

# The Brida Journal

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[www.journal.brida.eu](http://www.journal.brida.eu)

Week 04/2021

**Ideas and Conversations, for and by learners of English.**

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## Swimming in Music

*Frank frets over an unusual encounter.*

I can thank my lucky stars that the man was a teacher. This thought is my lifeline, my safety net to the experience I am about to embark upon.

But, as is with most good stories, there is an overture.

Had Jean-Yves Ragot's wife not taken part in one of my English courses, had she not had a quiet word with me about that class, had she not actively encouraged the Brida Journal and the Brida Project, I would not be having this conversation with her husband. Michèle is the sort of person who has a permanent question mark floating above her. There is something that puzzles one. Slowly it emerges. The patchwork family which now houses 12 grandchildren. The casual remarks, dropped like a handkerchief, waiting to be picked up and returned. In the summer comes an invitation for some coffee in the Blue House. And when the two halves present themselves as one whole, I still see the question marks. Months later, I realise, I am using the wrong sense. Do not look, listen.

At some point the handkerchief is dropped for the umpteenth time, "Jean-Yves writes an email about his work, would you like to receive them too...?" Meekly, I pick up the handkerchief, say yes and hesitantly something arrives. I read, it stirs, I listen, it stirs...but the end of year exhaustion is too great. An idea formulates but my body is crying for shutdown.

Eventually I open the door to this new world. Again, the question marks are jumping around, telling me to do something. But what? A question mark whispers into my ear, "you are using the wrong sense. Do not look, do not listen. Feel."

And so, I jump into swimming pool and swim in music.

It is just over a week before Michèle and Jean-Yves come here to discuss his work. My head is spinning. This is one of these golden moments which I do not want to screw up. But how?

How do you talk to the man when he writes and then sings?

*On en crève  
De tout c'qu'nous n'disons pas  
De ces mots que l'on garde pour soi.*

*We're dying  
Of all the things we don't say  
Of these words that one keeps to oneself.*

He does not make it easy:

*Qui, même toi  
Que je n'connais qu'depuis si peu de temps  
Mais avec qui je viens d'passer de superbes  
moments  
Toi qui es là  
Un peu paumé.*

*Yes, even you  
That I have known for such a short time  
But with whom I've just had a wonderful time  
You who are here  
A little lost*

A little lost?

*Je connais Paris, ville d'art et de misère  
J'ai vu Venise et les grandes villes d'Italie  
J'ai vu Munich et son Octobre de folie  
J'ai voyagé dans tellement de contrées.*

*I know Paris, city of art and misery  
I saw Venice and the big cities of Italy  
I saw Munich and its crazy October  
I've travelled to so many places.*

I breathe a sigh of relief. I can look him in the eye. We share common ground.

But, before I know it, he pulls the rug from under my feet.

*Mais mes voisins de palier, de quartier  
Je ne les ai jamais bien regardés*

*But my neighbours on the landing, the district  
I've never looked at them properly.*

Yes, I admit, I had not heard of the person nor his music, although he lives only 15 km from me.

As I swim to the deeper end of the pool, I meet Madame Louise. She must be a beautiful woman as I listen to the softness of the music with a hint of melancholy.

*Comme si c'était la première fois  
Puis elle regagne à petits pas  
Son vieux fauteuil où elle s'assoit  
L'instant sacré est arrivé  
Quelqu'un va enfin lui parler*

*As if it was the first time  
Then she returns in small steps  
Her old armchair where she sits  
The sacred moment has arrived  
Someone will finally talk to her.*

The song softly unfolds and reveals a deep humanity, so elegantly portrayed, so simple yet so complex as life can be.

A lap or two later, as I continue swimming, the humanity is perhaps a little more risqué.

*Le diable au corps  
J'en redemande encore  
Je calcule, je manipule  
Le diable au corps  
J'en redemande encore  
Je fais tout ce qu'il me plait  
Sans vraiment penser  
Au mal que je fais*

*The devil in the body  
I want more  
I calculate, I manipulate  
The devil in the body  
I want more  
I do whatever I like  
Without really thinking  
To the evil that I do.*

Yes, we were young once. How could we forget?

As I continue swimming, I encounter Mathieu, Julien, Fabien and Benoît.  
They are a cheery bunch, as the music tells me in a slight up-tempo gallop.  
Who are these characters?

*Mathieu, Julien Fabien et toi Benoît  
Venez, venez tous voir passer  
Passer là-bas sur le grand sentier  
De splendide cavaliers.*

*Mathieu, Julien Fabien and you Benoît  
Come, come and see all of us pass by.  
Passing over there on the big trail  
Splendid riders.*

And as I look “over there” I notice something else, up in the sky. I meet an old friend, whom I had not spoken with since I lived in London, some 30 years ago. And the mist in my brain begins to clear and I begin to see, to hear and to feel, all at once.

*File, file, redouble tous tes efforts  
Comme Jonathan Livingstone le Goéland  
Monte encore, vole de plus en plus fort  
File, file vers une nouvelle aurore.*

*Go, go, double your efforts  
Like Jonathan Livingstone Seagull  
Go up again, fly stronger and stronger  
Flying, flying to a new dawn.*

Working with another client, we stride through several “self-help books” as our discussion material. Jonathan reminds me how easy it is to glide through the sky and be different. And how to look for that next air current to propel us forward. Afterall, we just need to look, listen and feel. The seagull replaces the shrink.

The freedom that we experience here saves us from certain problems.

*Avant de juger un homme  
Il faut marcher sept lunes dans les moccasins*

*Before judging a man  
You have to walk seven moons in your moccasins.*

The teacher would not be a good one, if he did not let a little mystery enter your thoughts.

*As-tu déjà songé  
Au mystère de toute rencontre.*

*Have you ever thought about  
the mystery of every encounter.*

How do you prepare an “interview” with a teacher, a poet and a composer?

*Et dans l'odeur d'un bon café  
Laisser s'approcher la journée.*

*And in the smell of a good coffee  
Let the day approach*

*Dans mes périples, j'aime flâner, m'attarder  
Faire des rencontres, discuter dans un café*

*In my travels, I like to stroll, to linger  
Meeting people, chatting in a café.*

*Et quoi que tu deviennes  
Quand l'aventure s'achève  
Même si tu ne voles pas aussi haut que tes rêves  
Non, ne regrette pas tes envols de joie  
Découvre une autre voie  
Mais surtout n'oublie pas*

*And whatever you become  
When the adventure comes to an end  
Even if you don't fly as high as your dreams  
No, don't regret your flights of joy  
Discover another way  
But don't forget.*

*Mais tout ça bien sûr tu l'sais déjà*

*But of course, you already know all that.*

Would you like to swim in music as well?

Take the opportunity here: <http://jyves.ragot.free.fr/>

# Tour de France, Stage 9 - Poitiers

*Geneviève crosses the point from the past to the future.*

We have left Charente-Maritime and La Rochelle and are now 137km further east in the city of Poitiers in the region of Aquitaine.

The town was founded by the Pictones, a Celtic tribe. It was an Oppidom (a Celtic fortification). When the Romans arrived, the town was renamed to Pictavium, which eventually became Pictavis and is now Poitiers. The town has grown continuously and while Poitiers itself has 88,000 inhabitants, over 250,000 people live in the surrounding urban areas.

The town has many sights, here are the most unusual. I would like to start with the cathedral “Saint-Pierre”. In the south transept is a treasure of Gothic art, the quality and size is unmatched in France. The pictures show us biblical scenes, saints, angels and the coronation of the Virgin. All is shown in the required colour code (or rules) of this epoch; very vivid blues, reds and greens using precious pigments.

If you visit Poitiers during summer, keep an evening free to watch the illumination of the Eglise Notre Dame La Grande. The façade of the church is shown in colours of the Middle Ages with a multicolour, musical spectacle.

The Saint Jean Baptistry is an old Gallo Roman building in which you can discover an old octagonal shaped baptismal pool. It was used until the 8<sup>th</sup> century. The building was converted into a church and is decorated with murals from the 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. You can also admire the Merovingian sarcophagi.

Twenty kilometres from Poitiers is the medieval city of Chauvigny, where you can experience some brilliant falconry. At the baronial Château des Évêques you can attend a bird spectacle. In the amphitheatre you should admire the giant birds gliding over your head. New species join the growing family every year and a few from them have even taken part in movies.

Whilst you are there, try a very special mode of transport. The old railway line was transformed to a so called velorail. The vehicle looks like a car without the chassis and you sit on comfortable seats and pedal as if you were on a bicycle. The wheels are small train wheels rolling on a railway track. During your almost 9km long velo-railing trip, you can admire the landscape and take in the fresh country air.

An hour away is La Roche-Posay and there are two things you can do here. One is focussed on your health, the other on your bank account. The medical cure of La Roche-Posay heals all your dermatological problems, a health cure for your skin. It is the leading centre in Europe and is also known for its selection of skin care products under the same name which are available in chemists.

Once your health has been restored, you can “have a flutter” in the casino. You are spoiled with a choice of entertainment. Enjoy a dinner and cabaret in the “Salle de Cabaret”. Lunch in the “Bistrot Gourmand” and, in between meals, try your luck either with the “one armed bandits”, “slot machines” or “fruit machines” in the gambling halls or, if you want to spend an evening like James Bond, you can do that in the more traditional and elegant surroundings with roulette and black jack etc. Should we add a note of caution to say that gambling can be addictive?

## The Futuroscope

Poitiers is synonymous with the Futuroscope which is located 10km north of the city. Here is a theme park with an emphasis on technological and scientific education. It was opened on May 31, 1987 but different attractions have been added almost every year. You have a choice of over 40 different attractions, not just for children of all ages, but also interesting for parents.

Go on a time machine journey, experience a virtual reality racing simulator with local hero in the Alsace, Sebastian Loeb, walk along the cyber avenue and follow Thomas Pesquet, the first French astronaut who went to space, into the imagination pavilion in which you walk in total darkness and have to recognise objects by touching them. You can return to the ice age, watch a fabulous show presented by Canada's famous Cirque du Soleil. Why not "Dance with Robots" with Martin Solveig. In June 2020, the park opened its latest attraction, the Mars Objective which aims to inform people about future missions to Mars. There is really a lot to do and see, so my advice is just go in and have fun.

It's time to cycle on. See you when I reach my next destination, the wider area around Clermont Ferrand.



## Mixed salad with rump steak strips

Ingredients (for 2)	Method
<p>2 rump steaks            2 small heads of romaine lettuce            some lamb's lettuce            some radicchio            ½ cucumber            1 pck. cocktail tomatoes            1 shallot            6 tbsp. oil            3 tbsp. vinegar            1 tsp honey            Salt and pepper            Parsley, flat</p>	<p>Preparation time approx. 20 minutes            Cooking/baking time approx. 20 minutes            Total time approx. 40 minutes</p> <p>Wash and clean the lettuce and cut the lettuce hearts and radicchio into strips. Cut the onions lengthwise into strips. Cut the cucumber into small pieces and quarter the tomatoes lengthwise.</p> <p>Mix the oil with the vinegar. Season with salt and pepper. Add the honey and refine with herbs if necessary. Mix well until a creamy consistency is reached.</p> <p>Preheat the oven to approx. 150 °C top/bottom heat. Dab the rump steaks dry and sear them unseasoned for about 2 minutes on both sides. Season the steaks, wrap them not too tightly in aluminium foil and leave to cook in the oven for about 10 minutes, depending on the desired cooking point. The time depends on the size and thickness of the steaks. Do the pressure test in between.</p> <p>Mix the salad with the dressing, place on the plate and sprinkle with the parsley and the rump steak cut into strips.</p>



# Learn to be a Storyteller

Joe, a storyteller, actor, director, and choreographer, is offering online classes during social distancing in storytelling, performance skills and public expression for individuals or a group of your making. Joe has taught his storytelling and performance techniques at USC, Stanford University, Berkeley Rep and in workshop settings worldwide.

Hit the New Year running with the story you've been dying to tell. Let's do it. Not magic potions, just you, getting in touch with you. Classes are made to be fun, but you will work. It's in the work where the discoveries are made.

25% discount for New Year's signups before January 31, 2021. Let's rejoice with the year ending and the new one beginning.

Students find my classes helpful to their physical vitality, acting, artistic expression, public speaking, self-awareness, confidence and general "joie de vivre."

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# *News from the Grapevine*

## **Michael, Melbourne, Australia**

Masks no longer mandatory in Victoria. International visitors with mutant covid strain must quarantine for longer periods.. huge relief for most people that trump is gone. Stock market showing some enthusiasm after Biden inauguration.. heatwave coming this weekend for south east Australia, for Melb 34 on sun and 42 for mon.. how's that?

7m

What is with your prime minister?

10m

Can't he take on somebody his own size? China, Google? Bit big no?

9m

Big debate here on what to do with China.. many here feel that China is picking on oz because we're an easy target but that they are really angry at USA. Btw north Korea called oz out for human rights violations.. considered hypocritical

12m

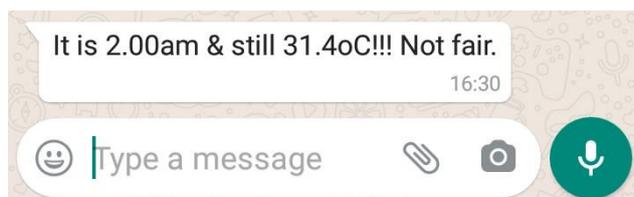
And Google threatening to turn off the tap?

11m

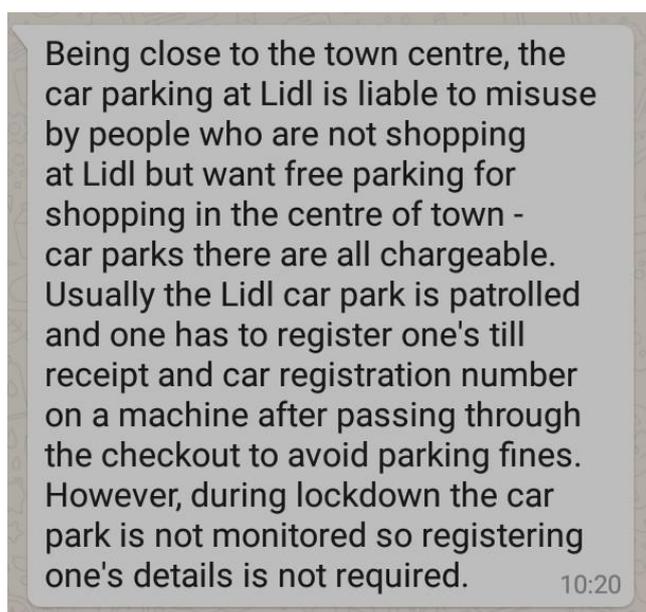
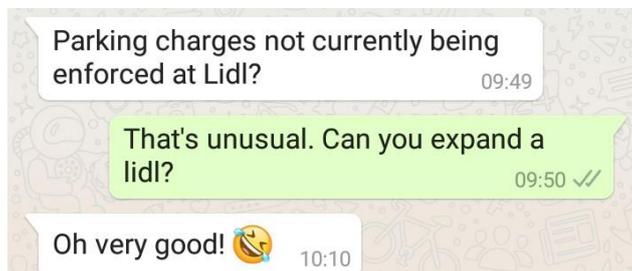
Ah yes.. bluff or not well see

10m

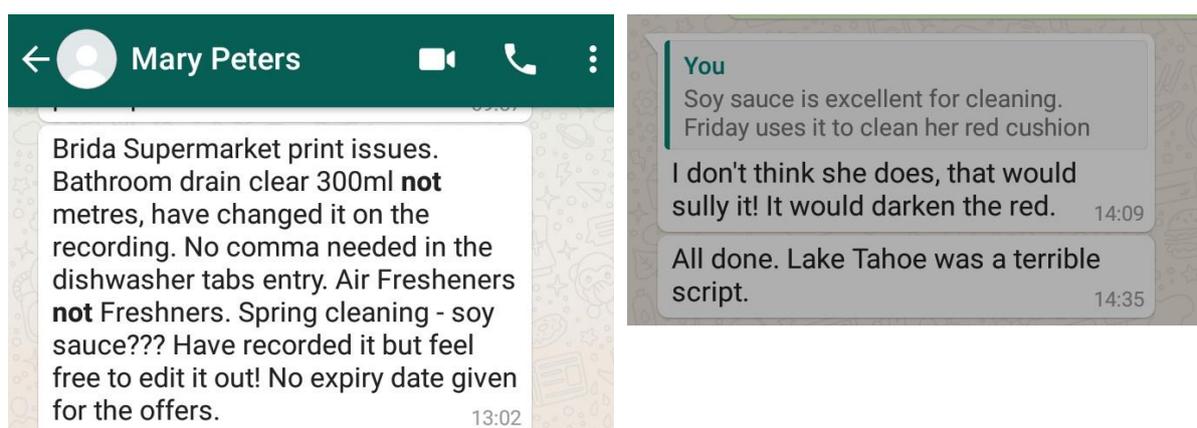
## **Monica, Adelaide, Australia – commenting on the weather.**



## Mary, Horsham, England, on paying for parking at a supermarket.



## Behind the scenes: Mary & Frank editing the journal.



The Grapevine: bits of news from people around the world. Why not share what is happening in your region. Message me on WhatsApp; Signal; Viber (+33 6 01 89 08 04) Telegram, (@FPCleebourg) or Messenger (Peters Langues)

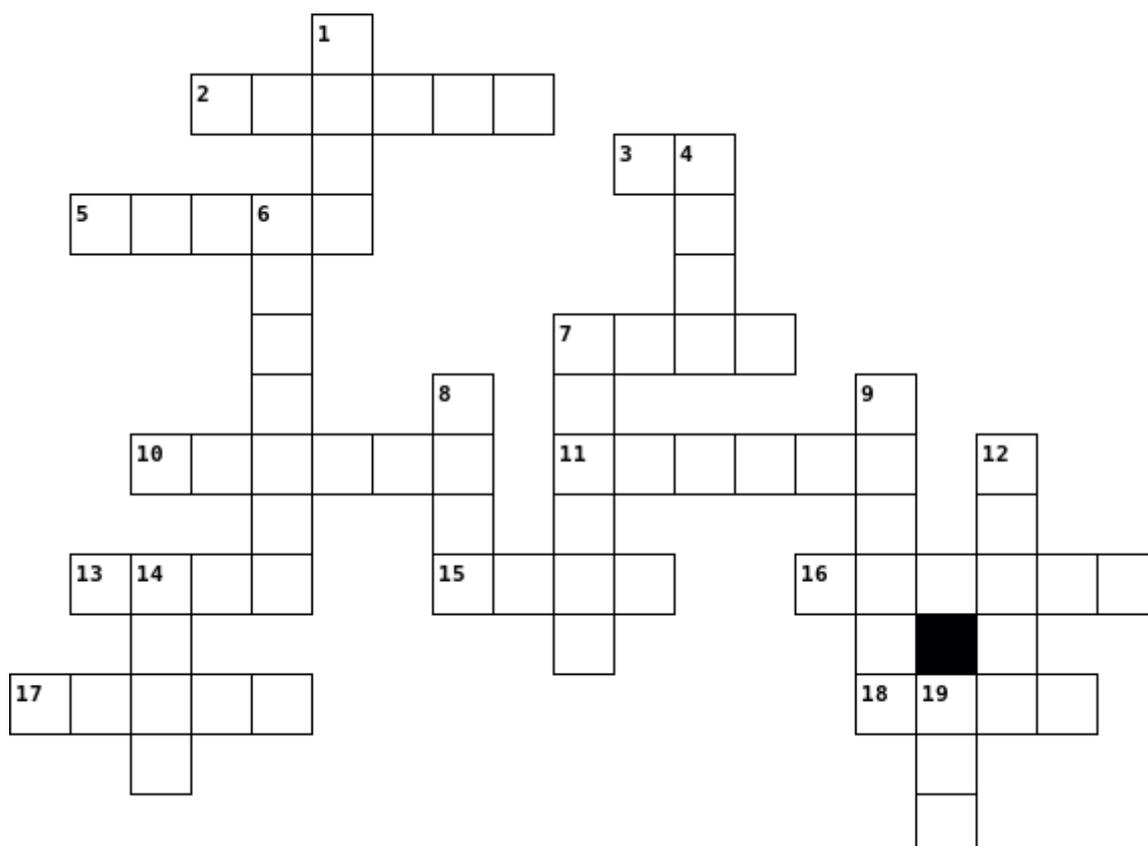


## Our special offers for this week. Start planning your spring cleaning

Limescale remover cleaning spray 500ml. €3.00	Spring awakening fabric conditioner 2l. €2.99	Jumbo storage bag €4.50
Bathroom drain clear 300ml. €2.25	Carpet stain remover 650 ml. €2.99	Soy Sauce, all purpose 250 ml. €2.22
Ironing water 1l. €1.50	Oven and grill cleaner 250 g. €3.99	Heavy duty scouring pads 3 per pack €1.20
Multi surface cleaner Crisp Lemon. 1l. €2.99	Bleach and hygiene Spray 750 ml. €3.50	Air fresheners various scents 300 ml. €2.00
All in one dishwasher tabs 115 per pack, €14.75	Starch with easy iron 300 ml. €3.00	Floor tile cleaner 750 ml. €1.80

**Offers while stocks last. Valid from Jan. 25 to Jan. 30**

# The Crossword



**Across**

2. The children jumped .... in excitement.
3. He picked .... the piece of paper from the floor.
5. Before the second.
7. To say something with melody and harmony.
10. Twice the amount of something.
11. to take away.
13. Don't push the door .... it instead.
15. A square shaped object, stuck on floors or walls.
16. A place where you sometimes win money.
17. Mostly a pleasant smell.
18. I .... John when he was a child.

**Down**

1. When you do not know where you are.
4. To prepare the details of something.
6. White bird found on the coast.
7. To slowly walk in a relaxed way.
8. When people arrange a meeting, then they ....
9. To make a comment about something.
12. "... You are here, why not stay for dinner?"
14. I .... fresh tomatoes for the salad.
19. My car is brand ....

**Solution 03.21****Across**

1. later
8. wanted
9. sweet
11. bought
14. away
16. picnic
17. aviation
18. shirt
19. local
20. on

**Down**

2. thought
3. about
4. chopsticks
5. conversation
6. approximately
7. Fancy
10. Peanut
12. Butcher
13. Fiction
15. asked

*Brida Journal, Ideas & Conversation, for and by learners of English*

## Improve your English with the Brida Journal

All the texts come with lessons. Whilst the Journal is free of charge, the lessons do come with a low fee to cover the cost of my time and work.

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**The Brida Journal** is an educational tool with the purpose of helping learners to improve their knowledge of English. Educators wishing to participate in the programme should contact me via email.

### Third Party Inspirational Sources

classifieds: gumtree.ie or gumtree.co.uk,  
the supermarket: various supermarket websites in the United Kingdom