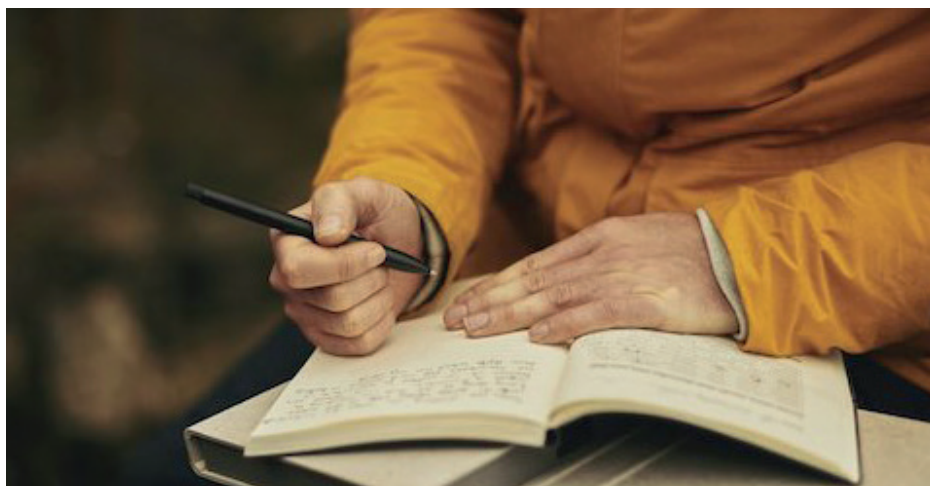


My Creative Time

Poems inspired by creativity



Voluntary Arts Wales
Celfyddydau Gwirfoddol Cymru

l.l.l. Llenyddiaeth
Cymru
Literature
Wales

What does your creative time mean to you?

What has creative activity meant to you during lockdown?

My Creative Time - Poetry inspired by voluntary arts, was a project delivered by Voluntary Arts Wales in partnership with Literature Wales in 2020, and supported by the Ashley Family Foundation. The project set out to highlight the importance of taking part in regular creative activity, particularly during this time of pandemic.

Based on a project developed by Voluntary Arts Scotland in partnership with the Scottish Poetry Library, this new initiative gave participants the opportunity to explore and express the varied benefits that arise from taking part in creative activity, and celebrate the work of voluntary arts groups and the connection they have with place and community throughout Wales.

Originally envisaged as an in-person project, we were forced to change our plans due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and therefore all work was delivered at distance. We commissioned eight poets, and partnered them with eight creative groups in the fields of theatre, crafts, visual arts, hip hop and creative writing. The poets each met the group they were paired with, and then led a poetry-writing workshop. In total therefore there were 16 sessions delivered, and 94 people took part in the workshops. The poets then offered feedback on the participants' poems, sometimes in separate one-to-one sessions.

This Anthology presents a curated selection of the poems submitted as part of the project. Despite the distressing context of the pandemic, these poems provide a powerful testimonial to the benefits of participation in creative activity during such a difficult time.

We hope this volume inspires you to spend your time creatively.

We are extremely grateful to the Ashley Family Foundation and the Community Foundation in Wales for supporting this project.

Contents

Groups	Poets	Page
Coffee n' Laughs	Karen Ankers	4
Get Drawing Whitchurch	Rachel Carney	13
Living Lines	Denni Turp	23
Avant Cymru	Mel Perry	34
Heritage Theatr Cymru	Natalie Ann Holborow	44
Newport Shared Reading Group	Ness Owen	52
Presteigne Writers' Circle	Jonathan Edwards	59
RCT Creative Writers' Group	Liz Pearce	67
Other submissions		84

Coffee n' Laughs

A weekly friendship group in Newport, providing participants with positive creative activities.

Birth

As we speak of times past, of people loved and places
found, memories give equal weight to exotic or mundane. Each
piece
of our puzzle finds its own shape. We slot together; screenbound
wordsmiths captured in creative space.

Hush.

Sounds offered here are newborn, sacred: they quiver
as they risk first breath; smiles soften
ragged edges.

Watch.

Words are coaxed and soon
poems come out to play; hesitant at first, like
sunshy children. When warmth welcomes soft steps, we soon
forget all is not vibrant and forgiving. What has
long been hidden rejoices in its strength.

Karen Ankers

My Creative Time

During the pandemic and lock down,
I am in an emotional state.
My tears wash away my thoughts
and make me anxious at times,
but I still have love, hope and kindness in my heart.
At the same time global warming
is causing disease in the world,
in the 21 century.
In the winter months
rain is soaking into the soil.
Still seeing Summer flowers,
the birds are still around.
The season is changing rapidly -
in the Arctic the ice is melting faster,
causing flooding in the world.

Population in a global world.
economic problems ,
people are losing jobs
living on a changing time.
I feel my muscles in my body are shrinking
from what will be for future generations.

Fazela

My Feelings

At least it is a sunny day today –
all the grey days make it hard work!!
COVID
you have taught us importance of connections.
Relationships now are important.
Zoom is the new way of life.
Be safe.

Strangers

We are strangers in the same house.
Forty-five have gone astray.
Who said love was forever?

Falling

Beautiful times have together
Fallen on the ground like autumn leaves
Wind came and blew some away
Others stamped by feet and harsh words
love is not forever.

Curiosity leads to knowledge
knowledge leads to understanding
Understanding leads to friendship and connections

Neeta Baicher

Crafting Friendships

We thread pathways,
weave hands,
create
security blanket-stitched connections
whilst French-knotting to untangle despair,
realise
chains of silk free us to be friends,
no bias binding our affection.

Susan Lewis

Birdwatching during lockdown

Sipping my breakfast tea
Looking out at the garden through panes of glass
I seem to be one with nature,
Protected from rain and blast.

Constant movement at the feeders
Robins, great tits, titw tomos las.
There could be dozens of them,
Or is it just the same greedy score
Keen to fatten up before winter takes its grip

This year has seen more of the nuthatch and the bullfinch
Sparrows and starlings back after many years of absence
What kept them away? What brought them back?

I love to see the starlings squabble
Move over for me,
Quick about it!
I'm coming in!
Geroff! I was here first!

Even the greater spotted woodpecker and the treecreeper deign to appear
Such a joy to see!
I've missed the long tailed tits, though.
Those fluffy balls with impossibly extended ends,
Who come as a tribe, joyfully messing about,
Staying for only for a day or two.

I wonder where the birds nest, but,
Don't go looking for them.
To find them is to disturb them.
I've done it accidentally, tidying up the ivy which covers our old walls.
It has always spelled disaster.
Who knows where the magpies are,
Ready to pounce and eat eggs or even babies.

To observe is always to disturb.
You can never know what would be going on if you were not there,
I'll stick to Autumn Watch with its hidden cameras.
On the telly I've seen robot penguins braving the Antarctic freeze
I've flown with robot geese on their great migrations.
So, it's not only nature that is wonderful
But technology giving us the eye on what we would not otherwise see.
Opening up sights and sounds of wonder.
Cameras, robots, television taking me to places I cannot or dare not go.
I'll just sit here in comfort
Thankful for my own glimpse into the natural world
Lockdown daydreaming in the time of Covid.

Marilyn Priday

Based on a recipe for creativity

Take a quiet space
Call it your own
This time is precious
Surround yourself with
Things you love
A little piece of luxury
Keep it close to self
Who cares what it might be

Remember a time when
You felt free
To let your mind wander
And just let be

Take one idea
Where does it go
This heart, this hand,
This pen...
Ink flows

Words spill out, upon the page
Spaces between dreams and sleep

Who guides your song?

This time is precious
Protect it like a jewel
Collecting light
Collecting time

Inside a secret locket
Don't tell anyone
Worlds within worlds
Don't shut the child down

Mix the words,
the artistry
a part of what was...
Against the feeling that
you're here and not alone

Marion Cheung

Get Drawing Whitchurch

A weekly visual arts group based in North Cardiff.

Art in Cardiff, November 2020

Their mess is full of twigs and leaves,
wax and saturation, indigo and ink.
They talk of clay and caves, sponge
brushes, lines and drips, the shadow
cast by a tree, the power
of negative space.

My own mess simmers in the mind
for weeks: bubbles of ideas
obscured by thought, until I reach in
to stir it up, pour it out and shape it
into words while it's still wet,
then wait for it to set.

Together, we mix the mess –
a splodge of paint, a drop of metaphor,
a scratch, a verb, a splash of red,
framed by the edge of the screen,
framed by the edge of our city,
framed by what we have said.

Rachel Carney

Picking up a paint brush

Picking up a paint brush
Water in a pot
Blank sheet of paper
Make a little dot

Brush full of water
Dip in Prussian Blue
Make a splash of colour
Add a paler hue

Stand back and ponder
Colours cool or warm?
Lost in the moment
Is it taking form?

Not the Mona Lisa
But it has a shape
Not Supper at Emmaus
But a magical escape!

John Moseley

Lost in Time

Look closely:
Just your feet
Waving
While the world carries on
Oblivious
To your predicament
Where is the rope to pull you safe?
The blanket to wrap and keep you warm.
No
Just the ploughman's till
The shepherd gazing skyward
The fisherman lost in thought
No sailor glances down
As the boat sails away
The sea pulls you under,
And we can see as Stevie said
Not waving but drowning
We hear her cry

Joy O'Connell

Inspired by Landscape with fall of Icarus by Pieter Bruegel the Elder and Stevie Smith

THE YEAR 2020

'When this is over

SEND A PARCEL

OF *Joy*

to help

weather the storm

Think

Beautiful sleep,

'It's everything you dream

OF GIVING |

at the ready,

brilliant

sunshine

THE GIFT

Joy O'Connell

‘Saint Catherine of Siena’ by Carlo Dolci

I marvelled at that saintly look
An image in mind as a boy I took
This perfect passion, this translucent stain
What sad secrets do you explain?

Two crowns, one of gold, one of thorn
And the pious offer worn
This devoted worship, this Catholic fear
Beauty captured in a tear

Decades later I return again
To this most demure study of pain
Seventeenth century perfection in paint
Fourteenth century demure Saint

Michael Hack

Painting in the Shadow of Mount Fuji

The black wave of loneliness is brushed aside.
I welcome the feathery light through the forest
As it casts shadows over the white of the sailing boats.

Each bows reverently to the majestic peak.

The curve of the encroaching shoreline
Desperately clutches at the forest,
Protecting it from the water that creeps slowly towards it.

Fuji watches.

The mountains below hug its foothills,
Partly hidden by the heathery wisp of the clouds
As they gently tease his power.

But he just smiles down on the beautiful world below and I paint, freely.

Liz Brown

Poem inspired by the print: 'Mount Fuji seen across the Bay' by Hiroshige, and the idea of creativity.

Reflection on Caravaggio's Supper at Emmaus

Particles, motes, fragments;
Flesh, clothes, fruit, bread;
Old, frail, worn, patched, rotten, stale
Ordinary and extraordinary
The ubiquitous building blocks;
A sudden moment of realisation,
The presence of the ineffable:
Transformation of the particle,
The mundane to the sublime
Indifference to meaning, purpose;
Flat pigment to incandescent light and colour
Silence to glorious sound
Shade to light.

Particles, motes, fragments
The universality of matter;
Or lost in the woods,
A sudden moment of realisation;
Transformation of the friendly trees to cold indifference as the light
fades;
Glorious sound to empty silence,
Incandescence to the void.

Mike Walsh

I REFLECT on how Turner's **masterful use of colour** stunned me when I first saw **The Fighting Temeraire** in the National Gallery when I was a young student

I LOOKED at the massive hand-crafted **golden** oak hull of the famous HMS Temeraire gliding helplessly across a glassy sea towards its final Port of Call

I IMAGINED ghostly eerily empty crew quarters and abandoned **blackened** gundecks once echoing to the deafening roar of deadly cannon and the triumphant cheering of jubilant sailors whose nostrils were filled with the searing fumes of gunpowder and the sickening stench of death

I SAW the tall barren **white** masts of the ship reaching up towards the clouds and merging with the acrid smoke belching out of the **black** chimney of the satanic ironclad monster that is leading the heroic icon like a hearse to the gates of hell

I KNEW those massive pine masts were once adorned with a multitude of huge **white** propulsive sails and **multi-coloured** flags of victory as it traversed vast oceans and endured tempestuous storms in its quest for patriotic glory

I GAZED in awe at the incandescent **orange** sunset that radiates out of the canvass bathing everything in its majestic glory a juxtaposition of beauty and profound sadness captured within this wonderful piece of timeless art

I REALISED that two monumental events in History immortalised this magnificent fighting machine its heroic intervention to save The Victory from defeat at The Battle of Trafalgar and the inspired decision by the artist to capture this sombre moment in time using his mood-inspiring **palette of colours** ensuring this once proud ship will forever be remembered as **The Fighting Temeraire**.

Michael Moorhead

Personal observations of JMW Turner's 1838 painting 'The Fighting Temeraire' depicting the ship being towed to the breakers yard.

I Take
my pencil blank paper and rubber
I start to draw but I erase most of it
I start again
I stop to sharpen my pencil
I start to draw very fast
I am not sure about the marks my pencil is making
It is as if it is drawing by its self
I stop
to my satisfaction I see some faces some smiling some sad
my pencil has given me a pleasing sketch
how did that happen

When I draw I am an owl, I have to fly, keep very still, swoop down to catch my food, I rest upon a chimney pot ahh how warm that feels, I look around, I see the world, I preen myself upon this warm comfortable place, soon I will have to fly off again, how I wish that I could set up home here, I hear a loud noise which disturbers my momentarily ideal world, I spot something...

I watch them
Playing laughing agreeing disagreeing having fun.
How can I put all that into one drawing on a single piece of paper the images I want to draw are quite clear in my mind it is so because everything I see them do - I love I love them both that is quite clear in my mind but how to put all that in one drawing on one piece of paper I don't think I can draw unconditional love for that is what is so clear in my mind
As I watch them

John Charalambous

Living Lines

A writers' group based at Cathays Cemetery in Cardiff.

Unlocked Wordsmiths

Set up for Zoom with writers I don't know
and with a deadline for us all to write,
I worried that my workshop would not flow

and all our efforts would be far below
our usual standards, would be far too trite
to publish, that we'd all be far too slow

to get it done. It would be touch-and-go.
I worried that the time we had was tight—
one session only then the to-and-fro

of email feedback that could help us grow
our poems into masterpieces bright
with images and language that could show

creative time is more than just ego.
I wanted to be able to invite
some great responses to the work we'd throw

into the mix, words enough to echo
in readers' memories though out of sight.
No worries. Phew! All sorted. They all know
their stuff. Great poems here to read. Bravo!

Denni Turp

*Title suggested by Pamela Cartlidge, and chosen by other members of the
Living Lines writers' group*

A word on words

'Can I have a word,' the pub manager asked,
as he beckoned Tim through the open door.
Wordlessly, Tim followed him along the terracotta floor.
'Word has it you play in a band,' he remarked
when both were alone. 'The last word, I hear,
on the saxophone.'

'Word gets around,' Tim replied modestly,
as the landlord eyed him levelly,
'Would you and your band do a jam here for me?'
Jazz in the pub, I'm able to afford.'
'I'll talk to the band,' Tim replied,
'I give you my word.'

Composing music was for Tim a great skill.
The pub's business was booming, with profit in the till,
'They have a way with words,' customers remarked
on the lyrics, 'Tim's, Mathew's, Dan's and Derrick's.'
'Doesn't pay,' Tim told the manager with a great sigh.
'We're going to have words, you and I.'

Instruments packed, musicians and singer,
outside the pub, they decided to linger.
They were tired and hungry, and money was tight.
Tim demanded their wages which was their right.
Words not music followed a heated discussion.
It was goodbye to brass, strings, and percussion.

Pamela Cartlidge

By the time I turned around

Some of what was lost is found, glass beads of all the colours
strung up once more on burnished wire,
memories gathered and glowing in late evening sun,
all but a few are a long time gone.

I remember the day we lost them in Dunnes Stores supermarket
where you and I were shopping.

I turned my head to speak and saw you standing still
in the middle of the aisle, towers of teabags rising high above.
You were no longer in charge here, as you had always been.

I saw your confusion and knew it for what it was,
what was to come to you, to all of us, and just then
my homemade necklace broke, each bead falling
in a cascade of tiny breaking-aparts, rolling
out of reach of my grasping hands into the darkness
beneath stacks of pasta and basmati rice.
You held the rescued few while I ducked and dived
between busy shoppers.

Now I sit here, eighty crow-fly miles of Irish Sea away
and a dozen years in time, adrift in Covid days of grieving.
I choose one bright red bead, and then a green,
one memory after another,
creating anew my string of cheap yet priceless colours
and thinking of your long goodbye.

By the time I'd turned around, you were already going,
returning to your source.
We couldn't follow while you travelled back in time
away from us and our busy lives,
to your memories of childhood games on car-free streets.

As you went, the silence grew, and I have so many questions
but too few answers, so I'll carry on our beautiful conversation
with you, my red-haired mother on whose gravestone is inscribed
Her works were kindness, her deeds were love.

We will talk while I hang the washing out, a meditation stretching
back centuries in women's time.
Hang it like this, you tell me, so the water doesn't pull it out of shape.
We can chat while I sew a new dress,
since the roar of machine no longer interrupts our flow.
I pluck out silver pins before the rise and fall
of flashing needle, fabric flowing through my hands
as they once flowed through yours.

I'm listening now.

Geraldine Murphy

Emergence

On dusk-caught feathers
we drift from a cloak of safety,
the yellow curtain dancing
now only a lost memory.
Sinking into sea that in the morning
was poured into the bowl of the bay,
but now aches with green pain.
In deep water.

Oceans widen, far shores recede.
The sea bell clangs the end of tides.
Weed-wrestled in the blinding deep,
vanished voices of tangled minds.
But in that compressed darkness
slowly, snarled thoughts uncurl
like onion skin, layer after layer.
An escape route.

Surfacing, the water has no drag,
the boundary with the world in sight.
Thoughts harden to diamonds
and through the waves break out.
Strong wings rise into the light.
A glimpse of yellow,
dancing again.
Emergence.

Gwyneth Williams

Ghost Bird

Ghost bird, that's how I thought of you,
unseen, yet often heard, herald of words,
gifted and raw, sung at break of day
or cusp of night. Your choice, always.

Perhaps peck-peck-pecking on the window
when I was in another room, so I heard only
snatches, like an out of tune radio
or morse code for the soul.

Then, come dark days, nothing. Too many
worries in the world, so I waited
with muddy mind and restless hands
as reminders of your absence.

Pages were cold, pale skin without you.
Thoughts flailing without backbones
or connecting tissue, too impatient,
could never make it to term.

Later, I sought solace in the garden,
found scattered heartbreak, a trail
of plucked quills that trembled
in the wind, spent and obsolete.

A fleshless death. No blood left
to use for ink, no entrails spread
for future-gazing, as they did long ago
in ancient Rome.

Yet hope bore fruit this time: flesh-pink
and coiled among the feathers,
a worm that gleamed, birth fresh.
A new beginning. Was it you?

It raised its bullet head towards the sun,
unwound, stretched out to finger-length
and poured down, deep down
into the earth's cocoon.

Transformed and cloaked in feathers,
re-forged with nib-sharp beak,
you will dart up on phoenix wings
of flame and sound a new song.

I hear it now...

Duncan Wildsmith

Graduation Day

When shrouded in the gown
Of graduation,
Scroll in hand,
Please understand
It was my friends
Who taught the lesson.

When mortar-boarded by
A tassled headstone,
Given honours,
Know the tutors
Were three whose grade
Was 'Mother, dearly loved'.

And when you stand alone,
The Chancellor's call,
'Admit her',
Gone in a whisper -
Know that you must wield
My pen and write on.

Craft each new phrase with care,
Follow new meaning.
I will be there
Between the lines
Of our treasured times.
And your tomorrow

Kathy Thomas

Memory of Winter

Memory of winter
lies, with the dust,
on the cold hearth.

Amy's daisies,
picked this morning,
lay May on the stone,
and February to rest.

Metamorphic stone:
heat against cold;
cold against heat.

Warming bodies huddled here
on darker evenings.

Summer drifts through
the swung-open window:
breeze rippling
across stillness.

Unimaginably,
summer will fall,
then winter.
And the bodies,
laughing, cooling, outside
will huddle, again in front of
the re-heated stone, for warmth.

Stephen Burgess

The Lifelong Search

If I could write a mountain,
would a person bear the climb?
Would they gaze at the surroundings that stand still in time?
The grasses of the mountain are the rhythm in the rhyme,
they're worn-out from the feet that have trod them weary,
dry.
I have strived to reach the heights that others wrote before,
but I stare vacant at the embers of the impassioned fires of yore.
I've tried to write the oceans.
I've sailed upon the seas.
High and low,
I've searched the flows,
swam with fish and flown the crows.
I've tweaked and tried my best to hone the nature I can squeeze.
The inspiration found in those voices so profound is an echo I yearn for when
I'm reaching to the clouds,
or at the bottom of the depths.
Every moment is spent in search of finding breath,
a fresh perspective to fulfil.
I think that I have found it and I'm proud,
that is until the thrill fades and vacates.
I'm left to bear the climb.
The mountains I have written are a sediment of mine.
The oceans I have written are a puddle in the shine.
So onward I must try to find the kindle to the fire;
warm my blood that I may love the things I leave behind when I've lived a life
to laugh and leave an element,
sublime.
One that grows with winds that blow through my Creative Time.

Dylan Matthews

Avant Cymru

A theatre company creating Hip Hop theatre, dance, artistic events and community projects, based in the South Wales Valleys.

From Zion to Zoom

I'd had proper dazzle
across the globe,
hovered in town's night skies,
in Wales, Ireland, Sweden.
I'd trapezed from country
to country, from bustling city
to remote island,
from estuary village
to landlocked, tree-smocked,
lake-logged town.
I'd strayed with passport and phone,
with poems to read
tucked in cabin-bag pockets.

My last performance
was in old Zion, Llanelli
where echoes soaked
into pulpit and pews
as those gathered
cradled a fragile paten,
savouring fragmenting crumbs.
Silent eyes flickered uncertainty.
When would we congregate again,
break bread of poetry,
sup the wine of language on our lips?

Questions hung in the balcony
through 2020's spring and summer,
autumn then winter, and into 2021.
In chapel quiet an undusted chrysalis
emerged, the soundless tortoiseshell
fluttered warm, moved draughtless air.

I dreamt that the only way
to see friends again, to meet
new people, to find my way
through this new fairground's
half-lit haunted house was to wear
a jam jar on my head.
Everyone wore jam-jars on their heads,
as we watched faces through translucence.
I reached my fingers to stroke
a stubbled chin, ruffle growing hair.
I felt the smooth, the cool, the rigid.

The Showman, spoken word's Greatest,
bounced back
not troubled by hazmat masks,
warning tape or vexatious signs
declaring pubs, clubs, restaurants closed;
theatres, churches, meeting halls, chapels dark.
Undeterred he launched his carousel again,
spun us away from Covid's dancehall
that resounded with foot stamp,
fist thump, hand clap
in right wing rhythm.
He shattered spells of spite in
walls of mirrors that sneered,
leered, tried to twist our senses of self.
In this landscape of real ruin,
as the world closed in outside,
the virtual fairground rocked us
and we opened up inside.

Helter skelter we rushed to read,
twirled virtual ribbons
on the midsummer pole,
flew flags of many nations
across the hemispheres,
soared with the sounds and colours of justice,
of speaking up for hope.
Time and space for the raffle
and fairground flirting,
no hugging, no snogging,
no worry about where
zoomflings might end.

I touched the glass oblongs of poets
in their kitchens and bedrooms,
across all time zones
from Columbia, Canada, Carlow.
It felt smooth, cool, rigid.
Yet there are dimples, tears
and laughter lines stretching
from lips to smiling eyes.
Carnies dancing at this international fair,
shimmying our solo spots in the ring,
risking a jig, a polska, salsa,
sattriya and jac y do
we applaud with riot,
with heartfelt reverence,
and keep the dazzle alight.

Mel Perry

Rocking to the unforgiving spot.
Top rocking into the joints that bend
and lifting our arms in conversations
needed to make amend.
Where we can't go back
where we move forward.
Open our hands to invite others in.
Hip Hop of peace,
Hip Hop of love,
Hip Hop of unity.
To create the changes
where we can all grow,
share and cheer on
Grounded Wales.

Rachel Pedley

Break wing
looking up
with this hooded top
rocking up to
the unforgiving spot
where the turn table spins,
now this is where
our story begins.
The first dance
of the hip hop
he breaks down
with ease on.
These weak MCs
looking to find
the lost information
of known infestation
where the fake
and frauds
try and take over hip hop's
sacred ground.
Looking around
Treherbet,
stopped at the end of line, stretched to the limit by the deforest plan
that began.
But things are borderline
pushed to the edge where
the people could break any minute.
The plan of attack
find the local senate;
we got to plan it
bring the power back
to people we need
to make the planet whole.

That must be the goal,
for the greater good
we come together
become tougher leather.
The world knows
the force of people
that's why the evil
never want to see us whole.
The war on ignorance
where the lost words become
power significance
change cannot be blamed
for what's been left ingrain
at the bottom
of the concrete plain.
Where are dark forces working
with cause and effect
with a new concept
with attack in hand the aim?
Cause confusion
make break wing
take blame
the good pictured bad
with people running chaos
the infamous becoming heroes
defrauding the people
to try and stop a squeal
of the people having come
to make things equal

Jamie Berry

Ballet shoes are stretching
With the warmup of my dance
Where we can mix our style and grace
And with that take our chance
The music takes control of me
As we watch the beat box mix
There is not a single bit of me
That dancing cannot fix
My rhythm takes me everywhere
Like a scribble on a page
And drives me to perfection
And to a time that dance won't age
Where the lost words become power
And music takes its place
Where we can dance together
And do battle face to face
So getting with my crew tonight
Brings a smile inside my heart
And as we stay so solid
I know we will never part.

Rhianna Connors (age 10)

My hat is stretching because I'm dancing
I'm dancing with my crew
My hat is stretching because I'm dancing
We are the happy few
My inside is like scribbling
As the lightening hit my house
And I can feel its thunder
That nothing here can douse
My I pod bring the dance to me
As I let my feelings flow
And to this hip hop battle
My dancing feet shall go
The first dance of the hip hop
Brings excitement and content
And a feeling of belonging
As this message must be sent.

Ryan Connors (age 9)

My hoodie has been stretching
Like subconscious of the mind
Where thoughts are just like scribbling
And the colours make you blind
When darkness can lay dormant
Until something lights the fuse
And the drums begin performing
Which can leave you black and bruised
But my hip hop brakes me free of this
And lays music on my feet
Where we go to free ourselves
Is dancing on our street
That must be the goal for the greater good
As I'm dancing with my crew
And why my soul belongs with them
For there is magic with us few.

Lily Connors (age 16)

Heritage Theatr Cymru

A voluntary theatre company which aims to explore Welsh heritage in a local context and in a sustainable way.

The Actor at Home

When she has obscured the thin light of the porch
and closed the living room door, a certain quiet
drops like a velvet curtain. No applause:
the kids beam minutely up at their televisions.
The room expands around her, the way
a spotlight blooms upon wood.

First memory, then language.
The actor seems to grow from her slippers
to gargantuan heights, a sudden goddess
in the armchair, straight-faced in drifts of dust.
Or perhaps this evening she's slumped in a gown,
inspecting a paperweight skull.

The ghost of someone's former self
curls from the paper, drums her fingers
along the table-leg as though patting
a tired horse. Who should appear
from behind the shadows of functional shelving?
Which wanderer makes its presence felt,
stirring among the rich frill of chrysanthemums?

She's got the cushions off now to rescue the voice,
thump life back into the heart.

Natalie Ann Holborow

Into Bloom

*Oh they're good with all of that nowadays
smiles the receptionist:
artists with their scalpels
Just a routine procedure,
like pruning a summer garden.*

A few polystyrene coffees later,
you'll have yourself a new wife.

A short high-pitched sound reverberates
as they select daffodils from a gunmetal slate,
like skirt steaks laid out at a meat market.
Weaving tendinous climbing ivy into a cask,
hollow when tapped - thoracic.
Then filled with a thumping red peony heart
with elastic lily lungs.
This is when I first remember:
The earthy intake drinking in bonfire smoke.
and as they cauterise my tulip tongue:
sherbet lemons crunched between snowdrop teeth.
Sprinkling sugar in the crevices of roots,
coins between each bone,
glittering, a capful of bleach in my blood.
Count to a hundred the anaesthetist whispers.
And with misty baby's breath: *she's breathing.*

As easily as they ripped me from a branch,
they hand me back to you -
smirking behind a bunch of supermarket roses.
The stitches tight around my laurel lips as I strain to smile.
You exchange congratulatory glances with the doctor who mutters -
Arnica for the bruises.
Holding my head,
fingering my thin hair,
you are like a child with a new toy.
Fragile, beneath your hand
I might wilt away,
rootless,
separating into petals like wet tissue paper.
But then,
you flinch,
a sudden electric shock under your oatmeal fingertips...
and contorting my mouth smugly,
I warn:
Be careful of the thorns.

Stella Miriam Pryce

Flight

Darkness can have no voice
When shadows form as one,
Seagulls scavenge for sound,
And the circling moon moves
Through the tide.

Love finds its mouth stitched
Shut with a tongue wired sharp,
And hands tied behind its back,
To walk on watered footprints
Of this day.

Dream soaks the paper night
And heralds sleep with no rest,
Stuck in mud like a scarecrow,
The birds' phantom fancy free
On the wind.

Where the sand will empty fast
Through spaces of a gilded cage,
Stopping the shift of silent swing,
To fill mouths of the new born
In their cots.

I see the plague of Icarus
Settle on a flight to the sun,
With no soft wings to take him,
Only one feather held tightly
In his hand.

Arlene Pryce

Not a Sonnet

Drowning in scribbled notes
Ink blots pool on the page
Where lost lyrics wade
Through silent waves
And last passion bleeds
Slowly into paper veins
Still seeping spent Fury
From the corner of my eye.
I can't feel it anymore
Yellow sunlight trapped
Beneath my fingernails
Where ash cannot gleam
Over scorched memories
once mine.

Shelley Parry

Worn Out

Dirty labour; fused clothes
Need washing.
Worn out by toil; I wish it
Were adventure.
You clean; dirt remains
Ingrained exertion.
Regimental hanging of garments.
I see a white rabbit; watch him
As he runs.
His fur; a different dirt
Of escapades.
All bills and no thrills for me.

Sarah Gray

Oak, Mythology and Folklore
A visual contribution from Maggie Todd



Newport Shared Reading Group

A reading group based in Newport library, sharing in the
delight of listening to reading aloud.

Cynefin*

From the hush of the
Wetlands, through
crumpled valleys,
along a river that flows
upstream, we wander
passed sculptures that
tell stories, searching for
saints that have lost their
name and back to the glass
fronted library, mirrored
-lift and mezzanine.

Into the little room
wrapped in stories
where cries from the
Chartist's Rising bursts
through the floor.
From here on you
have the technology
Whats App, wine
and Netflix, talk
of families that
have grown wings.

The years unfolding
between you and the
tangled sock drawer
of memories shared
on mascara Wednesdays
keeping you going
through all of this.

Ness Owen

**(Welsh) describes the deep relationship a person has with a place/environment that they know well and feel belonging to.*

The Reading Group

And so
I begin my descent into sanity
A weekly ritual this
Down the bleak-beige back office stairs
Running the gauntlet of
Have you got a moment?
And He said...she said
Through fob activated doors

And out
Into the bustling library, head down
With single purpose
Past the computer users
The book browsers
Parents herding cats
Disguised as toddling humans

And on
To the chairs lined up against the walls
Jean is already there, stick in hand
Mary is trawling for the Spoken Word,
Carefully placing this week's catch in reusable bags
Margaret arrives with a Hello Girls!
And Mike, we remember you,
Always ready to shake your hand
No longer possible of course
No longer with us,
No contact details,
No transition to the online world
Not, however, forgotten

And through
The Museum, dimly lit
Reverent displays
Of public house bars
Of schoolhouse desks
Of apothecary's shelves
Of days gone by

And up
To the abattoir metal table
The random roster of rickety chairs
The Stuffed fox, bulldog, top hat
That accompany the catch-up
The story
The discussions
The poetry

And then
All change
Our summer spent in lockdown
One hour each week spent online
Myself shirking family commitments
Themselves connecting virtually
Visiting lands of outside our walls
Witnessing history that feels more
Real than our current lives
Receiving proof of life

And onwards
The autumn leaves fall
The lockdowns continue
Our surroundings changed
To remain, for months, the same
The stories forever changing
Far off destinations reached
Without moving
Cultures discovered without contact
The thread of our lives strengthened
Through our Shared Reading

John Brodrick

The Wetlands

The journey to the Wetlands
Through Redwick's coastal lanes
Where blackberries hang - unpicked in autumn
And leafless trees remain.

Trees bereft of colour, leaves line the road ahead
The coast appears, the Severn flows
Excitement mounts, the children shout
The Wetlands, we are here.

It's quiet, peaceful and teeming with life
An underwater paradise
Where roots of rushes, push up to the light
The motionless water, an occasional SPLASH
From feathered friends, moorhens and ducks

Dragonflies and butterflies, the scent of orchids tempt
Above the skies, harriers dive, starlings shriek
And swallows seek

Twilight and the barn owls wake
Seeking out their prey
Goodnight to the Wetlands
For yet another day.

Margaret Hardy

Shared reading

What we share on Wednesdays
Mike, Margaret, Mary and me...
Stories, poems and reading out loud,
Ending happy, sad or abruptly.
Memories of childhood listening,
Our love of reading a common bond.
Likes and dislikes of genres and writers
Giggling and bleeping swear words out.
Unable to pronounce some names
Or getting our tongues in a twist.
Laughter, friendship, company,
Up to date news of family and friends.
Revisiting classics and monthly themes
Always fresh and unexpected.
Sympathy and empathy and often
A collective sigh or groan
At the end of the days selection.
And John
Our librarian.

Jean Rees

Reading

A lonely, only one
Home was quiet, not much fun
But – I held a key that opened a door
A door that led to a world of friends.
That key was words – from the early age of three
To new companions they made me free

First, Rupert, Rastus and Badger Bill
Many adventures I remember still
Later William Brown and the gang of four
I grew older – then came Biggles to the fore
Later, side by side with Buchan, “Sapper” and Dornford Yates
A myriad of villains we sent to their fate.

I have fought through Spain with Sharp and company
Strode the Roman Empire with brave legionary
Heroes Marcus and Cato – we had many a skirmish
From cold Britannia to hot dusty Judea
But the wildest times I’ve ever had
Was ducking and diving with Flashman – the cad

I can be serious with Barchester clergy
Break my heart with Charlotte Bronte
But, I fear, I have never been found
With a Booker prize winner in my hand
What reading means to me, you see
Is friendship, excitement and company.

Mary Kennett

Presteigne Writers' Circle

A writers' group based in Powys.

In all my scribbles,

sketchings, crossings out,
my scrunched-up cursing and my jotting tries
to play the poem's music or to magic
words out of my memory or air
to where they're wanted, there, to chance, to hit

on something. All of my hand-flapping goes
at riding all the poem's air from here
to there, to everywhere, in all my static
reaching for what doesn't quite exist
until I move, I make it. In my throat-

clearing syllables, all my untuned
scrapings on these strings, with every pull
I give the one-armed bandit, just to find
it will not ever quite fall flush or right.
In all the static of the radio,

the poem stuck between two stations, coming
through in bits and bursts, in spurts and starts,
in scratchy memories of all I've heard:
the lilting of my mother's speech, the sound
of one boy's calling, thrown right around

a playyard on a clear afternoon
in 1983... There is this tune
in any silent room I can't quite hear,
it's under everything. In all of it,
I'm trying in my fumble-fisted way

to show you what I've seen: the perfect poem
strolling out across a dew-filled lawn
some blackbird-trilling dawn, with all that blood
pumping through its veins, with all its real,
its puffing clouds of breath. And then I wake

with my head full, with my feet soaking wet.

Jonathan Edwards

Snow

Snow... landlocked since Biblical times;
stacked higher than a tower block.
Creaking, it inched precariously
from its parent glacier's bonds.
Deep rents of blue and ultramarine
split asunder, as if yielding
to demolition man's command.
Slowly it collapsed,
thundering and deafening into the sea;
three millennia of history gone... *forever*.

Kenneth Rodmell

Creative time

A phrase comes and demands to stay,
a possessive obsessive needing to share.
'I fit, use me, now construct my home.'

And I struggle to obey.

The phrase perhaps a first line, but also
an access to a process, layering through
memories, thoughts, feelings, doubts.

And it's begun.

Words group as in iron-filing patterns,
a sorcery, secretly working to be known.

Lines form long, short, dictating a form.

And create a mutiny.

Form versus sense? Achieving both is best.

But communication, sharing sensations,
revelations, fears, dreams from a phrase.

And there's a poem.

Mary Smith

Song of Truth

Such a sheet of stark white
This blind paper barrier guarding real life
That I don't pass through.

Outside in the bright glitter of summer green.
The shrilling certainty of a wren's long song
of his ancient story of mate and chicks.
I turn and make a mark

A first tentative, unlocking mark
Revealing a twenty-twenty unease, an uncertainty,
A crack in that fortress where words were safe
Shaken by devious truths

Where an innocuous phrase freely given
Became traitorous, punishable.
A change dramatically unchallenged.

Lies, misleading to a planned purpose,
First far away, then nearer and now here
To compete with dependable facts.
Fictional truths made to look like truths

Taken up, doubled, doubly doubled.
Skills built year by decade by century
Cast in stone, cast eagerly aside.

But not the skill of a thousand wren-years
That went into the dark safe nest of moss
Cobweb bound and perfectly proclaimed
In his three part song.

June Coveney

Creative time

Kitchen table, favourite pen, blank paper,
no distractions.

But the clock
ticks, the rain
batters the window,
the boiler
bumps and flares.
Oh, and the phone rings.

Creative time is stolen.

I have no control
over the clock or the raindrops or the boiler,
or even the phone (which I should have disconnected),
but then
my pen
starts to write –
thinly, faintly,
so that I become tense, eking out words.

Don't press so hard,

write smaller,

write little words, tiny phrases –

as though that might make a difference!

But my pen has second thoughts,
regenerates, gushes, and out rush lots of words –
words that aren't mine, that I have no idea what they mean even
and the clock and the raindrops are forgotten
as words keep pouring on to the page ...

Margaret Galliers

My Creative Time

Anticipation, excitement, today is the day;
a new topic revealed, an adventure to live.
Ideas start to buzz through the hum drum workaday.
At my desk I push them back, close that drawer with a thwack.
But in the shower I dream, fragments rise with the steam
teased by aromas of gel, each morsel does swell;
till reaching for the soap, I glimpse their full scope.
But as reality pushes in, pieces jumble and spin;
the story is elusive, strategy inconclusive,
atmosphere non-conductive.

Motivation stalls, ideas noted must wait;
unconsciously stirred in the soup of my mind.
Till deadline looming, the buzzing returns;
humming a warning – find a quiet Saturday morning.
Marinade complete it is time to retreat
to type on virtual paper, shapes formed in shower vapour.
From my fingers they run, like shots from a gun;
in my mind there's a shout, here's your chance get them out.
As the words zoom and dive, I'm elated I'm alive;
lost in adventure I thrive.

Emma Jones

Baby Woodpecker

Alive? Its legs and wings were motionless.
And there it lay for quarter of an hour.
I stroked its feathers and, eventually,
its inner eyelids opened and it moved.

I gradually encouraged it to stand
upon a finger and without support;
its life now clearly still ahead of it.
It felt quite safe for, when I offered it
a branch to perch, it chose to stay with me.

Eventually, half an hour, it showed
a willingness to perch, so I withdrew.
I guess its parents were instructing it,
for finally it flew away, to their
most audible relief, and mine as well.

Dominic Clarke

RCT Creative Writers' Group

A writers' group based in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The Next Subject

Through the thin cracks
in the floorboards, the creature
sensuously writhes, searching
for her presence in the room.
She waits impatiently
for her next client, hoping
he will fleck with colour,
the grey tediousness of today.
She doesn't feel the creature's
coming, sense the vibration.
She tells herself, she must try
to savour this time to spare.
She breathes deeply,
dispels her breath slowly.
The rhythm of her heart
steadies....out two three four.
The creature now entwines,
it's sharp tongue darting,
tasting her skin, spreading saliva,
wrapping, squeezing softly,
then tighter, tighter still
untilshe gasps, her head spins,
colour overtakes thought,
sparks behind her eyes.
She is lifted above the table,
the room's dull furnishings...
suspended. Gazing down
she sees the laptop, the notepad,
the handbag, the phone.....

She sees herself in professional guise.
The client walks into the room,
she observes him, his gait, the fixed smile,
the way his hair is combed across his head,
attempting to hide his age, she smells
the fried food on his smart clothes,
and his fear at the possibility of change.
Before he speaks, she hears his voice,
tastes his monotonous life,
feels the frustration that stifles him.
When the interview is complete,
when he leaves the room
full of hope for things to come,
she will create his story.

Liz Pearce

Just a thought

I float away
from today's worries
In a coracle
On a sea of clouds
Cradled in my thoughts
The world is far away
The Tree of Life, in Autumnal hues, guides me
Rising from the depths
To a future beyond
Of Butterflies and birds
They are pilgrims and shepherds
Mentoring me
We are content
We are free
Towards Hope and Faith
The journey begins

Ann Davies

Letters Home

Grubby scraps of paper
Post cards from the sea
Cherished for a century
Mean so much to me

Letters from a husband,
From so far away
Just a line to say I'm fine
Missing you, each day

Working very hard here
Singing all day long
Around the towns of England
Miners from the Land of Song

Welcomed by good folks
All along the way
They arranged our concerts
Found us all a place to stay

Singing on the promenade
Singing on the sands
Loads and loads of people here
It really is quite grand

Met a friend the other night
He gave us 10 bob each
Spend it on yourselves he said
Went to the Pleasure Beach

Riding on the Aerochairs
We had a rare old time
Switch Back and the Whip
Beats going down the mine

Did you get the money
I put aside for you ?
Take the boys to Barry
Fresh sea air is good for you

Lodging with a Russian
Bolshie to his soul
He told them down the docks
Their hearts are black
For they handle foreign coal

As we passed through King's station
Sang The Red Flag on the train
Told the Russain , he laughed so much
Thought he'd never stop again

The country side is beautiful
The fields are all in bloom
Wish you all could be here
Far from the Rhondda's gloom

Sent a sack of spuds back
The Soup Kitchen can have those
We're moving on again now
So I really have to close

It won't be long before we're home
We've tried to do our best,
Collected all the funds we could
Our voices need a rest

Write back to the address above
Your message there will find me
Sending heaps, and heaps of love.
Kiss the boys and Eiry.

Your loving hubby,
Idris.

Anne Lord

Legacy

Love and kinship,
Family, friends, heroes
The capacity of the heart, to
Beat with affection and emotion

'Significant others' enter our landscape
And imprint themselves onto our hearts
Enter left, Leave right
Here for a season-legacy enduring

The gift of special people into our lives
Experience, and investment
We all journey together
Memories everlasting

Gratitude for all that is, that has been and will be
Goodbye's and Hello's,
Impacts and moulds us into who we are
Ever-changing, yet
Transferring to each new generation

Kath Jones

Lockdown Lunacy - The Wife's Perspective

I was eager to go clothes shopping
When the lockdown rules relaxed.
But, approached the venture cautiously,
Hand sanitised and fully masked.
So off I went with my husband
And we both browsed separately.
I finished and paid and found him
Wandering aimlessly.
When we got home and got unmasked,
He was not what I expected to see.
Though the hair and clothes were similar,
I'd brought the wrong husband home with me.
I thought of taking him back to the shop
But would mine be there anymore.
Or I could take him back in the morning,
Cos' I have a Zoom meeting at four.
I decided to put him on Facebook,
Under lost and found.
Asking my friends to 'share' it
And spread the word around
So wives if you've lost a husband,
Inbox me if you can,
With his name and a description
Then come and collect your man.
Must say you've got him well trained,
He's a really domestic chap.
He cooks and he cleans and he polishes,
Mine would never do that.
And, if you have got my husband,
I am asking you not to worry,
I really would like him back,
But I'm not in any hurry.

Les Allen

The Mountain

Come and explore my beauty
I will take you on a tour
Through my peaks and troughs
And into a hidden door.
Up and down the gravel paths
And slippery, soft slopes
Stand atop and see the beauty down below.
The myriad of colours of autumn green and gold
The icy white of winter
Nipping at your toes,
Yes revel in my beauty
You may have no fear at all
But remember I have paid my price
To give you all you know,
I have been enslaved to horror and treated with contempt
You have burned me, dumped rubbish upon me
Cut down my bounteous trees,
Dug out paths on top and below me
Rode rough shod over me in scramblers and jeeps.
I have borne the brunt of all weathers
Searing sun, hailstones,
Bitter cold and sodden earth,
But still I stand majestic
Looking down at the villages below
And the ant like people
Scurrying in and out.
I will always be here I have eternity
You do not.

Linda Michel

Birdsong Alarm

Off goes the birdsong alarm
Out crawls her sluggish arm
Stretching for the button
The chirping carries on
Exasperated
Her eyes open
She presses stop
What a load of palaver
She snuggles under cover
She just wants to lie here
Impenitently
Shut out the world
Indefinitely
Why should she get up when
There's a miniscule
Creature invisible
So frail, it melts
In soap and water
So mighty it invades
The human body
Killing multitudes
As two grey dudes
Ignoring the danger
Blame it on China
Wuhan Madrid London
True work of Abaddon
The few amass money
From the pain of the many
To talk, we phone

To meet, we zoom
Terrified of
This miniscule
Creature invisible
So frail it melts
In soap and water
So mighty
It asphyxiates
Shutting down lungs
In a python grip
Of police knee-on-neck hold
Gasping
I can't breathe
Better lie here in bed
Asleep on the outside
Fully awake inside
Virtually alive
Oh wait!
It's time to celebrate
With a mug of caffeine
Now they've made a vaccine
To eradicate
This miniscule
Creature invisible
So frail it melts
In soap and water
So mighty
It forced the world to pause

Buchi Otung

Euthymia

The creative spirit
Is made of flesh
Tangible to touch,
yet seeming ethereal

urgently it springs
Searching for escape
Resisting mental blocks
Batting off self-doubt

energy flashing
a spirit free -
catharsis promised
a brief release

Stirring the senses
Tingling nerve endings
Brightening colours
Drumming the heart's beat

Finding hidden promise
Harnessing emotion's power
Soothing scars with its salve and
gifting love like lilac lilies

Flashes of inspiration
Like rare birds of paradise
Fluttering in the mind's eye
For the pen to capture

Sara Mayo

Conversation that would never take place in the pub

'Alright boys?'
'Good week?'
'Yeh! I've written some poems.
About the creative spirit.
Only in draft form mind.'
'Wow! That sounds great.
Can we hear them?
Might be able to chip in some ideas
If they're only in draft form.'

Conversation that might take place in the pub. Once.

'Alright boys?'
Good week?'
'Yeh! I've written some poems.
Only in draft form mind.'
Awkward silence
Gentle clearing of throats
And wriggling in seats
Sipping of pints in unison.
'About the creative spirit.
Want to hear them?'
A more protracted silence
Some spluttery coughing.
Vigorous wriggling in seats.
Slurping of pints in unison
With some spillage.
Another silence.
'Wilson had a good game last night didn't he?
Gives them more width doesn't he?'
'How's the spare bedroom coming on Pete?'
'Nearly done. Thinking of changing my car soon.
Might go and have a look this weekend.'
'Heard the new Springsteen album?
Brilliant isn't it?'

Conversation that does take place in the pub. Every weekend.

‘Alright boys?

Good week?’

‘Wilson had a good game last night didn’t he?’

Gives them more width doesn’t he?’

‘How’s the spare bedroom coming on Pete?’

‘Nearly done. Thinking of changing my car soon.

Might go and have a look this weekend.’

‘Heard the new Springsteen album?

Brilliant isn’t it?’

Yeh great lyrics.

He’s a real poet the Boss.

Gareth Price

Joining

The Ivy was falling off the pale green brick building in the woods.
Climbing over itself as it had nowhere else to go.
An Ivy basket.
Ezra came with me.
The large bundle now lay at our feet next to a small tree.
It's dead
Ezra bent the small tree
It snapped.
A triumphant beam spread across his small young face.
We could use it to carry the ivy.
The stick united us on our journey home
Our treasure, our joy, our meaning, our history.
On another day in another wood we witnessed
some children twisting and bending a young tree.
We are doing an experiment
You are killing it.
They ran away
In silence we continued for a while.
Nanna, you are happy about all those other trees that are alive aren't you?
I am Ezra, yes I am.

Helen Probyn-Williams

Hidden Within

Do I have a creative spirit?
Surely we all have one,
However hidden
Or beaten out.
In silence I find it
In talking with friends
Night- thoughts tumble and twist
Remember them in the light of day.

Life flows and changes,
We resist or follow the flow.
Regardless, time moves on
Creativity wains or waxes.
Now silent like the forest floor
Forcing connection with the Earth.

Together but apart, relating differently
Meeting new, Losing old
Longing to touch again.
My mind creates a future
Shoots appear, fairer, equal, green.
The spirit returns, we all are one.

Jess Morgan

Creative Spirit

Creative spirit, Do I even have one?
I don't belong to a religion
If I follow the Lord, then I'll not lose
But, how can I? Which one would I choose?
There're thousands of deities, both near and far
Jehovah and Allah, there's even one called Ra
Which sounds like something, an old man would say
To scare a trespassing cat out of his way.
Perhaps the concept, of creating religious fans
Has an ulterior motive, for a wicked little plan,
To rally the masses and do the bidding
Of the self-appointed elite...Nah, just kidding
It dawns on me, I've been digging a hole
Confused the word "Spirit" with "Immortal Soul"
Of course I've got spirit, my Joie-de-vivre
It creates the wonder in all I perceive:
When a horrible thunderstorm, others exclaim
Some wellies I don and dance in the rain
However, my creative spirit keeps me in a tiz
I can't find her, but I know where she is
Tip-toeing on my tongue or just behind my eyes
I search the mirror, but she's wearing a disguise.
From the deepest depths to the highest heights
She's just out of reach, but is always in sight
A cat chasing a mouse, whose routes are well rehearsed
And will always catch the cat, when the roles reverse
Whatever I'm doing, wherever I am
That witch will find me, creating where she can:
A boisterous behemoth, bounds past from west to east
I see bodiless heads in the belly of this beast
I call a mythical, monochrome monster
With its eyes ablaze it can easily conquer
All predators that hunt us as prey
Thus securing, my safe passage today

I've watched the people, drive by on a bus
And the zebra crossing, on this road is a must
Her voice has silenced, I think I'll be ok
Now I'm alone to get on with my day
I'm finally here at my destination
They say my temperature has to be taken
I think it's normal but, She's not as relaxed
And screams, "Don't give it, they're crooks. You'll never get it back!"

Stephen Lawry

Other submissions

Muse

Where have you gone now, you bitch?
You've done this too many times
For it to be healthy or beneficial.
You're called a muse for a reason,
So – stop walking out on me
When I need you the most.

Stop leaving me in the middle
Of these dry spells – you're meant to be
The oasis, the breath of life
For all my creativity.
Get your arse over here and
Do your job for once!

In a way, mind, the anger
Fuelled by your absence is generating
Some form of creative spark, but
I'm warning you right now,
You good-for-nothing lazy cow,
Don't make a habit of it!

Carrie Francis

Why do people draw?

“Because they can, that’s why they draw”
A simple statement but with a flaw

Many will say
That they just CAN’T
They will not try
They have a rant
CAN’T draw a circle
CAN’T draw a square
CAN’T draw exactly
What should be there!

But there’s no need to scream and shout
That’s not what drawing is all about

Composition? Construction?
Perspective? and Shade?
So many guidelines
Are just man-made
Don’t focus on rules
Techniques or tools
Make drawing a pleasure
To do at your leisure.
Sketch with your friends
While having a natter
You’ll find that worries
No longer matter.

Just relax and you will find
The joy of making marks.

Linda Evans

World gone mad

The world has gone mad!
So I reach for my pen,
or my charcoal, or paint,
wool, pencil. Anything.
I need to escape.
I made that mark too hard.
Try again. Get some focus,
make another start.
Anything to forget that
The world has gone mad!

I love to share

I must show the others.
I wonder what they'll think,
of how I've applied that
shadow there, or how I've
dripped that ink.

I love the way she's used that mark!
I love the colours he's used right there!
Although it's personal to each of us,
I love that our art we can share

Lynne Croft

Voluntary Arts Wales

Voluntary Arts Wales is part of Voluntary Arts: the representative organisation for the voluntary arts sector across the UK and Ireland, founded in 1991.

It promotes voluntary participation in creative cultural activity in order to develop a healthy, creative and engaged civil society. Voluntary Arts' strategy focuses on fostering collaborations, strengthening social connectedness and providing spaces for creative cultural activities.

www.voluntaryarts.org

Literature Wales

Literature Wales is the national company for the development of literature. Our vision is a Wales where literature empowers, improves, and brightens lives. We are a registered charity, and work to inspire communities, develop writers and celebrate the literary culture of Wales. We facilitate, fund, and directly deliver a literary programme across Wales.

Participation in literature is one of Literature Wales' three activity pillars and main areas of work. We aim to increase the accessibility and impact of creative writing for participants in Wales in order to inspire some of our most marginalised individuals and communities through active participation in literature.

www.literaturewales.org



We are extremely grateful to the Ashley Family Foundation and the Community Foundation in Wales for their support for this project.