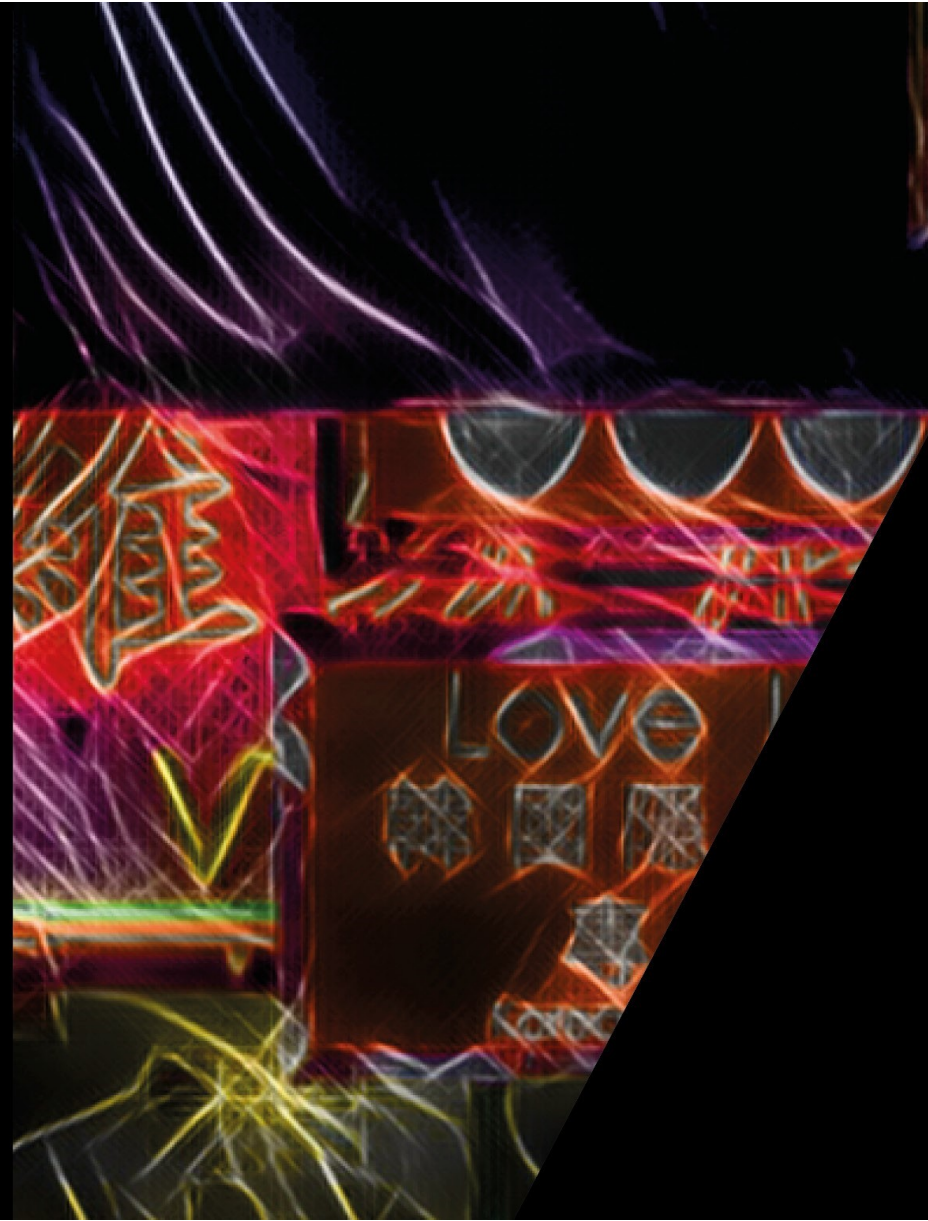


**FUTURE  
— AND —  
FORM**

**WHERE DO  
STORIES  
COME FROM?**



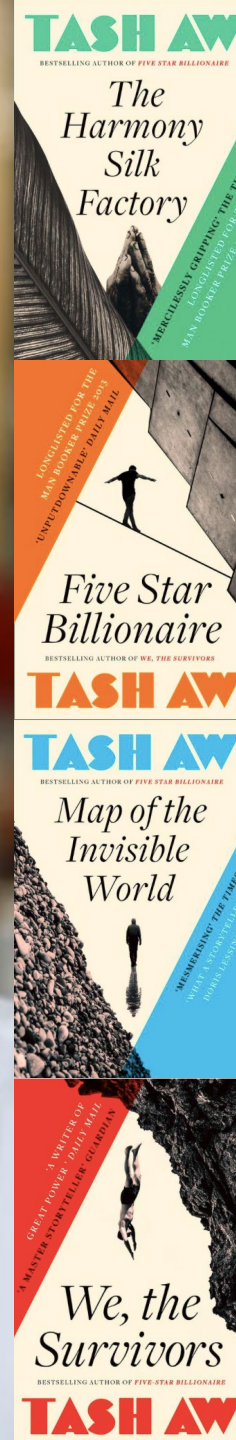


## Workshop Format

1. About the Project & the Author Tash Aw
2. *Where Do Stories Come From?*  
Independent Writing
3. Reflections and Feedback
4. Where Next with your Writing?

## **In this creative writing workshop and activity, you will be:**

- ✓ Responding to prompts – and trying what’s called ‘automatic writing’ or ‘free-writing’, which is all about getting words on the page
- ✓ Getting a sense of what a creative writing workshop is like – the value of feedback
- ✓ Maybe even getting some ideas of where you’d like to take your writing next – using this as a springboard in your writing.



## Tash Aw (1971-)

Born in Taipei, brought up in Malaysia, lives in London.

Author of *The Harmony Silk Factory*, written while a student at the University of East Anglia (UEA), that won several awards and prizes.

Has since written three more novels and a memoir of an immigrant family, *The Face: Strangers on a Pier*, also recognized by awards internationally.

*"For many years, I thought writing was a special talent that people were born with, but I've learnt that anyone can acquire these skills."*



# The Making of ‘Where Do Stories Come From?’

The British Archive for Contemporary Writing (UEA), are lucky enough to look after Tash’s Archive of drafts, early manuscripts, and correspondence.

One of those is a short story, ‘Sail’, that has been used to create an immersive online creative writing experience. This is Tash’s attempt to share the writing process, to encourage readers to become writers. Like many writers, he uses postcards and recordings of places he’s visited and sounds he’s heard to life in his stories.

Using written extracts, machine-learning manipulated images, and sound recordings you will take over and write your own contribution to the story.

Insert picture  
of Archives?

# Where Do Stories Come From?

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Written By

Tash Aw



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

**FUTURE  
—AND—  
FORM**

**UEA**  
University of East Angles

**GUILD  
HALL**  
LONDON

**NSM**  
FESTIVAL



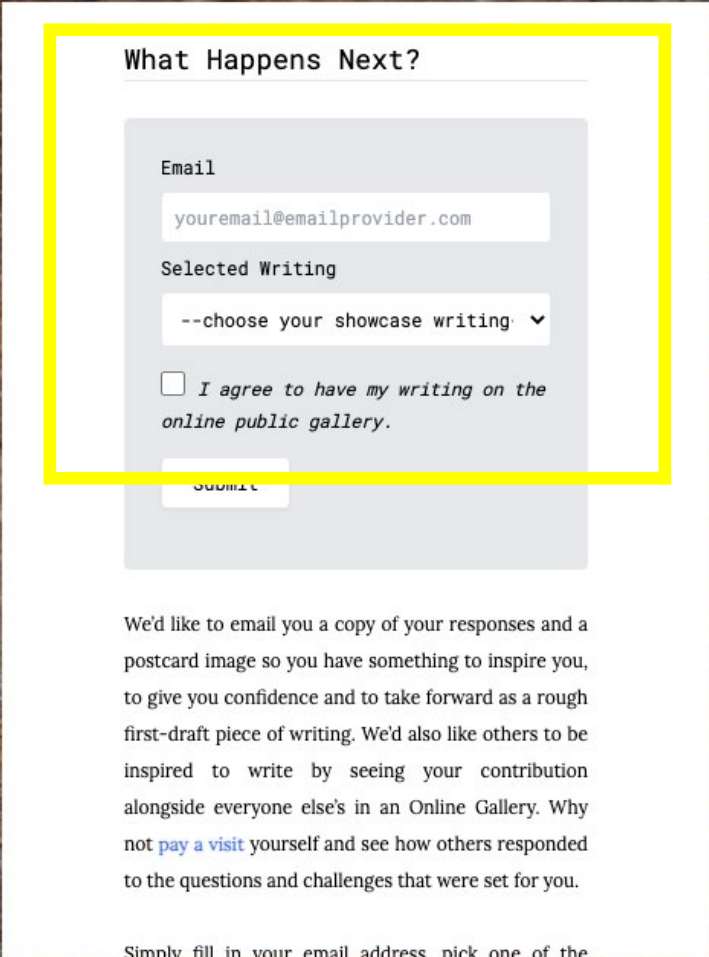


# Independent Creative Writing

- ✓ 20 minutes for 5 short sections
- ✓ Rather than 'story writing', these are prompts to get you thinking and responding
- ✓ Too fast? You can always return to do it slowly later
- ✓ Unexpected twist in the tale? Just go with it

# Try it online to submit your work and get a digital postcard

At the end of the activity, you must enter an email address and click 'submit' to get a copy of your writing.



**What Happens Next?**

Email

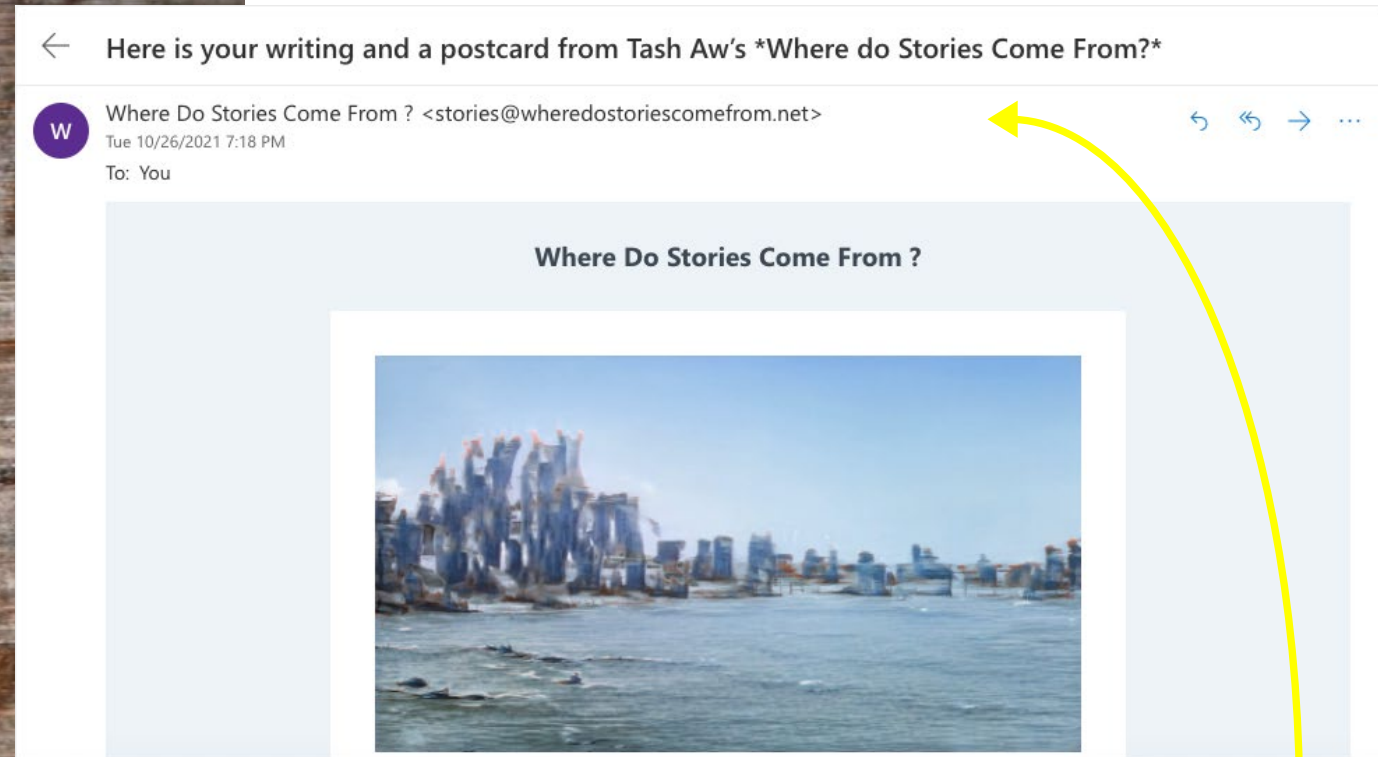
Selected Writing

--choose your showcase writing ▾

☐ I agree to have my writing on the online public gallery.

We'd like to email you a copy of your responses and a postcard image so you have something to inspire you, to give you confidence and to take forward as a rough first-draft piece of writing. We'd also like others to be inspired to write by seeing your contribution alongside everyone else's in an Online Gallery. Why not [pay a visit](#) yourself and see how others responded to the questions and challenges that were set for you.

Simply fill in your email address, pick one of the



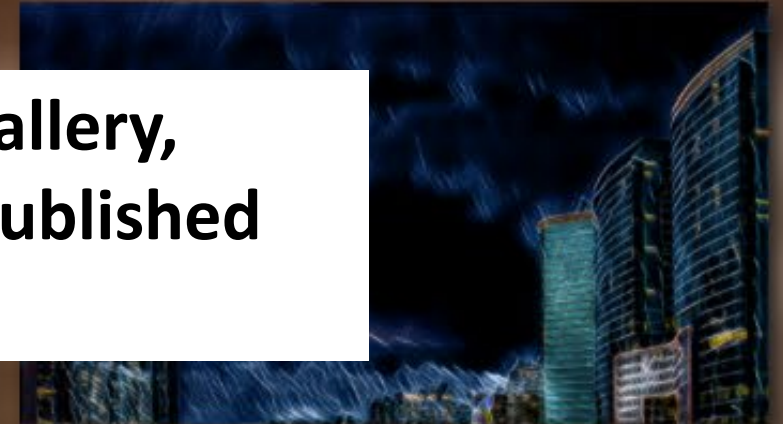
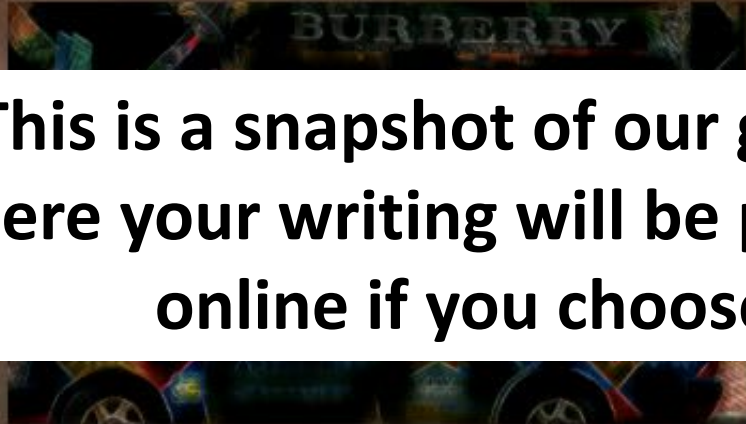
You will receive an email with a computer-generated postcard that links to your writing in the gallery, like this one.



WRITE YOUR STORY



**This is a snapshot of our gallery,  
where your writing will be published  
online if you choose**





## Here's how to get started:

- ✓ Use the printed version of the writing prompts that your tutor hands out
- ✓ Or follow the prompts on-screen, allowing about 3 minutes per prompt of silent writing time
- ✓ If you finish early, use the time to consider your responses to the prompts and be ready to feedback
- ✓ See you in 20 minutes to discuss!

# PART ONE:

## The Harbour

**Yanzu wants to buy a boat, a large fancy racing yacht. It costs a lot of money – probably too much. He can't really afford it, and in fact, he has no idea how to sail.**

*Why might someone want to spend a lot of money on something they don't really appreciate? Is it a status symbol, or something else altogether?*

Begin writing your answer on your page...



# PART TWO:

## Hong Kong

**Yanzu is, of course, fleeing a failed love affair with a woman he had been seeing for three months earlier that summer. She had loved boats, which is why he is thinking about buying this boat. Men do the stupidest things when they are in love, she once told him, but now he realises the opposite: they do the stupidest things when they are out of love; when they think they have failed.**

*What constitutes “failure” in modern life?*

Begin writing your answer on your page...

# PART THREE:

## Lack & Success

But Yanzu is a successful man. He runs a number of thriving business concerns in Mainland China and Hong Kong, including a development of eco-homes that proved popular among professional thirtysomethings. In a previous life he had been an activist and journalist who had been accidentally caught up in political issues in Beijing and forced to move to Hong Kong to start a new life. He tries to write, but nothing works. He reinvents himself as a businessman.

He gets married. He gets rich. He is a “success.” And yet, something is missing. People see him as a boring middle-aged executive. His marriage is dutiful but somehow unfulfilling. This is not how he imagined his life would turn out. Twenty years on from his youthful idealism, he finds himself trapped in a situation that looks like success but feels like failure.

*What next? How does someone in his position make himself feel better about his life?*

Begin writing your answer on your page...

# PART FOUR:

## Yanzu in Love

**He falls in love. With a British woman he hires to teach him English.**

**She is the total opposite of him: independent, free-spirited, unconcerned by money or material possessions. She doesn't take their affair seriously; he does. She makes it fairly clear that it will last for as long as she is in Hong Kong, probably only until the end of summer.**

*Should he continue the relationship? What does it mean to him?*

Begin writing your answer on your page...



# PART FIVE:

## An Ending

**They go on a sailing trip to the islands. She loves boats for the sense of freedom they provide, free from attachment. He tries to understand how she feels, but never really connects. They dive into the water to swim, both knowing that this high point in their affair might also be their last moment together.**

*How should this end?*

Begin writing your answer on your page...

# Welcome back

How was it being in Tash's shoes?

***Just the first thing that comes to you. There's no right or wrong response.***

***How about:***

- One thing you enjoyed/one thing you found challenging?
- Were the prompts helpful?
- Did you respond to sounds, or images, as well as Tash's text?
- How did you feel when Tash changed direction in the story?
- What do you think of Tash's creative process? Is it what you imagined?

# Where next?

If you'd like the full experience, go online to give it a go in your own time at:

<https://wheredostoriescomefrom.net/>

- ✓ Use warm up with exercises like these, or other prompts, to get started
- ✓ Want to keep writing? Find a routine
- ✓ Set aside a portion of time each day or week to write
- ✓ Join a workshop group or create one in your school or college
- ✓ Share your writing with other writers for feedback
- ✓ There are many creative writing courses and resources for young people, have a browse online.



# Goodbye

We hope this has given you some ideas to go forward with your writing, and some sense of what a creative writing workshop is like.

**Good luck with your writing!**