



Changing life stories



Nature Poems Resource



Writing from nature

The National Literacy Trust and the RSPB: Working together supporting teachers, and inspiring learning through nature.

Poems to accompany the National Literacy Trust Young Poet and RSPB Resource

“Writing from Nature”

Below are poems by partner poets in the Young Writers project, and links to poems that can be used in KS2/KS3 classes.

The poems are sorted by town/area. There are also general nature poems at the beginning of this document.

This is not an exhaustive list and we encourage teachers to use their own favourite poetry.

To find more local poems <https://www.placesofpoetry.org.uk> is a good resource.

Thank you to the poets who contributed poetry:

Paul Cookson, Leanne Moden, Nabeela Ahmed, Matt Abbott, Jamie Thrasivoulou.

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General Nature Poetry

Poems

Instructions for Happiness

for Charlotte

by Leanne Moden

Come sit down among the weeds,
somewhere near the water's edge.

Wait for the aching in your chest
to ease – and it will ease – then,

dip your toes into the water. The
shock of the cold will comfort you

like a missed-step, heart-lurch recovery.
You survived today. You haven't fallen yet.

Beneath the water's surface, your feet
feel comfortable. You feel comfortable.

Breathe deeply, and listen to the honey-
bees humming your favourite songs.

Feel the sun warm your bare shoulders
as sticklebacks congregate in your shadow.

Stay awhile, but don't check your watch.
Instead, look for hidden treasures submerged

in the shallows. Watch as neon dragonflies illuminate
the lilies, like affirmations highlighted in a notebook.

Taste the scent of damp earth on your tongue,
and plunge your hands into the cool mud;

you will need to keep this moment under your
fingernails, smoothed into the creases of your palms.

Leave only when you are ready. Come back often.
You are always welcome here.

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Go Explore the Countryside

by Paul Cookson

A Summer's day, a bunch of friends
Bows and arrows, building dens
Make belief and let's pretend
All of this and much more when
Finding tallest trees to climb
Leave reality behind
Hide and seek and lots to find
Losing track of space and time
A place to chase and seek and hide
Go explore the countryside

Rope swings over muddy ditches
Stepping stones and building bridges
Snagging clothes on hawthorn hedges
Balancing on stony ledges
Buttercups beneath the chin
Spinning jennies spin and spin
Grass between the thumbs that sing
Dock leaf cures for nettle stings
Hikes to hike and bikes to ride
Go explore the countryside

A piece of penknife poetry
Initialled love hearts there to see
Carved graffiti on the tree
From here to eternity
Flat and smooth skimming stones
Four leaf clovers, pine cones
Branches look like monster bones
Escape from all the mobile phones
All of these and more beside
Go explore the countryside

Be a cowboy, be a pirate
Let the geography inspire it
Be a soldier, be a knight
Find that stick to fight that fight
Forest shadows, grass that's high
A place to laugh or shout or cry
Caves and bones and stones and rocks
Blowing dandelion clocks
Imagination – far and wide

Let your dog run and run
Lose your dad and hide from mum
There is space for everyone
In God's fair ground filled with fun
Time for families to run wild
Find that hidden inner child
A fallen tree's a crocodile
Lose yourself and stay awhile

Feel the secrets on the breeze
Feel the past within the trees
Eternity in flowing streams
Rugged rocks and crystal seams
In this eternal field of dreams

Go explore, go explore
Go explore – it's what it's for
All of this and much, much more
Mother Nature's superstore
Where geography, biology
And history – they all collide
There's majesty and mystery
Passing time for me and you
Lots of things to make and do
Yesterdays or something new
Go explore – you know it's true
The magic here, the magic there
Take your time to stop and stare
Be sanctified and goggle eyed
Satisfied and gratified
Come back to
Come back to
The magic of the countryside

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Links

Kit Wright – *The Sea in the Trees*

<https://childrens.poetryarchive.org/poem/the-sea-in-the-trees/>

Laura Mucha – *Albatross*

<https://childrens.poetryarchive.org/poem/albatross/>

Judith Nicholls – *Bluebottle*

<https://childrens.poetryarchive.org/poem/bluebottle/>

Anna Thomas – *A bee I found by the garage*

<https://poems.poetrysociety.org.uk/poems/a-bee-i-found-by-the-garage/>

Hugo Williams – *Birdwatching*

<https://poems.poetrysociety.org.uk/poems/birdwatching/>

Birmingham

Aliyah Begum – *Walking to the Train Station*

<https://poems.poetrysociety.org.uk/poets/aliyah-begum>

Roy Fisher – *Birmingham River*

<https://poetryarchive.org/poem/birmingham-river/>

Blackpool

Rod Butterworth – *The Fylde Coast*

<https://northernlifemagazine.co.uk/the-fylde-coast-poetry>

Ian Harker – *Sea Interlude, Blackpool 1987*

<https://poetrysociety.org.uk/poems/sea-interlude-blackpool-1987/>

Kieran Wyatt – *Five Poems*

<https://lothlorienpoetryjournal.blogspot.com/2021/01/five-poems-by-kieran-wyatt.html>

Bradford/Yorkshire

Down Healey

by Matt Abbott

through cul-de-sacs,
the clarion call
rings out at dawn.

as Healey Road
curves and dips,
it echoes on for miles.

deep into the valley,
across the Calder
and then up.

if you're lucky,
in springtime,
you'll see it.

clunking down the gears,
i'd cycle past its garden.

tangerine sack
on shoulder:

primed for shipping
tabloids.

and when 7am
saw sunlight
(and i saw 7am),

i'd crane my neck
for a fleeting glance
at plumage.

a house that made me
doubletake
its postcode.

a bird that made me
doubletake
its being.

through cul-de-sacs,
its clarion call
rang out at dawn.

an Asiatic neighbour
amongst sandstone
and abandoned mill

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God's Own Country

by Nabeela Ahmed

Twenty minutes in any direction
And I'm where God resides
By a canal in Saltaire,
diverting course to sit on a branch by the weir
and enjoy a banana as the water crashes by

Walking up the cobbled street,
passing the church and the school,
stopping by the graves and looking up at Bronte Parsonage,
on my way to the moors

Parking on a hill to walk into the alien room
and peak out over the distant countryside
which climbs directly into your lungs and fills you with calm.
Roll down the hill to Wycoller, walk by the stream and devour cake

Always wowed by the sight through the hole in the wall
that stops your breath as the smile climbs higher up your face.
Count the steps across Bolton Abbey,
sit above in the woods to mourn the the ruins

Limestone walks, waterfalls and tarns at Malham,
perfect for children to practise flying stones across the stream
Sit by the sleepest of rivers or in awe at
Kirkstall and allow yourself to be lost

Walk higher and further to read the Dew stone
set in a daily changing frame of nature and then
hide under the doublers from rain

Enter through the gates of an estate, back in
time, by the river and up by the stone wall into
the neighbours yard at St Ives

On work days, I look for the cracks on Whetley
Lane. To catch a glimpse of snow wearing
Thornton Moors

In my spring I dreamed of seeing the whole wide world
In my summer I feel the entire world, is right here with me.

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Links

Anne Bronte – *Lines Composed in a Wood on a Windy Day*

<http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/bronte/poems/pba-wood.html>

Alicia Hayden – *Rain before Rainbows* (video performance)

Rain before Rainbows – a poetry reading

London

Links

Michael Rosen – *The Seagulls*

<https://childrens.poetryarchive.org/poem/the-seagulls/>

Chrissie Gittens – *Wasp on the Tube*

<https://childrens.poetryarchive.org/poem/wasp-on-the-tube/>

Nottingham

THE HISTORY OF TREES (THE MIGHTY SHERWOOD OAK)

by Paul Cookson

All the trees have stories
They're whispered on the wind
The reality of legends
And where the myth begins
And truth is but a fingerprint
Imprinted in their rings

All the trees have stories
And secrets they can keep
Embedded in the swirling bark
And in the roots down deep
The past is present in every branch
Every sway and every creak

Like Robin and his merry men
And the secrets that they spoke
The history of trees
Like the mighty Sherwood Oak

All the midnight meetings
Those with rebel plans
All the midnight councils
Of ragged outlaw bands
All the midnight drinking
The gathering of the clans

All forbidden kisses
Of those in secret love
The trysts within the mists
And the canopies above
Listen to the romance
And the plans they all dream of

Like Robin and his merry men
And the secrets that they spoke
The history of trees
Like the mighty Sherwood Oak

The branch that held the weight of a hangman's noose
The leaves that hid a fugitive, lost and on the loose
The bark where lovers carved their names forever in their youth

The ghosts of myths and legends
They dance upon the breeze
All the voices of the past
Are present in the leaves
Whispering their secrets
And mysteries like these

Every tree that is a tree
Or pirate galleon in the sky
A jungle swing or rocket ship
Or a castle way up high
A place to hide, a place to seek
Make believe and laugh and cry

Like Robin and his merry men
And the secrets that they spoke
The history of trees
Like the mighty Sherwood Oak

Stoke

Remembrance Glade

by Jamie Thrasivoulou

A monument
for every soul
For every life
who gave their whole

To bring us peace
in which to live

Conflicts fought
On all terrain
For every continent
A tribute paid

A peaceful place
Where nature reigns
symbology and art
maintain

the love
the hope
the dignity
the pain
the suffrage
the humility

Of soldiers
Past and present

Remembrance
For the fallen
Peace for
The future

Never forgotten
Always honoured
Every seed sewn
Is their blossom

A special space
An inclusive space
Where no life
Is forgotten



**The National Literacy Trust and the RSPB:
Working together supporting teachers,
and inspiring learning through nature.**

About the National Literacy Trust






Our charity is dedicated to improving the reading, writing, speaking and listening skills of those who need it most, giving them the best possible chance of success in school, work and life. We run Literacy Hubs and campaigns in communities where low levels of literacy and social mobility are seriously impacting people's lives. We support schools and early years settings to deliver outstanding literacy provision, and we campaign to make literacy a priority for politicians, businesses and parents. Our research and analysis make us the leading authority on literacy and drive our interventions.

Literacy is a vital element of action against poverty and our work changes life stories.



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