al., 2024; Hartmann et al., 2001; Carthwright, 2006; Malinowski & Horton, 2015). Therefore, dreams are frequently used in cognitive therapy (Knox, Hill, Hess, & Crook-Lyon, 2008; Hill et al., 2007; Freeman & White, 2002; Hill, 1996; Hill, 2003) as diagnostic and treatment tools, as dreams represent strong metaphors for irrational beliefs that dreamers often overlook in their waking lives (Barrett, 2002). Blagrove et al. (2019) found that dreams offer significantly greater insight than do daydreams for waking life issues, which they suggest is produced by embodied and metaphorical thinking in dreams. Pesant and Zadra (2004) explore different approaches, offer empirical evidence, and provide guidelines for conducting dream work in therapy. Since the focus of this research is

not the therapeutic application, this section will not go into detail about various therapeutic approaches, but it will offer an addition to the current models used in cognitive therapy. This addition is creative exploration of the dream in a group setting and with an expert facilitator, or on one's own.

In both experimental studies conducted for this research, the symbolic and emotional depth of dreams allowed writers to process personal issues and emotions, which in turn enriched their writing. Simply encouraging a deeper relationship with one's dreamworld yielded insight and a better understanding of one's own thoughts and emotions, while creatively expressing dreams in forms of fictional stories and poetry allowed for a freer, associative exploration of the dream's symbolism, emotions, and messages. Sharing this writing alongside their dream reports in a group setting aided further insight into these states and their inner worlds.

Developed as part of this research but tested across multiple workshops, including most recently monthly dream group with a group of therapists in Swansea, one exercise proved particularly useful in aiding insight and what was reported as 'cathartic' process. The exercise outlined below was first tested in 2022 as part of a one-off workshop with a group of Swansea residents and in partnership with a wellbeing and mindfulness teacher, and it was later incorporated in the Study 4 programme.

Express Your Dream Creatively Exercise:

- 1. Read through your dream report, paying attention to the feeling of the dream.*
- 2. Read through it again, circling words that resonate with a certain emotion, and write this emotion next to the circled words. (For example, the word "strange man" might become "fear" or the word "family" might become "joy", etc. There is no formula for this; it is entirely subjective depending on what each dream sign means to you.)*
- 3. Write these emotions down on a separate piece of paper and identify which emotion occurred the most frequently. The answer might be different from the feeling you identified in Step 1. (The group of therapists that did this exercise*

identified different emotions to what they thought their dreams were about, offering them deeper insight into their dreams' meaning.)

4. *Mindfulness exercise: close your eyes and become this emotion.*
5. *Use this emotion as a starting point for a short story or poem. This can become your title or the first word that you write.*
6. *Share this piece of creative writing with a group. Then share your dream. Use interpretation techniques to gain further insight into your dream and emotional state.*

If a writer does not know how to practice mindfulness or does not have a group available, they can still try this exercise without steps 4 and 6. They can simply reflect on their creative writing and compare it to their dream report to identify any symbols, emotions, or messages that they may have missed. They may also find that the creative writing provides answers to the questions with which the dream had left them.

This exercise can be further developed and personalised depending on one's needs and interests, and applied in different group settings, from therapy to dream groups. For example, combining art therapy with this approach, whereby one would draw their dream, or turning the dream into a song could be equally beneficial if that is the participant's preferred mode of creative expression. This approach needs further investigation to assess its effectiveness across both creative people and the general population, and its place in the current therapeutic models.

22. Implications for Creativity Research

22.1. The Role of Memory

Throughout history and especially in the modern day, creativity has been critical for our evolution as a society. But what exactly creativity is, how we can assess it, and therefore how exactly we can improve upon it, remains a challenge in creativity research. However, we can say with confidence that memory plays a key role in generating creative ideas, which are a result of goal-directed memory processes (e.g.

MemiC framework in Benedek et al., 2023). Recent research has suggested that associative thinking lies at the core of creativity, and highlights its role in the early stages of idea generation (Beaty & Kenett, 2023; Benedek et al., 2023). The more creative an individual is, research suggests that they make bigger leaps in making associations between distinct concepts in their memory. The present research thus proposes a new direction in creativity research, which employs the dreaming mind in the early stages of idea generation, as well as the early stages of problem solving, due to the dreaming mind's cognitive ability to create more remote associations.

22.2. The Role of Dreams

Dreams are a subconscious playground full of symbols, ideas, and emotions. We immerse ourselves in this realm every night. However, we forget most if not all of these dreams, and for those that we do remember, most if not all of their content is lost in translation from this dream-driven logic of the subconscious narrative to the rational mind. Going through this rational filter as we automatically attempt to make sense of the dream content, ideas lose their magic. In other words, translating novel ideas drafted in dreams to the waking mind loses the level of free abstraction that enables such abstraction in the first place. Ward, Patterson, & Sifonis, (2004) found that when participants were tasked to imagine a new alien species, they took the path-of-least-resistance by building a new species on the foundation of known animals, thus accessing their knowledge at the basic level of abstraction. The proposed computational models offer a solution that presents an important gap – the objective measures do not take into account an individual's long-term memory and subjective knowledge of distinct concepts, which is a key component of cognitive models of creativity, and especially creative writing.

The present research looked into the possibility of consciously immersing ourselves in this subconscious playground and thus increasing dream recall and decoding dream material in the dreamworld where the conscious meets the subconscious and all meaning and logic is still intact, saved from the translational loss. Imagine your conscious awareness driven by rational thought and waking-life logic immersed in the dream world with its own logic (e.g. different laws of physics, interrupted or lost linear

structure of time and space, never-before-seen creatures that couldn't exist in your waking world, etc.), giving you the opportunity to observe and interact with it consciously, enabling you to understand this world as it unfolds. It was hypothesised that on the brink of lucidity, either in REM dreams or liminal states, one would be able to understand, direct, and evaluate ideas created in this realm better than they are upon transitioning into the waking state. Applying associative thinking based on Beaty and Kenett's (2023) creative perspective, Hartmann's (1996) outline for a theory on the nature and functions of dreaming, Malinowski and Horton's (2015) emotion assimilation function of sleep and dreaming, and Zadra and Stickgold's (2021) NEXTUP model, methods for focusing and directing dreams to produce ideas and solve problems identified by our waking minds were also proposed and tested. Finally, interpreting the dream content that came as a response to these creative intentions was discussed as a non-linear and non-literal process, with writers' increased connection to their dreamworld through LD induction practice, dream journaling, and creative expression linked to increased understanding and the ability to decode dream content in the appropriate context. Therefore, even though advanced techniques for interacting with and decoding dream content in a fully lucid dream might not be readily available to beginner dreamers, it is evident from this research that simple engagement with the proposed DICW model components helps writers form a more meaningful, proactive, and revealing relationship with the dreamworld that in turn positively impacts their creativity.

22.3. The Four P's

What this means for creativity research exactly is yet to be explored. However, it is proposed here that instead of developing computational and other models, such as those for combining concepts, to increase creative output based on associative thinking, creativity research should focus on holistic and long-term methods for shaping creative thinking that focuses on internal processes rather than external inputs. Nurturing creativity in this way may aid associative thinking of an individual as a whole, rather than focusing on enhancing task-specific creative thinking. The present research focused on task-specific creativity in the sleep lab, albeit combined with six

weeks (Study 4) and eight weeks (Study 3) of LD induction training resulting in creative effects participants recognised beyond the specific task.

Furthermore, this kind of approach could be applied across creative domains as well as scientific fields, where novel idea generation and creative problem solving plays a key role in innovation and social transformation. In other words, this model is aimed at building a creative person rather than a creative work. It addresses all four P's (Rhodes, 1961), such that it improves the creative Process, which develops the creative Person, who then produces increasingly creative Products, all of which affects the "the relationship of human beings and their environment" or the Press.

23. Implications for Dream Research

23.1. The Function of Dreams

The findings from this research suggest a creative, insightful, and social role of dreams in people's waking lives, supporting Bulkeley's *Dreaming as Play* theory (2004; 2008), Blagrove's *Empathy Theory* and *Insight Theory* (Blagrove et al., 2021), Schredl's *Recall Benefits* (Schredl, 2006; 2008), Hartmann's associative theory (1996), and Zadra and Stickgold's *NEXTUP* model (2021). Dreams indeed seem to serve as an experiential playground as per Bulkeley's theory, and produce creative ideas, especially when focused, which corresponds to the suggestion that dreaming minds apply a different kind of associative thinking (making weak instead of strong associations) as per the Hartmann (1996) and *NEXTUP* (2021) models. In addition, when recalled and analysed, dreams offer insight into waking life events and emotional states, and when further shared in a group setting, they seem to have a social function and produce further insight into the dreamer's inner world. The creativity eliciting aspect of dreaming may be related to these other proposed functions, as all of these features are based on a mechanism of loose associations. As discussed in the previous section, the creative role of dreams is evident in the application of dreams for creative purposes, as well as the reflection of dreaming practice on a more creative outlook on life. However, whether dreams have a creative function in and of themselves, or

whether this function emerges upon recall, sharing, or creative application of dreams is not clear.

23.2. *Are Dreams Creative?*

Blagrove et al. (2013) suggest that there is a lack of intentionality in dream imagery creation, and the usual lack of control and deliberation in such dream formation is compounded by the fragile nature of dream memory, which requires encoding upon waking. Research suggests that at least some dreams are creative (e.g. Schredl & Erlacher, 2010; Morgan, 2009; Barrett, 2017). However, to answer the question of whether *all* dreams are creative, we must keep in mind the two criteria of creativity, originality and usefulness. The first of these might well be satisfied in dreams due to the associative thinking element, but the second may be dependent upon the evaluation of the dream idea by the waking mind. In other words, the ideas generated in dreams might be original, but when applied to a waking-life problem, they might not be useful and thus cannot be considered creative. This is evident from many examples from this research, where participants found original ideas in their dreams that did not work for their stories or poems, and which did not resonate upon recall in the morning as much as they did in the dream. However, it is possible that the connection was simply missed or misinterpreted upon waking. In addition, the profound impact of these ideas inside the dream carried over to the waking world, and this inspired participants, thus indirectly influencing their creativity or wish to be creative in a positive way. Therefore, even the ideas that are perhaps not inherently creative in dreams seem to have a creative and inspiring effect on recall and may give benefits with purposeful application through creative expression. Therefore, whether or not dreams are creative in and of themselves, they certainly seem to aid waking-life creativity, and especially when focused through lucid and liminal dreaming supported by creative incubation (e.g. Horowitz et al., 2023). The DICW model developed through the present research proposes a novel way of combining these techniques with the waking-life thought application in order to make dream ideas both original and useful, and thus creative.

23.3. Waking Life Continuity

In order to solve waking-life problems and generate ideas concerning waking-life events, dreams must incorporate waking-life thoughts. Indeed, the ‘continuity hypothesis’ suggests that dreams have meaning because of the way they reflect waking-life concerns and because of the insights they provide for waking life (e.g. Domhoff, 1996; Pesant & Zadra, 2005; Schredl, 2006; 2015; Malinowski et al., 2014). The findings of the present research are consistent with the continuity hypothesis, as reflected in the high number of obvious connections between poems written before and after sleep and the dreams and hypnagogic experiences occurring between them in Study 4 of this research. The present research thus presents examples of thoughts before sleep emerging in dreams, such as motives from poetry written before sleep appearing in dreams, and further being carried over to creative work post sleep. The identified connections between the poems written before and after sleep may be a result of the emotional attachment to certain memories (e.g. Van Rijn et al., 2016). The appearance of poetry elements in dreams and hypnagogic experiences may also be explained by the dream rebound effect of suppressed thoughts in waking gaining expression during dreams (Wegner et al., 2004; Bryant et al., 2011).

Furthermore, incubating creative ideas at home, participants across Study 3 and Study 4 successfully carried their waking-life thoughts into the dream and focused their problem solving towards these ideas. Setting creative intentions before sleep at home, participants reported a “dream-lag” effect, which involves a delayed incorporation of waking experiences into dreams, occurring 5 to 7 days after the initial experience (Nielsen et al., 2004), while others reported a more immediate incorporation of waking events, known as "day residues." Therefore, this research suggests that there is a continuity of waking-life thoughts in dreams, and that these can be focused by targeted sleep incubation (e.g. Horowitz, 2023), guided liminal experiences, and lucid dreaming with targeted creative intentions before sleep and inside dreams.

23.4. Lucid Dreaming Induction

The two experimental studies (Studies 3 & 4) suggest that a group setting, combined with creative tasks that allows one to discuss and express their dreams while deepening their relationship with the dreamworld, aids the motivation to continue the LD induction training despite the lack of perceived success with inducing lucid dreams. Therefore, future studies that involve lucid dreaming induction training should consider implementing group sessions and creative exercises in their programme in order to increase LD induction success rate among their participants. The creative aspect of this programme is particularly significant, implying that by nurturing creative expression of dreams, people are more likely to induce lucid dreams. This could be the result of increased creativity, as research suggests a strong correlation between creativity and LD (Blagrove & Hartnell, 2000), but it could also be due to the increased interest in the programme as one engages in interesting exercises and produces subjectively perceived meaningful work. From a practical and outcome point of view such increased interest and group work may augment creativity, although from a solely scientific point of view it does lead to the possibility that some effects are due to a demand characteristic due to these high expectations and positivity (McCambridge et al., 2012).

24. Future Directions

In addition to the implications for both creativity and dream research, below are some suggestions for future research based on the present findings.

24.1. Creatives vs. General Population for LD Induction

Study 3 found an 83% success rate in inducing lucid dreams at home, which is notably higher than the 62.5% in the subsequent study, suggesting the importance of focusing on LD induction before implementing creative techniques. However, this was still significantly higher than previous studies, mainly Saunders et al. (2017) who saw a

45% success rate during their 12-week intervention. Future studies should develop an intervention of at least the same duration as used by Saunders (12 weeks), with a control group consisting of non-creatives and a group of creatives in order to test whether the creative people would induce more lucid dreams. In addition, another control group could consist of non-creative people conducting creative exercises and/or participating in creative workshops in a group setting to test whether this would have a positive effect on LD induction for non-literary creatives.

24.2. Technological Integration

One of the key challenges experienced in Study 3 was the dropout rate caused by a decreased motivation shortly after the start of the LD induction training at home. In Study 4, this was mitigated by creative tasks and group engagement that kept the process interesting and engaging for participants. However, for study 4 this meant that the focus was taken away from the LD training even though more participants persisted. This is evident in a lower success rate in inducing LDs among those that completed the study (62.5% as opposed to 83% in Study 3), although this might have been due to the shorter duration of the intervention as well. The integration of technology, such as dream recording devices and lucid dreaming induction tools such as Dormio (Horowitz et al., 2023; Carr et al., 2020), could enhance the practice of dream work. Future research should explore the role of technology in facilitating and enhancing dream work for creative purposes. For instance, using wearable devices to monitor sleep stages and trigger dream recall could provide more precise and actionable insights for creative professionals. It would also enable lucidity to be objectively verified by pre-arranged eye movement signals from the lucid dream state.

24.3. Integrating Dream Work into Writing Curricula

Writing programs and workshops can incorporate dreamwork practices outlined in this thesis into their curricula. Mainly, the DICW model can be directly applied to writers wishing to explore authentic writing as opposed to the standardised practices taught in most creative writing programmes. By teaching writers how to use dreams as a source of inspiration and creativity, these programs can enhance the overall quality of creative

writing. Studies 3 and 4 highlighted the benefits of structured dream work for this, suggesting that incorporating these practices into literary educational settings can foster a more holistic approach to creative writing.

24.4. Expanding the Model for Other Creative Domains

While these studies focused primarily on the creative writing domain, future research should explore the impact of dream work on creativity in other fields, such as visual arts, music, and scientific innovation. Some participants in the present research reported benefits in other domains such as painting and music, however, these were limited due to the focus of the studies. Understanding how dreams influence different types of creative processes can broaden the applicability of these findings and provide insights into the universal aspects of creativity. The DICW model could be expanded to incorporate cognitive abilities for the domain-general creativity, with its foundation in associative thinking, which is a domain-general cognitive ability. The only aspect of the DICW model that needs to be changed for other creative domains is the *Morning Writing* technique, which could become, for example, a “Morning Drawing” technique. However, *Morning Writing* could still be applied to other domains, especially the free writing aspect of it, which pertains to the process of idea exploration rather than the production of creative writing itself. Future studies should thus test the DICW model with groups of creative people from other domains to assess the scope of its applicability.

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APPENDIX A – Study 1

A1

It was a dream where I came up a hill and there was a gallows on top of this hill with birds all flying around it. There was a hangman there. He had died, not by having his neck broken, but by strangulation. I could tell because his face was all puffy and purple. And as I came close to him he opened his eyes, reached his hands out and grabbed me. (Stephen King in Epel, p. 135)

A2

When I write I fall into a state where I access all of that. I'm still trying to capture that feeling of standing up there and putting up my hands and calling down the rain (Anne Rice in Epel, p. 214).

And the fear and the horror that rose up in me from the information about this vicious creature in the room with the child created such heart-thumping and sweating that I immediately started cataloguing my physical symptoms so that later, in describing Kinsey in a moment of great terror, I could use that information (Sue Grafton in Epel, p. 61).

A3

Dreams as Starting Points

Author	Dream Name	Genre
Arthur Spiegelman	Tin Can Man	Comic Strip
	Nazi Party	Comic Strip
Maurice Sendak	Mother and Child	Illustrated Book
John Sayles	Assholes	Movie
	Bigfoot	
	Alien	
James W. Hall	Premature Burial	Poem
	Dark Carriage	Poem
Jack Prelutsky	Vegetable Man	Poem
	Elephant Ball	Poem
	Musical Garden	Poem
Reynolds Price	Closet Crucifixion	Poem
Clive Barker	Strawberries	Short Story
Allan Gurganus	Wings	Short Story

Dreams Used for Problem-Solving

Author	Dream Name	Genre
Jack Prelutsky	Ending	Poems
Stephen King	Ending	Novel
	Setting	Novel
Bharati Mukherjee	Ending	Novels (2)
Amy Tan	Ending	Novel
Anne Rivers Siddons	Climax	Novel
	Resolution	Novel
	Character Function	Novel
Isabel Allende	Metaphor	Novel
	Tone	Novel
Art Spiegelman	Narrative flow	Comic Book
	Visualization	Comic Book

Other Dreams

Author	Dream Name	Genre
New Experiences		
Maya Angelou		Experiment
Bharati Mukherjee	Wings	Metaphor
Sue Grafton	Monster Dog	Physical symptoms
Ann Rice	Flying	Deepens sensuous aspects
Mysteries		
Robert Stone	Outerbridge	Evocative image
Character Development		
Anne Rivers Siddons	Scratch	Function
Amy Tan	Insight	Emotional Level
Maurice Sendak	Opera	Raise emotions
Monitor Process		
Isabel Allende	Grandmother	Monitor process
Maya Angelou	Arc de	
	Triomphe	Monitor process
	Small Town	Monitor process
Establish Priorities		
Ann Rice	Flying	
	Typewriter	Confirm project
Maurice Sendak		Resolve ambivalence
Amy Tan		Set priorities
Reflect Creative Process		
John Barth	Subtitles	Dictation
James W. Hall	Words	Lecture
James W. Hall	Morgue	Book tour
Leonard Michaels	Tongue	Style
Ann Rice	Lestat	Character

A4

Finding a shape for the story was enormously satisfying. I wrote twenty-two pages and then boiled it down to three and a half pages. Partly because of the requirements of the composer but also it was such a joy to have been given this kernel of something and then to develop it and to find its larger meaning (Allan Gurganus in Epel, p. 95).

A5

You know it's funny, Scratch, a black character in King's Oak, showed up in one of my dreams (Anne Rivers Siddons in Epel, p. 240)

It was a pitch black night and I was with Claudia, the child vampire (Anne Rice in Epel, p. 217).

A6

I don't normally see my characters in dreams exactly as they appear in a book, but I do experience a similar kind of feeling or emotion, something that gives me new insight into the questions that I'm asking of these characters. (Amy Tan in Epel, p. 285)

APPENDIX B – Study 2

B1

For my three books, I have dreamt the whole plot including characters, places, even emotions as my dreams often play out like a full-blown movie. – SS

I dream movies, I swear it. Main characters that aren't me, new species, and its own story line. I get everything. Plot, characters, setting, in world physics and conflicts, even the names. – EG

The dream laid out the scenario (robots everywhere, having to hide from them), the main love triangle, how the hero and heroine met, and some elements of how the robots worked, all in one key scene. – Kali Vicci Ravel

I did a poem when I was about 15, I was sitting on a beach on the west of Ireland, and I could hear this, I could feel the ground trembling. And there was the shouting and screaming, all of a sudden, a horse went right over my head. With this chap on it bareback, wild hair, and that comes back as a dream. And he went straight into the sea, on the horse. And that comes back a lot. [...] But in that dream, I'm with the horse and the rider swimming next to him. And I can see my face in the eye of the horse. [...] I can still remember the horse coming out of the sea. And you know, when all those bits of water like diamonds, you know how you can almost stop as it comes out of the water and just seeing that... – Mike Stephenson

B2

I've had new ideas completely isolated from previous writings and stories come to me in a dream and I've had tons of smoothing out of troubles I've had with scripts or outlines, or relationships, or scenes, or dialogue, etc from lucid and non-lucid dreaming. – James Croak

Out of the total of my books I would say that two have started because of lucid dreams, but many have been affected by dreaming while I have been in the middle of a book.

– Michael Jecks

As well as the full novel ideas, I have been fortunate to dream up fresh ideas for my novels. I have always assumed that if the novel is on my mind when I go to bed, my dream can progress on from what is already in my thoughts. – SS

B3

There was one particular one that I had. If you can imagine a pond or something as dried up, and there's just the weeds and they're like, the stems of white from where they've been under the water. I had that dream that was about a river that dried off, or something, and I wrote a story on that. But then it ended up going into like a novella size really and it was about the lake draining. – WG

B4

There's a reoccurring dream I have of going to a place that looks a little bit like Sicily. There's like a big hotel there and there's a beach. And there's like a massive back sort of conscious sea that almost looks like a tsunami, but it's moving really, really slowly. But it's like a living, breathing kind of conscious thing. And it can speed up if the people that are needed are scared or have trepidation, you know, the sea reflects the emotion, which I think, I think that's quite common in dreams anyway, that the water reflects emotion. – Adriana Polito

B5

Having a background in dyslexia, my whole life has been about problem solving. You know, having to try and translate what I was learning into my own language, translate it in a kinesthetic way. [...] We think that if you dream about a fish, it means that X, Y, and Z and actually, I think we tailor our meaning to whatever a fish is, whatever a

bicycle is. And we have our own language, internal language dialogue, that connects and associates emotion to a concept, or a feeling or whatever, and that we then use as our own internal universal sort of symbolic language, that we then utilise to sort of navigate through meaning and problem solving. – Matt Price

I've always written a lot of poems. And the first one I wrote about a dream was one of my recurrent dreams, an anxiety dream about a hotel. And not being able to find my room, not being able to find the correct floor, the lifts have been problematic. And so I wrote a fairly surreal poem about that, which appeared only a few years ago. And my most recent story had three of my own dreams in it. – Chris Morgan

"I'm dreaming of a large hotel I know I've stayed in but I can't quite remember the name of. All large hotels are the same in that you can spend hours walking all the way round a floor before finding your own room or the lift. And the stairs are always hidden.

So I'm walking along a stuffy corridor with no windows. Eventually it makes me turn left, but still no windows. Lights go on and off. The corridor is narrower now. I can see that all the doors are without numbers, just a couple of small holes at head height where the number should be.

The lucid dreaming part of me knows this is all about anxiety. But I'm not anxious, am I? I'm just turning left again and again in a dim, narrowing corridor with plenty of doors to rooms but no numbers. Where's the worry in that? Perhaps I should open one of the doors and it will immediately become my room.

Suddenly I'm in a lift which seems to be going up. I press buttons for "stop" and "down". The lift continues going up slowly. All the buttons for floors are labelled "5". I press one at random and the lift stops. The door opens onto darkness, which I don't fancy, and eventually closes again. I remain inside it. Why do we always choose light instead of dark?

I notice now that this is a brightly-lit lift with mirrors all round, none of them reflecting me or my anxiety.

Jump-cut and I'm running along a carpeted corridor. I keep on having to slow to turn left. And now the corridor is soggy underfoot and I'm splashing through marsh, and when I look at the walls I can see there are shadowy trees on both sides of the path I'm following. Not very Tunisian. Their roots cross the path and I trip over one.

I feel myself staggering for several paces before I fall. With a big splash I land and turn over, so I am lying on my back with water over me. Will I drown? No, the water seems to have gone, or at least receded. I don't feel at all wet.

Then, as I look up, I notice that a tree is growing out of my chest or stomach. I'm not good on trees but it looks just like the trees on either side. It seems to be a couple of metres in height, though it doesn't hurt me. And I can feel my roots digging themselves into the soft ground beneath.

I raise my head while I can and look about me. Every tree in the forest is growing out of the body of a young woman.

You can have no idea of the terror this creates inside me, as I wake up.” – Excerpt from “Satin Dreams”, a short story by Chris Morgan

SPRINGTIME IN THE HOUSE OF ESCHER by Chris Morgan

*The hotel is a hollow square;
random room numbers; vengeful
lifts. I tramp the carpeted
corridors by night (or by day:
no windows) seeing no-one, but
ascending gradually to a summit
of anxiety. Round each corner
is cigarette smoke, diffusing.*

*Walls and carpet (I can touch
all three) are Laura Ashley bulbs,
forty watt, frequently flickering,
so patterns change, live, fly off.
I search for you, for your room,
for the key, for an exit. Mirrors
confront me without reflecting
my concern or my state of mind.*

*Sometimes I am in your room,
massaging, looking up or down at you*

*as you change your clothes, your face,
draw yourself drawing yourself; or
sleep to dream serially between
glancing at the illuminated alarm
clock on the bedside table, which
signals the end of each dreamtime.*

*The hotel dreams it is infinite,
but still expanding, rooms dividing
like cells, into cells, growing
smaller beds, fewer hangers, noisier
plumbing. Replicating wallpaper,
curtains and pictures, same
programme on each channel; always
use room service; never leave me!*

*Sometimes the room holds several
beds on walls and ceiling, and when
the man comes in to wake us up
and pretends to draw the curtains
you hide your face but put out
on your bedside table a photo
of you taken in the spring,
when you smiled and still had hair.*

*Perhaps I should step through the
mirror, open any door or my eyes,
risk a lift to the outer world.
Or turn over to see the clock
before sliding back into chasing/being
chased along cunning corridors,
through treacle and past obstacles,
as blossom falls from seasonal trees.*

*Sometimes the hotel dreams of me,
or you, but it has no escape routes,
cannot awake, must forever circulate
on its own spring-carpet moebius trip.*

A delicious sense of health and freedom suffused my being — as though I'd become a wind gust magically endowed with awareness. And what awareness it was: I felt more clear-headed than ever before — as though I'd awakened from a lifelong drugged stupor. My sleeping body blazed with a cold, pale fire, emanating from within. Waves of light rippled across my face, making it flicker like candles. The strangest thing was the fire's color: an uncanny color not found in any Earthly color-chart or rainbow. It was crystal-clear, beautiful — and utterly alien. The bedding and other objects in the room also glowed with this unnatural light, but more faintly and steadily than I. For one thing, I felt wide-awake — more than awake, even. For another, my sensory impressions were unlike anything I'd ever experienced before. Curious, I slid through the wall — passing layers of stone, wooden studs, and plaster-board. I floated into a garden below and saw threads of colored light along tree trunks. — JS

B6

How It All Started

Do you know this dream? An exam-room
full of neat, serious girls, your lucky gonk
by your fountain pen, the plop of tennis balls
through an open window. You're here for
'O' level history on The Causes
Of The First World War but you've no idea -
too busy bunking off to watch *Crown Court*,
and the teacher says *You may turn over*

and begin and there's a question
on the Algeciras crisis and all you can think is,
Algeciras sounds like a virus or a cloud formation,
your eyes blur, scanning for something
you understand, you wonder who Bismarck was,
why his web of Alliances was so significant,
your throat swells like a new loaf, you watch
the girls who know the answers to these things,
and you think of the stutter of gunfire, a soldier's
booted foot lying in a puddle, how the leather split,
how the rest of him wasn't there, just a stump
of bone, and if you'd learned how it all started,
you might have known how to prevent this.
You should have known how to prevent this.

The Biting Point

Thirty years dead and still curmudgeonly,
my grandfather is driving me through
the fog-numbed streets of Crystal Palace
at five a.m. He's in the plaid dressing gown
he wore to die in, and he's shaved,
badly, dark blood flecking his chin.
We're the only Austin 1100 on the road;
he crunches through the gears,
blaming the damp, bad oil, the years
it sat cobwebbed in the garage.
He slows for the lights, not best pleased
when the engine stalls – no part of his plan,
I know, to crank the key three times before
the damned thing fires – he's often told me
a good driver knows a car's temperament
like the back of his hand. As a milk float
toots behind us, he mutters, frowns,

eases one foot off the clutch as the other
trembles over the accelerator.

*Listen to that! He's triumphant; the engine
warbles its surprise. Like opera!*

*That's known as the biting point, girl,
I'm just telling you so's when you get
a husband, you'll know what's what.*

We coast down Fountain Drive; the car
sighs and dreams, a purring baby now.

He sits straight, sliding the wheel for a bend,
as the BBC transmitter sparkles
and winks in the distance - the last thing
he ever mentioned, the last fixed light.

Back

If you go back, the kitchen will be
full of green water, you'll hear
the slow gulp as it swallows the table and chairs,
there'll be a dance of colanders,
wooden spoons. Upstairs
on the bathroom floor, the mermaid
will be dead, a husk of herself,
her poor scales dried to psoriasis,
and in your old room the cat
will squeeze blind, sticky kittens
into a box, where they will starve,
while the rats in the attic
grow to the size of Jack Russells. Even
the King-size marble with the
turquoise spiral will have smashed
falling from a shelf one wild night; don't
go back. Don't go back. The waters
are rising, there's nothing there

for you, stay here with me. Let others
shutter the house, wrap it, tip it
off the edge of the world.

- All three poems published in *Lip*

B7

I know that I have dreamt up fascinating concepts and ideas while asleep, which have massively impressed me, and which have left a lasting influence - and which I have completely lost and forgotten in a matter of minutes after waking! If there was a way to dream lucidly and then fix that dream in my mind so that I can save it long enough to get to my keyboard, I have no doubt that it would - or could - be as important as conscious planning/plotting. – Michael Jecks

I'm sure that it would be a very useful tool for developing stories and characterisation. While sitting back and planning/plotting while awake and conscious is very effective for me, lucid dreaming may well offer a different approach that would add significantly to the process of creating stories. – Michael Jecks

If I could consistently enter into an LD to run a simulation on how my story would develop, I would definitely do it. – Daegon Magnus

If it was possible, sure. I tried to focus more on the feelings than the details of the dream since dreams get weird and have things with individual meaning to us. Someone else could have the exact same dream and it mean nothing to them. But yeah I'd go back and try to find out why I was in the labor camp, what caused the blast for the escape, how did John become a crime boss, and why did it make sense to go to him for help? – Ken Collins

Typically when I become lucid, my imagination gets stunted, and I invariably wake up not too much later. One exception being my Mountain Witch (song) dream, in which I was lucid. – JRS

I'm at my best when my subconscious runs rampant. My logic gets in the way of good ideas.

I don't lucid dream, ever. – Elisha Grant

I can lucid dream, but I find it hard to have original ideas. I can only think about things I've been thinking about while awake. My non-lucid dream ideas are more original, and then my waking mind figures out how to make sense of them. [...] Tbh, when I catch myself lucid dreaming, I usually just force my eyelids open and wake myself up. It feels weird - like typing with gloves on - but I can do it. – Kali Vicci Ravel

I don't know. I do a fine job of that in my waking life. I'm a virtual idea-factory! – Travis Seppala

B8

Over the years, what I tried to do increasingly in my lucid dreams was to actively explore my surroundings. So if I was in a building I would step outside. And I was curious to see what is there outside, what season it is early winter or summer, are there trees, is there traffic, who else is there, is there someone I know, is it warm... Now I still try to use lucid dreaming to work out plot points or ideas or see if it connects in any way to what I'm trying to write or do. – Antonio Zadra

Many times I know it's a dream but then I sort of direct and jump in and out as a character. It's just the way I've always dreamed. At least 3 times I woke up in the middle of the night, loved the dream but wasn't done with it. I went back to sleep and back to the dream. I have repeated a dream and like a director thought: let's do this instead, knowing it was a dream. I've made notes on some things and didn't write short stories but rather formatted them closer to essays or poems. The jumping in and out of participation and directing or just observing is how my mind seems to have always worked at night. – MT

B9

I started for like a 30 day period every night, I would think about what I wanted to continue to dream. And I then entered the REM sleep cycle, I was able to kind of build upon where I left off. Each day was segued into the next sequence. Sometimes I would spend more time going over and reviewing where I was up to that point. And then I would only add a little bit more to it. [...] What's kind of cool about the lucid dreaming concept too, is you're looking at it from different angles, you're re-evaluating it from a day-to-day sequence, so I was really thorough by entering my dream state where I kind of manipulate and control and I would do it from different angles, I would do it from the different eyes, from each character. With lucid dreaming, you can look at it from literally every angle and be able to see what other substories you can pull from it, because I feel like the more substories are there, the more layers to the onion, the better. – Owen Palmiotti

It's about getting inspiration for a plot hole, giving me a new direction, a slight change to structure, or a fresh character who can change the mood or plot. [...] I've been able to go back to the dream to continue it (occasionally), although more often I think I've returned to the same start-point and replayed the same dream sequence. I have gone down alternative routes sometimes - not terribly often, sadly. – Michael Jecks

B10

If you take a look at my novel, you'll recognize a lot of dream related elements, but you'll soon recognize one key character who's a direct adaptation from a character in my dreams, who has no bearing, as far as I can tell, to anyone in my waking environment. – Antonio Zadra

I looked up and saw the moon and decided to summon Clay. Clay is a character of mine who I've been writing about for about 15 years [...] So I know him well. [...] A door appeared and he stepped out. The first thing that surprised me was how he looked, which was both similar and quite different than how I've always imagined him. – JP

In many of my lucid dreams I used to have when I was a kid I would regularly interact with a dream character I called Lyra. When I wrote my first novel, I based the main character off the image I had of Lyra, and all of her emotions and how she would react to situations. – Daegon Goldau Magus

I lucid-dreamed to make her come to life again, engage in banter, tried recreate a person I had not thought about for a half century. She comes alive in the script, a larger character than real life. – JD

I looked up and saw the moon and decided to summon Clay. Clay is a character of mine who I've been writing about for about 15 years, though the most recent 'Stars of Clay' story is the first that has been developed this far. So I know him very well. However, before this dream, I had never thought to summon him before, though he did appear to me a few months ago in another dream where I was trying to summon my spirit guide Sam. A door appeared and he stepped out. The first thing that surprised me was how he looked, which was both similar and quite different than how I've always imagined him. I've always seen him as how I look, but here he appeared like a mixture of me and a young Peter Capaldi. Capaldi played Dr. Who, a television character which the most recent version of Clay was heavily influenced by. We both went back through the door and I became a third person observer of a very doctor who-ish adventure. – JP

Contact with other non-physical entities is one of the strongest elements I have also incorporated into the main plot points. [...] I will sometimes use settings that I have been to during an LD. For example, in *Dreaming Demons*, Alex Jones (Lyra) has an encounter with a dream being who teaches her how to properly lucid dream and explore different worlds within the astral plane. It turns out that this being is the Goetic demon/spirit Toratsah (Astaroth) who is teaching her these skills which she will eventually put to use in a war that is being fought in the non-physical planes. – Daegon Goldau Magus

I had him as dream characters to do drawings for him. He does these lucid dreams but again the answers he gets from his dream characters are very unpredictable put it that way. He had this one gentleman he asked: look, here's a piece of paper and a pencil, would you mind doing a drawing for me? And the guy goes: oh, no no no, I can't. And Dave said: well why not? He goes: I'm from Czechoslovakia. Now Dave was able to find a weird associations between the colours of his clothing and the Czech flag, but again completely unexpected. He had this one woman who said: oh no problem, and then she gave this whole story of how she had taken drawing lessons as a kid and that she was actually very good at drawing. Then the drawing she gives him is just a series of letters and numbers, and so Dave complains in the dream and says well this isn't the drawing. She goes: Yes, it is but you have to figure out the key. Right, so there's a key to unlock what these codes mean. – Antonio Zadra

My intrigue is always from the perspective that I don't know what this or any other dream character, for that matter, will say or do next in my dream, even in my lucid dreams. But they're created by my brain, so my brain knows because whatever words are coming out of their mouth my brain has decided those are the words. But I had no idea. So, this always interests me like when I asked dream characters questions or when they say something perplexing, you're kinda surprising yourself, that's how I like to think about it. Because your brain is doing this but is keeping a lot of material outside of your immediate awareness. So this character tried to convince me that this lucid dream wasn't a dream. I had later dreams where I asked them if he ever dreamt. He insisted that he did, and that in some respects I was also character in his dreams, even though he sometimes agreed that he was a character in mine but that we both had these realities. – Antonio Zadra

I had written the first two books of a supernatural trilogy several years ago but was getting nowhere with the third book. I had started it, but only had one or two sections written. I had major writer's block with it, so shelved it for a year and worked on other projects. One night, I had a nightmare where I was "trapped" in the dream and couldn't wake up. In the dream, my best friend kept telling me that the dream was actually reality and what I thought was real life was a dream. It was terrifying because every time I told him that was impossible, that my wife and son were real, etc., he would say

no, they're a creation of your dream. This is what's real. [...] that nightmare I had directly inspired the plot of my third book, "Onyx Nightmare". – R.W. Harrison

B12

The story is about going back in time, and then creating that footprint, like the butterfly effect, where the second you step foot in 1763, you start changing things. You're no longer Benjamin Man Ray from St. Augustine, Florida in modern day, you're now the founding father who saved George Washington in the crossing of the Delaware. And you're now this pivotal figure in American history. – Owen Palmiotti

When I'm lucid I go with it and see what happens. Sometimes it can be a familiar place and then sometimes it can be very unfamiliar, or an unfamiliar thing that's happening. I'm very aware of a setting, a smell, or colour. I can bring that back up again. As a memory, you know, when I write something. And others are always thinking, how do you remember the detail? Because with a dream, you know when you have some control, you can almost slow it down and you could almost stop it. [...] I've done that in a dream where you almost make it like synaesthesia. I'm quite surprised at myself thinking in the dream, now what would it be if that colour sounded or smelled or... what sound would that make? – Mike Stephenson

SYNAESTHESIA (by Mike Stephenson)

*I hear the alphabet in raindrops
words fall in a summer shower
and when the last word drips and stops
I breathe an antiphon of red poppy flower.*

*Sunlight smells of shadow
sounds tremble pink, green and blue.
At night I can only hear yellow
and the stars; the stars taste of you.*

*Your hands sing in alto
my fingers entwine in hum baritone
our footsteps leave traces in Day-Glo
lips buzz a bumble bee drone.*

*Everything is electro chemical chatter
how we absorb and perceive; does it matter?*

B13

I climbed to a tower on a high mountain. There was some sort of gathering or party at the bottom of the tower, almost like it was a ball. They asked me "are you here to see the Seer?" and I was like "yeah." They pointed to the top of the tower and said "she's up there." So I went to the roof of the tower and saw the whole world, a vast desert. The seer was there, waiting for me, and she said something to the effect of "you're not ready for what I have to show you." And the dream ended there. On a separate night, I dreamt that I was at the ball at the bottom of the tower, waiting. I recognized the setting and went lucid. Remembering the other dream, and the seer, I lucidly went to the roof of the tower to meet her. She was waiting for me, this time with a large crystal chalice full of water, and she said "drink." It was the cleanest, coldest, most refreshing water I've ever experienced. Once I drank it, I fell out of lucidity. From there things got pretty bizarre. She had me pour the water over the side of the tower. When I did, blood poured out of the chalice, and ran in a torrent down the mountain side into the desert down below. The blood formed a river across the land, and the desert became fertile, and plants grew from the river and turned the desert into a jungle. The seer turned to me and said "with a little sacrifice, you can save a dying world." – JRS

B14

I'm constantly leaving babies on buses; I can't tell you the number of babies I've left. So I think that dreams are kind of flagging up some insecurity or fear or guilt or shame or whatever. And that, you know, for writers I speak to, that's an interesting jumping

off point. [...] I think for a lot of people, psychologically we're interested in what does that dream say about our subconscious? What does that dream say about the thing that we're worried about, that we didn't even realise that we're worried about? I think, for me, the baby on the bus is my creativity, and I keep abandoning my creativity. So I'm getting to that stage now, and that's why I feel so guilty and awful, and nobody must know. Because it's about not nurturing the thing that you should nurture. And had I not had those dreams, I think, I wouldn't have been made aware of that, and then try to explore them in fiction or poetry. – Cathrine Smith

I had this dream. And I thought, what do I really want to do? And I wasn't being truthful to myself and doing what I really wanted to write about. I was just sort of fudging it, and just there doing what I thought I shouldn't be doing. And actually, I really wanted to write about something more important. So in the stunt industry, there's sort of a boys club. So there's a group of people that control the flow of the work, and they keep it all to themselves and their family and their friends. And I wanted to write about that. So that's what I really wanted to do. So I had this dream, and the dream was about, you should do that. And so it was about truth, and not being fake and not being authentic. I woke up with that complete certainty. It was like I dived into a cool lake. And I got out with clarity and certainty. – Matt Price

As for asking for a dream about what to write, this is only something I had started doing a few days before seeing your post. I would lay to sleep and repeat the affirmation asking for a dream to show me how the next episode should go. I had just finished a four part series about their journey to Atlantis. – JP

I have been thinking for a while, my process feels a bit stale. Why do I procrastinate so much? And just thinking, this [lucid dreaming] could be a really good tool for me. But I think it could help in my teaching as well, because I always have stressed the role of the subconscious and how it's a really valuable tool, and that we shouldn't be too hung up about trying to analyse everything and focus so much on the craft that we don't think about the WHO ARE WE and why. Now, why are we doing this? Why are we writing this and what is it that we want to write about? [...] There are so many books on craft and technique and whatever. And actually, I think what there needs to be is more about how and why the stories come about, rather than just like the seven

plot points, list of characterization, blah, blah, blah, you can learn all that stuff. You can buy any decent book or go on a course or whatever. But I think what people would like to know is how can I become more creative? [...] If we accept that everybody has the capacity to become creative, and to use their creativity, how do I find mine? Where is it? Where is it? How can I get to it? And *how can I write the stories and poems that only I can write?* [...] Why does this story exist? And *why could only I have written it?* I think that's the thing. And I think that's where dreams are very handy. Because dreams are truly individual and experience, you know, we've experienced mass group experiences, haven't we, we've experienced lockdown. We've experienced the news, we've experienced, you know, all these group experiences, but dreams are completely individual. – Catherine Smith

B15

I write down everything. First and foremost. Everything. As soon as I wake up. Then I develop from there. Add backstories, cut out the stuff that doesn't make sense, and sit on the story for upwards of weeks while I get it fully fleshed out and the details of a broader story filled in because I'll usually only have a few very vivid scenes. Then I find a place to start. Because my dreams never start in the beginning. I use the dream I have and think out. How did they get there? Why? What was their drive to get to this point? – EG

The plot I eventually worked out is about a world in which no one really ages. Everything is comic book or cartoon time. Like, it feels like time's passing, but you think back and you had three tenth birthdays or went to senior prom five different times. For the people in the world, this is hard to think about. In the world, a serial killer is stalking a young woman. When he finds her, he's able to awaken something in her and time begins passing normally. [...] I think the heart of it will be a friend of the young woman's, who loves her (maybe romantically). He has the same struggle as the serial killer - these women they need are trapped in the same body and cannot exist at the same time. – Kali Vicci Ravel

As soon as you wake up, and you've had a dream, have a notebook to hand and without thinking about it, or analysing, just write down everything you can remember. And don't let that sort of critical editorial capacity interrupt. [...] So what I tried to do is not let my inner editor get in between the material that I could remember. I started with really, really rough notes, really rough, just single words, images, a couple of words here and there. I just plunk down any old, rough description. Because as soon as you start picking it up and making it into nice sentences and things, I think that compromises the force of the images you just experienced. The next stage was to make this more dramatic, because you know, as a writer, your job is to create drama and tension. So that probably came in the second or third editing. I would sort of hand write a very rough first draft, and then and only then transfer it to the laptop. Because with me, if I start typing too quickly, my inner editor is thinking: is it getting good? No, that's a boring word. That's a bit of a cliché, blah, blah, which says something about the freedom of just scribbling. – Catherine Smith

APPENDIX C – Study 3

C1

DAILY CHECKLIST

Date: _____

- Wrote in my dream diary 1 dream 1-2 3+
- Conducted reality checks None 1-5 5-10 10+
- The MILD technique Yes No
- The WBTB technique Yes No
- Achieved lucid dream Yes No

Notes

C2

Practised regularly: PLJ, PU, PJ, PK, PL, PM, PP, PB

Irregularly: PF, PS, PG, PI, PA, PV, PY, PN

Tried a few times: PT, PH, PW, PD, PE, PX

C3

Apart from taking purposeful breaks from the training in order to relieve the stress around having to induce lucid dreams, some participants have had to pause their training for other reasons. For example, PS reported having an unproductive week and sleeping poorly due to the pain in her shoulder. Similarly, PU had a tooth problem, so he lost a few days of training due to that. PV fell ill in the middle of the process, disrupting a few days of her training. PW started taking hay fever medication which seemed to have resulted in dreamless nights; he wanted to stop the medication because of it but I instructed him not to. After a few days, he realised that the medication wasn't affecting his dreams but rather the pressure around inducing a lucid dream. Near the end of training, PK reported not getting as many lucid dreams as before due to meds. A number of participants experienced physical or emotional weariness due to work or other personal issues, and reported being simply too busy some days, with life getting in the way. For example, at one point PF reported: "a lot in my head with work. This seems to block me from dreaming and from being creative." PI had a family bereavement which caused disrupted sleep and feeling overly tired, which in turn made her pause the training for a few days. PJ had dealt with the passing of some of his friends throughout the process, which made his training inconsistent.

C4

Recall

PD, PR, PP, PW, PY, PF, PS, PK, PV

PV: "I haven't managed to be lucid in my sleep yet but I have definitely noticed a difference when I wake up. 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. Writing the dreams down has definitely been such a helpful thing and when I go back and read through the diary I'm amazed at how much interesting content I've gathered from the past week."

PD: "Better recall now. Remembering a lot more dreams cause I'm writing them down."

PR: "For two nights I couldn't remember any dreams. The rest of the nights I am remembering three or four dreams, some very vivid. My dream recall is getting better and one was a film I was producing!!"

"I haven't lucid dreams yet, but I am remembering masses of dreams. It seems as though I can't possibly have enough time in the night to dream all the dreams, I am dreaming!"

"I've been remembering between three and five dreams nearly every night. Very complex. Long dreams."

Then, "I am dreaming every night, remembering five or six dreams. One was like a film it was so detailed."

PP: "I do WBTB almost every night, and remember more dreams after."

PW: "Week 4's dreams were quite productive in that I remembered a fair number of at least."

PF: "The process seems to have helped me to remember the dreams but I've yet to influence the dreams directly."

Spotting patterns from dreams and also remembering more of them when writing them, which helped a lot creatively."

PS: "I have several dreams some nights (especially early morning) and if I used a dream journal (which I have used) then I would be able to recall quite a few."

PK: "I tried the three steps: I will recall my dream, I will be lucid in my dream and I will find my story. 2 out of 3 worked."

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 breakfat 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."

C5

PV – excerpt from dream diary:

"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."

C6

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.”

C7

PU – excerpts from dream diary:

“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. I can still 'see' much of it now.”

A few weeks later: ““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.”

C8

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."

C9

PX: "Some interesting developments have been a tendency to find myself in dangerous or potentially frightening situations notably underground. I am by nature very claustrophobic but in dreams have found that I can acknowledge this, but at the same time remain calm and effective. There was one dream, where I rescued someone from a water filled sinkhole and I was aware of danger and the huge effort required but felt after I succeeded that I generated just the right amount of adrenaline and was afterwards calm."

C10

Insight & Transformative

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."

C11

PA – excerpt from dream diary:

"Very interesting, vivid dream about an incident in my past. In the dream I was me, but with a much more mature viewpoint than I had at the time with the person. It made me realise how immature I was at that time of my life even though I was an adult. I had a prevailing immaturity and a self destructive element somewhere in myself which caused me no end of conflict at that time in my life."

C12

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. The shape is drawn below.

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.”

C13

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."

Dream: 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.

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 one that stands out was the third dream that I remember in the night. 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 (the smoking kind full of weed). Perhaps 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) AND it is much more FUN than some of my dreams in the earlier part of this study."

"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 experience, 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 redream 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 session. 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.”

C14

PW: “My second dream was a comic book adventure involving two couples from another world or dimension (they weren’t necessarily couples, perhaps just four friends). The dream seemed to be following a recognisable plot line. I do seem to be getting a lot of story-like dreams lately.”

C15

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 or 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 carpark, feel the rain..."

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

C16

Problem solving: PNJ, PLJ, PS, PF, PT, PG, PH, PI, PJ, PV, PY, PK, PQ, PM, PN, PW, PP, PR, PB, PE, PZ, PX, PD

SP: PNJ, PLJ, PS, PF, PT, PG, PH, PI, PA, PJ, PV, PY, PK, PQ, PL, PM, PN, PW, PC, PP, PR, PB, PE, PZ

PNJ

- Starting point: mundane dream
- Dream of story in progress: yes
- Imagery, setting, theme, tone, characters, symbolism, New concept

PLJ

- Starting point: theme from multiple dreams

- Dream of story: problem solving, insight
- Dream: sit down and write, insight
- Imagery, setting, characters, symbolism, theme

PS

- SP: Lucid dream
- Symbols, punchline, theme, characters, location (lucid bits)
- Problem solving: yes (liminal)
- Dream of story: yes

PF

- SP: Dream
- Perspective, characters, location, symbolism, emotion, theme, imagery
- Dream of story: yes (liminal relating to character)

PT

- SP: Two dreams
- Problem solving (not directly)
- Characters

PG

- SP: Liminal
- Problem solving: liminal + dreams
- Theme, characters (in LD), plot, emotion

PH

- SP: Dream
- Everything
- Problem solving

PI

- SP: Dream (multiple)
- All elements
- Problem solving: yes (dream of story)

PA

- SP: Dream
- Symbolism, imagery, character, theme,

PU

- SP: NOT a dream
- Elements: /

PJ

- SP: Dream
- Problem solving: Yes (lucid)
- Title, everything

PV

- SP: LD
- Problem solving: Yes (non and lucid)
- Title, everything

PY

- SP: Multiple dreams (lucid)
- Everything

PK

- SP: Two LDs
- Everything
- Problem solving: Yes

PQ

- SP: Lucid dream
- Problem solving: Yes
- Everything

PL

- SP: Dream
- Imagery, emotion, characters, theme

PM

- SP: Dream
- Problem solving: Yes (liminal)
- Everything

PN

- SP: Dream
- Problem solving: Yes (liminal + dreams)
- Phrases, everything

PW

- SP: Dream
- Problem solving: Yes
- Everything, new concept

PC

- SP: Dream
- Everything

PP

- SP: Dream
- Problem solving: Yes (liminal)
- Everything

PR

- SP: Dream
- Problem solving: Yes
- Everything

PB

- SP: Dream

- Problem solving: Yes
- Everything

PE

- SP: Dream
- Phrase, characters, imagery, emotions
- Problem solving: yes

PZ

- SP: Dream
- Problem solving: yes
- Everything

PX

- SP: Not dream but morning
- Problem solving: yes
- Everything

PD

- SP: NOT dream, from before
- Problem solving: Yes (lucid)
- Location, theme, new concept

C17

Non-lucid dream	Lucid dream	Liminal dream	Multiple dreams	Multiple LDs
PNJ, PF, PH, PA, PJ, PL, PM, PN, PW,	PS, PV, PQ	PG	PLJ, PT, PI,	PY, PK

PC, PP, PR, PB, PE, PZ				
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C18

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.

C19

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!'

C20

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.

C21

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.”

C22

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.'

C23

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 neves 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."

C24

Project story appearing in:

Dream: PNJ, PLJ, PH, PI, PW, PR, PB, PE, PZ

Lucid dream: PJ, PY, PK, PD

Liminal state: PS, PF, PM, PP, PX

Liminal + Dream: PG, PN

Dream + LD: PV

Lucid + Liminal: PQ

C25

Direct answer: PG, PH, PS, PLJ, PI, PU, PV, PK, PQ, PN, PP, PR, PB, PE, PZ

Indirect answer: PH, PG, PT, PF, PNJ, PU, PQ, PW, PB, PZ, PX, PD

C26

Name/title/phrase: PS, PH, PI, PJ, PV, PY, PK, PQ, PM, PN, PW, PC, PP, PR, PB, PZ, PX, PE

Imagery: PNJ, PLJ, PS, PF, PH, PI, PA, PJ, PV, PY, PK, PQ, PL, PM, PN, PW, PC, PP, PR, PB, PZ, PX, PE, PT, PD, PG

Setting: PNJ, PLJ, PS, PF, PH, PI, PJ, PV, PY, PK, PQ, PM, PN, PW, PC, PP, PR, PB, PZ, PX, PD

Character: PNJ, PLJ, PS, PF, PT, PH, PI, PA, PJ, PV, PY, PK, PQ, PL, PM, PN, PW, PC, PP, PR, PB, PZ, PX, PE

Symbolism: PNJ, PLJ, PS, PF, PH, PI, PA, PJ, PV, PY, PK, PQ, PM, PN, PW, PC, PP, PR, PB, PZ, PX

Emotion: PNJ, PF, PH, PI, PJ, PV, PY, PK, PQ, PL, PM, PN, PW, PC, PP, PR, PB, PZ, PX, PE

Theme: PNJ, PLJ, PS, PH, PI, PA, PJ, PV, PY, PK, PQ, PL, PM, PN, PW, PC, PP, PR, PB, PZ, PX, PD

Perspective: PF, PX

New concepts: PW, PK

Ending: PN, PLJ, PI, PK, PQ

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.”

C27

PU – excerpts from dream diary:

15/2: "To bed hoping fr 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. ships 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 Mahronda, (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. (vol14)

Woke 0300: recall dream1. I run a business hiring out fairground 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 shortcut 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.

C28

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.”

C29

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 into the story which she 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.

C30

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 millenium 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.

C31

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."

C32

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).”

C33

PF – poems from dream diary:

12/2

I have seen many reflections,
Some inside me, some on the outside that is still my soul.
Stilling surfaces
Stilling my thoughts on a lake.
Endless reflections, mirrors, reflecting mirrors, eyes and lakes, and skies and
raindrops and mirrors and mirrors and mirrors.
Narcissism of dreams telling me stories I want to see and leaving me as the star
in the dark night.

Led into a more conscious poem but written with my eyes closed –

twitter bird real not blue but brown and warm
sending beak sharpened songs into my head
a jumble of notes and swoops and trills that could be important
could be the cure for cancer the formulae for endless energy
the answer to my hollowness
6.57 digital time marking my passage through reality
stakes in the air to tie my life to while I flounder and kick and swim
against the detritus of living

27/2

I know too many people.
They crowd around
me
like spectres in the snow
blocking my view with their hazy edges
not keeping me warm.
Rising up in foaming clouds
crested horses overwhelm
me
with their chatter and nonsense and hiss.
Everyone a perfect snowflake
gathering in the dirty slush of the street.

C34

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."

C35

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.

C36

PLJ – excerpt from dream diary:

"I'm writing. I have been arguing with someone about my novel. I decide to change the time of the novel to 1950 and have characters refer to the 2ndWW and show that they are living with the consequences of war. I am writing with two laptops, one for each hand as I type. There is a problem, there is no keyboard for either laptop. What I have is a box of jumbled up scrabble tiles attached to each screen with numbers and letters for the left hand in one laptop and numbers and letters for the right in the other. On the screen at the top of the page are the words 'draft 3'.

I wake at 9am and am thinking about a possible story set in 1950 post war Britain. I also know I need to work on my current novel- it's not quite at draft 3 stage yet."

C37

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*]

C38

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.”



C39

PB – excerpt from dream diary:

“This phase happened on a bus, [buses again!] there’s a lot of noise and there doesn’t seem to be anyone bothered about where we’re going. I don’t think I’m the driver but I can hear lots of voices, snippets of conversations as if I’m on the luggage rack. The bus stops and a woman gets on. I couldn’t say how old she is but her clothes are just a massive splodge of bright colours, mainly purples, bohemian, glamorous but so mismatched.

I shout ‘Hello’ but she doesn’t take any notice. Nobody else seems to see her. She never finishes a sentence but she keeps saying it’s going to rain ... in different languages! [IRL I have no idea whether she was really saying the right thing but it sounded good!]

The bus stops at a harbour and she leaps up and rushes off to a blue-fronted café... Everyone else disappears.”

Excerpt from story:

Except, that is, for Mavis. Every day, in her inimitable way, she plops down, purple-shaded, on the faded plush of her favourite bench seat, croaking ‘Aw’right?’ in habitual greeting.

‘Tis awful sharp (muggy, hot, fresh, drear; delete where inappropriate) this morning!’

That’s inevitably followed by ‘My knees hurt something terrible!’ (rotten, fearsome, chronic, dreadful; insert where appropriate)

But if she says ‘I can feel it in my bones, there’ll be rain by teatime. You mark my words!’ If they paid attention they would realise that, though her Jenny Joseph style might be at odds with country lore, she’s more reliable than any Met Office suit with computer.

C40

PK – excerpts from dream diary

7th March: “Sparkling golden translucent tubes that people can float through. [*This appears in my story as the transparent bubble they roll in*]

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...

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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.’

C41

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.

C42

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.

C43

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 songing 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

C44

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.

C45

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.

C46

PLJ – excerpt from story:

The house I am in now is weeping, I can almost feel its heartbreak. 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.

C47

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.

C48

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.”

C49

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.’

C50

Mentors

PH, PV, PL, PN, PW, PO, PC, PR, PX

PR: “Intention to meet a mentor and dreamt of him.”

“One thing that has changed is that my dreams are becoming even more useful and processing. I had a talk with my old mentor two days ago in my dream, I went to sleep, hoping that I might be able to see him in a dream”

PO: “Recently had this rapper I love in a dream who told me ‘I don’t like your vibe as you’re not confident’. This helped me with my confidence.”

PW: "A very productive night’s dreaming. I asked for a Cat dream guide and I got Colin Baker (who played the 6th Doctor in Doctor Who). That’s not so way off the mark because I know from a mutual friend that he happens to love cats and as part of his costume he had a cat badge pinned to his lapel. He told me I need to do a mental health check which consisted of making humorous plasticine figures.”

C51

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.”

C52

Unblocked / significantly improved creativity: PB, PQ, PI, PF, PM, PN, PP, PS, PF, PG, PH, PA, PJ, PV, PK, PL, PW, PR

Different approach to writing: PP, PN, PJ, PQ, PX, PLJ, PNJ, PS, PF, PT, PI, PV, PY, PB

PI: "I am not a writer of stories. I have previously only written instructional how to guides and non-fiction articles as part of my teaching work which are not necessarily full of creative writing. At the start of the project I was feeling like I didn't really know how to write stories that weren't from my own experience and I didn't have a clue how to imagine characters for stories. Doing this lucid dreaming project has helped me to dream up characters and stories so I have found it an expansive and creative experience."

PF: "I'd been working on a book called 'Moments of Friendship' as a self-help/positivity book. This is going to be the second in a series (starting with 'Moments of Joy') but I really couldn't make it work. It was repetitive and trite. After the first night of training, I woke up with a clear vision that it should be called 'Moments of Determination' and the basic content just spilled onto the page."

C53

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!).”

C54

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 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 improvises. 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.

C55

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 below 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.

C56

PM – excerpt from story:

“Somewhere in the distance a strange, distorted cry made the hairs on my neck stand up. I turned inland to face the danger but could see nothing. I told myself there had to be a road somewhere and that I could find my way back to civilisation, but that idea held no traction.

The cry came again, closer now and more distinct. I realised it was a song, and then I recognised that voice.

When I first met Dawn, she had just finished a set and, amazed by what I’d heard, I offered to buy her a drink. Her smile lit up my world, as she accepted, but I failed to register what she'd asked for. Whatever I got her, I supplemented with a gratefully received packet of fags.

“I have something for you!” I called, now retrieving the cigarettes that Guinness had given me, a suitable offering to the dead.

There was a pause in the singing, and I knew she was with me again.

“Come with me,” I said, handing over the fags.

I knew, somehow, not to look back as I made my way back to the shore, where I knew Charon, would be waiting.”

C57

PN – excerpt from dream diary:

“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. Now need to work on touches of character development, maybe. Will read it all thro and type up and see what it looks like.”

C58

PF – excerpt from dream diary:

“21/3: One dream that seemed to be on a loop as I had a sense of dreaming it more than once or not being able to move past it. On a train, from the north. Getting off at Malvern. J from Nova Scotia is in a carriage behind me. I’m feeling bad for not sitting with her. I’m facing forward and the train seems to be heading into a bend all the time. We can’t get past the bend. The scenery is the Black Mountains and a town on the side of the track. I know Malvern but not well and have never got off the train there, so it’s an odd choice of station and I had an awareness that this was odd.”

C59

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. Perhaps 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 niggle 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?”.

C60

PD: Just to let you know, I've continued to have fairly regular lucid dreams, often really good ones. I've found a reliable way to recognise I'm dreaming, which is needing to go to the loo! My mind finds all sorts of ways to stop me actually going (luckily!) and I've learned to recognise this. Obviously it doesn't happen every night but it's fairly common. And then if I fly, I can usually maintain it for a while.

PN: I've not started writing my new novel using lucid dreaming yet- thinking I'll do it during the winter- life has been massively busy over the summer. Been revising and promoting my existing books and finishing my latest in the series ready to publish, as well as trotting round the country visiting friends and relatives-the joys of retirement!

Going to go into prison at the end of September with the Literacy Trust which I'm very excited about, doing a workshop with the women based on one of my books. Life keeps throwing up all sorts of surprises!

PW: In case it's of interest I've not maintained my efforts to achieve Lucid dreaming, there seems to have been too much going on over the Summer and the nighttimes have been so hot is all I can do to get any half-decent sleep. I do hope to resume in the not-too-distant future though.

PM: I have been bumping along pretty much as before and some of my writing continues to be inspired by dreams, though I'm not sure I'd call them lucid. I've still only had one or two fully lucid dreams in my life and sadly none, since doing the study.

PF: Since we last spoke, I've self-published a wellbeing journal and the military history I was working on has been published. Now working on an anthology about AI with a group of women creatives and a military story about Northern Ireland told in 2 disjointed voices. The AI anthology is part of the women's creative collaboration I organise, The Tea Set. We're setting up a website to showcase our work and creating an anthology of words and images in response to AI. I've had some interesting, intense dreams that have come out of nowhere. This is something that hasn't happened for years so I'm sure it's been triggered by the lucid dreaming practices. I've been using meditation visualisations before I go to sleep and I think these are actually reducing my dreams! Another piece of research...?

C61

First night using the 'incite a story' technique: The men in the motor: It could make a story, possibly a funny one as it struck me as a comedy element as I was dreaming it. I thought as I was 'watching' the two men - my view was as if I was perched on the headrest of the driver's seat, an over the shoulder shot - was that this would make a comedy sketch. (PB)

C62

3/2: 5.30 Awake and thought of plot for story. Out of bed at 6.15 Wrote plot down.

7am lay down – came up with lots of light bulb moments re plot.

8/2: after WBTB: Lay down at 6.30. Great additions to the plot of 3rd. Details as to people, what they do, how they meet, coincidences.

10/2: A few light bulb moments as dozed though not sure if it was a lucid dream.

11/2: Up at 5.30. Dozed at 6.30. Large amount of info gained re more detail as to characters.

Not sure I am lucid dreaming here but I'm definitely in a state of wild day dreaming where I can consciously ask a question e.g. how did these people meet, and then an answer appears. The answers are coming as thoughts i.e. they seem to be spoken, rather than a dream which, to me, is visual. (PG, from dream diary)

C63

The house I am in now is weeping, I can almost feel its heartbreak. 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. (PLJ)

C64

On two occasions, I 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. (PX)

APPENDIX D – Study 4

D1

The test is called the Alternative Uses Test (AUT), and it provides participants with one word, for which they need to come up with alternative uses. For example, if they were given a word "coffee cup", they would need to think of other ways this item can be used apart from holding coffee, such as serving a percussion instrument you hit with a drumstick, a template to draw a perfect circle, etc.

I have attached a document with all of their answers to different words they were presented with before and after sleep. You won't know which ones were done before and which after sleep as this is blind assessment. The first column in this document gives you the word that they were presented with. The next column is the participant's number, then it's their answers (their alternative uses) for that word, and then the results column is for you to fill out.

The assessment method for this is very simple. Next to every word they provided, write a score from 0 to 5, with 0 being not creative at all, and 5 being very creative. You might find that some answers don't make any sense at all, so you can cross them out and write 0 for those. 5 should be given to super creative and original answers (i.e. both creative and not mentioned by other participants).

Once you assess all of the answers for a single participant for a given word, write the overall score in the results column by adding up all of your scores. "Max" is the number of high scores (5s) they got. For example, if you give someone a 5 for one answer, then their max will be 1. If you give them a 5 for three of their answers, then their max will be 3. And so on. If no 5s are given, then max is 0.

So, for example, let's take Participant 1 and their answers for the first word "Brick". The answer "doorstop" is creative but it's used by multiple participants, so this one wouldn't be 0 nor 5.

For Participant 2, you might want to cross out some answers here as they are not alternative uses for the word brick.

D2

During this nap, if you drop the pen and wake up, record your thoughts, images, ideas by slightly opening your eyes and writing these down. Stay fully relaxed and go back to the nap immediately. The important thing is that this writing remains as unconscious as possible, and do not pause to think about what is being written. Focus on any imagery, feelings, phrases, or ideas that come to you. Don't judge them, just take them as they are.

D3

- Incubate: find an idea/starting point for a new poem
- Write down your dreams without rational thought meddling with the report
- Write a poem after you've recorded the dream; it can be on anything - stay half asleep and irrational! No conscious control over what you're writing.
- Read both the poem and the dream back later during the day and only then involve the conscious thought: does it make sense? What does it say? Interpret it to yourself first. Then think, if someone else was reading this, would they get the same message? How can I make it clearer to the reader? Will this be interesting to the reader? Etc. This is when we involve the reader and objectivity into our poem.
- Rewrite in light of these rational thoughts.
- Incubate this poem before sleep by reading it and asking your dreams to work on any aspects of your poem.
- In the morning, record your dreams.

- Straight after that, reread your poem and write down any thoughts and ideas either from your dreams or the emerging ones in this still half-awake state, that might be relevant to your poem.
- Rewrite your poem using these ideas and thoughts, with as little conscious control as possible.
- Read this poem later in the day and repeat the procedure as many times as needed.

D4

1. How would you describe your level of creativity over the course of this workshop? (e.g. did it progress, stagnate, or stay the same?)
2. How would you describe your relationship with your dreamworld now as opposed to before the start of the workshop?
3. If you had any, can you describe your lucid dreams, what you did in them upon becoming lucid, and their influence on your writing and creativity?
4. Do you feel increased or decreased control over your dreams and waking life?
5. Has your writing process changed in the past 6 weeks? (Does the process of writing poetry or other works feel different than your usual writing process? If so, can you describe how?)
6. Have you noticed any other differences in your work as a writer or other work (creatively or otherwise) since the start of the workshop?
7. Have you received any insight into your waking life (e.g. perspective on certain events or situations, your emotions towards something that used to be hidden, etc.) through this process? If so, please elaborate and provide any support for your statements, such as specific dream reports or poems that provided this insight.

8. Can you describe your lucid dreaming induction training from the start of the workshop till the end? E.g. did you conduct daily reality checks, did you do the MILD and the WBTB techniques, and did you write down all of your dreams? If you struggled with any of this or had to pause the training, please explain this.
9. What could be done differently in this training to help you induce lucid dreams? What could be done differently to help you be more creative?
10. Did you use the sleep incubation technique? If so, what kinds of things did you incubate and what were the results? Please provide examples.
11. Did you write in the morning hours just upon waking up? If so, how did you find this process?
12. Did you practice the liminal dreaming technique and/or experienced the liminal state? If so, what were your experiences and did you/could you use them in a creative way? How did they differ from your night dreams and waking ideas?
13. What did you think of the exercises we did in the workshop? Did they help your creativity/produce anything interesting?
14. First lab session (lucid dreaming induction): do you have any further notes (apart from what you have already told me in the lab)? Did you do anything else with these experiences after the session? Did you notice any differences in your dreaming or waking life after this session?
15. Second lab session (liminal dreaming induction): do you have any further notes (apart from what you have already told me in the lab)? Did you do anything else with these experiences after the session? Did you notice any differences in your dreaming or waking life after this session?
16. Any other notes you might have.

*Please provide any other poems that came out of this process, including the corresponding dream reports and/or explanations of how this process inspired them. Please also provide poems that you read, discussed, or wrote in any of our Sunday workshops.

*Please provide dream reports of any significant dreams, including lucid and semi-lucid dreams. (e.g. insightful dreams, creative dreams, etc.)

D5

P14: Because my day-to-day life is quite busy [studying a degree, leading a society, struggling with mental health issues, in a relationship, busy family life] it's difficult to fully focus on reality checks in the middle of the day.

I think the main barrier was the point in my life where I started the course. For university students November is quite a stressful time because there are quite a lot of assignments. Most of us have three or four assignments a week. Maybe if the course was near the beginning of the term I would be able to focus on it a little more.

P16: Through the period of the workshop and recording dreams and trying to incubate lucid dreams I have noticed that my quality of sleep has generally been worse and that I often felt tired, although this coincided with a busy period and somewhat stressful period in my life.

Greater consistency in performing reality checks, and use of WBTB techniques when waking up naturally in the middle of the night would've have been helpful. I did not manage to have a lucid dream focused on poetry, but in the future I should approach this more intentionally. When my use of the dreaming techniques did not yet produce full lucid dreams, I should have become more focused and intentional in consistently doing the techniques, but being busy I was not more motivated to do this.

P15: I think I didn't commit to all the exercises, probably because I so worry about my sleep. I could've done a lot more but overwhelmed and took on too much at the same time.

I don't think I ever did the MILD properly as I was thinking will I ever be able to fall asleep if I do that. Didn't do enough reality testing to actually work.

D6

Did the training properly: P1, P5, P10

P5: I attended all six sessions and conducted frequent reality checks every day and wore a bracelet to help me remember to do this. I carried out the MILD technique every night, but did not do the WBTB. I wrote down every dream that I recalled during the six weeks of the course.

P1: I conducted daily reality checks, chanted the phrase "I will remember my dreams and I will have a lucid dream" and wrote down all of my dreams.

P10: It was quite easy to start with, and I really found help through your devices. The 'am I dreaming' tag I put it on top of the light switch in the kitchen, so I'd see it all the time, and I would do it, and I really liked the game. Or so I took it as a game, anyway, and I really enjoyed it, and I was doing it, pressing my finger against my palm and all that and then gradually I did less and less and less. Then I changed the location of the thing, and I put it on top of my computer and I could see it again all the time. So with your techniques, I found it easy. And I found it entertaining, actually. And I was doing it. And even though I haven't really used that stuff in my dream yet. I will keep doing it. Just found that with time I did less and less.

Did the training partially: P3, P4, P6, P7, P8, P9, P11, P12, P14, P15, P16

P11: I tried to conduct daily checks and dream journals – although journal writing fell away through the course.

P12: Among the various possible techniques, I've decided to concentrate fully on one, which may seem the simplest, but in fact, not at all. Am I Dreaming? It is efficient to remember oneself and observe oneself firstly. Only after long practice of this it might be useful to move to a different check point.

P7: In terms of the dreaming induction training, I often practiced the reality checks, but not daily. I didn't keep a dream journal, because I could never remember many, if any dreams I had during the course.

P3: I did not do it, perhaps as regularly as I might have done. The MILD technique, yes, but the reality testing not so much. I think I went through little phases of doing it for a few days, and then I'd forget you know that sort.

P9: Some reality checks but somewhat inconsistent; wrote down those dreams I could remember.

P16: I tried to often do reality checks, including various checks and reminders, however it was pretty irregular. During busy periods I often forgot to use the techniques. I did practice some WBTB and MILD techniques. I used all techniques more regularly at the beginning of the workshops, and probably decreased over time. The only full lucid dream that I had was at the end of the workshops.

P8: I think, remembering to do it is just as hard both times [study 3 and 4], because I've fallen out of the habit again doing it. It wasn't any easier to get into the habit of doing it the second time around. I don't know why it just wasn't.

P4: I think I had some trouble creating routines that I can kind of stick with.

P15: I think I didn't commit to all the exercises, probably because I so worry about my sleep. I could've done a lot more but overwhelmed and took on too much at the same time.

I don't think I ever did the MILD properly as I was thinking will I ever be able to fall asleep if I do that. Didn't do enough reality testing to actually work.

P14: I had a lot going on during this time so I couldn't 100% focus on it unfortunately.

Not sure: P2, P13

D7

P6: I've had a couple of nights of not writing down my dreams, cause I realised I was getting exhausted so had a bit of a break.

D8

P3: It's interesting because I tend to write down visual things. But what you've been talking about emotions now, I'm thinking of a dream, well rather an image that I had, and I'm just sitting thinking about it now. There was a lot more to it going on than I actually wrote down because what it was, it was a box with some metal tubes in it which I wrote down, but actually thinking about that, I think there were other people there. Also I avoided saying anything about it, asking questions. So *there's actually more in the bits that I didn't write down than in the bits I did write down*. And I'm thinking, I mostly just write down the themes that I see, but actually asking more questioning or what did that feel like or what was I thinking at the time is all that stuff that would enrich it. I wrote that down a few days ago about the box. But because I have the "box" written down I can still relate that to the dream.

D9

Increased recall:

P11: Started to remember more from dreams like names and features.

P6: There's something else about remembering dreams. I wake up after dream, as I've been programmed to in this course, and part of me thinks oh sod it, but then it's like my dream self is saying no you gotta get up and write it down. It's not my conscious self doing it, it feels like it's coming from the dream world. Like the lucid self coming out into the conscious self, like the other way around.

P13: Since I started recording dreams, just the process of doing that made me remember much more of them.

P3: The more I am focusing on dreams and writing them down, the more I remember. I mean, that was true before in the previous workshop.

P16: My dream recall has greatly improved from the beginning of the workshop. While I was recording my dreams most frequently at the start, I still try to record my dreams when convenient and able to.

P9: The course & instructions are working - not with lucid dreaming but with more dreaming & with more control than usual.

Increased control:

P14, P15, P11, P5, P12, P7 (waking), P1 (both dream and waking), P9

D10

I was more relaxed at home, I think. Yeah, I'm just aware that my rhythm varies through the day and on different days. So I really want to respect my rhythm of the moment and just go with it. So that's really what I try to do these days. I was trying to stay within the constraints of the exercise. But [at home] I was definitely a little bit more relaxed about how I was approaching it. Also I was aware we have several days. So you know, I was thinking it's not as critical as it is in the lab where you have the one off. So I was also allowing myself to just, you know, if I'm too tired and I can't think, or if I have an idea that I want to explore a bit further. Yeah, I was a little bit more relaxed with these things at home.

D11

P3, P4, P15, P14, P6, P3, P10, P8, P11, P1, P9

P4:

I think with the pastel pink paste one [poem written in workshop], there was maybe some stuff around that. Probably a bit with my story stuff, like working out timelines. I've kind of been thinking a bit about that. The story I'm writing at the moment kind of centers around an uprising in Estonian history. But so far I've just written about a folk singer at Midsummer's Eve, and I wasn't sure, do I want to bring in the uprising. I didn't know the structure. I had just started writing it. And then I was like, Okay, I don't know what I'm going to do with this. and you know I'd done lots of research around that time and about this whole uprising. but I wasn't sure how I was going to create it into a story. And I've been using that liminal space a little bit for that when I should have been using it for poetry.

I think I've decided like not concretely, but I have a definite feeling of how it's going to be centered around, and what parts of the uprising are going to be in there. But I've decided since that I'm going to change perspective to another character, because something about it just wasn't feeling right. So there's going to be switching perspective. Which I don't think I worked out in a liminal state. I think it was during the day, but I think I've mostly been thinking about what are the strongest images, or imagery that I really want to have in the story, and using that liminal state to kind of like daydream about that and I probably shouldn't. But that's a lot of the time how I structure my stories. I do it around the images that are really calling out to me, you know and thinking about it in the liminal state it helps me to figure out what are the really strong images for me.

I yeah, I think it was just more. Yeah, figuring out what were the strongest images. I'd already looked up the stuff and researched it online and had a bit of an idea what I wanted to do, but I think it was more consolidating like a strong bit that I don't want to leave out.

P14:

I found techniques before going to sleep quite useful to help me to get to sleep because I was struggling with that before so it was easier for me to incubate dreams or poems or thoughts because it helped me to go to sleep.

I did find that it was easier to get to sleep which reduced the stress which meant that I slept better which I think in turn means that when I woke up in the morning I was more refreshed and I was able to write better. I don't think I came up with anything too specific but I did find that it was easier for me to just begin writing poetry off the cuff in the more and if I did an incubation technique that led me to sleeping better.

P15:

the night we last spoke, I decided to fall asleep thinking about the big problem I had with the setting for the novel I'm writing for the PhD.

I had a dream that was set on a beach (The Manic Street Preachers were doing a free gig!) and there was a short pier like the one in Aberystwyth (where I was an undergrad).

Most of this wasn't important and I can't remember what happened but in the morning I thought about the beach and quickly came to realise that it needed to be set mainly on an island. I had got so entrenched in thinking about Vietnam (which I visited in 2018) and the Marlon Brando section of Apocalypse Now that I couldn't get further than that. But the trouble was it needs to be self contained without being a prison and islands do that.

I've always loved things set on small islands.

Having got that sorted, in the morning I also started to solve practical questions of how I would create the novel. My PhD is about using improvisation to create characters, situations, dialogue etc and see if it helps to make it any more real.

Explore the problems and advantages.

This is in some ways unrelated to the dream except that it freed my mind up to work on the other parts once the setting had been sorted in my head. I decided to add three more kinds of improvisation.

- solo acting improv that I would do mainly on my own and record it
 - Writing exercises inspired by improv exercises
 - Dreams themselves, which feel like the ultimate improv coming as they do from stimuli in your life, that day etc, or what you think about as you fall asleep.
- Each of these would be for different aspects of the novel (although I wouldn't want their separation to be too rigid as that can make for a boring structure for a novel).

Anyway, I know that's quite a vague use of dreams and lucidity is still something I'm not at yet I don't think, but writing them down and knowing if I get stuck or want to try and "improv" at night then it will really help.

P6:

Sometimes, I'd get the sensory feeling, the after dream feeling. So there is a kind of answer there. I'm not quite sure what it is. The kind of okayness. You're in the right place, the void. Now feel like I'm going into the void place. You know, don't worry. This is the void, the void, and it becomes futile to start with. And it's fertile. I know this place. Yeah, it's okay. It's okay to drop pretense artifice, and all of that construct. kind of like a reassuring feeling, though, to go into the chrysalis place, you know. Get turned into mush just a bit. That says kind of this is all right, you know.

D12

“There were lots and lots of images, losing things, being late, all those very common things. And when I wrote the poem, the first draft of it, I thought that’s not even about fire, but actually, in a way, it is. [...] It kind of made sense when I got to the end, when I reread it, that the fire did have a meaning in the context of the poem. [...] The fire was a metaphor, really for energy. So when I first read it I didn't see it that way. I just saw there was no fire, you know, but of course, it was a different kind of fire.” (P3)

Dream:

There was a sense that we were all there together and were about to move on to something else or perhaps somewhere else. Laura [the experimenter] and I were going to be travelling together by train – maybe some of the others were too. To start with we had forty minutes to get to the station in order to catch the train. However, I couldn't find my bag with money/cards etc inside. I searched upstairs under coats on the backs of chairs and in all the rooms but couldn't find it. I wasn't worried about the bag. I knew it had to be there somewhere but I was concerned about missing the

train. There was twenty minutes left to get to the station at Bornhurst and I suggested that Laura went on ahead without me. I said that I would catch her up but even though I said it I knew I wouldn't be able to walk fast enough or even run to catch up with her. The minute hand on my watch slid onwards to twelve minutes to the hour.

Poem:

What happened to yesterday's fire

*when dark was a colour not lack of light
it seemed so sure of itself
as it burnt a path through the current task
and words were readily coming*

*but now it's almost extinguished
I'm fumbling around in the grate
pointlessly picking at broken sticks
and waiting for something to strike*

*always the unstarted journeys
the searching and absent choices
so many abandoned beginnings
vanished or missing or wasted*

*but there are messages here
from me to myself
not just my imagination
there's purpose in effort
and things can be seen
in ways that were once uncertain*

*it takes only a spark to set alight
a poem that needs igniting*

D13

Yes: P14, P3, P8, P1, P4, P12, P1, P10

No: P15, P11, P5, P16, P7, P6

P12: As morning writing, I tried it once. But I'm not sure if it was connected with the dream, maybe not. Or maybe I just forgot about it. But sometimes I have this, that I'm doing something and some trigger works out, and you have this first line. And then I start writing down and I also don't know where I might end up. But it was in my native language so I can't read it. But I pretty much loved it more than anything I wrote in English.

P3: I had been writing in the morning. I quite like writing in the morning anyway, I'm more of a morning person than an evening person. I do my best work in the mornings, I think, anyway. It's interesting, because I think that's perhaps something to do with coming out of sleep. I don't know, there is something about it feels a bit like a clean slate in the morning. By the time you get to late afternoon, you've had so many other things and phone calls and emails that you've kind of lost that clear space.

...

The first version [of the poem] was written in the morning immediately after writing down the dream. And the dream was very complicated. There were lots of bits in it. So I was really quite busy trying to remember all the things. And so when I started writing the poem, actually just trying to include something from all of the things. But I didn't really think about it much other than that. And it was only when I came to look at it afterwards that it started to make sense.

P8: I always write in the morning. I do feel more inspired in the morning and I feel more relaxed. I don't feel guilty about doing it as well. This is a big thing, you know, because I'm not making money from writing. Therefore I feel it's something that if I do it in the morning, that's my time in my dressing gown, with my cup of coffee, or whatever. And then I get on with my day, so it doesn't interfere with my day. But I

also just think mornings are the best time for writing, and maybe that is because you're more in touch with your, you know... Unconsciously, I've been writing in the morning, because I'm more in touch with my unconscious then. But I've been very much over the past year or so, trying to write at the same time of day, because I think that if you do that your brain gets used to it. And I just chose the mornings. First thing in the morning is my favourite time of day, anyway. And it's like a treat for me to sit in in a room with my cup of coffee.

D14

P10

Poem 1 – written just after waking up:

*I play with the yellow grass
and make circles with my finger on the sand
lying on this gentle hill
other people dotted around
each on their own
sucking the sweetness of the evening*

*I look at the woman lying on her belly
10-15 yards away from me
looking down the hill*

*I watch her straight brown hair, her fringe
She is beautiful*

*She catches me staring
Looks at me and her gaze is deep
I shy away*

*Two breaths later
we repeat the choreography
I'm so grateful for this gift, her presence.*

Poem 2 - (written just as I woke up)

*Sit up, it's barely daylight out there
a new day – what are you gonna do with it
stay in the comfort of the warmth
look out of the window the world passing by
against the familiar backdrop
take the dog for a walk, rain or shine
speak about dog habits with other dog owners
the owner of Jack and the owner of Lola*

*Anyway I didn't want to talk about ownership
But the ownership of my day perhaps
this new day – what am I going to do with it
I have no dog. No dog owns me.
What am I going to do with all my freedom, today?*

Poem 3 – recorded in a half-awake state

"Trying to die quietly"

*Trying to die quietly
(But) Life springs through my veins
Aliveness shakes my body vigorously with fever
Trembling
Pulsating
Tapping my foot to the cosmic rhythm
Can I die quietly?*

*Before I turn up the volume of life, of experience
What does that mean anyway
Defy gravity momentarily
Fly around the lake, play with the ducks
Crawl with the worms
Dance with the wolves
The very ones that keep me from dancing*

*Trying to live quietly here
Does life need to be crazy after all?
How can I die quietly if I don't live quietly
How can I die quietly if I don't live it all
Spending so much time painstakingly making confetti
With my scissors and coloured paper
Wouldn't it be a pity
not to have a chance
to throw it up in the air
and dance*

Poem 4 – recorded in a half-awake state, after incubating the word “Wilderness”

*In the wilderness,
you are with the other
moving in mysterious ways
in the wilderness
you see the other side
no man's land
everyone's land
wearing only what's needed
let loose your instinct
to smell the ash
to dance in the desert of your quest*

D15

Hey
window seat
bumpy
cloudy
grey
THEN
The huge sun
of pristine light
witnessing dominion
over the swirling mountains of white
and you
empty now
DON'T SOFTEN
do soften
to your Jewish wound
gently coursing
howling cursing
into this bloody homecoming
to a land you've never lived
to murder a hatred you'll never kill
If I could hold you now
And keep you safe
I WOULD
But never will

Liminal-inspired edit:

Hey
window seat

bumpy lift off
Patchwork fields
cloudy
grey
then into the blue
and
a piercing violence of light
Shining indifference
Over the mountains of white

Real mountains now
Their peaks a reach of the hand
As the plane edging onward
To Zion
The promised land

And you
empty now
don't soften
do Soften
to your Jewish wound
gently coursing

howling cursing
in to this bloody homecoming
to a land you've never lived
to murder a hatred you cannot kill
If I could hold you now
and keep you safe
I would
But never will

D16

P4 Poem:

Enter Through the Forest Floor

*Enter through the forest floor
through grey leaf jelly,
all the layers
of lives and stories never known
to forsaken litter-mates of man,
roamed far from death,
roamed far from life.*

*Enter through the first floor,
past veins of leaves
and sand of bones,
each grain a star,
each grain a wheel
of life
that turns
and turns
and turns.*

*Enter through the forest floor
Trickle down with Autumn's rain
Dissolve the rocks, sink further down
into the dark, where earth is soft.*

P8 Poem:

*I chose the dog for his eyes
and now they follow me through the woods*

wanting to know the answers
to questions I haven't asked.
Why is this a clearing, who lit the fire,
where is the plane going that cuts across the sky
when I lean my head back so far it hurts
and look up?
I see witches dancing around the glade,
naked and smeared in a dark slime they have made.
I see a group of men come here to burn and burn
as they did as boys
as they should never have stopped burning
because they never stopped being.
The dog is looking at me for answers
and I kneel and hold his paw
and say I don't know.
This is the only truth I have.
I don't know.

D17

Second dream:

*I had another one. I was in a group of people who were facing a series of challenges of the battles against evil. We were all dressed in armour and had weapons. We were afraid, we were gathered together in one room, waiting for the next thread. The room's in semi-darkness as we clutch our weapons. And all at once we all looked up to the ceiling. We could see a small light playing on the ceiling. It was moving about. It provoked a profound remembrance in me. I am filled with joy and longing. I remember what happened before the long challenge began, and the reason why I was here. But I can't remember now what the reason was.
I think my interpretation at the time was that stopping the car and getting out of it was equal to my quest for knowledge and reading the books about spirituality and emotion and questioning the pointlessness of it all. And I interpreted the shed as to mean death,*

that you have to go through death. And on the other side was something which you could describe as an afterlife. Maybe I was just seeking comfort, you know, because of my own grief.

That dream in particular stayed with me cause you know sometimes you forget dreams when you don't write them down. But that has been in my conscious mind constantly as something that has really helped me in life. And the poem just summed it up really how I felt about it.

D18

It was a weird sci-fi with a broken communication between two ships. Someone has to go on a mission and the mother's saying no it's too dangerous, you can't.

Interpretation: Communication between two ships corresponds between communication between mother and son. Lack of or broken communication. Dreamer as an observational entity can watch but not interact or change the course of the dream. Might equal lack of control of a situation, relying on communication that isn't there.

It was eight months ago. I don't have much on what was going on at the time. It was definitely about communication. There was something interesting in the dream about communication being based on magnetic fields. And the mother was trying to block the signal. I can't remember the context but my mother is recurring figure in my dreams.

The poem gives me another perspective on the dream. I found the exercise to work towards it also very helpful. And the different words that it kind of broken down into. I never would have thought that scream would have been the word I would've ended up with. So I liked the paradox of that with being in space.

D19

The poppy blue

*Goes through the earth
Badger's claw, the pain of death
Would that I could become immortal
Not ever lose a friend
A loved one or beloved pet
For we are all of the earth
The changes of dirt
The eternal thirst
The kitten claws
The worm that rides
And we will lose
Our deepest love inside
The tears of sorrow
The price of love
Joy and loss from above
Cut my heart into a million parts
When worm turns and I lose my love
But then the bulbs grow
The earth's feeding their leaves
Sights of their colour, their vibrancy
Will help me with my inevitable grief*

D20

*We walked and talked
Lay on the grass
An early autumn day
With the sun still
Strong
Age and the season
Had not yet pushed
In to age
I read Keats to*

*Her while she lit
A cigarette.
We were there a
Moment
The moment was
Long
And is seared on
My memory
Fled is she now
To better things?
Which of us has
Their desire in life
She leaves me that
Day.
Autumn, Keats and
The dry warm grass
Before the sun too
Fled.*

D21

*I've never seen the Northern Lights but I would know them.
The falling dust of red and green against the night,
the creak of cold, an electric taste like steel or blood
as I run my tongue against my teeth.
I have never seen the devil but I would sense him.
No heat, not the believer's fear of burnt stone and bism
written in the night after visions.
He would be a man I didn't notice at the start.
He'd keep his back to me,
listening, knowing,
ready to turn my best intentions into dust.*

D22

*Identities obscured
By a veil that hides our faces
Our emotions masked
And completely locked in stasis
A lighthouse guides us
Down the path we must follow
A path red with anger
A road that leads us to tomorrow
Betrayal sits on her lips
Ready to be spoken
My eyes blinded to a friendship
That's been broken
Yet there is another path
Flowering and green
Where the sun might have shone
Where the guiding light has been*

D23

Pastel Pink Paste

There was no room for me
in the female dorm.
I kept to myself,
Among the boys.

When it was time
And there was a place there
for me in the world

my mum came to help me move
(like she always did) -

There were bags and bags
of things to move -
a bag of frozen cherries,
a bottle of pastel pink hair conditioner,
whole cherries floating
suspended
within its pastel pink paste.

Was it all mine?
There were bags and bags
of things to move -
did they all and my mum
belong to me?

Some things, my mother had brought -
This fresh start of mine
A chance to gift
What she wanted to hold on to
On to me.

She always came to help me
But she sure did weigh me down with
A lot of her stuff

D24

Emotion; P4, P5, P7, P8, P12, P15, P16, P3, P10, P9

Symbolism: P14, P15, P8, P11, P12, P4, P3, P16

Themes across dreams that ended up in poetry: P14, P6, P8, P11, P5, P12, P4

D25

P4, P6, P8, P10

P4:

I curl myself like a woodlouse
Against the cold,
The bone-aching cold.

A thought on the border
of thought and dream -
I grasp at it, and it slips
through my fingertips,
falls to the ground,
grows fur and legs,
and walks off
into the darkness, I follow.

Let me watch it dig bones
from the undergrowth,
Let me watch it dig stars
from the earth,
Let me hear it howl at the moon.

It was three separate liminal experiences, before I went to sleep. Photos and memories and the one that started curling up like wood glass was later on in the night. It wasn't any specific animal, I think. It's almost like an illustration, like kind of like a monster. But I didn't feel like it was going to attack me, it was I guess like a phantasy creature.

02/12/23

Liminal poem ideas - Lead lizard eyelids/ Chainmail scales [thinking about drifting off to sleep, being sleepy, being tired]. Two other ideas for poems [monologue about photos, and poem that starts 'I curl myself like a woodlouse against the cold', that I have written and shared in a separate document].

09/12/23

No dreams recorded, but poetry ideas before drifting off to sleep - fragile ice maiden about being cold under the covers in the winter weather, and then, a poem about Gaza, starting with: I couldn't write a poem about Gaza until/ the 9th of December 2023/ the memory of/ sitting in my Granny's house/ in October, two months ago, watching the news/ and feeling the surge of/ tears from inside me, and trying not to look/ at/ the injured/ children/ because/ I would soon have to/ counsel children who are injuring themselves/ and/ I had a cold [large gurgling cough]/ and/ the thirteen countries/ that looked Netanyahu in the eyes and mouthed/ - spoke the words - "War crimes"/ but the US stood in front,/ large, bullying/ so he did not see/ the look in their eyes/ and/Rishi Sunak off to the side, twiddling his thumbs,/ saying -/ "Well, it's a really tricky situation actually" -/ and it is a tricky situation, and has been for many years before I was born, but/ the watering of Gazan earth with the blood of over 22,000 Gazan children/ is not avenging, it is genocide./ Avenging the actions of a few/ by/ spilling the blood of many children/ is not proportional./ If you believe it is not genocide/ tell me of a better example,/ and let's talk about the difference. [forgot to turn recording off, silence punctuated by coughs for 41 seconds]

P10:

I recorded the dream and then I wrote the poem in that kind of semi awake state. And then this morning I realized that I didn't have a chance to read it. And that was just 2 days ago and I realised how much more detail there was that I'd forgotten in two days. Even though the feel of it is recorded in the poem, I had forgotten a lot of it from the dream report. So yeah there's lots of stuff happening and I just find it so useful to record dreams, I mean it's obvious. But yeah just looking at the dream and going back to the poem, it's very basic, I could do a lot more with it. So it needs work basically, I only did it one morning. Cause then I was interested in a different poem rather than working on that one cause it feels like this is just a first attempt on something.

- Did not want to share the poem because it wasn't ready for sharing yet

D26

*The night knocks
and we strain to keep the door shut.
The light pushes its way inside our heads
and we quail like stone men at the sight of a corona.
Space splitting the dark,
the universe inside our minds,
photons, beams, prehistory
making itself know, becoming part of us.*

D27

P1, P3, P8, P9, P10, P11, P16

P8

Dream:

I am helping to look after a house and maybe children with another girl. I am young. We are nannies or au pairs. It is a very wet house, there is damp in the walls. We have pads and contraptions to put inside the walls to soak up the damp but they don't work very well.

We are cleaning up with a Hoover and it feels competitive. I am Hoovering over a loose blanket but getting everything rucked up.

Switch to a dark shimmering dress with a flared hem, swinging in the moonlight.

The girl from the earlier part of the dream is wearing the dress.

Poem:

It rains today and the slick of it still covers the road sand leaves,
turns the beach into a mirror,
so when the moon comes up she is doubled.
A girl is dancing on the pebbles,
the blue light catches her dress and she shimmers,
fracturing the white glass of the moonlight on the sand.
A man in a black shirt takes her hand.
I never see his face, but the angle of his neck,
the grip of his hand as he leads her to the beach,
makes me cold.
They dance with the moon under their feet.
Her dress lifts as she spins,
catching the light that is bright as a fairground.
His back is straight, his shoulders stiff with intent.
He stands still in the slick of light
as she pirouettes around him.
And the moon rises high and fills a pool of darkness at his feet.
When the moon casts a shadow you can see a man's soul.

P11

Dream:

a dream about Frida Kahlo

Poem:

It's Called Diego

I love him,
he is me and
I him.
His size,
his bulk,
his appetites
are mine.
We travelled to America,
machines, wealth
unemployment
The lift boys ignore
a Mexican
His mural is huge,
a thing of beauty
It is of the people and for them.
Yet why does
he work for
Rocketeer?
Helen Wills Moody appears.
Chiseled cheekbones and flirting
with my husband.
But I love Diego
he is better
than this and my
Love overcomes all.
The mural is nearly finished and we are
part of it.
We are together in art
and life.
Let it always be so.

P1

Dream:

- Went to Portugal, was followed by a black panther with orange eyes that disappeared.
- Saw lots of distressing images of children in a warzone (hands bleeding)
- Went clubbing.
- Got 40% discount on coffee at National Pool

Poem:

Orange popsicles
Electric doors
Bleeding hands
Bricks and rubble and predators
That disappear
When you turn around.
A pushy waitress:
“You should eat more”
At a party with a boy
Who will never love you –
A sister acting like a brother
An absent father
Discounted coffee

Dream:

My cousins (all grown up)

Poem:

It was hopeless praying
For your innocence
I hoped you'd stay forever that way:

Sticky hands and round cheeks,
Eyes that glistened with tears
And toothless smiles
It was hopeless hoping
That you'd never grow up

Dream:

- Was in a big school (in an old train station)
- Was lost and following the crowd
- We were all late for the lesson

Poem:

I call every girl Emily
Because it feels right
And stumble up the endless stairs,
My best friend ahead of me.
I watch her bag thump
Against her skinny back
And think about how
The first boy I told
I loved
Still makes me nervous.

P3

Dream:

Poem taken directly from the dream. That was just a weird image. I didn't do very much with that one. I have been watching a thing about Shakespeare the day before, so maybe that's what that was about.

Poem:

Danish

One night I dreamt a tableau
inside a picture frame
one man seemed significant
a roman emperor, a Dane
wearing a toga in white and gold
and a chariot to match.
Perhaps he was in old Pompei
when the earthquake came
or maybe it was just because
I'd been listening to the bard
who wrote about that other Dane
the one with the murdered father
where everyone dies at the end.

Dream:

Walk along the road toward (a place) with no light in complete darkness.
The battery on my phone had almost gone. There was a faint flow briefly and then
nothing. I would have to feel my way with my feet and notice when I went onto the
grass. I wasn't black like night so much as absent of light, as if all the light had been
obscured in a thick fog. There was mild frustration in this and recognition with what
would have to be done. Presumably I was heading home but there was no sense of
time about needing to get there, only the need to manage the current situation. I have
no idea how I came to be there or where I had come from. I just was where I was and
needed to do what I needed to do in order to keep going.

Poem:

Only the road

There is only the road to follow
even if it can't be seen
and this is a much travelled route
well worn and riddled with patches
no light, no guide, no certainty
of any destination
only moving forwards
taking each step carefully
and feeling the way each time

Dream:

I was staying in a shared dormitory in a big house. Katy and Elisabeth were there. I had left a pile of books on a desk in our room and went down the corridor to find the door that led outside. Elisabeth was sitting there reading a huge book. She asked me how long it took me to get into the book I was reading because her one took a long time. The door to the garden was open.

I'm not sure I actually heard her words or replied. It felt more like telepathy.

I hope they wouldn't think I was taking up all the space with my books on the desk.

Poem:

Surrounded by books

each one is a doorway through time
and retains the smell of that bookshop
the feel of that garden bench
or the warmth of a winter duvet
beneath which a torch lit the way

old tomes with turned down corners

brown edges and marginal marks
or worst of all a missing page
that leaves a story unended
whatever the author intended

but I'd rather the sound of a newly cracked spine
and the scent of ink that is fresh from the press
the anticipation of genius
in words that are recently minted

or an instant electronic romp
where the pages renew with a touch
and dozens of volumes
can fit in a pocket
and last for a worldwide trip

through all the days of childhood
the school and college years
the sleepless haze of baby care
together with work and leisure
in and out of relationships
always there were books

there were stories that changed the way I think
and tales of far away places
authors whose words were slow to sink in
not forgetting the ones I hated

there's magic between the covers
where my alter ego lives
here lies what I could have done
and who I might become

P16

Dream:

Waking on a beach it is very busy on the beach there is a older blonde woman with a small dog playing in the surf I go to feed the dog an Oreo as it's coat is red and a shiny leopard print pattern it's not an ordinary dog I comment on it's sheen when I am mocked by a man I don't know but I rise above being provoked and walk away and later in a different setting I am in the toilets and I am using the urinal he approaches me again and begins to apologise and I turn and slap him now I am apologising profusely and he is angry again the dream goes on. I am at my window and all along the beach people are shooting fireworks that take the shape of Christian crosses along the shore and rejoicing.

Poem:

On the Shore

The sea washes away everything
with great force and swallowing embrace
flattening all features
baptising the shore
and between these waves people
standing in the surf or playing or swimming
not giving way
indifferent or cruel to one another
forgetting they are 5, 10 or 50 years away
from becoming everything again
unable to stand against the tide
how can I find the strength to turn the other cheek
to bear this heavy yoke lightly
to stop kicking against the goads

P10

Poem:

(no title)

What do you do with longing?
I wish I was there – not exactly that place
but that feeling – than energy
that’s what I’m longing for
Youth maybe you could call it
togetherness perhaps
the energy of the crowd
longing for belonging?
Or is it love, young love, the butterflies
in the belly, falling in love
I don’t miss any of the bad stuff
I’m calmer & happier in many ways now.
Or am I saying this to myself for consolation,
to balance the longing
But what else shall I do with it now?

Dream:

I put my feet up, close to someone’s face, and I notice that he noticed – “probably they smell” I thought and felt a bit embarrassed.
It seems we were cooking outdoors, by the public water source. Perhaps we were talking about the high number of pupils in the class these days, and my friend Sakis² says “Yes, there’s 500 of us now in the class”. This really makes a big impression on me; the system seems to be struggling... At the same time I feel Sakis is so fortunate to be in this class. I feel a bit jealous; I would like it too to be in high school with so many classmates in my class.
A young boy next to me tells me it’s great that I don’t smoke – I tell him that just now I was thinking that I would smoke if I was in a class with so many others, but I’m glad I don’t smoke now – he agrees, tells me that my breath is cooler and

calmer. We continue talking but not so orderly, interrupting each other. We're still cooking; it's african curry.

1 A few taps next to each other, similar to what it was like in my school.

2 My dear and close friend in the army, who I haven't seen or spoken to for many years.

Poem

(edited poem)

(no title)

Take my hand, or we'll get lost
in the crowds, follow the child
follow the half-naked woman
she can open doors for us.

Black smoke is burning behind you
it's burning what brought us here – still valuable
and must be saved
but how do we get there
on time,
how do we get there on time
against the flow
struggling through the crowds
holding hands not to lose each other.

Remember, not long ago we were enjoying ourselves
strolling in the market of El-Khalili
not the actual one, one with hills
and beautiful
which I need to remember
to describe outside this dream.

Dream:

(6:57 am)

It seems I'm at mum's home with Jo, and I'm on the phone to mum. My mum's neighbour, Mr Kaltibanis, is there with us and I ask him "Have you been working recently from home?". He says "Yes, how did you know?". "Because of the calm tone in your voice", I reply, "you can't be in a rush to go to work". He agrees. Then he explains what he does, but I can't understand what he is saying; I can't hear it, it's all muffled.

Then we're on the motorbike with Jo, and I'm still on the phone to mum telling her we're on our way. Earlier I was feeling calm, but as I'm driving I get more and more stressed and agitated. "How long before you get here" she asks. I get angry with her because I'm driving and don't want to chat unnecessarily and I'm just keen to arrive. "In 10 minutes, in 5" I tell her and I hang up frustrated while she is still talking.

At that point I pass by the police station. I stress, and hope the police didn't see me driving and speaking on the phone, then stressing even more that the motorbike is on fire and I can't get there on time and put it out.

When I arrive, I check behind me and I can't see Jo anywhere. I'm in a busy market street, with lots of people coming and going. It's sunny and the street is a big dust road coming down from the hill; it looks like I'm somewhere in the Middle East or Morocco. It's beautiful and I think I must be at the market of El-Khalili, even though I know it can't be because that one is flat, whereas we are in a hilly landscape.

Soon after I see Jo coming down from the top of the hill; behind her, just the other side of the hilltop I see lots of black smoke. I ask her, "is this black smoke from our motorbike burning?" she says "Yes".

We try to get to the motorbike but there are so many people all walking down the hill towards us. I take her hand and try to get passed through the crowd but it's hard to move.

I get an image in my head that someone is holding a fire extinguisher spraying the bike and I ask Jo "is anyone trying to put out the fire?". She says "No, no one is taking notice".

I feel really stressed that I won't make it in time to save the bike, but it is impossible to move fast because of the vast crowd walking the opposite direction to us. We leave the main street and take some other small paths, crawling through some small openings and under little arcs or over bridges.

I see another woman who is also trying to go a different way to the crowds. She is in front of us holding a child in her hand and another one is walking in front of her. A woman in a high-vis vest tells her she can come through and opens the fenced gate for her. The woman with the children walks through and she is topless now.

D28

The Lemon

Written After a dream 7:30 am 3/11/23 where Barack Obama is saying

“If I had a sour lemon for each time life disappoints

I d have aching joints and brownie points “

Then half asleep I wrote:

For my many good deeds (really embarrassing I know - self praise:)

But when the fox barks & the badger howls

There is a part of me

That cannot find the tools

I need to help our human kind.

I then immediately wrote The Lemon; this reflects the increased empathy I have felt to African & Mexican/Mayan relatives from Belize & the abhorrence I have for the colonial crimes originating from u k; I have also tuned in more to the need to embrace veganism more of the time (husband & I have been Vegetarian for most of our adult lives);

The Lemon

The lemon moves my face in sadness

As I consider our planets madness

Butchery without repeal
Eating meat at every meal
When becoming vegetarian would allow
Deeper respect for the sacred cow

Our white chalk cliffs are red with blood
from the innocents hurled down from above
My throat swell up,
my eyes are misted
That such violence has persisted

From twisted minds to contorted forms
As bodies scream & people groan
When it is fun, in the name of a game
To shoot or hurt or rob or maim ?
When kindness should,
I think, determine,
The games we play,
Enhancing our empathic learning

So, with prayers for peace
And contemplation
May our actions inspire moderation,
our media portray more of helping,
Less of horror
For a happier, kinder,
and better tomorrow

May we support
Those seekers of asylum
Arriving in boats
at our tiny, privileged island
May we create laws
from a place of love

To clean from our cliffs
Our historical deep red blood

It's about the asylum seekers, it's about these people arriving in boats and being pushed, well I know that technically we don't push them away but there's a feeling that we want to push them, and we're very lucky. We are so lucky. And then I think about video games, there's all this is my pet hates in here (this poem). Like my son is 18 and we had constant battles over Grand Theft Auto because it's just so violent and aggressive. So this kind of allowed my pet hates to come out.

D29

Dream:

4 horsemen jumping down from 4 earth built walls onto horses with scythes in each hand holding the reins in their mouths & the dream was set at night.

I think it's about what's happening in Gaza and to some extent in Ukraine. That's been on my mind a lot lately, I find it very distressing what's happening in the world right now, I don't even watch the news sometimes.

I was half asleep and I wrote a poem in that liminal state, when I was just waking up. I then wrote the rest of the poem when I felt "in the zone" - in the afternoon actually - when I was feeling in a dream like state; luckily the words came tumbling out uncensored & I just then edited it where I felt I needed to. The word atherogenic was new to me & it is a medical term but high stress seemed to fit in the context of "flight & fight".

Poem:

Horsemen of the Apocalypse

Four fanatical horsemen
May they choose the light

In dark dramatic caverns
Of infinite ergogenic flight
a sword in each hand
teeth champing on the reins
In pain they roar & rage
Against the Terror
Of their self made cage

Foaming fury from the mouth
But no coin to bite
They ignore their dreams
And the gift of second sight
Walking whilst asleep
To churning, misguided emotions
Not thinking
Not speaking
For neither gift nor token

Galloping forward & then outwards
Dust springing from the hooves
The apocalyptic horsemen
Jump down from four tiled roofs
transported, then, by vultures
To village & to town
Where people in icy terror
Do not dare to make a sound.

Hidden in shadows
And cloaked by giant bats
The horsemen's companions
Were town sewers & their rats
For even the cats lived in fear
Of cat pudding or cat pie
Where forsaken frozen people

Were left , prematurely, to die

No food, for they are starving
And in desperate plight
They go out hunting cats & dogs
Under cover of darkest night
So, where is our compassion
To this terrible, torrid sight
What is the answer?
How may we bring
Our horsemen to the light?

In the words of the great leader
Martin Luther king
“Only light can drive out darkness”
So, Strengthen our flames
From deep within,
And When hearts are filled with hatred
Don t give back the same
That is only a licence
To kill, to hurt or maim

Help us Find our love
Our Wisdom, our compassion
To pause & think before we act
When filled with rage & passion
For revenge is not the answer
It will only bring more pain
And may our horsemen find their light
To end their tormented reign

An example of a dream involving my mother:

*our family were in a shopping mall but the ground was a giant slope
at the top of the slope there was a shelf with bath soap body soap shampoos etcetera
my mom was looking at the shampoos and the body soaps
my dad was in a shopping cart and I let him roll down the slope
my mother shouted and yelled to grab onto the cart
I thought the cart was safe and rolling down the shopping mall was safe
after my dad got to the bottom he said he felt like he'd been on a roller coaster
After getting back to the top of the slope my mom asked me what soap do I want
I told her I don't mind
in my head I was thinking I really don't want cherry
my mom picked out the cherry and put it in the cart
I said nothing.*

D31

*I think I was trying to help some people, probably women. I'm not sure out of
somewhere, so we escaped from somewhere, and then it was down lots of mazes, and
up, up, down and down a hill and stuff, and then occasionally we get trapped. We'd
have to fight or something, and then sometimes it seemed like I was the one doing the
chasing, and so on. So again I was. It was like swapping characters bit, but you know,
completely opposite.*

*and that's when I think it would become lucid sometimes is when you're being attacked
or something you think. Oh, I I can't be really being attacked now I can't be really
about to die, or have I just been killed? I can't be, cause I'm still thinking. Well, I'm
sure I was killed just a moment ago. So why am I now doing this? So I was a bit
conscious of all that. Then when I woke up I was annoyed.*

*There were a couple of TV programs I wanted to watch because they looked
interesting. And then they were just really violent and not well written, really, either.
So I was annoyed that I was dreaming that.*

But then I thought it's okay if I keep dying, because then that'll make all these other things go away, in the past, things that I regret or whatever. So that was where the feeling came from, rather than actually...

Poem 1:

Bloody Regrets

*If I could only bleed away my regrets.
But I would drown in so much blood.*

P15: "I think I did have a direct feeling that by bleeding enough I could get rid of my regrets when in a dream, which was literal in the dream and symbolic in my life, that enough suffering can overcome the mistakes, equal the scales, but actually it doesn't work like that."

Poem 2:

Always Running

*Chased to death,
Every new me,
 Caught in the head lights,
 The half-light,
 Beneath the axe.
Crushed up and spat out, more tired than before.
The new me, same as the old me,
Just older, smaller, less constructive*

P15: "the second dream is the feeling that every reinvention of myself is not enough to move on, even though I don't find that the case at the moment it is always my fear."

D32

Dream

I was with Caroline (friend), and she was very upset. I tried to comfort her but it didn't work and she pushed me away, so I sat back and listened over a rectangular formica table under bright kitchen light. She started to cry and said 'it's turned my thumb around'. I know she meant her psychological pain. She showed me her hand and her thumb had twisted around so that the nail was downwards.

Poem inspired by dream

Her face twists away from the world,
a sour shape that draws distaste.
So she learns, this girl in pain,
to keep the muscles of her cheeks and brow,
her lips and tongue, restrained.
In repose.
No crucified fist of a mouth,
no thorns and blood,
no wide, staring, white, shocked eyes
of a dying doe under her lids.
To pose.
But the pain bleeds into her skin
and limbs and blood and breath.
It spreads and strains
until, in forty years,
she can show me in the dark,
under the table where we talk,
how her thumbs have turned around,
the nails down.
Opposed.

Notes: They were the images I kept coming up with, and then the opposite of that: What do we do when we don't want other people to know our pain. We kind of pretend; the opposite of being twisted by pain is being is putting on a poker face, isn't it. But poker face isn't very poetic. So I was trying to think of words that were the opposite of that, and at the opposition of that opposed pose repose. And that's when that came to me.

D33

The following dream was after a stressful Welsh class. I had been away 2 weeks on holiday & had missed two Welsh classes so, although I had prepared, I struggled more than usual & at one stage my mind went blank when asked a question in Welsh & I felt a sense of panic.

I dreamed I was writing a poem in Welsh & heard the first two lines in my dream. In my dream I also saw a cockroach eating an ant.

Paned is Welsh for a “cuppa” Amser Paned means tea break in Welsh;

Ansel is not a Welsh word - I looked it up after the dream - it is a German name from the old German ans, meaning "God" and helm, meaning "helmet" and taken to mean "God's protection". Ansel is also a code - We define social and emotional learning (SEL) as an integral part of education and human development. SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.

Neu (pronounced nay) is Welsh for “or” - as I awoke I was trying to remember the correct Welsh words; Sadern is Welsh for Saturday

Dyscu Cymraeg (Dyscu is rhymes with husky) (Learning Welsh)

Paned Ansel?
Neu Amser Paned?
Neu Paned Panic !

My mind goes blank,
I feel absurd,
When I forget,
what i have heard,
so betrayed,
by my memory,
So mistakenly
far out to sea.

I prepared for the lesson
Learned about “saderu”
“Dydd” of the week
But, when asked to speak,
My mouth is dry,
My mind goes blank,
Forsaken by
my cognitive bank!

Oh, that I could speak
the thousand tongues of biblical days!
So frustrating when I cannot reach
The hidden memories
That I seek

To conclude,
effective teaching must transform
from couch potato to avid book worm
I must practice, practice, practice!
Paned Amser no more!

If I am to thrive & overcome
This language learning chore

And, as a cockroach eats an ant,
May I be more than just a plant,
Not on a windowsill in the dark,
But, enculturation imbued,
with a constant and committed,
language Learning spark

(Was going to abandon the last verse “as a cockroach eats an ant” - as it did not make sense to my logical mind - but then I decided to be curious “do cockroaches eat ants”? - cockroaches only eat ants on an occasional, opportunistic basis “ but that made perfect sense to the poem / because my learning was occasional & opportunistic rather than consistent & committed on a daily basis - so it then fed into the last verse!! ; then I realised “aha” it was a poem not just about learning a language but learning a culture & becoming that culture - so the other bit of the now last verse which did not make sense - “more than a plant”

Actually did make sense when I realised that this was about becoming a part of the Welsh language culture - requiring a huge commitment - the word enculturation I looked up “The process of learning one's own culture” - my ancestors were Welsh on my Dad s side.

D34

it's about looking outside and inside at the same time. But realizing that we're all trying to search for answers, maybe on the external level, like maybe talking to someone, maybe even judging someone or discussing some external things and concentrating on them. But sometimes you just have this moment when you stop, look around and then realize that it's all inside. All the answers are inside. So that's just the context of it but I used some metaphorical images like building blocks or

something when you're climbing on the roofs and looking. But the context, I meant it to be like this, I don't know if it's perfect.

The line that inspired it: *I would have climbed on the roofs of neighbouring houses*, or something like this. I was thinking about the country where I'm from, we have these apartment blocks, like huge ones, so I was thinking about how you can climb and see other apartment blocks and all these tiny windows with people buzzing, doing something.

I still don't remember the dream. It was just a line that I got and I started writing and I didn't know what the context of it was going to be.

Poem in Russian:

Мне так хочется влезть на крыши соседних домов
И посмотреть на пейзаж.
Что они видят
сквозь рамки стеклянных снов?

Очередной форсаж? Очередной витраж
Из неразгаданных спутанных судеб?
Мне бы мачту повыше,
так чтобы видно всё судно.

Много слов на земле.
У бога слов не хватает.
Богослов богомольно страницы
одну за одной листает
Что умирает? слышишь?
Так тихо свеча догорает,
Навек растворяясь в моменте,
возгласе нового дня.
Приветствия шлют витрины,
А я влез бы на крыши соседних домов
И посмотрел бы

На себя.

Translation:

I really want to climb onto the roofs of neighboring houses
And look at the landscape.
What do they see
through the frames of glass dreams?

Another afterburner? Another stained glass window
From unsolved tangled destinies?
I would like a higher mast,
so that the entire ship can be seen.

There are many words on earth.
God is at a loss for words.
Theologian piously pages
flipping through one by one
What is dying? do you hear?
So quietly the candle burns out,
Forever dissolving in the moment,
the cry of a new day.
The shop windows send greetings,
And I would climb onto the roofs of neighboring houses
And I would look
To myself.

D35

P14

*A poem I don't remember writing that I found in my book:
I wrote it immediately after waking up.
after reading it I believe its about abortion.*

Poem:

There I lay, fearing my own creation
disgusted by my flesh and blood
there is a creature within me bread and raw, an open wound to me
it's precious tiny form latches onto my vessel and slowly it draws out dignity
feeding upon my greatest fear it grows healthy and strong, a beautiful form

my dear parasite within me ohh how I'll miss her
a bud with a future
she'll never blossom
instead rocked prematurely in a cold plastic bag
among others of different strain
a daffodil a Lily a lilac bud of anguish
a rose a Daisy a burgundy body of pain
warm and cozy held within a thick bloody blanket of a terrified woman
there goes my bliss
a sharp metal kiss
the limbs I fought so hard to grow
ripped off petal by petal
my baby beating heart squished between claws
my home. Never to be seen again
I have new friends now
grief and relief
they walk hand in hand
almost as twins

P3

I often have dreams that end with a word, I wake up with a word. I woke up and knew that there was a word, but I couldn't catch it. I knew there was one in the dream, and then sort of as I drifted out of the dream, even while I was still asleep, the word had gone. And I was trying to make it come back. And I couldn't do that.

Poem:

Catchword

once within a dream
I hung upon a word
soundless, unheard
but ripe with meaning

a mysterious encryption
that I can't ignore
heavy with significance
that I can't retrieve

an otherworldly byword
that I must decipher
or else miss out on
this ethereal disclosure

by effort and stealth
I strive to grasp
this arcane graffiti
that glows insistently

then all at once the letters fade
the poem that might have been
is lost in the walls of the dream
where memory cannot penetrate

P9

I awaken from a dream which I cannot remember except it included a cobweb & workbench & then I write this poem when half asleep - it is more insightful than creative.

Poem:

Frayed Around the Edges - get a move on!

I m frayed around the edges
but the work bench, it is sound
There are holes & cobwebs glistening
But rainbows can be found
And when I pick my feet up
& myself off the ground
A candle burning through the night
is calling "homeward bound"

The candle burns to integrate
the purpose of my soul
Taps into ancestral wisdom
that I might individuate and grow
The stag on high with antlers
is beckoning me on
"You have so much to give
hurry up & write more songs"

So, get the workbench out
& cover it with jobs
For hard work won t hurt anyone
& your talent won t be robbed

And when you see a gear box
you need to up the pace
You ve made a start
but with consistency
You can finish this creative race

I must now prepare myself
for not much time remains
Keep on writing, dreaming
for the troubled & disdained
The moon, obscured by shadow
she will soon woo the day
That I allowed fear to dominate
And hid my light away

D36

Lucid Dream:

I am on a high street that resembles Cardiff a security officer who is a young woman that I don't recognise asks for me to follow them into a building to help them out I go in and the building is full of people moving about through many rooms I think at the time it is some kind of court the security officer starts making a commotion about me and I break away into the crowd and retrace my steps back outside the building Outside I meet a very old man who has a white beard and hair and wears a long green coat that I own in waking life he has a flat wizened face full of wrinkles and seems upset looking into his face I become aware that I am dreaming and lucid and that the old man is me I take both his shoulders in my hands and I am reassuring him and I say something along the lines of it's not true that you are old it's an illusion and that you are actually young with all great things planned ahead of you to experience again and that he or you should put down your phone and really live to the fullest and while talking and trying to console or convince him I feel a rising

sense of elation that builds and builds and in the dream as I am talking and I am aware of how strangely powerful this emotion is I feel basically ecstatic like a rising mania though I don't remember the old man's mood improving

I leave the man and thinking lucidly in the dream I decide to fly and I rise gently into the sky like on a low and slow breeze upwards until I am above the street and in the distance ahead of me there is a great mass of rolling roiling clouds expanding and darkening and being aware of the dream I say to myself rather crudely but with great intention swore against going that direction and I turn to float to the (west) instead flying over rows of roofs of gleaming terrace houses sprawled across the hills while in the sky the clouds have broken golden and blue I am still flying low sort of feet first over the houses and my feet are catching on the antennas and the feeling of scraping my lower legs is so vivid I wonder if something is really happening to my legs outside the dream maybe I was scratching them in reality but in the dream I rise and come to a hot air balloon where I get the understanding I am supposed to meet a sultan like figure but at point I seem to wake up.

Poem:

It's probably not that bad being old
You run around the halls of other men
Commanded and compelled on their terms
the curse of your better nature
and against your better instincts
into the warren of rooms
of the tall cold buildings
where decisions are made
and made for you

Now peer into the wizened face
lined with mistakes and regrets
Eyes closed and face drawn
Hands on both shoulders
Stubborn still and jilted
Are you refusing to see

that it's not too late at all
Old man don't you know

I am you and I am so full of life
and I so desire to live
These are the great magnificent plans
I will to complete
I am not new and fresh born,
I am not without regrets
the shames, the failings
and the disappointments
All the things you seem to know so well
Compounded over only one life
You and me the same
All the best things that you will get to have again
Time like a flat circle
Rise and round and rise with the mood
roll on the holy mania
coming and going I go up
I will see you again in your time
As you see me now
Put away your childish things
And don't despair

Commend that you live so fully
dancing on the head of a pin
Will away up and to the breaking sky
against the rack of the storm and
with the gusts slow and winding
now I go to meet wiser men
my head in the clouds feet dragged
by terrestrial metal thorns
made bloody and keep me grounded
I wont slip and float away so easily

I want life now I will live

SLEEP LAB POEM:

seeing myself and being both 33 and 109
exactly at the same time
held together overlapping one another
lines drawn and etched on an ancient face
my own brief emotions one on one
joy firming and relaxing to mark a life well spent.
light behind the eyes and a city in the
sky with four queens and moving all over
birds of light.

Corresponding dream:

It's like the idea of being 33 and 109, like the same time somehow. Well, like old. I'm not 33 though. I'm only 30. So I don't know what those numbers are really about. I don't know, I found them quite pleasing. I was like the image in my head of being old but happy. Like, I don't know, it kind of was more formed in my head. I remember it being almost composed when, like as I was coming out of it. But the numbers were very clear. I'm not sure if it was like 109 rhymed with time. Unfortunately. I thought that at the time, actually, I was like, oh, that'd be annoying. That was the reason because it's quite. I was like, that's probably as old as you could be.

D37

Poem:

The Clock

*The clock weighs heavy in my hand
It's bell of wakefulness commands
That I get up & start my day
When I would rather hide away,
Writing poems,
The gifts that belong
To our shared consciousness,
Our universal song.*

*The clock weighs heavy in my hand
Demands I leave my warm safe place
To chase the pretensions of our race
The swinging tail
The treadmill trite
I must respect
From day to night*

*Would that I could set myself free
To dwell fully in creativity
But as counsellor, mother & wife
I may make sacrifices
to live my life
For, I hope, a fair & balanced grind
Giving time to each thing
that weighs heavy on my mind
Like the chime chime chime
Of the clock*

*Tic Toc Tic Toc ring ring beep beep
The alarm clock will not let me sleep
Or, dreamy, write this poem or song
Because time, continually, marches on
Fitness & weights in the gym
Or a healthy life extending swim*

Before embarking

On Counselling

So much to do before I die

When the clock will boom boom

from the sky

The poem directly echoes the dream experience. It portrays the heaviness of the clock in the dreamer's hand, emphasising its command to start the day. The desire to hide away and write poems reflects the creative struggle mentioned in the dream. The swinging tail and the treadmill metaphor are incorporated, symbolising the routine responsibilities that must be respected and attended to. The poem expresses a yearning for freedom and a dedication to a fair and balanced life, acknowledging the ticking clock and the inevitable passage of time, as well as the demands of various roles such as counsellor, mother, and wife. The rhythmic and repetitive sounds at the end of the poem mirror the ticking of a clock and reinforce the theme of time's relentless progression.

D38

I was having a dream. I was walking all over sort of, I suppose, desert. And this huge balloon was ahead of me. A massive hot air balloon shaped with a face. It was a man's face and I could see it just as the balloon came down I could see it sort of side on. So it was partially away from me. Then to my side there was a figure walking towards me. A lady with a sort of white shroud wrapped all around her. But part of it was flowing in the wind. And now she came closer. I still couldn't, I could make out it was a woman. But I couldn't make out any features and I wondered why. That was very strange. Because she was coming closer and closer. There was still no definition there. And I wanted to get to the balloon yet. Yet I couldn't. This figure was keeping me there.

I did have another one. It was walking down a town centre and then I met Carl, a shopper I used to know. But I didn't recognise a town centre at all. He said he'd been there before. But I had no recollection of it whatsoever. And then we sat and we lay down in a cafe, strange. And it was raining, it was raining really hard. So we were glad to get inside but I just had no recollection of what the place was. And what connection he had to do with her and I thought that was strange. And then he told me he was going and I didn't want him to go.

That seemed odd enough to last a long time, more so than the other one.

D39

Two elderly people seated at a round table with a tablecloth, a reindeer with antelopes features in a picture on the wall, he comes to life and his head extends out of the painting. That's very hip and gorgeous.

On a plane upside down, I feel momentarily anxious, the plane is flying upside down and the air vents and lights are below my vision instead of above. Images of a crocodile with an open mouth inviting me inside a dry sandy bank with limited water and then a fan, keep it warm in a box, it becomes a cat flap.

Then the words I heard: don't explain tell me, or tell me let me find my way. Then I saw blue stars under eyelids.

A white man with dark brown hair and stubble holding a lantern and wearing a head torch. A sound like a large raindrop on the ceiling. A Boone dog in a basket. Will he come to play?

D40

Crashing waves, purple sheep, a bright light that I was going towards, lots of things, a hedge. I was in like a tube. It was almost like a translucent tube. It could have been,

you know, almost like one of these tubes that they used for sending light down telephones. And it was snaking in front of me. And I was following it and there was a light at the end and I felt very peaceful. And then another one was, there were purple sheep running up a hill and jumping into my arms. Well, and there was a sea at the bottom of the hill. It was a funny colour. It wasn't like a normal blue. It was very strange blue like a thick blue, a co -pink. And the crashing waves were, I think they were in Amaroff and they were crashing over the road and they were punching a stone straight through the buildings and knocking all the windows out and washing people away. And the hedge was a hedge I dreamt about the other night and it was full of bees and I was trying to get back into that dream and I don't think I managed to get back into that dream but I could visualise the hedge and there was someone walking backwards through it and all the branches were crunching and they were pulling me with them and one of the bees turned into an orange and started peeling itself. Okay, the strips of rind were coming out off the orange and the orange was the bee's body. And it was enormous, an enormous bee. Perhaps I was dreaming then. The bee was walking backwards. Yeah, and this man was walking backwards.

D41

So the notes I had was there was a McDonald's advert and I was talking to a girl. And then someone had found a cure for an illness and people were happy. I don't remember the illness or like why they were happy or anything. And then someone was talking about what like time allocation and what do we do like what do we make time for what do we enjoy? What do we make time for? I was talking to my dad and one of my friends from work, he was there as well. And then I got a job in Switzerland and I really wanted to enjoy Switzerland and not work there. So I was asking for like holiday pay and stuff.

D42

what I wrote was part of my experience here. And it's the image, this image I have as a little child. I was reminded of that. I mean, I thought, I was very little, maybe five

years old or something. I thought about it other times in my life, not frequently, and it just came and it was with me.

...

the memory I have of lying down on the floor in my parents' bedroom where there was a bit of sunlight because we were in a block of flats and lots of flats around. The sun would just barely make its way into the, because we were quite low down as well. So there was just this big floor by the window that would get the sunlight. So I would lie there and stare at the sun. So I wrote about that.

a sensation on the head, actually, that kind of product. So it's all mixed up, yeah, it's all mixed up. The sensation was of being in the dark, even though that's in complete contrast with the experience, that being in the dark and just like in a very quiet, absorbed space, I was feeling good and I was feeling... I said, afterglow, I don't know what is afterglow, I don't know, just that's what I could tell I was feeling. I was feeling some kind of sense of peace and calmness.

And some image, I can see them with my eyes closed in complete darkness, some light or the glow of light. And that relates to how I was feeling this sense of peace. And I don't know, that reminded me of that experience of looking at the light.

D43

It's a memory from years ago. It's the story of constant breakups in my relationship world. I was just walking in the woods in Cornwall and I was just thinking, it's going to be about a yearning place again which keeps reoccurring and then a buzzard flew down, it landed right in front of me and dropped a feather in front of me.

There's an image then from God Pan from nature because I was thinking about nature from before and it says you can have anyone you want, any woman you want. And then this came to me now actually, the end of the sentence: you can have any woman you want but you cannot keep them. That came to me now.

D44

P10: "I'm a fine kind of bloke" and "We cannot be sure what's happening" – heard these phrases.

P6: "you can have any woman you want" phrase.

P14: "you and your friends will look after me" and "What is your mental diagnosis before I do this physically" phrases.

P9: "can I get some sleep now, can I get some kip, the captain of this frame needs to steer a very heavy ship" words, "don't explain tell me or tell me let me find my way" words, and "Winklepicker wants to kick a ball."

P4 was hearing a line from a song "I can't quite quantify the feeling."

P8 heard the waves crashing during her vision.

P9 heard a sound like a large raindrop on the ceiling.

D45

I think partly, there are two things really. One is I wanted to convey the sense of things being cyclical, you know, in a broader sense, with things generally coming around in cycles and whatever.

Yeah, that was a strong impression I had [in a dream], especially in the early stages. But also, I think I might be trying to rationalize some of the stuff that's been going on with the workshops and some of the things I've been thinking about. I don't think I captured it very well in the poem, but I wanted to try and convey the idea of things can... you know, if you imagine water in a fountain with loads of different layers and pools full of water, from the perspective of a droplet of water, it's just in this big mass of water, no distinguishable identity. But then, when it falls from one layer to the next, there's a moment where it coalesces into an individual thing, then falls into the next layer where the identity is lost again. It coalesces into another tangible form and drops into the next thing. I think that's kind of what dreaming can be like, where I can't pinpoint the exact visual imagery of the dream, but there are moments or fragments where it does coalesce into a recognizable entity or identity.

So, I mean, because you don't describe the dreamer trying to grab onto things. Yeah, this group, there's nothing in the fountain that you can hold onto, yeah, there's not.

Yeah, that makes sense actually. I hadn't put those two together because I've just woken up.

D46

Your parents are alive. You feel part of a line of succession, but if you haven't got children, when your parents die, you don't feel like you're belonging in a line of anybody.

D47

Something about splitting my personality. Yeah, because there was this thing like part of me, I was telling someone, who maybe it was me, just doing some cleaning and tidying in the house, I said, you do that, I'm going to the woods, but the person who was doing that, it was me, I could see myself just emptying the bin, and I said, okay, you do that, I'm going to the woods.

But I was kind of aware of that, I was kind of thinking, oh, that must be like a dream because I must be drifting off or something, and I thought, what's that, this is both me. So the splitting personality, I think there was a conscious thought of me around, I wonder what the split personality is, is it you having sort of different needs, you want to do different things, it can't be that, so this was more conscious thinking.

D48

(not N1) – finding leaves in a forest, picking them up, there are words/poems written on the back – different colours = different moods

(not N1) – a mummy unwrapping bandages, from fingers, words written on the inside (thought just now – what is written over the eyes?)

A poem from perspective of ancient person in a grave, buried with their dog – the coldness, antelope;

Looking for words, poems on coins on the bottom of a hub of water

(not N1) – a deer comes up to me in a forest – cautious but friendly, sniffy my hand – warm, soft, the sensation of it breathing + vapour. I part the fur under its white spots + find words / a poem □ this led to thoughts now involving words or strings of sentence lines inside hatched eggs / unckoo eggs

(not N1) – inside words rocks □ splitting them with a pickaxe

□ inside wood, splitting wood

□ carving flesh from bone - written on the bones □ from this, title – ‘It’s written on the bones of things’

D49

It was a call back to something from the first study, so that was interesting. I just bought a van yesterday, finally, and it has a place where the table has been removed, so there's a hole in the floor which is circular, and in the story that I wrote for that short story workshop, in the van there's like a hiding place that she has which is a cutout that she removes from the floor, and I think it was circular, maybe my memory is playing tricks on me, and yeah, and there were like items inside there which were kind of central to the story, so I kind of realized, oh that's weird, I've got the same hole shape in my floor, and I could make that into a little secret stash place. So that was just almost like a little subconscious problem solve that my mind came up with.

D50

2nd session:

There was quite a lot that's related to the story or the world building that I'm doing at the moment. I do a ridiculous, stupid amount of research of different things to world build for my short stories and so you end up reading a lot of stuff that you don't get a chance to use. And so like a while ago I was researching a lot of stuff about ancient

coins and in this specific time period kind of like in Estonia, I'm not gonna use this for anything else, but that kind of came up a little bit in an image. Yeah, I think it made me put down the word Ancient coins when I wouldn't have done ancient before. The coins had words engraved on them which If I hadn't been researching it recently, I probably wouldn't have thought of words and how they were all really different. I was looking at lots of different pictures of them. I feel like that came out in the dream and it made a really interesting image.

1st session:

one thread of thought I had during the sleep lab was around ideas for titles for my short story connection, and kind of daydreaming about finally getting it finished and published, and how to do that/what that would be like. This is something I've seen come up a few times recently other times when in a liminal state, once before the day of the sleep lab, and once since (both recorded). I have recently taken up my collection of short stories again after a 6 month break, so I think my unconscious is getting on board with trying to motivate myself to finish.

D51

The fountain does more so. Yeah, I think because it felt like it was kind of illuminated by, like, moonlight, I think. And it had this kind of like, very sort of similar silvery quality to it. The poem was about moonlight. I wouldn't want to rationalise it too much, but like, I think it was the kind of, it's hard to describe, but the kind of like the lighting of it, like in the other dream image, it's clear that it's nighttime, right? So it should be really dark, but there's this kind of like internal like luminescence to the image, if that makes sense. Although rationally, like it should be dark, you know, there's this kind of, yeah, like sort of shimmering like quality to it, where it feels illuminated.

D52

P4: "I have a dog walk later and I'm a little bit anxious about getting back in time for that"

P2: "I usually leave the windows open when I sleep so maybe that's the problem. It was hot and I didn't want to move around too much."

P8: "I think I was cold but I thought it wouldn't matter. And so I just kept trying to go to sleep and half way through I needed to go to the toilet but I was half asleep so I didn't want to get up and make myself fully awake. I thought I was so close. I thought if I disturb myself and move, then I'll never get to sleep."

P3: "I was needing to go to the loo and I thought oh I'll just ignore that. And then of course it just got to the point where I'm attempting to ignore it, I'm making it a big thing."

P9 left her bathroom door open after going to the toilet, and the flashing lights from the bathroom distracted her for the rest of the session.

P10: "I realised I was here and I started worrying that maybe I missed your signal because I was aware I was dreaming and I thought, what happened I didn't hear the signal, so I went to that for a moment, but then I turned around and slept again but more entirely in a sort of awake and conscious mind. I was sort of worried about the process here."

D53

Competition

Father Figure?

Belief in oneself

Water – sea or swimming pool?

Something lost

D54

P14: I've never done this before. So I think maybe I hadn't fully processed what I just found. So I don't think I fully have understood it yet, so I'm not sure if it's like gone through and if it's like understandable through the poem.

P12: I have a lot of ideas, but it's hard to describe.

I was too concentrated on the time limit. If I have like two minutes, I'm thinking too much like two minutes, two minutes, and it's, yeah, if it's like intrusion.

P4: The stuff that was relevant to the title was at the end [of N1 notes], but maybe if I had written the full poem, it would have had a sense of it coming back around to the title.

...

When you came in and I finished writing the last bits that was the part with the deer and the vapour on the skin, but there was a lot more that I would write if I was going to finish it.

P10: The deadline felt strange. I don't feel I can be creative on a spot like that anyway. It's very little time, I tend to just, you know. If I send you an email about something, it will take more than five minutes. I would reread it and reread it. So it's very little time, but I see it as, you know, just a quick exercise, isn't it?

P13: "I don't think I managed to get across what I wanted to get across. I think, you know, there was a bit towards the end... I can't remember exactly how I got there, but the idea of falling into formlessness and then... falling into form, which I quite like as an image, even if I think it needs a bit of tweaking to make sense, yeah.

Obviously, you can't fully convey the sense of what was in your head when you wrote it, but I think it needs a bit of... I think probably if you look at it in the context of the conversation that we've just had, then it will make sense, yeah? I think if you were coming at it from, like, you had absolutely zero context, you might maybe not get what that was referring to, right?

D55

Well, my mind's gone blank for a bit. It was nice, but I was almost starting from a void, from nothingness almost. It seemed like my mind was not functioning yet. I didn't start writing straight away, I listened more to, I had space to listen, I suppose. Also I didn't feel the rush, even though I had only five minutes.

At the beginning of the session, I started straight away whatever comes almost like automatic writing because I had only five minutes. But after sleep, I didn't feel rushed. I just started writing straight away, anything that was flowing. But now I stay for a good couple of minutes just completely still and just listen to my body and the space and what was happening on my mind was gentle and quiet.

I find it strange, the deadline. I don't feel I can be creative on a spot like that anyway. If I send you an email about something, it will take more than five minutes. I would reread it and reread it. So it's very little time. I wouldn't write like that. I would kind of write about something I would think about, and I would think about a lot before I get a pen on the paper normally.

I'm already awake now, but still I don't feel like, like normally awake. I felt like I didn't have my full cognitive ability available.

IN ANOTHER LD SESSION:

I feel really heavy and drowsy actually right now and just couldn't think of any words. And I'm aware that earlier drifting in and out of sleep I had a lot of ideas, I was more lucid in a way. And even I thought of dreams I had, and ideas and words and I thought, I can write a poem about that when you ask me later.

But even these are gone now... Even if I remember some words, they don't feel important right now. I just feel heavy and not up to the task.

IN N1 SESSION:

I feel completely different. I remember that last time, I just couldn't operate at all, whereas now I feel much more awake. And that actually I want to express myself this way, whereas the last time I forced myself and still completely blocked, I couldn't operate. Now it's just really nice, I'm just enjoying it. Yeah, I'm in such a

completely different state, because now I've just spent a couple of hours relaxing in a more esoteric and calm space.

[Described today coming in a good mood, walking through the park with people, and for that reason it was easier to write. Whereas last time he wasn't in a good mood.]

D56

P2, P10, P6, P11, P15, P9, P8, P4, P16

P10: "I'm just in a confused state but not experiencing confusion, just experiencing as it is, just witnessing without any sort of anxiety or confusion."

P6: "Well, I am not sleeping, I am not dreaming, and yet I felt very relaxed, sort of in a reverie, that kind of place."

P15: "Although I didn't sleep like I expected to, I did still feel quite relaxed about the whole thing. I expected these to be much more annoying; but I felt comfortable with the whole thing."

P16: "I felt the whole thing was actually very relaxing, and I really enjoyed it for some reason. I don't usually enjoy falling asleep, but it was nice to just be very still and at peace and calm. ... I felt quite **creative**."

D57

Preference for N1 session: P9, P2, P10, P12

Preference for LD session: P14

P2: I felt like I was on a roller coaster going up and down with the dream state and being more relaxed than the last time, and I could kind of go along with it. – P2

P10: I feel completely different. Remember that last time, I just couldn't operate at all, whereas now I feel much more awake. And actually I want to express myself this way, whereas the last time I forced myself and still completely blocked, I couldn't operate. Now it's just really nice, I'm just enjoying it and I've just spent a lot of time doing this. Yeah, I'm in such a completely different state, because now I've just spent a couple of hours relaxing in a more esoteric and calm space. I can just tell I'm in a completely different state now.

P14: It was a lot different than the first one. I think I found it difficult to grab onto the thoughts. In a dream, you can kind of backtrack. But I feel like when you're in a liminal space, it's difficult to backtrack for some reason. For some reason, the thoughts don't get stored for as long a time. It's really difficult for me to, usually when I'm recording dreams, I start with the most recent thing, the most what I just thought, and then kind of go backwards from there. But with this, I couldn't go back very far. And also, sometimes with dreams, there's like multiple scenes or multiple dreams and remembering, but usually there are like a couple of different things that happened that I can remember. And when I'm writing one down, I can remember like the other four things, what scenes there were, and then go on to those. But this, I cannot remember anything. And then I'll wake up and like, I know something happened and I just have like one line of like the most recent thing.

D58

*Wave to me from a distant shore
Where sunlit birds meander and soar
And nest up on the gentle white
Of crested moonbeams in the night
For the wild, the freedom is the sea
Where dolphins dream and rays and whales
Sing long and deep and high their tales
To mermaids and mariners travelling far*

Who gaze upon the northern star

*My fragile yacht, where will she go?
When waves are crashing with furious foam
And angry people kill with fury
Without rhyme or reason,
ignore the jury
Bring peace to those turbulent folk
Who cry and scream & pull the yoke
Of constant fear & heartless blunder
Lost to mankind - they live to plunder*

D59

Improved: For everyone else across sessions

Worsened: P10, P3

Neutral: P15, P11, P10

D60

I was kind of thinking about it a bit more while I was writing it. I was just sort of almost writing it for an audience, just thinking how it would appear. And this is just, I don't really care how it appears too much, it's just, what's happening. More for me. It's more authentic. [With before poem] You're thinking what the reader might want to read. You don't think so much about that [with after poem]. You just think what is inside you and you just let it out, kind of.

D61

Sometimes I sort of start in the middle and I write some like cool imagery or whatever but then you're almost trying to like post hoc fit some discernible function or message onto that after the fact. Experiencing that vision of the fountain didn't just get me an image to write about, it gave me a deeper meaning of what it represents.

D62

I felt a bit blocked probably because I didn't really know what to make of any of this to begin with. But then it started to flow out around a few lines in. The one before was a bit harder to write.

D63

P4: It felt like a really weird image [from a hypnagogic vision] for me to use a mummy in a poem because that's not a type of imagery I would ever use. Even in terms of like folk war and stuff that I like to research, I never really look at Egyptian, it never really interested me, but it felt like it became something more when I started writing it down as a poem. So that was interesting and more like the metaphor that hid what it could have meant came out in that image. [This process] kind of pushes you to explore different avenues that you wouldn't usually use.

D64

But this felt different probably because I've never caught these thoughts before. Because if there's something that I can remember that's happening in that liminal space, it's probably when I'm more awake. So those thoughts were something that might have been more easily connected to something that's happening in my day-to-day life or I can like see a reason behind how that thought sort of came up. This is more... Maybe abstract, though it's still based around people.

Normally when I write, it's hard to grab onto something and feel like what else is there in that, if there's a certain topic I'm writing about, it's hard to find other things that connect and like create a context for the poem. But for this one, I feel like there was a lot of content and a lot that just happened that I could write about, I just didn't know how to untangle it.

D65

I think it was probably more random things, more random and odd images coming into your head. So I think it's just a bit more random and maybe you feel you can juxtapose illogical things more and allow your train of thought to go more freely. I think when you dream you have more freedom to dream weird and wonderful things. So then when you wake up there's more scope for creativity that you might not even thought of. And make connections. When you're half asleep, you make more connections. Yeah, I think there's definitely something in that. You make more weird connections and make sense of things when you're writing a poem.

D66

Usually in the morning, I used to wake up and then sort of write my dreams and then do a poem type thing. And those didn't really make sense. Well, they made sense when I was writing them and then when I read them after, they don't make any sense. And this felt a little bit more in control maybe.

D67

P6: The one I wrote before sleep, it was like what I was writing about, there was a scene but I wasn't there, I was like describing it; I was like creating this scene. But these other two poems [after sleep], I was there. I feel like it comes out differently because I've actually been in... like I've just experienced it.

P12: The third one [after 2nd awakening] was pretty much more meditative. So the third one is really good, I think. Maybe not, I mean really good in the feeling that I'm just in the flow. So it was not about writing a poem, like rhymes or something, it was just smoothly going. It just kind of came out of me.

P11 in N1: The first poem was more like the work of mind, like a game, so I came up with the idea, and obviously it was more like working with the mind, just like starting with this letter, these are the words, I was thinking about rhyme and reading. And in the after poem, 80 or maybe 90 percent I was in flow just writing, and 10 percent thinking about like rhyme and words, etc.

P11: I think it flows much better now, certainly than it did. I mean, it flowed quite well first thing this morning. Yes, the first one flowed quite well. This one did too, but the images didn't necessarily connect, it was more automatic writing.

P5: I saw myself standing on the rock and that prompted kind of thoughts about the trade of between what you want from life and what you can actually get. So the poem began with an image and then it just kind of continued.

It definitely felt like I wasn't thinking. It just came out. Yeah, whereas I was thinking about it before hand.

P3: Writing down afterwards is like writing first thing in the morning that we talked about earlier, that it's somehow freer and... It's more flowing. I don't know quite why that happens, but I suppose it isn't hemmed in by all the stuff that's happened during the day up to that point, really. It just goes as it goes.

P1: I think it flowed a bit better because I'd just woken up, so I wasn't thinking as much as the other one. So, yeah, it came out a bit more naturally and it was easier to write the poem after.

P13: I think when I tend to write, normally, I tend to be quite intentional. I try to really carefully think through what I'm about to put down because it's a physical effort to put it down [due to disability]. So... it's different to, I guess, like how I'd normally write.

I did think it felt more comfortable with just being like, right, let's just put down whatever the first thing that comes into my head is and trust that it will have some formal structure to it, you know? Just kind of, that process of automatic writing, I guess, and like trying to just go with the flow rather than think, oh, hang on, how many syllables are in this line and how many syllables are in that line, you know?

P11: A long time ago, I tried writing poems and... Yeah, they were very pretentious and just not working out at all. I think this is much better, I feel it flows much, much better. It certainly did after the dream.

P15: I think I was a lot less consciously trying to write something in particular when I was writing just now. Whereas before I gave myself a title and then thought, can I write about the title? So basically, I was a little bit freer with it now, but then that also probably made it a bit more vague, so, you know. So it kind of started a little bit more with the flow. But then after a while it ended up with sort of a bit of a logic to it.

D68

About this one I couldn't tell you what's in it. I mean I know the theme, but I couldn't tell you exactly what words I wrote, whereas the other one [before poem], I had to think about it consciously and I could probably tell you pretty much exactly what was in it.

D69

P8: My eyes were half open when I was writing it, so it really was half conscious. There seemed to be more of a rhythm to it. There was like a rhythm going through it. It was like a beating rhythm, which I think was the sea [from hypnagogic experience]. And probably blood in my head. So it wasn't just words. It was sounds and feelings.

P4: This was definitely more musical. I think it was also because I had that line from a song [during sleep] and so I started off following the rhythm of that song and then I kind of deviated from it after that. This was definitely more like feeling, sensory based and the other one was more image based, I think.

Another session: I quite like how the rhyming scheme turned out. I find that with these poems that are written in these different states that they have their own rhythm that kind of comes through. It's not regular, which I like. Because it kind of becomes non-standard. It's like I'm almost letting it write itself rather than imposing or trying to create out of the structure, you know?

D70

P2: I should use the conscious mind, let's say, to rationalize it. So it's kind of like frame it in a way that it can be passed on, that can make sense to others.

P13: from my perspective, I guess it would need like tweaking or whatever, but I think as a way of starting and actually then... clearly in five minutes it's not gonna be like the best poem in the world, but I think actually like there's something, there's bits in there that then you kind of take and put more structure around.

P12: So I was trying to maybe the first line comes after all of those images and then I'm just transmitting all the things that are coming. So that's the thing that most of the time I'm not doing it consciously, like that suddenly I have the line and then I'm transmitting maybe some of the things or trying to embrace the feelings and understand what is. And how can I do that maybe in associative form? maybe this would be not comprehensible for someone else but it's just the attempt of trying to share the information something that is hidden.

P12: Writing poems was easy, but you need to edit them after that. In descriptive manner I guess it needs less editing, you know, because it's like you're not focused on the rhyme or the written importance or something, but if I read the poem I see the

places I would love to change later, but in descriptive I guess everything, almost everything is perfect for me.

P12: I need to analyse the images and work them into the poem. And leave maybe some associative images, though maybe for spectator or the reader it might be... if I put these two together it might be not clear that this came from...

P15: The after poem might need a bit more editing or something. Must be. But it feels like it's perhaps a bit more interesting. Bit more something about it, that has possibilities to take a bit further than just trying to write to be clever.

P8: I think a little bit of consciousness helps when you write that. So the process felt totally unconscious. It felt good. But reading the results, I think perhaps a little bit of direction might have produced a better result.

P3: "I can do something with this, take it somewhere, make it work into something that says something."

P4: "there was a lot more that I would write if I was going to finish it."

D71

I thought the lucid dreaming lab was quite useful for me to think about what was happening when I am lucid dreaming like what point in time I am in my sleep cycle how awake I am what is the mental state where I start to lucid dream I thought was quite useful in just visualising and thinking about what was happening while I was sleeping and what it would be looking like mentally at that point..

D72

I find my dreams interesting and try to understand and explore their meanings and for possible subconscious elements. I often don't understand them, and they regularly have very bizarre elements, which is something I have realised more through the process of recalling them. I have reoccurring elements in my dreams that I had not previously recognised. I now try to remember the total experience of my dreams and try to avoid narrativizing them.

D73

...Second part of dream:

Then it got erotic. I was sat somewhere, doing something (the details of dreams hey!), I knew at the time. Working on my PhD probably and on a picnic table. Three black women were talking and dancing behind me. It looked fun, they looked fun. I asked if I could join them for a dance.

They were very friendly. I danced and talked to one in particular. Eventually we were kissing while the busy world went by. I asked about having sex or we were going to have sex. She said she'd rather not, not right now. Still friendly. I was happy with that but thought I should ask for a handjob!

I'm not sure what her answer to that was but then drama started. We were playing a game of laser tag or paintball. We shot at our enemy past a truck parked across the park we were in.

Something alerted us, or she had a sixth sense about it, that something was wrong. She jumped up on to some pallets, piled next to the lorry, and whipped out a large knife, cutting it down the side.

Inside she found real guns and a man putting them together. She overpowered him, people came to help. I probably did too!

We apprehended him and she was a hero.

I tried to get back to the dream, back to her, but I needed the toilet and once gone I had to get up.

Meaning

I think this dream comes from being surrounded by young people when I visit the university combined with the article I recently wrote to do with consent that is about the only thing I've written that went a little 'viral'!

The hero bit? Well, she reminds me of a friend (ex-girlfriend) who I met when she was 18 although she's in her mid 40" now. We aren't really in touch now and her alcoholism makes her impossible. But she's still cool, still a hero and could do more great things despite her issues. She wanted me help to write a story of her life. (her parents were in government at the time of Idi Amin in Uganda and she had a very hard life both there and in London. The opening scene would be of her finding a human head in the fridge when she was very little) But unfortunately she then never gets in touch with the details of the stories anymore, and I'd visit her on the way home from Swansea in Bristol but she just asks me or my wife for money so I can't do it.

She is the character who talks the most sense in my third novel, which is just a whole bunch of people I've known.

D74

Being around different areas of a place or a map. One place I went into had all these different crafting things, crafting tools, and you could get a discount for buying them if you were using the app or a map to explore different places. It was an app/"screen"-filling map to explore different places (like in a video game). Think it was an art gallery, with a gallery shop (kind of like the one I used to work at in the Glucksman Gallery, like a loft gallery shop). There were all different kinds of crafting tools - lino cutting, pottery kits, etc. [I have been thinking a lot lately about different kinds of arts and crafts I want to try as a side hustle].

D75

This dream went on for quite a while - something about being on a campus, and being the only girl in the boys' dorms because they didn't have room in the girls'.

And then it was time to move to the girls' dorm because they had space, and packing everything up. And some of the things I had were like frozen cherries, and like a cherry hair conditioner that my mum had given me. My mum had given me quite a lot of stuff, and she came to help me move my stuff to the other dorm.

D76

I think, in the past year or so I kind of came out as bi. Well, half came out. I come out to some people, but not to others. And I think for a long time like gender in terms of being like comfortable with how feminine or masculine I am, has been something that I've been interested in for a long time, especially like, I have quite a few friends who are either you know, part of the LGBT community, or they're non-binary and I guess, like back home in Ireland, but then also here in Wales, the communities are really different, too. ... thinking about in relation to like my family and my relationships with my family and people in my family, who wouldn't be considered kind of, I guess standard in terms of like sexuality.

D77

P15: There were a couple of TV programs I wanted to watch because they looked interesting. And then they were just really violent and not well written, really, either. So I was annoyed that I was dreaming that.

P3: I have been watching a thing about Shakespeare the day before, so maybe that's what that was about.

D78

I was in space. I don't remember all that clearly, to be honest with you, but it was the same sort of theme [as for another liminal poem], I was in space. I was floating

around. I think I was floating around in that one. and there was just light and that's the way my mind went. A sort of 2001.

I do spaceships a lot. Now, that's probably because I've been clearing up my dad's stuff. My dad died a few years ago and left loads of stuff in my attic, and I've been going through his stuff, and he's got pile of all UFO magazines. That's it, that's what it is.

D79

I also want to see what's in them, the common symbols. And I found that nearly every dream has got water in it, different kinds of water. It could be something horrible like a horrible pond or a beautiful lagoon. I think it is emotion. I dreamt about a canal where I used to play as a kid and the water was black. It always used to scare the life out of me. So I dreamt about that. And sometimes I dream about rivers rising or waves and houses, and it's all about different states of emotion I think.

D80

I've noticed a theme in my dreams, it's always walking or travelling. I'm not a well travelled person so I wonder what that means. Is it subconsciously something I want to do or?

Like one poem I've written:

Come on, let's get in, let's drive

We can go out to the city limits

We can go out further

We can go out visit an old friend

And there's another one then about walking down on the beach and seeing many ships go past. So yeah definitely a theme I noticed. Had that in the sleep lab as well, dreams about travelling.

Laura: Do you think it's about travelling like going on a holiday or more abstract?

P11: Probably more abstract. Whether I feel I need to go, I need to move on? Maybe that stage in my life, perhaps now at 60 I feel I need to move on more.

Laura: The first poem you wrote in your lab was also about travelling but it wasn't inspired by a dream, it just came out of you.

P11: Yes, that's right.

D81

But then the dream of flying. I realize from the dream. I've always had dreams of flying in the dream. Oh, yeah, this is the Flying dream again. Whereas last. about 15-20 years ago, used to be Parkour. Bouncing off building and thinking: Oh, this is amazing. I can go much further. And this is real, yes, real, that can really jump this far. But now it's gone into proper flying, and it's been 20 odd years, but forget I have these dreams. And now, remembering that I have these dreams. it's like, it's almost natural. Yeah, just lovely flying.

Yes, I've had an experience in a dream and I was explaining to people that I can fly and cause this is a secret that I think if I let people know, then it's gonna be dissolved. I won't be able to do it in the dream world. And so in the dream world, I actually said, oh, that they noticed I could actually fly, but not very high, but by being seen. I couldn't really fly, but I was definitely off the ground for quite a few minutes, and so I'll let other people see me, that I was flying, and it was okay. And I didn't come to ground. It's like saying fairies don't exist and they cease to exist. But actually, I can fly. And seeing witness flying.

Still feels a long way away, still feels like, that's my dream place. But something's happening in the dream place.

D82

I had a dream last week. In a dream, I saw a pottery vase about that big. And I looked at it, and I thought the shape of the ellipse at the top of it was wrong, as if I was drawing it, you know, as if it was a drawing, but it wasn't. And I corrected it. or I made it go as it should be from the angle I was looking at it. And I didn't really think anything about it till I woke up and I thought, I was able to put that right in a dream.

Later on, in the same sort of sequence of events, I was stood on the dock side looking down into the water, and there were 4 pencils, 4 white pencils. In formation, all pointing the same way. You know like swans are when they're sort of swimming together, and they were pencils. And I thought oh that's just my brain telling me that I... I don't know. It just seemed oh, I knew what that, but what was... It seemed like I follow up from the thing with the port, you know. Like part of my brain was saying, well, what would you make of this.

So I kind of got on the verge of being lucid, I think, a few times. It was almost towards the end. You know the thing about the pencils that I mentioned, that I knew they were swans. So there was also a sense with that that my unconscious was trying to tell me something, show me something. It's like there were 2 parts of my mind working at the same time. It didn't feel like dream as such, but it was almost as if the rational part was saying, Well, yes, they're pencils, and the other one was saying, oh, but you know they mean something else. There was something like that going on where it was like a conversation. It wasn't in words at all. But it was like it was saying, well, I could make these swans if you like, or I can make them pencils, and you can make of them what you like. It was like there were 2 things going on at the same time, which I guess is what is happening in a lucid dream, although I wasn't really thinking of it in terms of that until afterwards, that there was something going on between the 2 parts of my mind.

D83

P16: I got semi-lucid, I realised that I was dreaming and doing the checks like rubbing my hands together. Don't really remember a lot of it, I tried to do the spinning technique but my cat was sleeping next to me and I got worried I'd roll over it. Then I went back to sleep and forgot the dream.

Became lucid in a dream and then fell out of lucidity.

P9: I dreamt I had an alarm clock in my hand and a weight. And then somehow, I felt. I then noticed that I had the phone in my hand. And then I was awake but I was also asleep. So that I felt it was my first sort of fringe of lucid dream.

D84

I am walking in the park beside a lake and there is a woman in front of me walking backwards trying to keep my attention on her behind me are two men in dark clothes following slowly on bikes I approach the woman and suddenly we are kissing but this is not my partner and I realise I am dreaming, I rub my hands together and the greens and blues are very oversaturated and vivid with the plants growing in Williams Morris like patterns – this is like the pattern on my dream journal – I try a spinning technique to stabilise the dream but I either wake up a bit (or worry that my cat is on my bed) or forget I am dreaming later I am in the pub at some kind of group meeting.

I am waking up when I realise I am in a dream and I start to rub my hands together and squeezing my eyes closed then everything is black and I slowly start to see stars shooting by like I am flying past them but it's like looking at them from out of a little screen or portal as all around that is white it's as if I am looking out from a spaceship as I know that I am dreaming I want to see some larger stars and they start rushing past one by one and I laugh in delight at what I am experiencing and marvel at the sense of size and mass of them it's something that I experience quite viscerally in the dream now some stars start moving past me in their own intention and form up a horizontal line in front of me of 7 or 9 celestial objects an odd number which I think are burning intensely but I can't remember more.

I am in my old bedroom of a shared house that I used to live in there are several people who are younger than me sitting around who I don't know I explain that I used to live here and I have a semi lucid awareness that I am dreaming because I don't live here anymore and couldn't be here there is a strange new door in the wall so I explain to them how I used to feel in this house as I was unhappy and isolated at the time and I also tell them how the internet was terrible in this room and everyone listens kindly.

D85

The first time I became lucid it was very quick. Upon realising my dream almost didn't let me reality check. I tried to jump and fly but the ground came with me. I pulled up my hands in front of me but I couldn't see them. I tried to look into my surroundings but it all became a wash of colour.

Another lucid dream I had soon after this I almost just suddenly out of nowhere realised I was dreaming and interacted with my environment immediately with no barrier.

D86

The very night I sent my last email I think I had a lucid dream. In the dream I thought to myself "I am in a dream so I can fly." So I did fly and pointed it out to people in the room when I was with them. I did this twice I think but also switched lights on and off.

D87

that's when I think I would become lucid sometimes is when you're being attacked or something you think. Oh, I can't be really being attacked now I can't be really about

to die, or have I just been killed? I can't be, cause I'm still thinking. Well, I'm sure I was killed just a moment ago. So why am I now doing this? So I was a bit conscious of all that.

D88

Inside the painting

I dream I am within the gilded frame
of a painting by Edgar Degas.
Dancers swirl, soft on stage,
a myriad of pastel pinks, blues and greens.
Graceful pirouettes on pointed toes
as music swells, then falls,
from the orchestra below.

But, the glamour hides
a sinister, grim, exploitative side;
Feigned pleasure, where is the pride?
For their skin is flaking,
Their tightly bound toes are aching
& they are shaking.
Female fear of male fascination,
Dalliances in darkened rooms off stage.
Hidden loathing.
Suppressed rage.

Black silhouettes stand,
menacing the perimeter.
One man wears a bowler hat.
Another holds a cane.
Watching, leering, stalking
the young teen girls

As they exercise and train

For the Paris Opera House
Hid a history of shame.
Those tyrannised “street rats”,
So cruelly misnamed
Some, sold by mothers,
In response to desperate poverty
Eyes deadened, disassociating.
Cast as an amusing sexual novelty.

Chastened children
Your ordeals commenced
from 12 years of age
Flowers plucked Then discarded
by the male top hats and tails,
Little swallows and sparrows
to monstrous leviathan whales

I weep now for the fate of
the “Little Dancer” Marie
Degas’ model at age 14
ephemeral, transformed
to bronze eternity
But, Instead of celebrity status
Borne from hours of posing pain
Marie gets press defamation,
hypocritical, toaded words
Upon the printed newspaper page

“A sculpture of bestial effrontery”
“Why is she so ugly? “
“the lecherous little snout
The beginning of a rat “

“This flower of the gutter
forehead half covered by her hair
Marked already like her lips
With profound vicious character”

Marie never got to be a prima ballerina;
in an unmarked grave she lies;
Fired by the Opera House for missing classes
When working several jobs to survive.
And Degas’ bronze sculpture of realism
Sweeping away the fake
Unsettled the critics with harsh truth
A young girl, subjected to abuse,
neglect and hate

So, what does this dream mean to me
As I watch from the edge of the stage?
What association with those dancers
paid less than a minimum wage?
A plea to those who discriminate
Or respond with unhelpful disdain;
Offer kindness whenever you can
For, Next time, it could be you
within that gilded cage

D89

Increased productivity and more creative ideas: P14, P2, P9, P15, P8, P4, P10

Discovering or reconnecting with creativity: P4, P8, P16, P6

Changing approach to writing: P3, P7, P10, P15

P14’s lucid dreams inspired her to write more poetry. For example, a lucid dream in which she struggled to do a reality check prompted her to write about things evading

her she looks at them, and another lucid dream in which she had no barriers inspired her to write about accidentally stumbling upon the thing she was searching for. In general, P14 reported writing more poetry with more ease than before.

After a long period of not writing or creating, P16 reports that he has begun writing creatively again through the duration of the workshop. And even though he believes that most of this isn't of great quality, he enjoyed the process and wants to write more. Similarly, P8 reports: "I hadn't written poetry for a while. It's been a bit of a wilderness. So it's got me back into it." P4 reports the same: "I've started writing again, which I didn't write for the whole of the summer and quite a lot of the autumn." P6 who said he had always hated poetry now has a deep interest in it, signing up to creative writing courses and writing both poetry and prose.

P3 also expressed an increased interest in poetry; though she would usually turn her ideas into stories rather than poems, she feels differently now: "Because it's all focused around the dream, it's almost as if it's given me a different focus for writing poetry. But it's made me think that I want to study poetry a bit more. Read more poetry."

P15: Probably the best of it is, it's just reassured me that I can write that way. And the book I'm reading at the moment, I think gosh, this is just like there's a lot of logic in it. But then it just seems to just go from one weird situation to another. And I think I'm not really like that. So that's probably what it is, more than anything. It's reassured me that to write like that is fine.

So example, I'd made all the notes, but I'd never finished reading it up. I'm a vegetarian, but I was in the sausage factory, and all sausages were falling on top of me, and then I was with the pigs in the field, and they were collected up, and then they were all stuffed, and I was going, and then eventually, it gets to this event. And then I go to this awful nightclub I went to in Glasgow, and there's all these people coming, and I'm killing them and stuff. And then I'm outside just talking to someone, and it just, you know, all of that made sense together. And I liked all that, and I feel like I could use that in the point in the novel.

I think I always had that sort of freedom in me. But I then always slightly worried that it's not everyone's cup of tea. So I think I should draw it back a bit and make it a bit more accessible, and so on. But what I like about dreams is that there's always

something going on. There's always a new thing happening. There's no downtime. You read a novel, and there's always a bit of downtime. Now, actually. I mean, I've been thinking, I really I have a bit more downtime, you know, not be so constant cause. I did a workshop, at a university where they had to read my book, my first novel, and one of them was saying, the big problem he had with it, there was no downtime in it, you know. It was all one thing after another, because I think I'd read somewhere a long time ago that the middle of novels can dip, and so on. So I just don't know. So ends up being. I almost like a lot of short stories squished together. Which is what dreams are like and then they get connected.

I still think I probably don't need to have it constantly bombarding the reader, and it needs to be a bit of a slower paced writing. I don't know. But I think the books I like do actually keep going, So I think this process probably reassured me that that's really worth pursuing.

P7: it's definitely helped with my research. Like how I approach writing it.

P15: I've been more open to or I've been thinking more about the fact that I can be open to any sort of different kind of creativity. You know, even just writing those short poems, I'm thinking, oh, yeah, that is a different way of looking at things slightly. It's difficult to tell, partly because I'm doing a lot of work with the improvisation stuff that I'm doing at the moment. And that's making me think.

D90

Emotion & symbolism: P4, P5, P7, P8, P12, P15, P16

Flow: P3, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9, P11, P12, P14, P15

D91

11/12/23

No dreams recorded, but recorded some thoughts about my short story collection and current story I am working on (related to Estonian folklore) while drifting off to sleep, the sequence written here is expanded from the visuals I had/what I wrote in the liminal states workshop -

‘Cradling Bone Dust: Thirteen Tales of Women from Northern Folklore’ as a title. Incorporating the sequence of the white horse by the meteor lake into the start of the story, maybe a dream drifting down through the green water and seeing the bone ring or bones at the bottom... The white horse, like skeletal... The green pool, like... the great green... misted-over eye of the forest god... perhaps the dream is an ominous omen... for the child.

08/11/23

Liminal state, thinking about short story collection title: “Revered, Reviled & Feared: Women in Northern Folklore”.

There was that transition between the portal, the horse walking through the portal from one story into another. And so I did have a little bit of an idea about whether I could do that in the story collection that there would be in between each story from a different country there would be some kind of interlude. Transition. That some kind of symbolic, almost dream like, you know, someone you know, a character dives into a lake, or you know this horse going through the portal or whatever. I haven't decided if that would just be confusing, or if I'm going to use that.

Yeah that there's a connection, story world. Yeah, or even if there's an object that the object is left somewhere, and then at the start of next story, another character picks it up. But there's some difference between different spaces, kind of like timelines, and that, you know, I could play around with that, and that could be quite fun.

And a lot of those stories, they're all kind of like Northern European stories. So there's quite a lot shared between some stories. So like, you know, between Estonian and Russian myths, there's quite a lot of interchange. And you know, Scottish and Irish and stuff. So yeah, something that came out of that that I'm kind of playing with the idea of doing, but I haven't settled on yet.

D92

I kind of feel like writing a poetry collection on the side is something I've been interested in. But because I focus mostly on short stories, I never felt like I would have a base of enough poems to kind of start from. And I feel like I might do now. And every so often an idea will pop up, and I keep popping ideas in a link in a document that I have for poems and short stories, especially like flash fiction. But yeah, I guess I kind of had a few poems before that I was like, oh, it'll be really nice to eventually have these in the collection, but you know I find it hard to put aside the time for poetry. But yes, now I've got a few more, I feel a bit more confident that maybe that's something I could do.

D93

There were 2 things about fire. One was a fire but there was also wisps of smoke, and that were not connected with anything, and they were on the top of people's heads like wisps, like candle flames, only just the smoke. And I've used that in another piece of writing that I am doing at moment, which I actually only just realized, that that came from a dream. It's like I've been writing about it, but didn't know. So it all impacts one way or another, doesn't it? Yeah, I just started a new novel. I'm not sure at the moment till I really get going on it, whether it's going to work out into something. I'm just sort of teasing out ideas with it at the moment. But it's to do with the idea that we have voices in our heads that often conflict with each other. You know what you should do and what you shouldn't do, you know, you should do this, and you shouldn't do that. Like you should get out of bed in the morning or no, you should lay here a bit longer those kinds of things, but in also in all the big decisions and stuff as well. But I wanted to personify those 2 voices in, or more than 2, perhaps voices into something. And in what I've got so far, which may or may not remain with it is, they are like little wisps that enter the head shortly after birth. So that's what I did with the wisps of smoke.

Laura: that's exactly how you just described your lucidity, the two voices.

Yes, that's true, that's true! So yeah, there's something in all of that, it hasn't unfolded yet, it will take a lot of work to develop it into some sort of shape. So yes, it's fed into that without me even noticing it.

D94

P9:

Much more prolific & working on both dreams & poems helps me to make sense of my inner world, e.g. this new poem:

Cycling up a hill with square wheels
(Jan 2024)

I dream I am on a bicycle
with square wheels
cycling up a hill.
In a simple pen sketch,
I am a moving line,
drawn in profile.
Without shadow, shade, or colour

No trees, nor sun nor sky.
My world is black & white.
No birds in flight.
No pigs, chickens, cows or goats,
As I float, on square wheels,
Going somewhere,
somehow.

But, two dimensions only.
Where is the third?

Stolen from my dream ?
How contrary!
How absurd!
I'm flat as a pancake,
a black line on a white page.
Like a child's game of hangman.
Or Noughts & crosses.

Mystery, reveal thyself!
What is the meaning
Of this strange dream,
with its unclear, uncertain themes?
Square wheels cycling up a hill?
Impossible!
But, in my slumber,
I sail on upwards
through the air,
no wind moving
my once beautiful
long dark hair.

The square wheel.
A square peg in a round hole?
Where am I not fitting in?
And what is my unnatural goal?
I m pondering, puzzling,
associating, linking,
making sense from the obscure.

Am I too Square
In attitude or hairstyle,
as I transition, fearfully, from dark to grey?
For me, owning "silver" is unnatural.
It is giving me the horrors.

Will I be accepted or rejected
by new acquaintances,
family and friends of yesterday
Or, should I hide my head away?

My dearest Ma
Still dyes her hair
& she s now in her 80's.
But, after a dye related ear ache,
I now forsake
that putrid, dark paste.
Instead, I am learning
to concentrate
On building my immunity!

To dye or not to die ?
Consider the animal friendly way :)
skin care mindfulness
Vegan kindness
And 3 square (plant based) meals a day.

Tonight my daughter spotted a grey hair -
On Chimmy rabbit !
Now, in floods of tears
I reflect on pending and past deaths
Andthe soil depth.
I am bereft.

Such an effort
This aging and changing.
Post viral recoveries,
health postcode lotteries
And we merge & manage,
Moving Uphill,

on square wheels!

And, as in my dream
colour leaves our lives,
Drains from our face, in shock.
We wear black & white
And move unnaturally,
Up, Up and over the hill
Into an unknown,
colourless Sky.

So, prolonging my senses
and, I hope, my life,
I am now abandoning
fortnightly self poisoning;
Covering hair with grey-slime
Takes too much of my time
Leaves me unsightly
Burns my scalp (ever so slightly)
Hard upon my purse
And, when in this state,
How could I look any worse?

No wonder then,
I cycle with square wheels.
In two dimensions.
My moods are flatter
as I contemplate aging,
loss and becoming less.

But, too pessimistic!
Our third age defies intuitive logic!
Less is also more!
A Wise, insightful, confident woman,

I will not allow myself to be cast
as a hag at anyone's door!

Each line tells a story
a third dimension, depth, after all !
For, with kindness and compassion,
we flourish,
In love, we rise before we fall.
We have not reached our peak,
We are not yet "over the hill".
Time, now, to live our dreams,
Before the final farewell.

D95

I think it's to do with where I'm at at the moment, creatively, and not being all that purposeful. Just being a bit vague about what I'm doing next and where I'm going with that.

The dream was more about, anxiety about having a train to catch. But then I was going with somebody else, and I said, Oh, you go on it, I'll catch you up, as I couldn't find my purse with my ticket. So there was a sort of anxiety. In fact, it was yeah, this anxiety, but it was also a bit of annoyance with it all. I mean, I wasn't really really desperate about missing the train, although I knew I would miss it. But that's something about have I missed the boat here by not being that purposeful in what I'm doing.

D96

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people. Before I knew this (from a recent t v documentary) I was repeatedly dreaming about shadows in a cave & important conversations I could not hear

7:45 am Wednesday morning 1/11/23

I feel Very frustrated to be awoken from a deep dream, where I am listening to important conversations in a cave; in the dream I sense there will be times when the hurricanes of life toss me out of the feeling of mastery in my small boat - the sense of a hurricane did not appear in the dream but in the sleepy waking state after dream state.

The knowledge that the dreamers teach

Forces of autumnal winds
Drive my yacht into the waves
briskly filling up her sails,
As I desperately try to recall
conversations
from a dim & distant cave.

modern world
impacting on my dreams
And ancestral memories
As yet unknown, unseen.
A harsh alarm,
then gentle songs & music
Interrupt my sweet, deep sleep.

Oh, how I yearn to reach
The knowledge that the dreamers teach
in that dark and dreary cavern
insights bright as gold
Their stories untold
Ants, carrying their essential load

Oh, swiftly bring your gifts to me
Before my sails are torn to tatters
By hurricanes which may approach
And capsize me from my fragile boat

For our small vessels may not be seaworthy
To the strongest of our storms
And we need our secrets from the deep
When we are most forlorn
To help and guide us on our way
To transform disappointment,
To reach
A happier,,more perfect day

D97

Dream:

I awoke from the Dream about Room 23 & wrote it half asleep in the morning. This detail of a dream is unusual - as often I only catch a fragment of a dream from which I write.

I am In a stately home, rooms filled with large gilded framed old masters. I am doing some research on the paintings. I am friends with the owners of the home. There is a random piece of clothing in a dogs basket instead of in the ironing basket. I need to return the clothing to its logical place. The owners want me to stay with them. My husband has a small bomb which is not an explosive but which goes off & makes a bang & it startles the attendants.

I am desperate to see the exhibition in room 23 & I feel worried - in case the bomb means that they close the house & I cannot visit & see the art inside room 23. But the bomb is ignored by everyone. In the dream I feel annoyed with my husband for

sabotaging my research by setting off the small bomb. I say good bye to the owners & walk, alone, briskly to room 23. Before me I see attendants whispering “Room 23 is closed because it is so popular. We cannot allow anyone else in because the room is full but you can come back tomorrow”. They agree to me looking at the catalogue of paintings in room 23. In the dream I am annoyed with my husband for sabotaging my success & personal growth

Poem:

Room 23

Old masters of Room 23
Reveal yourselves to me
The brush work fine
The light & shade
The shepherds that gaze
The gifts from each sage
For the child in the crib
Baby Jesus

Madonna of the rocks,
Be my teacher.
What portraits have you seen
Of your visitors
in between the cracks of history ?
Shrouded in mystery,
You glimpse their lives
Witnessed, from your imperial vantage point.
The contents of your gilded frames
Are Protected by bullet proof glass
From the criminally insane;

A school group with their art teacher;

A woman with her husband, the preacher
As he patiently explains
to the disinterested & profane
Aspects of the bible.
A cultural religious text
Of which some know less
Than the latest contest
of Love Island
Or Strictly Come Dancing

Dance thee into an art gallery
Or a homeless hostel
Or a hospital
Where our presence
could make a difference

I am so tired of vicarious lives
Where viewers fill their insides
With the remote stories of another.
Instead, be our own projects
Develop our talents
Our meaningful relationships
For we have but a short time
To take our lion for a walk
from our self made cage

And, to the saboteurs of our success
Remind them “less is more”
You may see less of me
As I find my own identity
Develop my own creativity
But when we come together,
It will be worth the wait.
Fun & joy abound

For that which was lost
is now, again
found

Portraits of room 23
Will you ever see
Upon your cream & golden walls
A portrait of me
to deck your halls
A celebrant in my own right
For what I say, do or write
“Portrait of An artist as a Young Dog”?
Or, the Artist s Mother, holding a frog:) ?

D98

Having more dreams than usual and sort of weird experiences. I dreamt of being in a cave and seeing shadows on a wall and I couldn't hear what was being said. Then I asked to dream again the same dream. It was basically a prayer that my mom used to say. Then next day I saw an advert about the way of the heart with a cave, then couldn't see it later. I linked it to ancestors etc.

Wrote a poem based on a dream I had about a Chinese tea pot. It was in water and the water turned red. I also watched [?] of British empire.

A line about false teeth remained. I thought I have to put my logical mind to one side because false teeth didn't make any sense, but then I found that false teeth were a thing like 3,000 years BC and they used animal bones.

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D99

I think I'm looking for something. Yeah, I'm definitely looking for something. for something. A lot of my poems like, trying to find a way, like looking for inspiration. Trying to answer questions about life, the universe, and everything. I can remember when I saw that image, the circular image [from previous study]. I had a feeling of well, yes, I found it ever kind of a Eureka feeling. But yeah, I think a lot of my dreams and a lot of my poetry that come out of it, and story ideas that have come out of it, it's about searching for something, searching for meaning, I think.

Laura: Does that tell you anything about your waking life? That search.

Yes, absolutely. I can see it absolutely. I closed my business down in March and it was a process. I knew I was going to close it down, so I'd been gradually winding it down for a few months, because it became not viable. I needed to close it down before it started to wrap up. Before it stopped being solvent. So I saw the writing on the wall, and it's a business I'd had for more than 20 years, so it was quite upsetting.

And so I was in a situation where I was gonna have to start all over again and I'm not ready to retire. So I am searching for something. I'm searching for a new meaning.

D100

I have a bit of a difficult thing going on in my family. I decided to ask the dream to solve my problem. I had a dream this morning, I was on a swan, flying, it was so lovely. Blue sky, clouds. And then a wall in the air with holes in it. I could see the earth through the holes. At the moment, I think it means relaxing more. And maybe I need to swan around a little bit more. I'm a bit of a rescuer. So that was quite helpful, I haven't worked it out yet but yeah.

I was in a Jungian dream group in Australia, and in that group, they said put a note under your pillow and ask the dream to guide you. So I didn't do that but I mentally did it, as I was drifting off I was thinking of issues of my complicated family.

D101

I've noticed in my dreams that there is often a child like wonder. There are children playing, sometimes I am the child, I'm in awe of a child, I play like a child. This I think reflects how I want to incorporate that feeling more in my waking life and how I don't like the restrictions that society and I put on myself.

D102

I have found that there are often reoccurring elements in my dreams, but they appear more and less over a period of time and seem to be related to things in my waking life.

Recently this involved being asked questions by an older figure that I don't have the answer to or can't understand. I feel this reflects feelings of uncertainty about the future, I am planning on moving country by am not sure about my future career and recently there have been announcements about Visa requirements that would affect my partner if they were going to stay in the country.

A reoccurring symbolic element of my dreams recently seems to be being involved in confrontations with others. These were often in strange circumstances, with unclear or varied usually male antagonists, though they would be generally hostile interactions but not violent. I am not a particularly confrontational person in waking life, although in reflecting on these dreams I feel that I am generally angrier than I had previously considered. I usually would think of myself as a calm person. On reflection on this anger I feel this in part probably general anger about the way in which the world is politically and economically unfair on people, but also a feeling of how things are getting worse and causing a more antagonistic world. I hadn't considered how strongly I was unconsciously emotionally reacting to this. I have not recorded any dreams about living in a better or fairer world. While it's hard for me to understand the exact meaning behind the dream confrontations, I do recognise that I have subconsciously been feeling angrier and more vulnerable than I realised.

D103

On the 11/11/23 I attend a large rally in London for a ceasefire in Gaza. These events are on my mind a lot during my waking life in this period.

15/11/23

I am in a school but all of the doors are locked with key cards so I get trapped there is a door with a fire alarm but I refuse to pull it I instead double back on myself I am able to move following children and cleaning ladies and I get out

I go to the pub it is early in the day around nine but people are still drinking it is busy I make my way to the bar a young man or old teenager angrily Says what are you looking at? I don't back down but to avoid a fight I ruffle his hair I leave and am looking over my shoulder to see if he is following me I consider hiding around corners and jumping him but I end up somewhere I don't know

I have the sense that I have recently moved (I haven't in waking life) and I have just left something early maybe an event but I suddenly see that I can catch the no. 15 bus (I had forgotten but apparently this is a bus in Cardiff to the hospital, or a bus that goes to where I was living around a year ago) as it arrives I flag it down the bus isn't too busy but when I get on people block the way I sit next to an old lady suddenly she is shouting at me because without realising it I am going through her handbag I am trying to put away my bus ticket she is very angry at me and I have no idea why I did that. I offer up my phone for her to look through in exchange I give her the passcode but she struggles through reading my texts she finds one that references cancelling something, I get the feeling this relates to something else I have dreamed

There is a meeting in my living room discussing politics I speak up and let my thoughts be known on what we are talking about but I go on and on and half the meeting walks out during or after I think there was supposed to be an election or vote of confidence I feel shame that I wanted to lead the group or be listened to although I do recognise and think to myself that my speech was bombastic and off topic

19/11/23

We are on the frontlines of a war that has been going on for 100 years against an enemy fewer in number but with a much greater firepower. Our side is dying of exposure most of us don't even have boots and things are getting really desperate then suddenly spring breaks flowers are growing and the moment of danger passes and me and my comrades embrace and dance

Later In the same dream I am on the train with another comrade because of the length of the war and the rate of casualties we are now officers, a higher ranked officer comes along and we get into an argument about class, about the high command being members of the aristocracy and the way that this officer says 'poor' it starts a fight and I am biting at his nose but the scene is all a film set and I congratulate the actor across from me I feel sheepish and that I have gone too far since we were just acting

04/12/23

I'm observing a scene somewhere like the British parliament a young Muslim woman is orating she is standing on a bench barefooted she is rallying against injustice and I am very moved. I am aware that she is expelled from her political party but then later reinstated after public backlash. I am then outside a building as the inside is so crowded I am waiting and feel like we all are.

D104

Having the reminder of using creative work is really helpful. Because working online in text-based medium, you can kind of forget about using that. And my training was in art therapy. So that was a very strong part of my training. But you know, it's something that can get glossed a lot with working that way online. So I think it's a helpful reminder. And talking to people about it as well. There was a conversation I had about Gestalt therapy that was really interesting. And sometimes, I haven't been using it recently, actually, but I used to do a thing in therapy quite a lot called you know, a creative question which would usually use a little bit of, you would prompt guided imagery, and then the other person responds to it, and in a way you can then use that and tease it out to, you know, for telling you both a bit more about how they feel about themselves, or how they want to see themselves, and you know you can use it in that way.

But there's just been so many new processes coming into our work recently. It feels like that continues to get pushed out at the moment. It feels like it's becoming harder to have time to be really an individual as a practitioner at the moment. So it kind of

feels like I'm being reminded of how it's helpful. But then, in practice, it's really, my workspace isn't creating the space for that for that to be easy to happen.

It's about being able to work as an individual as a practitioner, whether creatively or not. And a symbol. people expressing their own symbols and then being able to use that to

kind of working with the subconscious to help them to make sense of the stories that they tell themselves.

D105

And certainly in my work, because my client work is becoming. It's adding more fun to that work, which is, I always like to add a bit of fun to catch up is that I'm getting much more active in the sessions. Even with beginners we're getting more just sitting down in chairs. We're exploring, doing the twisty rag, which is, we grab a twisty rag between when we're talking about frustration and anger, in opposite directions, until you really really really feel the edge of the frustration and anchor and colorful language is really invited. And so really working more with the visceral.

I think what I might do is work with dreams in a more visceral sense rather than talking about dreams, acting them out more.

that would be really helpful to really, actually do some empty chair work with dream characters.

I got a new practice in Uplands and I finally put up new pictures. The last two I got since doing this work with you. I got an impressionist, an early nineteenth century impressionist. And then I've got these Rothko ones, and I got red just colors, bright colors, and I brought this other. the one I bought more recently just gone higher on the wall, and it's sort of like blue, dark blue and a light blue. Mark Rothko, it's very. It's just colors, and it looks like a window.

and I had a client last night, and she says, Oh, it looks like a window, and what's it like? It's like a portal. And I was thinking about dreamworking. So I asked what's that mean to you? And we explored the picture, cause this particular client's quite

ADHD, very, very scattered, and yet working with a portal was really helpful, and to ground here at the same time. But that has partly come through this work, because the portal to the subconscious, you know, very inviting. And it's not just got the colors that people can put whatever pictures they want into that window, the cosmic window.

Laura: In dream work with incubation, trying to get into lucidity. It can be a portal. It can be a window, whatever you're visualizing, what you need on the other side. And you're visualizing your dream body, you know, going through that and entering that, and actually turned out quite powerful for a lot of people, because it's much easier to enter this world that you want to enter if you physically visualize a door.

Yes, and it's containable literally, because you can come in and out of. So it makes it safer.

Yeah, exactly. Cause you literally walk into it then, rather than just mentally trying to create this world. It's just like, if I open this door, walk through it, it will be there, and then you come out the door again. So it's a little bit like talk about the window of tolerance in terms of dealing with trauma. Serious trauma. Where you have a window of trauma, you can only go enter trauma to the amount you can handle, so you have a window of what's in this window? How much of you is available to meet the trauma, and how much you was just get completely washed away with it and go into schizoid, or you know, hyper or hyperplace, which couldn't be quite dangerous physically. So it's almost like the window. It's a safe container.

D105

P15: I felt like what I did earlier was one that you would find more entertaining or enjoyable to read. But then I felt like, you know, they seemed like a few that I have written in sort of just early morning have actually had a bit more, you know, they might need a bit more editing or something. Must be. But they, they feel like they perhaps a bit more interesting. Bit more something about them, that have

possibilities to take a bit further than just trying to write to be clever, you know, as you write a bit more for now.

P4: I like this so much. I mean, it's not finished yet. But yeah, I love it.

P3: The second one is more creative. Well, of course it is, yeah, because it comes out of something.

P1: I think the images were a bit more vivid, like it was easier to create new images in my head and then write them down. That felt a bit more automatic, I think, because I wasn't thinking about it too much. It was just a bit more natural, and it was easier to write. It wasn't better though. I'm prefer the one from before, I think. I think it's because you said I could write on whatever and then this one I had like based on one of the things that happened and I didn't I didn't think any of them were that strong. The setting, that's probably why.

P16: I think it's a more interesting poem.

D106

I have been having more ideas for stories. Short stories especially. I had a cracking one the other day. And I don't know where it came from. I can't directly relate it to a dream. But yeah, I've been having ideas and having to jot them down more than I remember doing before. So yes, I think it probably has.

I've started a story workbook where I'm working on ideas, but also stories that I enjoy. I'm analysing why I like them. But I'm consciously working on story ideas that I've had and trying to work them up into something that has got a proper structure and isn't just an image.

So yeah, that's come out of it.

Stories

As out of nowhere, from behind a boundless rock that trapped my frozen body for eternity before this moment, I emerged onto a small and intimate bay that seemed to stretch along many coasts for many reasons. This was mine. As if out of a warm jelly, my body formed and I suddenly had legs to step on the warm white sand that tickled my bare feet. There was no one on this small, intimate bay that seemed to have been created just for me. It was the perfect environment filled not with loneliness but a sense of belonging to oneself, and the perfect temperature surrounded my breath; with the sun falling on my soft, new-born skin and the breeze flowing through my old, much too wise mind. I could hear the birds somewhere in the distance, behind the cliffs, but they did not seem a part of my bay. Though I would invite them later, to admire their magnificent wings and shade myself from the sky. At that moment, though, I could sense the creatures near me, those under my feet that moved like sandworms, but tiny ones, invisible to the naked eye, slithering between my toes and grounding me on this island.

After I had made a few steps towards the ocean, I felt the movement of the sand, of the worms, of the breeze, of the sunlight, beating alongside my heart and creating my breath. I felt the world around me stretching out of my skin and I could play with colours as I pleased. It wasn't beautiful, it wasn't sad; it was yet to become anything. I searched for a story out in the open, asking worms if they wanted to speak to me. But they mumbled reasons to each other and retreated into the ground. I felt a cold coming from behind the clouds that had suddenly formed, so I neared the water and touched it feet first. It was neither cold nor warm; it was perfect and somehow familiar. It was like a mother's touch.

Diving into the ocean with sand dunes making uneven landscapes for all kinds of terrestrials to live their separate yet connected lives, I discovered an array of colours shining from various light points underwater. Purple was coming from an antenna poking out of a strange fish's eye that somehow never could look straight ahead. Blue was the sand from which emerald algae kept giving birth to thousands of planktons, which came together into a formation so as not to be eaten by larger species.

None of these reflected life as I knew it, back inside that rock, inside my limits. They were all so magnificent, cordial, affectionate, as if the ocean spoke to me in a single voice through them all. Yet they all had their own individual lives they were leading, each unique in appearance, unique in their path, colours, and thoughts. Each with their own story.

I swam amongst these creatures that each provided me with a different colour to attach to my soft, malleable skin. I started glowing with them, yet painfully and wonderfully aware of my individuality. They couldn't speak to me, not with words, yet I somehow knew their stories the moment I would touch them. Pointing my finger and feeling their matter against my skin, I would know what they were made of, and they would pour out their stories into my skin. I was looking for a protagonist, someone whose story is worth telling, not a supporting character. And I almost felt guilty for not choosing any of them as I passed them and took in their story. But it was not mine to tell, I felt, and this was my bay, after all. So just before I fell on my knees to feel the sand against my cheeks, I sent my thanks to the underwater world and the dunes that took them all away after a short goodbye.

Alone with the blue sand, I caressed my face with the grains, it seemed one by one; some were gently sipping down my skin and some were entering my pores to merge with my thoughts and add to these stories. I felt they wanted to be a part of it. The sand, so weak against the wind yet so adaptable across the worlds, belonging to everywhere and never setting home anywhere, so hard and strong when stepped on it in the burning sun, so versatile when soaked in the ocean and the rain. The sand felt like a father's touch, a touch that lasted a moment and then it was gone.

Emerging from the water, I remembered to breathe like a human. And that was when I felt the gentle raindrops coming down on me and merging both with my body and the ocean in which I was still immersed. I could soon not tell the ocean from the rain nor my thoughts from the voices coming from the coast. Carried by vulture-like birds the size of the sun, I crawled up to the group of people standing in a queue by the rock from which I once came; from which by body was moulded. One by one, the old, wise men stood on a manmade stage facing the water, telling their stories to the ocean as if it was the wisest of them all and the judge of what is worth telling. I took a seat in the white sand, leaning against that rock, and carefully listened to the wise men present their stories to the ocean. They all sounded so fascinating, so worthy, so immersing, yet I remembered none of them.

My attention was drawn to a little boy, skinny and rough, with ruffled black hair as if the ocean had just spit him out so fresh. He was swinging his feet in the arms of his father, another wise man, and revising the story seemingly written on a piece of paper in his hands. He wasn't as nervous as the wise men, nor as expecting. He seemed to have had a story that was worthy regardless of whether it was told to the ocean. He seemed to have belonged there, at my intimate bay, his skin stretching out of mine and his thoughts entangling with my tongue. Suddenly, I found myself telling his story, not to the ocean, not to the wise men, not even to myself. But to the boy, who listened carefully, wide-eyed, his skin melting in the rain, disintegrating into the sand, and retreating back into the rock.