



**Creative Wordshops**

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# Writing Letter

## Jan 2025

re-story, re-create, re-  
imagine you

for this letter, a weekly story  
and ongoing opportunities -  
[dorianhaarhoffblog.co.za](http://dorianhaarhoffblog.co.za)

Dear writer, storyteller, reader, lover of words, images, silences...

Thank you for those who subscribe to the monthly letter and/or who receive the weekly Sat story. While the letter and story remain as a gift to all, for those who wish, I'd appreciate any voluntary donation.

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### Beginnings Endings

*What we call the beginning  
is often the end. And to make an end  
is to make a beginning. (T S. Eliot)*



As we move into the first quarter of the 21st century, the beginning of a year, I'm thinking about beginnings and endings. We talk as if they are linear. I thought I could coin a word *begend* so looked it up and behold found:

- ✚ a song - Higher Intelligence Agency from the album S.H.A.D.O 2
- ✚ a TV soap - *Begend the Endginning*

- ✚ a definition - when repeats follow the end of miserable experiences

What if these 'Begin End' labels are circular rather than linear? TS Eliot in *East Coker* writes of this cycle:

In my beginning is my end. In succession  
Houses rise and fall, crumble, are extended,  
Are removed, destroyed, restored ...  
there is a time for building  
And a time for living and for generation  
And a time for the wind to break the loosened pane....

Alice in Jeanette Winterson's novel, *Gut Symmetries*, 1997, asks "now that physics is proving the intelligence of the universe, what are we to do about the stupidity of humankind? I include myself. I know that the earth is not flat, but my feet are. I know that space is curved, but my brain has been cordoned by habit to grow in a straight line.... I say, I am open minded, but what I think is."



Our outworn language maps betray evolving experience. We often celebrate beginnings. We grieve or are relieved at endings. Buckminster Fuller who created the

geodesic dome and coined the phrase 'spaceship earth', claimed that human misconduct came from living as if the world were flat. This worldview implies endings/beginnings not one continuous cycle. We can now choose to see what the first astronauts saw. - no up no down, no *terra firma* no solid space, no sunrise no sunset.

What about the final stanza of Jane Hirschfield's *Poem With Two Endings*:

Death is voracious, it swallows all the living.  
Life is voracious, it swallows all the dead.  
Neither is ever satisfied, neither is ever filled,  
each swallows and swallows the world.  
The grip of life is as strong as the grip of death.  
(but the vanished, the vanished beloved, o where?)

We apply this linear language to our relationships too though love in its infinity knows no beginning and no end. John Donne's *A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning* privileges the circle of parting and reunion. His metaphor for two lovers? The two points of a compass used for drawing arcs or circles. Here is the ending:



Such wilt thou be to me, who must,  
Like th' other foot, obliquely run;  
Thy firmness makes my circle just,  
And makes me end where I begun.

Here is my recent attempt to place this conundrum:

### **Endings, Beginnings**

if endings and beginnings  
form not a line drawn on a wall  
to measure the height of a child  
but a circle, then the end sings  
as undertone in the rondo  
of everyeach birth cry.

if we return to incarnate  
the afterlife hides a while  
in the begin shape of death  
in the genesis of a Fariy Tale  
once upon waltzes at the ball  
arm in arm with ever after.

when the circus clown climbs  
astride the monocycle  
the end rides in the whirring wheel.

it's the spin of the yin yang  
as the dot of white or black  
expands, contracts to rotate shape.

so bring us as we ride our monocycle  
and swirl amidst our yin yang circle  
into the *begend* balance of a Wisdom Tale.

Yet perhaps we create such begin-end illusions in our language as we need these book ends to contain and explain while surviving in a limitless universe. I often wonder about Rilke's insight:

Be ahead of all parting, as if it had already happened,  
like winter, which even now is passing.

For beneath the winter is a winter so endless  
that to survive it at all is a triumph of the heart.

Be forever dead in Eurydice, and climb back singing.

Climb praising as you return to connection.

Here among the disappearing, in the realm of the transient,  
be a ringing glass that shatters as it rings.

[Be. And, at the same time, know what it is not to be.

The emptiness inside you allows you to vibrate  
in full resonance with your world. Use it for once.

To all that has run its course, and to the vast unsayable  
numbers of beings abounding in Nature,  
add yourself gladly, and cancel the cost."

Let's take bend into the new year so we can, like Thoreau, live  
deliberately.

Dorian

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*You help me to sound like myself (numerous clients)*

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for info (bookings via Dorian)

discover the writer / artist inside

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