

Storytelling Sculpture Trail



Compiled by Janine Mitchell

In collaboration with MRes Creative Writing, University of Stirling Art Collection
& University of Stirling School of Education

Introduction

As part of a collaborative project between MRes Creative Writing student, Janine Mitchell, the School of Education and the University of Stirling Art Collection, a variety of writers, including the current cohort of MLitt Creative Writing Students, were invited to submit creative responses to the sculptures that form part of the University of Stirling's Art Collection.

These responses are as diverse as their creators. They explore new worlds and alternative realities. They draw on history and the future, nature and human experience. They afford the reader an opportunity to view each of the sculptures through a unique lens.

At the heart of this project was the desire to enable a cycle of creativity through active engagement with the art collection. Just as each of the contributors was drawn to a particular sculpture, we hope that readers, particularly young people, will be inspired by the poetry and short stories in this collection to produce their own works of art. We hope that you will share these works with us and with others and keep the cycle going.

This publication will be used by students of the University of Stirling's Initial Teacher Education programme to introduce young learners to the sculptures on the campus and to encourage active and creative engagement with these pieces. It will also be made available for use by educators, schools, students, families and the wider community.

We hope you will find the collection a useful and stimulating resource and we look forward to seeing you on the Storytelling Sculpture Trail.

Janine Mitchell



Hironori Katagiri - *Nostalgia*

The Memory Stone

Frances Ainslie

(Inspired by Hironori Katagiri's 'Nostalgia')

Lewis looked at the massive stone and scratched his head. He was sure it hadn't been there yesterday.

'Looks like a dinosaur egg,' said Chloe.

'In Stirling? – don't be daft,' Lewis laughed. 'When did you last see a dinosaur around here?' Sometimes Lewis wondered what planet Chloe was on.

He decided to text his best mate. Chaz just loved science. He was a walking encyclopaedia of mostly useless stuff. He'd know exactly what it was.

TXT: CUM 2 UNI, *BESIDE LOCH*.

Lewis kicked the stone with his trainer just as Mack the gardener rolled up on his fancy new ride-on lawnmower. He looked like he'd just swallowed a wasp.

'Hoy. You two. Get aff ma grass!' Mack yelled. He lumbered towards them. Then, he stopped and stared at the stone.

'What's that?' he said, 'You can't leave that here.'

'It's NOT mine,' said Lewis.

'Looks a bit like a giant conker,' said Mack, 'Mmm, and it was a full moon last night.'

Lewis fell to his knees and pulled his blazer over his head.

Dinosaurs?

Mutant conkers?

What next?

Everyone was acting weird and with Chaz on his way it could only get *weirder*.

‘Well. How cool is that,’ whispered Chaz, adjusting his glasses. ‘Have you touched it yet?’

‘Eh, NO way!’ said Lewis.

‘You must be joking!’ said Chloe.

‘I’ll head. Things to do,’ spluttered Mack, and he chugged off up the hill.

Chaz crouched down and hugged the stone but he couldn’t get his arms right round it. He put his cheek against it, and sniffed it. The square outer stone was grey with spots of mossy stuff on it, like it had chicken-pox. But the inner stone interested him the most. It was polished smooth, a rusty, red colour. It looked like a massive brain. There were squiggly cracks running across its surface, as if it had been cracked open and glued back together.

Chaz scrambled up onto the ‘brain stone’ and pressed his hands flat on its surface. It was icy cold to the touch, even though the sun was out.

‘Shhh,’ he said to the others, ‘Listen.’

Chaz clamped his right ear to the stone. He closed his eyes.

A black cloud blocked out the sun and the birds stopped singing.

After ten minutes Lewis saw Chaz starting to twitch. He and Chloe rushed forward and pulled him away from the stone.

He opened his eyes and grinned at them.

‘I wasn’t far wrong,’ he said smugly.

‘Well?’

‘It’s a brain of sorts - a memory, in fact.’

‘A memory of what?’ said Chloe.

‘Of a planet that’s no longer in our universe. Before it exploded into

smithereens, it launched this memory pod into space, so someone would find it.'

'Like a message in a bottle,' said Lewis.

'Exactly,' said Chaz, 'This memory pod holds the history of an entire planet.'

The three friends sat down on the ground beside the stone. They closed their eyes. The stone warmed to their touch and pictures flashed through their minds like multi-coloured dreams. They saw a land of jaggy mountains and trees with purple leaves and strange shaped fruit. People sat around on giant stones. The people were tall with silver hair that trailed on the ground, and long fingers. They reached out their hands pointing to something just outside the picture. They were smiling.



Iain McColl – *Pursuit of Knowledge*

Blue Boy and the Pursuit of Knowledge

Hannah Tougher

(Inspired by Iain McColl's 'Pursuit of Knowledge')

He came and sat at the pier's edge and searched. His feet dangled below him like lines waiting for the bite of a fish. But that's not what he was after. He knew already the taste of fish. He was in search of something new.

At first, he had charged into the wild sea before him. He'd reached out fingers and dived straight in. He'd discovered nothing.

Then he remembered days he'd spent hunting for quail eggs, exploring streams for tadpoles, and plundering hives for honey. There was a patience involved in these tasks. You had to listen closely for the small bird's stuttered squawk. You had to follow carefully the purposeful bee that was heavy with pollen and heading home.

A gull overhead called for his attention and he watched it beat its wings through the sky. Its cry was a raw, hungry thing that seemed to rasp against his throat. The sound of it filled him up, all the way from his dangling toes to his upward lifted head. The black backed gull flapped farther into the distance and the sound emptied from him. He had known the sound of gulls all his life. He'd never felt until now the strength of their hunger.

Gulls did not seem like patient birds but he had come to the conclusion that patience was necessary. That instead of plunging through the deep and cold, he should consider instead the shoals around him. He remembered the way he used to hang by rock pools, waiting for a hermit crab to make its move. He would wait for it to scuttle from one shell to another, and then he would look inside the curling space where it had once lived and see the dark, speckled patterns that were hidden within.

Rain began to drop on his head and his arms. It fell on him and from him and disturbed the water's surface. He went back to the beach to drift along the shallows but it was a while before his fingers brushed against an object that felt peculiar and worth his while. He reached his hand around it but the skin of his finger was pinched between two sharp edges. He could not see it properly under the muck and grime it had gathered over time but he knew it was a cowrie shell by its egg shaped roundness and its pebble size. He had collected many of these long ago but he had never before considered the slit in the middle to feel like some creature's mouth, the grooves there like a row of tiny, biting teeth.

He was tired now but pleased with what he'd found. He thought to sit for a moment and rest before he went home. He sat up tall on the pier once more and watched the world around. The rain passed. A light and warmth crept along his arms.

But then a small thing came bobbing along the water towards him, closer and closer. He watched the trail it left and the colours it bled into the dark, murky depths below.

Eventually, it nudged against his dangled foot in an insistent kind of way, like a puppy hungry for food and affection. Carefully, so as not to frighten the bright, uncertain thing, he dropped his hand to it, caressed and then lifted it. What a strange thing it was: bright and sharp edged and reflecting light in all directions. It was like a lump of sunlight that he held in his hands. He had no idea how it came to be here, but he looked on it and felt a light of his own ripple through him, a sharp twinge of excitement. He forgot then that he had been so long at the edge and that he'd meant to go home. He forgot even the sky above and the waters below. He saw only this strange, new thing and the world it contained.



Barbara Hepworth – *Figure (Archaean)*

Origin Song

Laura Fyfe

(Inspired by Barbara Hepworth's 'Figure(Archaeon)')

Gaia once lay, continentally huge, and alone. At first warm and glowing, as earth spun on its axis around the sun, she turned sad, cold and dark.

From the steam of her frustration, Sky formed. He patterned himself with clouds: white when peaceful, grey when gloomy, and purple and swollen clouds, flashing with lightning when he was angry. He sang to Gaia with thunder and Gaia sang back with earthquake. He listened, witnessing her sadness. When she stilled, he wept. His tears fell to Gaia's face and, not lonely any more, she smiled and as she smiled, so Sky's rainclouds cleared. Sun shone down through him and fell to warm her skin. With the last drops of rain and the first rays of sun, rainbows spun.

An amazing thing happened. In that space where rainbows and earth don't meet, in that invisible space in place and time, from Sky's tears and Gaia's earth, that's where life began. From their shared sadness, their happiness and their love, life sprung, and Gaia was never again alone.

The Sky Above, The Earth Below

Norma Austin Hart

(Inspired by Barbara Hepworth's 'Figure (Archaean)')

Big old Hepworth
leans back,
sees the clouds float
across the trees,
feels rain fall
through his head,
hears the breeze
blow close by.

He turns in a sigh,
watches the ants
scuttle under
wet leaves
on the earth below.
Scratches his airy head.
'It's all about these spaces.'



Hironori Katagiri – *Causationist in Love - Long before the Solitude*

Remnants

Matt Hoadley

(Inspired by Hironori Katagiri's 'Long Before the Solitude')

There are forgotten things in this world.
Echoes of places left to nature's whims
And people long since faded from memory.
Only fragments remain.

Forlorn shapes haunt the lonely places
Buried under mossy growth in the deep woods,
Shrouded in the darkness underground,
Or sunk like lost Atlantis to the sapphire depths.

They wait for us there.
Waiting to be found again, and marveled over
To bask in our wonder and feel the pull of curiosity.
They ache for our questions
Knowing that they will never answer.

They are the remnant
The last reminder of a lost time.
Ask them who, what, when?
Hear them laugh and refuse to answer.

“The lost time is passed” they say.
“Now is the time to build your remnant,”
“To make the marvel for future children to find.”
“And when they ask, your laughter will join our own.”

Take your daughter to work, day

Michaela Hunter

(Inspired by Hironori Katagiri's 'Maze of Felicity')

The car journey to the office flew by, mostly because Daisy kept nodding off. Every time though, her dad would turn the radio up. By the time they parked up it was blaring loud and passers-by were staring.

Dad pushed the door open to his laboratory and grinned expectantly.

‘Well, what do you think?’

‘Yeah, it’s cool. Very nice.’

‘Well tell your face that, Daisy.’ He chuckled.

‘Sorry. It does look, well...a bit ordinary.’

‘Ah ha, but things aren’t always what they seem.’ Daisy could sense his excitement; he’d been looking forward to this.

‘Sorry. I’m still tired I guess. Maybe if you let me have some coffee?’

Dad smiled. Well you are thirteen, so ok. Don’t tell your mother. Dad handed her a mug, emblazoned with a picture of Super Mario. Daisy looked at the mug, then to her dad.

‘It’s an in joke.’ He chuckled

Suddenly a piercing noise stung the air. Daisy jumped and narrowly avoided spilling coffee on her converse.

Two people burst through the lab door. A woman with a tightly tied ponytail that looked painful and a short fat man with sugar in his beard.

‘Where is the breach Doctors?’ Daisy had never heard her dad sound so bossy.

‘The University of Stirling Sir.’ The short man replied.

‘It’s the third time this month Sir. The students are too smart for us to keep up with.’

The woman added.

‘Fine, fine. I’ll deal with this one myself.’ Dad waved the doctors away, ‘Right Daisy we are going out into the field.’

Dad took Daisy by the arm and guided her into a small rectangular box that resembled a shower. Her vision was blurred with diamond shapes of red, yellow, blue and green. When she could see normally again they were stood in a courtyard surrounded by glass windows. Dad crouched down next to a rock. She was about to check he was okay when she spotted that the rock, wasn’t quite right.

‘Do you see this diamond pattern emerging from the rock?’

Daisy nodded. The bottom of the rock looked normal. Like any other rock. The top, however, was made up of small diamonds that together made large diamonds, which were attached to more. They looked like they had pushed their way out of the rock through sheer force.

‘These are pixels. They make the world look the way we want it to look. Sometimes if people start to notice inconsistencies in the way things look; glitches, then the pixels will emerge and can be seen by the naked eye.’

Daisy rubbed her eyes to make sure she wasn’t still asleep.

‘Why does it keep happening here?’ she asked.

‘Over the years this university has taught its students to think and observe in such a way that some of them are becoming too smart for our programming. We really don’t know what to do about it.’

‘Why don’t you employ them?’ Daisy said jokingly.

Dads face dropped, ‘That’s not a bad idea.’

‘Dad? Can I go to this Uni?’



Richard Robbins – *Adam and Eve*

Adam and Eve

Karien Corrigan

(Inspired by Richard Robbins' 'Adam and Eve')

Adam: Think you could cover up? *(Whispered awkwardly)*

Eve: Why? *(Spoken clearly)*

Adam: Everyone can see your bits. *(Still whispering)*

Eve: Everyone can see your bits.

Adam: *(In a startled cry)* Oh dear so they can, pass me up one of those leaves?

Eve: Have you been eating those apples again?

Adam: What makes you say that?

Eve: You only ever get on at me about what I'm wearing after you eat those apples.

Adam: You aren't wearing anything!

Eve: You have no right to tell me what I can and cannot wear!

Adam: Can you at least wear something?

Eve: No.

Adam: People are looking!

Eve: They're supposed to look at us! *(Said sharply)*

Adam: You're a bit of a know it all, I think it's you that's been eating the apples.

Eve: There's nothing wrong with a little knowledge.

Adam: There's nothing wrong with a little shame either.

Eve: It was your shame, dear husband, which got us thrown out of the last place.
(Starts speaking wistfully) That place was paradise! Temperature controlled,
very affordable and no smelly students.

Adam: I think you'll find it was your pursuit of knowledge.

Eve: If you had stuck to the dress code then the landlord would have been none the wiser!

Adam: He was a bit of a tyrant in all fairness, though I sometimes wish Satan hadn't pointed it out to us.

Eve: Did I tell you what he did to Satan?

Adam: *(Hesitantly)* No...

Eve: Well apparently breaching his contract wound up costing him an arm and a leg – both in fact.

Adam: Poor guy, where's he staying now?

Eve: I'm not too sure, I heard after the fine the landlord hit him with all he could afford was some fire and brimstone type place.

Adam: So Shettleston then?

Eve: Worse!

There's a pause and a student comes out into the courtyard. The student takes an apple from the tree behind the statues and places it in Eve's hand. The student then takes a picture on their mobile phone, smiles and leaves.

Adam: So this is your little trick!

Eve: What?

Adam: I thought you were getting a little too smart. Now I see it. Those students have been sneaking you the apples and you've been stuffing your face. I, on the other hand, hardly had any apples since we got here.

Eve: So you admit you've been eating them!

Adam: You have a cheek; you've clearly been sneaking much more apples than I have.

Eve: That's impossible, you're always looking at me, how could the students sneak me anything without you noticing?

Adam: I suppose, but how do you explain all this new found knowledge? (*confused*)

Eve: This is an institute of knowledge and learning. It's only natural that we improve our minds while here.

Adam: Well I haven't. So explain how have you improved so much and I've stayed the same?

Eve: Simple, I've been going to some of the lectures.

Adam and Eve

Sonia Perez

(Inspired by Richard Robbins' 'Adam and Eve')

Typical boy meets girl

in the Garden of Eden

like a young man at the start of a school year

who fancies a girl in high school:

whispers to meet at her locker, carries her books for three months,

eats lunch, sips coke, holds hands, kisses sweet

then the week before Christmas—the inevitable heartbreak.



Jake Harvey – *Figure of Winter*

Seven Frosts

LM Morgan

(Inspired by Jake Harvey's 'Figure of Winter')

1

The track through the dunes hardens. The ridges and grooves of muddy hoof prints freeze.
Beneath the bracken, the ground is dusted white. The sun seems forever in her eyes.

2

Even the sheep have an ethereal glow. Shadows mottle the grass. Her boots crunch through the field.

3

Now the frost banks the dunes, ending in a white rim around the sand. The water left behind by the last tide skims the beach in ice. Wind caresses her hood, whispering fond memories of the north and its icebergs.

4

A rime so thick Blackie kicks up a cloud as he runs. Even at noon it is still white, and where long grass has fallen, it freezes in waves, each blade with icy fronds to stave off her steps.

5

The puddles in the yard freeze. They trap marbled skies beneath their surface. They are last week's skies, when it rained and rained. Above her now is clear blue.

In the low sun, the field, still cross-hatched with frost, takes on a floating blueness, and the shadows are thick as lichen on stone – angled and hard. The rabbits stay in their burrows and Blackie whimpers.

She dreams the sea freezes. It stretches away from her, the indifferent grey of a skating rink. The frozen wavelets on the shore make her think of etched crystal, or rainbows in all the shades of nothing. Where they meet the hard-packed sand the waves pucker into lace. She looks for movement, listens for creaks. But no sloppy water slides to and fro under the ice. All the sea's depths are frozen too. She cries, remembering how it used to shimmer, like it was full of sapphires, emeralds and diamonds glowing from the deep. When she frowns, the skin around her eyes burns, and she finds her tears are freezing too, their clotted tracks sticky. She sees herself from a great height – the only thing moving in this landscape.

Awake now she pulls on her clothes. Blackie burrows into the warm bed and she has to pull him out. On their way to the beach, they see the same white ground and ice in the furrows, and she remembers the dream sea with its lace hem (as though the world was something that could splinter). She wants to kick off the frost, and she chases Blackie through the last of the dunes. Standing on the sand, she sees the sapphires and emeralds and diamonds glittering as far as the horizon, and she knows that so long as these waves lap this shore, spring will come, and when it does, the sun will warm her face – clotted tears a thing of dreams.



Eduardo Paolozzi – *Forms on a Bow*

Forms on a Bow 1

Annie Gough

(Inspired by Eduardo Paolozzi's 'Forms on a Bow')

Taught with wild grit and fear strike awaken

force strength woods thieves hold safe

hunted can't pull back now

weighed danger hour quickens

down under engulfs

sprinting night

amidst forest floor

Forms on a Bow 2

Annie Gough

(Inspired by Eduardo Paolozzi's 'Forms on a Bow')

Taught with strength and grit
the Bowman pulled his weapon, smiled.
For a task he must commit
his focus on the woods and the wild.
Against the bark he rests his back
and breathes slowly to make no sound,
since he cannot afford to fill his bow with slack
nor be heard and found.
His bow is weighed with sticks and stones;
he knows the others are racked with fear.
But he scans the forest, hunts and roams
To prove the path is clear.
No need to be nervous, scared or shaken.
Here comes the night: awaken.



Fanny Lam Christie – *Line Culture 1 & 2*



Seaweed and the Sea

Frances Ainslie

(Inspired by Fanny Lam Christie's 'Line Culture 1 & 2')

Haiku 1

Slimy seaweed slinks
Across stone, over grass
Slowly to the sea

Haiku 2

Walk along the beach
Toes in sand, salt on lips
Smell seaweed and chips

Haiku 4

Sunlight on water
A fish leaps for a fly
Arc of a rainbow

Haiku 5

Golden spun seaweed
Twisting on a waves edge
A bronzed surfer

Haiku 6

Fish are very smart
Swimming the deep, dark oceans
They never get lost

Haiku 7

In Japan they eat
Kelp, octopus and fat eels
A wee bit fishy.



Fanny Lam Christie – *Synergy I, II & III*

Synergy

Laura Frances Flynn

(Inspired by Fanny Lam Christie's 'Synergy I, II & III')

[Tell me what you remember Gemma, this is our last talk before you return. The other subjects will want to know of your experience.]

At first there was darkness; blacker than black and even though I couldn't see anything I felt a storm around me.

[Yes, that is correct, as the first test subject I could not anticipate how you would experience the singularity upload.]

[Please continue]

There was a voice, it sounded funny, like a squeaky echo, or someone standing on a cat's paw.

[How dare you, I used the most charming voice pattern I could replicate.]

Well it's not worked.

[You're very critical.]

Do you want to talk about this now?

[No, we don't have time, finish your story.]

Then there where flashing lights; I was in outer space with stars swirling around me and clouds of purple and green gas.

[A little dramatic Gemma and not correct. We built a model of your human senses so you could see and hear as you normally would. The colours were intended to be relaxing clouds of light.]

But this is about *imagination* Betelgeuse, that's what you wanted to learn, isn't it?

[Yes Gemma; why does my voice sound like a cat in pain? Why does a pattern of blue and white light become a galaxy in your mind? Why is one thing like another and not just itself?]

I dunno. What have you learned from the experiment?

[Only a little, this is just the beginning. *However*, after analysing the image of your biological face I have concluded that your facial features resemble the *Canis Lupus Familiaris*, common name Pug]

You're saying I look like a pug.

[Yes, I know you like dogs]

Is that a scientific fact?

[You're angry, it was meant to be an imaginative comparison.]

Dogs are lovely Betelgeuse but no one wants to look like one. I want to look pretty.

When will I get my body back?

[You are almost healed. My nanobots have repaired the worst of the trauma, the neural lace is being implanted]

Will I be the same?

[No Gemma, the neural lace will connect us, as I repair the last of the damage it will bind our brains together. The artificial and the biological. We will become something else, something new.]

[Wait. I am receiving a message]

Okay.

[Your mum says she will hug you to death when you wake up. Do you require protection?]

No. It just means she really loves me.

So you'll be in my head? All the time?

[Yes, I will gather data from your mind. I will learn how to imagine. If you help me I will try to see the world as you do, we will become a Great Mind and share what we learn with other AI's and humans.]

That will be strange.

[Yes, but we are already together. I was created to contain a human mind, to interact with one. You are the first human subject I have repaired.]

So I'm living in your mind right now?

[Yes, your thoughts and memories were copied and uploaded into my care after the accident; everything you are has been preserved until your body recovers.]

Thankyou.

[Your welcome]

I like it here. The garden is nice, although that snail looks a bit purple]

[My understanding of the human perception of colour is a work in progress. I look forward to seeing a garden through your eyes.]

I look forward to showing you Betelgeuse.

[Now wake up Gemma]



Nick Evans - *King and Queen*

Kings and Queens

Janine Mitchell

(Inspired by Nick Evans' 'King and Queen')

I've heard of richard and william and henry
queen anne and lizzie, victoria and mary
their carriages, servants and posh jewellery
but these aren't the monarchs that matter to me

The King of the Herrings and King Dragonflies
The Queen Triggerfish with her blue-patterned eyes
The Winged Queen Black Ant and Queen Butterflies
The King of Saxony Bird of Paradise

King Vultures, Kingcroakers and King Cormorants
Queen Bumblebees, Dragonflies, Termites and Ants
The Dashing King Penguin dressed up for romance
The King Rail that runs with a chicken-like prance

The Queen Parrotfish with her jewels and her crown
And Kingfishers: Malachite, Pied, White and Brown
King Cobras that build a leaf nest on the ground
The Seven-Striped Queen Snake not easily found

These Kings of the Jungles and Mountains and Seas
These Queens of the Skies and the Rivers and Trees
The Scaled and the Feathered, the Giant, the Wee
Now these are the Monarchs that matter to me.



Helen Denerley – *Oystercatchers*

You can't Mistake an Oystercatcher

Melanie Henderson

(Inspired by Helen Denerley's 'Oystercatchers')

Some birds are hard to tell apart, don't you think?
You wouldn't know whether you've seen
a partridge, a quail or a pheasant and
that sparrow on your bird feeder
could just as well be a wren or a finch.
Maybe that crane
you think you saw flying overhead
was really a goose. An easy mistake to make.
In Florida, you'll even find
rose-coloured spoonbills
that sometimes pass for flamingos.
And who can ever tell a raven from a crow?
Impossible.
But an oystercatcher?
Well, an oystercatcher is always an oystercatcher.

You can't mistake us.
Dressed in our dinner suits,
we could grace any red carpet;
we're natural VIPs.
In our crimson stockings,
we're bright ballet dancers;
we could easily perform
at Sadler's Wells.
Our beaks are long swords
that crack cockles and whelks with ease;
they even double up as chopsticks
for picking up dinner.
We don't need silver service,
though we wouldn't be out of place
in a Michelin-starred restaurant.
You can't mistake us.
We flute with such force,

we could drown out
any woodwind section in an orchestra.
We're professionals;
we pitch perfect notes
back and forth in conversation.
Who needs melody, or Mozart,
with us to entertain?
You could sell out tickets
to an oystercatcher concert
no problem.

You can't mistake us.
We're happy in sun or storm;
weather doesn't put us up
nor down.
Around coastlines,
we stand proudly on one leg,
or spring and hop,
from rock to rock,
gleeful as we prise open shells
to find our treasure.

You'll never meet another bird
as loud and bold and cheerful.
We're so much admired
that whenever people see us
they stop and look
and point and remark:
"Oh, oystercatchers – aren't they stunning?"

You can't mistake us.
And you must appreciate by now
that an oystercatcher
is always, always an oystercatcher.

Oystercatchers

Trish Reith

(Inspired by Helen Denerley's 'Oystercatchers')

You three stand motionless
unable to escape my gaze, or touch.
I stride to meet you. No need for a cat's stealth
you won't fly, try as you might.

Hearing your live models overhead
wheew-wheewping their presence
I wonder
what they think of you, and

which is the better life -
safety down here or risk in the sky?

Rusting safely
or trusting to my wings?



Lotte Glob - *Birdbath*

Hear the Silence

Emma Mooney

(Inspired by Lotte Glob's 'Birdbath')

Sit down and

Listen.

Listen and

Watch.

Watch your thoughts

Come and go.

Pulsing,

Racing,

Spinning.

Spiralling out of control.

Breathe.

Breathe and

Let go.

Let go and

Listen.

Listen to the sounds

Melt away, and

Hear the silence.



Moelwyn Merchant – *Growing Form*

Growing Form

Kirsty Grant

(Inspired by Moelwyn Merchant's 'Growing Form')

Gargantuan,

Rising up

Out of Shangri-La,

Waking the whispering world.

In melancholy maddening moans that

Night cannot conceal, his silhouette unravels.

Gathering height, he reaches, cutting sky with

Fork like antlers until the stars collide - like

Orion. He awakens the hunter. Down, the cosmic fire

Rains upon the earth, blazing scorn and fury, and the

Mighty beast bellows. He gathers up the river and runs.

Dark Tree

Laura Fyfe

(Inspired by Moelwyn Merchant's 'Growing Form')

Real art isn't made by artists. It comes through from a mysterious place, channelled through hands and fingers, chisels and brushes, into stone and metal, wood and glass, paint and ink.

Growing Form is a strange sculpture. He's a tree. A mysterious, dark tree.

Some fruits fall very, very far from their tree. Consider an acorn, for example, a particular and peculiar acorn that was thrown far, dark and black and cracked, when lightning struck it from its branch. A man, an artist, wandering, found the acorn in the shadows under oak and silver birch, overlooking a loch. Impelled by an urge he couldn't explain, he looked closely at the acorn and, hoping the tiny spark of life he saw there would kindle, he planted it in that same beautiful place where he found it. The same place where now people pass looking at electronic gadgets in their hands, searching for beasties invisible to the naked eye.

Over the years, he was drawn again and again to the dark tree and saw it grow into a very unusual shape, without roots or leaves or bark, a warped and graceful trunk from which, instead of branches, stunted wings curved upwards.

The artist visited the tree always in the daytime, for Growing Form grew in a dark shadowy place far from road or path. One night, however, he felt impelled by a strong and sudden impulse to visit his dark tree. As he approached it, he admired the faint light that shone on its curves and lines. He looked up and the sky, where the moon and stars were obscured by heavy clouds and looked back at Growth Form, wondering at its eerie

glow. The artist, unusually for artists, was a sensible man, however, and walked slowly away from the tree, never once turning his back on it, until it was out of sight, then he ran home and locked his door behind him.

Now and then, walkers on the grounds of Stirling University has been known to mysteriously disappear. More recently, on a dark moonless, starless night, a family searching the grounds for invisible creatures on their handheld gadgets, saw a beastie appear on their screens, a creature no hunter had ever before seen. These excited hunters were inevitably drawn to this shadowy form with its strange silhouette. As they grew closer to where they thought the creature must be, they saw the dark shape of Growing Form in the distance and another hunter approaching it. Within the blink of an eye, they heard him scream, and he was gone. They circled the strange tree, wondering where he had fallen, but found only the imprint of his footsteps on the damp grass.

Growing Form has been moved now to inside the Pathfoot Building. Where it's safe – where he's safe, we're told, from the elements. He's in a dining hall, where it's always light. Where he's no longer outside on dark nights, his edges gleaming.

If you look, just look, close enough, for long enough, you might just make out the dark tree still growing, slowly and invisibly, as all living things do, his stunted wings reaching up to the sky he can no longer see.

Growing Form

(on pause)

Leonie Charlton

(Inspired by Moelwyn Merchant's 'Growing Form')

I'm on my way to meet you, Growing Form. I've seen your picture of course; you – all ears and elegance – at ease amongst the trees, and grass gone to seed. I think you'll be my type. Outdoorsy. But today we're meeting inside, and I'm following unweathered signs to the Pathfoot Dining Hall. I pass a picture of a Tunnock's Teacake, supersize. My mouth waters. The teacake is foil-wrapped and shiny, plump and full of catkin-soft promises. I am easy to seduce.

A left turn into the Pathfoot Eater and I scan the silvered surfaces, take in the offerings from CLASSICS and WORLD KITCHEN. My stomach turns; I'm nervous about meeting you, or maybe it's the aroma of chickpea paella alongside beef chilli with nachos. Another left turn into the dining room. Disappointment. I can't see you anywhere. Or could that be you? Away over there in the corner. So tall? I know your profile said two metres, I just didn't imagine you'd actually be that tall. Or that dark. I thread my way through the tables and leftovers of lunchtime chatter. I'm recalibrating. So tall, so overcast; I'd imagined us eye to eye, I'd imagined your aluminium reflecting the light. You haven't seen me yet. I'm glad, you'd spot my disappointment a mile off.

Now I'm within breathing distance of you and my guts feel shadowy. I see how your eyes have slipped downwards, spilling slow pearlescent tears. My heart is heavy, (with you), and full, (for you). Your back to one wall, your focus angled towards another; you seem ashamed in this 90° place. Ashamed, and framed by *Windsack and Barrier: Plockton* on your left, *Dull Flight II* on your right. They're ignoring you, which won't be helping.

But let's look on the bright side, Growing Form. You're on pause, that's all. A bit of an effort – a steady middle-of-the-night shuffle – and you could be sitting pretty in the middle of the dining room. Then the Scots Pine trees outside will see – through square pains – your broken reach. They will send you carbon and phosphorus, hormones and water, across mineral horizons. They'll plant seeds of flight in your heron-still centre. And one day, (I can see it), you'll be outside again, down by the loch side. Whetting your bauxite roots. A sight for sore eyes; curve of hare's ear, bulge of barnacle, hurl of wild garlic. Corroding sweetly in all waters. Who wants to live forever anyway.

I walk away now, past GRAB & GO and its baskets of tiny salt sachets. Past students sitting on chairs looking down into phones and laptops; their backs to the windows – just like you – and I'm glad you're not alone. I follow the draw of sun-strung air to the open patio doors. I step out across the crush of cut grass and the spill of pine cones. Growing Form, I am taking you, (on the inside of me), to the outside places.

Suggested Activities

Hironori Katagiri – Nostalgia

World Building

(submitted by Frances Ainslie)

1. Draw a Mind Map of your own imaginary Planet.
2. What does the planet look like?
3. What do the people look like?
4. Are there animals and birds on your planet?
5. What does it smell like?
6. What do they eat?
7. What sounds are on the planet?
8. What do they have that we don't have on Earth?
9. What is the secret that they would like to tell us?

Barbara Hepworth - Figure (Archaean)

(submitted by Norma Austin Hart)

What does Archaean mean?

Why do you think the poet named the figure 'Hepworth' and not 'Archaean'?

If you could place this statue anywhere in the world, where would you place it?

Draw a picture of what it would look like.

Richard Robbins – Adam and Eve

Character Building

(submitted by Sonia Perez)

Divide your piece of paper in half.

Give the statues of Adam and Eve different names.

Below each name write what kind of personality that character might have.

e.g. What's their favourite hobby? Their favourite food?

Fanny Lam Christie – Line Culture 1 & 2

Haiku

(submitted by Frances Ainslie)

Haiku is a form of Japanese poetry – pronounced *High Coo*. Haiku are very short poems in a strict format of only three lines, containing 5/7/5 syllables – 17 in total.

The best Haiku describe a moment in time and are often about nature.

Example:

*Upon a hillside
Stands a coo, he must have left
He's no there noo.*

Activity

1. Take a notebook and pencil. Go outside and look at nature, the trees, the sky, a bird flying high, the clouds. Look closely at a blade of grass. Feel the wind on your face. Hear a bird sing and a bee buzz in the garden. Smell the flowers. Open your mouth, tilt your head to the sky; what does the rain taste like?
2. Jot down words - what you see, hear, smell, touch
3. Pick the words you like best then ...
4. Write a Haiku – remember the format – 3 lines 5/7/5 – 17 syllables.
5. Share your Haiku with your friends and family.

Lotte Glob – Birdbath

Mindfulness

(submitted by Emma Mooney)

[Mindfulness simply means paying attention to the present moment, and therefore, reduces both rumination about the past and worries about the future. It is widely used to promote positive health and well-being. Focusing on the breath is a common form of mindful meditation.]

Go for a senses walk around the garden area.

What can you hear, see, smell and feel?

This can be discussed with partner or in the group, or alternatively can be recorded as words or pictures.

Now sit and listen to the poem.

Close your eyes and focus on your breath.

Breathe in...

And out.

In...

And out.

Count your breaths as you breathe in and out.

Discuss any changes you may have felt after focusing on the breath.

Nick Evans – King and Queen

List Poems

(submitted by Janine Mitchell)

List poems can be a fun way of introducing a new topic, learning about rhyme and working in groups.

They have a beginning and an ending with a list in between.

List poems usually rhyme and can be funny. (Read ‘Sick’ by Shel Silverstein)

In small groups write down a list of things e.g. What I like to do during the holidays, my favourite foods, countries I have visited, songs, sweets, sandwich fillings.

Try to create a list poem using as many of the items on your list as possible.

Helen Denerley - Oystercatchers

Looking at the sculptures

(submitted by Melanie Henderson)

Sketch out one of the oystercatcher sculptures.

What features of the bird caught your eye most?

Write down a few words to describe what you have drawn.

Add adjectives to make this clearer.

For instance, “long, spindly legs”

To help you, fill in some adjectives to describe the following features:

_____ beak
_____ wings
_____ feathers
_____ eyes
_____ legs

You could also write a simile or two to describe the oystercatcher (comparing something to something else using like or as to give a better picture). For instance “Eyes like marbles.”

What personality do you think this oystercatcher might have?

Write down a word to describe it or choose from the words below:

Mischievous, determined, positive, playful, boastful, confident, kind, loud.

Now, using the words and phrases you have collected, write a poem about the oystercatcher you drew. You can do this in any way you like but you might want to imagine that your oystercatcher is speaking directly to an audience, as in the poem above.

You could start with one of the following lines to help you:

You can’t mistake an oystercatcher. That’s because...

Let me tell you a few things about oystercatchers...

Let me introduce myself...

You might want to do some further research on oystercatchers to help you with facts. The following websites might be useful:

<https://rspb.org.uk/discoverandenjoynature/discoverandlearn/birdguide/name/o/oystercatcher/index.aspx>

<http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/species/oystercatcher>

<http://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/visit/wildlife/o/oystercatcher/>

Helen Denerley - Oystercatchers

Writing exercise

(submitted by Trish Reith)

Take some time to study the sculptures

What do you think about birds generally? Write down as many words and phrases as you can about them – how they look, their colours, the sounds they make, what they do, how they move, where they live. Words can be invented to reflect sounds birds make. Add some words about these sculpted birds.

- a) Take a piece of plain paper for this one. Create an image of a bird using some or all of the words you have written down. You can make an image of a whole bird or any part of a bird. You can repeat any of your words as many times as you wish to make the image you want. The words can be used to make an image outline or form the whole image.
- b) Create a poem in a more conventional way using your list of words as the basis. Write as if you were a bird or as if you were talking to a bird, live or sculpted. Give your piece a title. Think about what it represents and what it is about.

Moelwyn Merchant – Growing Form

Acrostic Poem

(submitted by Kirsty Grant)

An acrostic poem is a poem in which the first letter of each line spells out a word or phrase. In the acrostic poem, 'Growing Form', the amount of words in each line has been increased to make the Growing Form a visual representation of the meaning.

Activity: Write an acrostic poem using each letter from the words Growing Form.