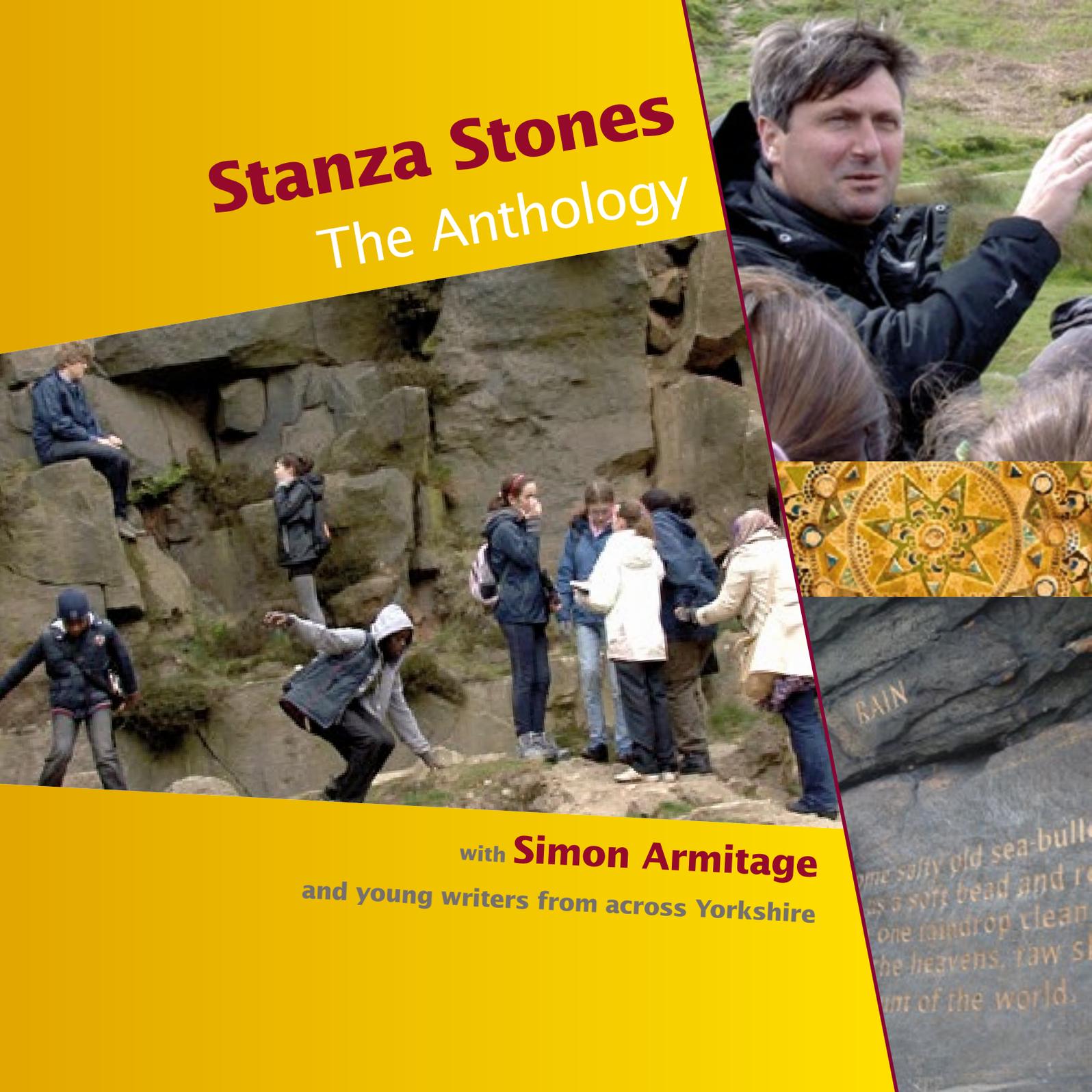


Stanza Stones

The Anthology



with **Simon Armitage**
and young writers from across Yorkshire

some salty old sea-bull
as a soft bead and re
one raindrop clean
the heavens, raw sh
unt of the world.

RAIN STONE



DEW STONES

stanza stones trail

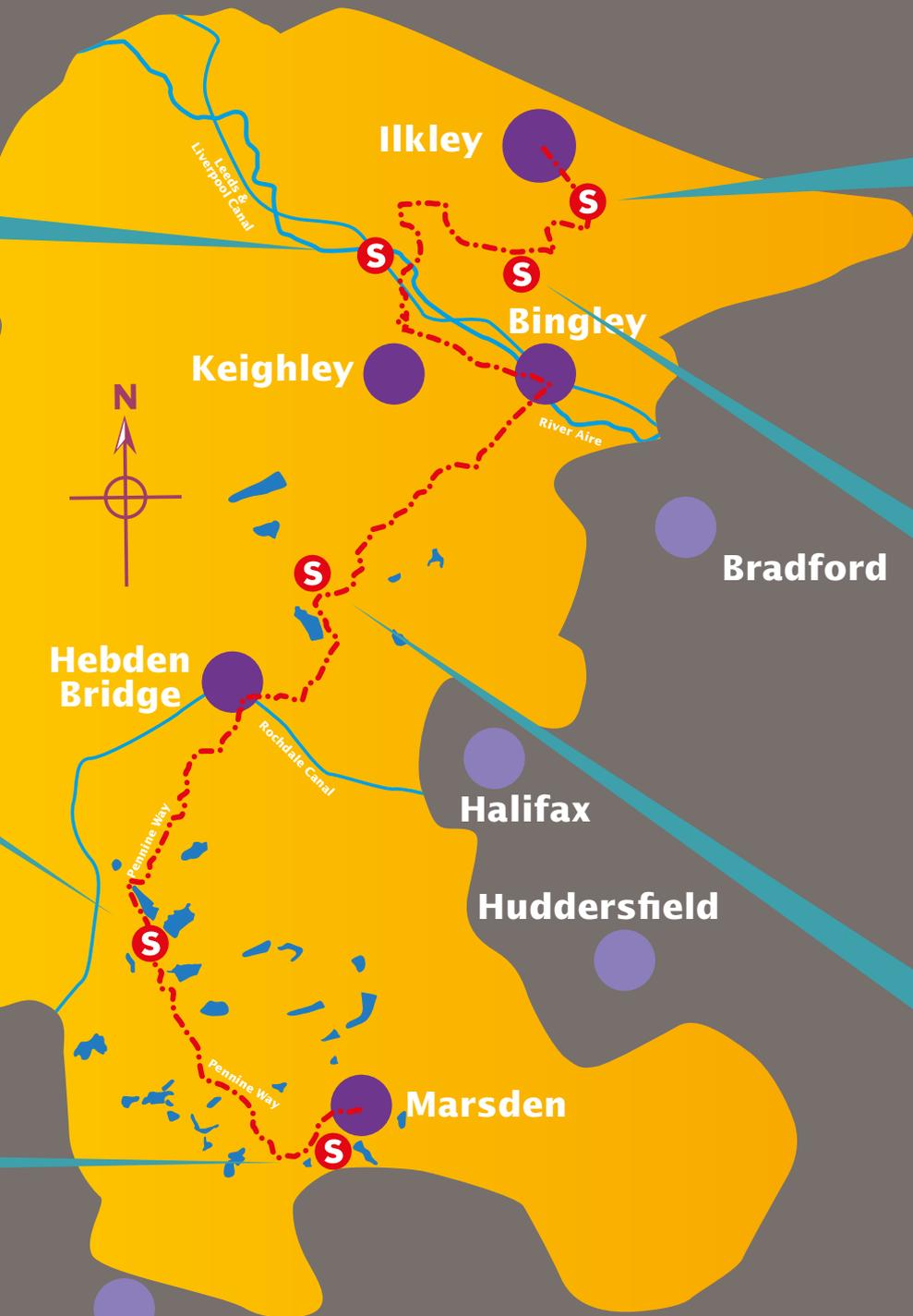
South Pennines Watershed



SNOW STONE

Manchester





BECKSTONE



Leeds



PUDDLE STONES



MIST STONE

Oldham

Marsden

Huddersfield

Halifax

Hebden
Bridge

Bradford

Keighley

Bingley

Ilkley

Leeds &
Liverpool Canal

River Aire

Rochdale Canal

Pennine Way

Pennine Way





Stanza Stones is a collaboration between imove, Ilkley Literature Festival, Simon Armitage and Pennine Prospects.

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Poems © Simon Armitage

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Pennine Prospects, a rural regeneration company, supported the project through the South Pennines LEADER programme (Rural Development Programme for England), which is jointly funded by Defra and the European Union. www.pennineprospects.co.uk



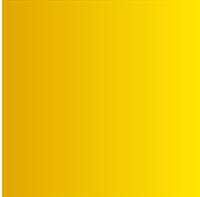
Cover: young writers from Leeds Young Authors, Calderdale Young Writers, Ilkley Young Writers and Tadeeb International New Writers' Project visit Ilkley Moor with Simon Armitage

Stanza Stones

The Anthology

with **Simon Armitage**
and young writers from across Yorkshire

Edited by Antony Dunn





Stanza Stones The Anthology

imove



Tessa Gordziejko

*Creative Director of imove and Programmer
for London 2012 in Yorkshire*

We are very excited that Stanza Stones is part of imove, Yorkshire's most widely reaching Cultural Olympiad programme.

imove is about the art of human movement and there are few places to have a greater sense of being alive, moving and creative than on top of the Pennines. The Olympics have always included art as well as sport (that's why we have a Cultural Olympiad) and physical movement is a theme which connects them. To capture that feeling, to make words with it – and then to carve those words in stone and place them back on the hilltops – is something really special which Simon and all the young writers involved with Stanza Stones have shared.

We want lots more people to experience it, to walk the distances between the stones, read the poems – and hopefully create some of their own – for years to come. These hills have, in past times, been like a lung for people who lived and worked in the industrial cities. It's been great that, as part of Stanza Stones, a new generation of young writers are finding that escape – not into a movie or game – but into our bodies freeing our minds in the landscape. It's part of the legacy of 2012 which we want imove to leave.

imove is funded by Legacy Trust UK which is bringing an explosion of creativity and talent to communities across the UK that will last well beyond London 2012, and by Arts Council England.

www.imoveand.com

Contents

About the project: Rachel Feldberg	6
Writing the Stanza Stones poems: Simon Armitage	7
In Memory of Water: Simon Armitage poems	9
Carving the poems: Pip Hall	16
Finding the sites: Tom Lonsdale	18
Calderdale Young Writers	20
Leeds Young Authors	28
Sheffield Young Writers	42
Ilkley Young Writers	52
Tadeeb International New Writers' Project	62
The Writing Squad	70
Longley School	81
Acknowledgements and Project Participants	82

Stanza Stones
The Anthology

Contents



Stanza Stones The Anthology

Rachel Feldberg

Rachel Feldberg

Director, Ilkley Literature Festival

In 2010 Ilkley Literature Festival and I move began a very exciting project, when we commissioned leading UK poet Simon Armitage to create a series of new poems responding to the landscape of the Pennine Watershed in the run up to the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

We wanted everyone to have a chance to read Simon's poems and see the landscape which inspired them. So we asked letter-carver Pip Hall and her apprentice Wayne Hart to carve the poems, which explore different aspects of water, into six atmospheric locations along the Watershed, from Marsden where Simon was born and grew up, to Ilkley, home of Ilkley Literature Festival.

Simon and Landscape Architect Tom Lonsdale spent hours tramping the moors to scout out locations and get permission from landowners. This initiative was supported by Pennine Prospects, a South Pennines rural regeneration company.

A very important part of the project, supported by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, was arranging for six groups of young writers aged 11–29 from Bradford, Calderdale, Ilkley, Leeds, Sheffield and across Yorkshire to get together and take part in master classes with Simon, visit the moors with him and then create their own work.

The poems they wrote were passed on to young dancers from Northern School of Contemporary Dance, RJC Dance, North Yorkshire (Youth) Dance, students from Longley School working with Manasamitra and young film makers from Leeds College of Art and Media Fish (part of Leeds Young Film). Over 140 young people were involved and their work became part of three inspiring outdoor performances with Simon in May and June 2012.

You can read some of the young writers' poems in this book, or find them on a new sculpture by Peter Maris at Scammonden Water near Ripponden.

We hope you'll get up on to the Pennine Watershed and visit the Stanza Stones for yourself. (You can download a free Trail Guide from our website www.ilkleyliteraturefestival.org.uk)

And to tempt you, there's a secret, seventh Stanza Stone somewhere out there on the Watershed. Just keep looking and you might come across it ...

Simon Armitage

Writing the Stanza Stones poems

It's one thing writing poems for yourself, in a diary or notebook, for your eyes only, but as soon as you decide you want to publish or transmit those poems to a wider audience, you're taking part in a different activity altogether. And it's another thing again to write poetry not for books or magazines or the usual poetry-reading circle, but to be carved into rocks in public places, where they might last for centuries and catch the attention of passers-by – people who might have no interest in verse.

With the Stanza Stones poems, my first inclination was to write a sestina, distributing the six stanzas among six different stones. If you know the sestina form you'll know that the six end-words of each verse are repeated in a rearranged, pre-arranged pattern, so choosing the right ones is important. But like so often with a poem, the plan changed. Every time I went to the moor I collected a bit more language until I had a long list, several long lists in fact, of terms and phrases associated with the territory. I'd choose six and begin writing, but got nowhere. On a couple of occasions I had a vague sense that a poem was beginning to take shape, but it was rarely more than three or four lines, and never that feeling of being ONTO SOMETHING. The daydream just wouldn't come into focus. The crystal wouldn't form.

The poet Peter Sansom once told me that it's sometimes best to forget about a poem for a few weeks rather than wrestle and struggle with it, so that's what I did, and when I returned to it with a clearer mind and a clean eye, I saw what the problems were. Firstly I was trying to let the form dictate the content. Secondly I was attempting something too literary. Thirdly, the sestina form seemed too inflexible and stubborn to accommodate the different geographies and rich vocabulary of the moor. And lastly, I had no idea what the poem was about. A case of putting the cart before the horse, to use a Yorkshire phrase, or letting the tail wag the dog.

Another visit to the watershed and I came back with a very different idea. To let water be the overall subject, and the various forms of water to provide the topic of each individual and self-contained poem. A piece about rain, a piece about snow, a piece about dew... the Rain Stone, the Snow Stone, the Dew Stones ... and so on.



Stanza Stones

The Anthology

Simon Armitage

Photo: Simon Armitage with
Glenis Burgess, Stanza Stones
Project Manager

Stanza Stones

The Anthology

A bigger, over-arching title came into my head, *In Memory of Water*, connecting the often commemorative act of monumental-masonry and engraving with our most vital but often neglected necessity, our common gold, our shaping force, our local vintage – water.

It's impossible to say that an idea is right. All I know is that no sooner had the notion occurred to me than the poems started to happen, even to the point where I was anxious to get to my notebook, because words and lines and sentences were queuing up in my head, impatient to be written down. To me this is always the most exciting phase, where the internal, abstract concept of the poem is attempting to materialise externally, where the mind is in negotiation with the world through the medium of language. What we call writing.

And it's been exciting to see how others have responded to the same themes in their own writing. Over the course of several months I led groups of young poets up onto those same moors – above Marsden, above Oxenhope, above Ilkley – and gave them no particular instruction other than to collect words. And from those words, firstly through writing exercises in workshops, then later in their own time and space, poems came into being, many of which are collected here in this anthology, and some of which will be carved onto stones and sited across the region.

Simon Armitage

Some of the young poets were already familiar with the Pennine landscape, but others had no experience of it whatsoever, and it was impossible not to giggle now and again at the sight of cool kids in expensive trainers picking their way through peaty bogs and along rocky escarpments, or to see carefully sculpted hairdos being blown every-which-way by the raging wind. But eye-opening, moving and inspiring to read poems of raw experience, personal insight and genuine feeling, and to see what impression the wild landscape had made on such vivid imaginations.

I think most of the young poets got something quite unique from their time among the rocks and the heather and the clouds, and have given us something quite unique in return in the form of their poems. And for that I thank them.

In Memory of Water



Simon Armitage

Stanza Stones
The Anthology



Simon Armitage

Dew

The tense stand-off
of summer's end,
the touchy fuse-wire
of parched grass,
tapers of bulrush and reed,
any tree
a primed mortar
of tinder, one spark
enough to trigger
a march on the moor
by ranks of flame.

Dew enters the field
under cover of night,
tending the weary and sapped,
lifting its thimble of drink
to the lips of a leaf,
to the stoat's tongue,
trimming a length of barbed-wire fence
with liquid gems, here
where bog-cotton
flags its surrender
or carries its torch
for the rain.

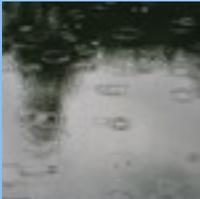
Then dawn, when sunrise
plants its fire-star
in each drop, ignites
each trembling eye.

Rain

Be glad
of these freshwater tears,
each pearled droplet
some salty old sea-bullet
air-lifted out of the waves,
then laundered and sieved,
recast as a soft bead
and returned.

And no matter how much
it strafes or sheets,
it is no mean feat
to catch one raindrop
clean in the mouth,
to take one drop
on the tongue, tasting
cloud-pollen,
grain of the heavens,
raw sky.

Let it teem, up here
where the front of the mind
distils
the brunt of the world.



Stanza Stones
The Anthology



Simon Armitage

Beck

It is all one chase.
Trace it back: the source
might be nothing more
than a teardrop
squeezed from a curlew's eye,
then follow it down
to the full-throated roar
at its mouth,
where a dipper
strolls the riverbed
dressed for dinner
in a white bib.

The unbroken thread
of the beck
with its nose for the sea,
all flux and flex,
soft-soaping a pebble
for over a thousand years,
or here
after hard rain
sawing the hillside in half
with its chain.
Or here,
where water unbinds
and hangs
over the waterfall's face,
and just for that one
stretched white moment
becomes lace.

Mist

Who does it mourn?
What does it mean,
such nearness,
gathering here
on high ground
while your back was turned,
drawing its net curtains around?
Featureless silver screen, mist
is water
in its ghost state,
all inwardness,
holding its milky breath,
veiling the pulsing machines
of great cities
under your feet,
walling you
into these moments,
into this anti-garden
of gritstone and peat.

Given time
the edge of your being
will seep
into its fibreless fur;
you are lost, adrift
in hung water and blurred air,
but you are here.



Stanza Stones
The Anthology



Simon Armitage

Snow

The sky has delivered
its blank missive.
The moor in coma.
Snow, like water asleep,
a coded muteness
to baffle all noise,
to stall movement,
still time.
What can it mean
that colourless water
can dream
such depth of white?
We should make the most
of the light.

Stars snag
on its crystal points.
The odd, unnatural pheasant
struts and slides.
Snow, snow, snow
is how the snow speaks,
is how its clean page reads.
Then it wakes, and thaws,
and weeps.

Puddle

Rain-junk.
Sky-litter.
Some May mornings
Atlantic storm-horses
clatter this way,
shedding their iron shoes
in potholes and ruts,
shoes that melt
into steel-grey puddles
then settle and set
into cloudless mirrors
by noon.

The shy deer
of the daytime moon
comes to sip from the rim.
But the sun
likes the look of itself,
stares all afternoon,
its hard eye
lifting the sheen
from the glass,
turning the glaze
to rust.
Then we don't see things
for dust.





Stanza Stones

The Anthology

Pip Hall

Pip Hall

Lettercarver

My task was to create a letterform for Simon's poetry and then go up onto the moors and carve it the old fashioned way with a hammer and chisel. Each letter took 15 minutes to carve but, before carving, all the letters had to be traced or drawn by hand (and then redrawn when a sudden downpour would wash away the outlines). And so just one stone took weeks on end to complete. I had two clear guidelines: first Simon preferred a neutral lettering style for his poems, and then there was the rough and rugged gritstone rock of the moor, into which I would be carving. The lettering I designed needed to be free of personality so that it wouldn't detract from, or suggest a lack in the poetry. And the rock surface, with its coarse texture and undulating contours ruled out the use of any expressive detail such as serifs, extremes in stroke-thickness or undue curving of lines.

This all pointed towards using a sans serif style, that is without feet at the ends of letterstrokes. My task was to devise a letterform that would act as a vessel for the poetry; sober in style, and yet able to reveal the poems directly to the readers with grace and clarity, allowing people their own understanding and interpretation.

I started drawing, and for inspiration I turned to some personal favourite sans serif types, in particular, the quietly neutral Lucida Sans. I drew the letters I needed for each poem, aiming at lightness and openness – and a certain robustness, bearing in mind the rigours of the rock surface for which I was designing – adapting the letter width and size according to how much space was available.

The layout of the poems on the stone was an equally collaborative process. I drew the lettering full-size onto ribbons of paper so it could be tried out for size on the stone, and I could make alterations, before I traced the words on for carving. I was influenced by the shape of the stones themselves and their surroundings, in the way I worked, and so, setting aside the conventions of the printed page's straight lines I allowed the natural contours of the rock to guide the words across rippling surfaces, around ridges and furrows. I was aiming to create something that was not only a reflection on the landscape, but would feel part of it too.

Photo: Pip Hall carving
the Mist Stone

On my paper copy the poems appeared as narrow columns of short lines. Written for what were likely to be landscape-format stones, Simon was happy to point out that his line-breaks weren't set in stone. Literally (well, almost: the line-breaks have been altered by the demands of the stone in all but one of the poems).

One of the most enjoyable aspects of the project was being involved in this metamorphosis of the poems from typescript to the realm of landscape, and witnessing how the stones we'd chosen played their part in our designs. On one occasion, the positioning of a phrase across a characterful gap in the gritstone suggested to Simon that a particular word was no longer needed: it was promptly removed – a poetic example of the transformative powers of rock.



Stanza Stones

The Anthology



Pip Hall

Photos: Above – Pip Hall and Simon Armitage preparing stones for carving
Snow. Left – Pip and Simon on a wet and misty Nab Hill



Stanza Stones

The Anthology

Introduction

Tom Lonsdale

Landscape Architect Consultant

My two main hobbies are motor-cycling and hill walking so, when Ilkley Literature Festival asked me would I travel around the Pennines looking for likely places to carve Simon's poems into rock, it's not hard to understand why I agreed! Map-reading was my first pleasurable task, plotting places to look, then it was out on the bike to promising locations for a shortlist. Then things got even better as I walked with Simon to test his reaction. A few produced a thumbs down but more produced a thumbs up, depending on whether he was "feeling the love" for the place.

The bread and butter part of the job was to obtain a string of permissions from landowners and statutory bodies such as Natural England, who are rightly watchful of anybody interfering with Sites of Special Scientific Interest. I need not have worried: everyone I asked thought the project a peach and, with a few conditions about bird nesting season, gave all the sites their approval.

"It cannot get any better," I thought, but I was wrong: Pip Hall was appointed as the letter-cutter and we were bowled over by what she brought to the project. Simon and Pip were quite capable of sorting out the style and spacing of the lettering without me but witnessing their discussions was irresistible and my third hobby of photography came in handy to record Pip's work.

Once the sites were fixed I started to devise a walking trail. Out came the maps and then the walking boots to check my directions made sense even to inexperienced navigators, then finally a spell on the computer to write it all up and draw some map diagrams.

This enchanting project differs from most in my previous forty years as a Landscape Architect but has brought me closer to the land and its spirit than any.



Young people from Calderdale Young Writers and Sheffield Young Writers visit Pule Hill with Simon Armitage

CALDERDALE YOUNG WRITERS

We meet once a fortnight on Mondays from 7pm-9pm at Hebden Bridge Library to write and discuss poetry. There are six of us. We are between the ages of 15 and 18 and hail from various schools and colleges in and around Calderdale.

Writers James Nash, Gen Walsh, Andrew Mcmillan and Rosie Lugosi have all worked with the group during this project.

"Going out on the moors was great, especially in a different context and taking what I got from the moors and putting it on paper."

Poppy Turner

"Although it was cold it was very inspiring."

Izzy Turner

Stanza Stones
The Anthology

Calderdale
Young Writers



Ilkley Moor

Strip back the earthy skin,
uproot this vegetable sinew;
ancient in this ragged wound
is nature's skeleton of stone.

Tearing the surface, bleakly,
these jutting promontories: the crown,
cradled, silent, in barren lands
in which a song of time is writ.

The imprint of man's hand
engraved shallowly in rock;
the names will wear away
but always spring will come again.

Dylan Wilby



*"The experience of being in the group,
and taking part in the workshops
is inspiring. Since I joined the Hebden
Bridge stanza stones, words have
taken on a new meaning."*

Jasmine Simms



Stanza Stones
The Anthology



*Calderdale
Young Writers*

Rosa

I'm sorry.
My love, my stone –
it was never your fault,
or mine,
but both.

I didn't mean to break you.
I just remembered the night
when I stood in the dim light
and played through a fog of smoke
to a crowd who didn't care.

You were an antique, an heirloom,
a wreck.
An old woman.
But I loved you anyway,
then I snapped your neck and crushed
your silver mouth.

Because the song you sang
was only beautiful
to me.

Because I listened,
and the world didn't

David Lawton

I see for miles, beyond the moor

I see for miles, beyond the moor
beyond the sheep in the field
and the house on the other side of the valley,
though really I see nothing at all.

They come to me for salvation
to be rid of the harshness of the world
to be free and alive
at least for a little while.

My time is short, although I feel everlasting
nothing is permanent.
I will erode and disintegrate
'til I am sand floating in the wind.

That is the cruelty of reality.

Isobel Turner



Stanza Stones
The Anthology



*Calderdale
Young Writers*

The Mortal

A wind tumbles over the heather,
lifts something from under the rocks
which kisses the dusk momentarily,
and returns.

A man uncurls, and rises
from his resting place amongst the reeds.
His shadow rolling over like a tidal wave,
engulfing any doubt within his presence.

Perhaps he shouts then, but no one hears.
How long has he been there?
Playing roulette in honest fury
with the face of the moors.

His life unfolded before him
as an even grace.
A slowly drawn frustration – given, then taken.
Mortal.

Jasmine Simms

On That Hillside

Maybe when that rain washes away our footsteps,
Maybe then we can forget,
The days that we once walked up here,
And that now painful moment that we met.

Perhaps each bright green blade of grass,
Now so clear in my mind,
Will perhaps one day begin to blur,
Till there's no feeling left for me to find.

Can you still hear the birdsong,
As it whistles through the air,
As I'm looking for you on that hillside?
Yet I know you're no longer there.

You never replied to those words I once spoke,
When I gave you confessions of love,
You just sat there all silent and watching,
That glorious sunset above.

Will others share the sun up there?
Will it be light or love which leaves them blind?
Will others tread those footsteps
I cannot leave behind?

Just like the way those rivers ran,
We slowly flowed apart.
You were just like the rocks of the hillsides,
Solid, cold and lacking a heart.

Maybe when that rain washes away our footsteps,
Maybe when the tears stop,
I'll sit on my own on that hillside,
And watch the sunlight drop.

Chad Burney



Stanza Stones
The Anthology



*Calderdale
Young Writers*

Crow Poem

In the morning, they fly.
I, pinned to the ground,
Am a traitor.
I cannot fly, I cannot struggle,
I cannot try.
The wind pities me, lifts me,
Cannot support my awkward,
Solid bulk,
Drops me

In the evening, they fly
Although among them are those
Who will fly no longer

In the evening, their harsh voices grating
At my guilty conscience,
We cry.

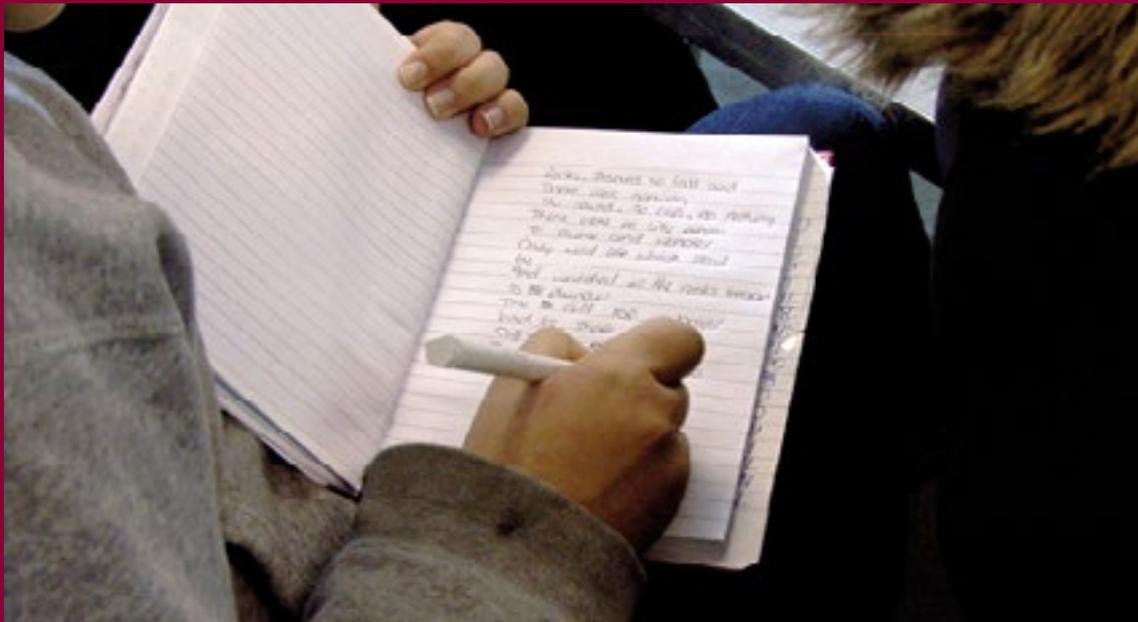
Lady Gaga Visits Pule Hill

Chased by wolves
Across the moor
In a top notch beef dress.
Two days later,
Sadly,
There is nothing left.

Poppy Turner



Leeds Young Authors visit Ilkely Moor



Leeds Young Authors in a master class with Simon Armitage

Leeds Young Authors

Leeds Young Authors (LYA) was founded in 2003 by poet and playwright Khadijah Ibrahiim. LYA promotes positive social dialogue among young people through the written and spoken word.

Around 25 young people meet every Tuesday from 6-8pm at the Host Media Centre in Leeds. LYA focuses on creative writing, spoken word/performance poetry and poetry slams, to dispel the myths among young people that poetry is an outmoded form of literary and artistic expression.

Leeds Young Authors runs creative writing projects out-of-school and in schools and gives young people the opportunity to develop their artistic abilities as confident writers, live performers and as essential contributors to the literary continuum.

Leeds Young Authors has gained many accolades and awards for its work:

1st UK slam team @ Brave New Voices (USA)

Voted in the top 10 National Arts Projects Heritage Lottery 2007

1st Place UK national winner - Word Cup poetry slam 2010

We Are Poets - Sheffield film doc youth jury winners 2011

Founders of 'Voices of a New Generation National Team Slam fest 2004

www.leedsyoungauthors.org.uk

www.facebook.com/lyapoets

"It was a new experience for me, to actually be out on the moors and take notes and ideas for a poem directly related to the moors."

Paris Kaur-spencer

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Leeds Young Authors



Field

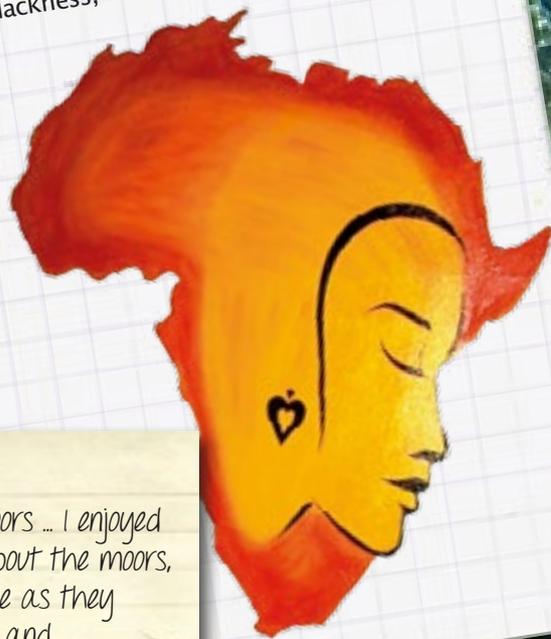
An empty field
like a blank sheet of crystal white paper,
glistening in the pupil of the sun
like an innocent schoolgirl,
yet the innocence lies in the eye of the beholder.
When she walks home at three o'clock
is a very different walk from where she walks at midnight.
You'll fail to see the freckles on her face behind her dark head.
This field,
it awaits the shadowy darkness to cover it,
like the black ink of a ballpoint scratching its way across the once clean sheets.
As the sun goes down
the innocent that once lingered
turns into something more sinister,
scribbling unreadable words over the paper.
All that lingers are her torn schoolbooks
and her shadowy figure slowly fading into blackness,
but as the sun comes back up
a new page is turned over
and the schoolgirl will walk along,
with all her innocence,
like an empty field,
glistening like a blank sheet
of crystal white paper.

Shaliyah Grant

"I really liked it up on the moors ... I enjoyed it because you could learn about the moors, watch and laugh with people as they struggled against the wind, and the workshop was really creative."

Jacob Sharry-Broderick

Key Young Writers
sent us
chocolate cake



Stanza Stones

The Anthology



Leeds Young Authors

The Stage

Mixtures of both warm
and cold are located
within the centre.
My place is strange,
attractive yet has
a sting like a
scorpion. Only
is ever seen out
in the late night.

As people watch
and gain its
inspiration and
positive energy.
Smart and silver
glittery clothing is
all that is found
in its wardrobe. The
MP3 tracks on its
iPod would be from
dramatic opera,
catchy musical theatre
songs.

Entertainment is the
Word, place of where
most stars shine.

Jamal Gerald

Yah Ge Mi

I come from Africa!!

I come from Africa!!

I come from Ghana's beautiful Asante Kingdom. The Goldsmiths are constantly pressured to make pendants of the finest quality.

I come from shimmering royalty where the silver rolls, songs run like water and the music pumps through the heavy, dense air.

I come from a land where the fast, frantic dance is second nature and the sun beats down on the exotic land, no fertilisers needed.

People jam down the dusty road, regardless of the time. Angels float above singing melodies as soft as the wind but as loud as a whale.

I come from a proud nation, where Empires fall and rise. The flowers, radiant as the sun so bright, can be seen from miles away.

This place is the land of kings. Fear is outnumbered by hope, hate is defeated by joy. I come from Africa!

Africa is my home, now and forever.
No matter where I am, my heart lies in Africa!

Jacob Sharry-Broderick



Stanza Stones
The Anthology



Leeds Young Authors

Prison Cell

This place of no wind,
just dust and dry skin,
a restless sloth,
slow,
yet full of anxiety,
anticipating fate,

a place of 24 hours,
no indication of morning, noon or night,
and the sun?

A mere four grey walls here,
that neither rise, nor set,
a suffocating straight jacket,
consuming the body and mind
to a pit of despair,

a place that hums silence with a haunting breath,
and lacks the ability to pause, and stop.
Hell! A solemn hell,
this barren pitiful cell.

Tavelah Robinson

I travelled to Britain soaring

I travelled to Britain soaring
over buildings and past the
sweet cotton candy like
clouds and I shed a tear
missing home but also bursting
with excitement to explore this
new wonderland, I can't help
but notice the weather
is like a woman in a shopping
store. It can't decide what it
wants rain or sunshine and
when I get outside
the airport it's pouring when
I go into my new house it's
sunny and fantastic. I come from
a place where people are jolly
and have a skip in every
step they take and a oops
in every glass they break, hoodies
walking around like soulless
monsters but when they take
their coats off you think what

there a guy I wanna
be friends with. Oh Britain
outside your city lights glistening
through the
rain never giving up your
spark. I come lars from cars
creeping slowly like green slimy
lizards on the black-as-
coal tarmac road, and the
dustbins talk trash to the
revving parked motor bikes.
Oh Britain with your corner shop
pick and mix sweets, graffiti
bus stops and bangers and mash
though not as good
as battered fish and chips.
I come from a terraced house
with a miniature African field –
stalks of corn, fresh greens and
plump tomatoes – growing in this
place that is now my new house.
Oh Britain!

Josiah Ndlovo



Stanza Stones
The Anthology



Leeds Young Authors

I come from dutchpot mutten and cantors fish

I come from dutch pot mutten and cantors fish
and nanna's Sunday dinner on the jet
black dish.

Potternewton parks smell of burnt eyries, rottweilers,
bulldogs and Ociana flyers.

Cracks in path that break your mum's back,
men in hoodies walking round with big moving
sacks.

I come from a diamond encrusted sand and a
blue blanket sea.

Palm trees swaying to the reggae melody.

I come from the mustard Sun melting
behind the waves.

I am 50% British,
25% Jamiacan,
25% St Kitts and 100% Vasana-Lee.

Vasana-Lee Williams

These cracks in the rocks are history

These cracks in the rocks are history
Memories hiding and decaying in the walls of wisdom
Engraved on wooden benches
Brian and Joseph in death as in life they roamed these very same moors
Like Charles Nelson and Frank they made their names known to history
Embedded in the rocks in the mind they fed his-story, their stories, parts of their life
They taught us how to laugh, smile and cry
Now when tears flood to loved ones' eyes
History cries puddles of memories
So when visitors come they remember them
Through water and rocks
These people are mysteries
Of a normal day in Ilkley.

Abena Weston



Stanza Stones
The Anthology



Leeds Young Authors

I Can Hear the Past

Untouched by human carnage,
there's not many places like this
where I stand alone,
eyes closed, arms outstretched, head back, I
am free.

There's no bounds of society or of
how I should be.

There's no thoughts in my head but my own.

The wind forbids me to hear others

All reaching out past my fear.

Out on a rock

I am higher than any heap of clothes on my floor.

I watch as people below me move in
and out of each other, like ants in a colony.

Deep breaths, as the wind washes me
like an impatient wet-nurse, it scours me,

ridding me of the germs from the city,

every stitch in my hoodie is shaken

like a baby's rattle.

My hair whips
round my neck like an
unwoven scarf
warm and soft.
I long to engrave my mark upon a rock's face
like so many before me have.
They are the words on a gravestone
in our beloved world,
a mother
to us all
even after we have
ripped up trees,
suffocated her airways, packed her full of concrete;
we have scarred her face forever until her beauty and her freedom
is only a memory
forever fading over time but never truly lost.

Paris Kaur-Spencer



Stanza Stones
The Anthology



Leeds Young Authors

Environment

What do you think when you hear the word *environment*?
Do you think of greenhouse gases destroying the ozone layer?
Do you think of the oil leaks
engulfing our oceans in a black mist?
Or do you think of your home environment,
the place where you grew up,
the tranquil or hectic house
filled with love.
Your environment helps mould your mind
into a model citizen,
your environment is where you live
and respect for your home is respect for our home.
The litter filling the seas
creating pollution and disease,
the smog in China
creating a blanket of poison, obscuring our vision of the earth,
these problems are then shrunk by the media.
Problems once big are now so small
it is as though we are looking at them through the wrong end of a telescope.
How can a new generation grow in a world getting smaller?

Nathaniel Benson

Existence

I may be one being,
But I am made of many.

I come from the heart of industry,
Of centuries' wealth.
I hail from hope,
I spring from glory.
Stand too close and you may just
Catch the
Clanking
Of the ancient machines
Coursing through my veins.

And yet
I come from a land of placid beauty,
Of wide expanse,
Of priceless freedom.
A link so strong it is woven into the very fabric
Of my existence.
I come from a land where the beauty of reality
Is normality,
I come from a land where its very soul resides
In the notes gliding across the strings
Of some bohemian violin.

Horsehair on metal
Flour on millstones
Sunlight on water
Silence on cacophony
For these were the basis
For that first spark
That ignited into the flame
Of my soul.

And sometimes
Just sometimes
You hear the glory, the power,
The industry
Collide
With the silence, the beauty,
The music
To form the incessant pound
Of my heartbeat.

Marion Smith



Stanza Stones
The Anthology



Leeds Young Authors

I Open the Box

I open the box and suddenly A SNEEZE
A glass of thoughts sat on my lap for a moment.
I look through a wall of transparency,
I only see darkness.
Darkness that only listens to me sing a symphony
With only my voice,
I am content with the being of my inhibitions.
I only see what is away from me.
I can't touch it.
Nor feel it.
I only taste the sweetness –
I trickle my nose,
and I am only in my own work of Art!

Tila Robinson

My Interesting Identity

I'm a black and loving person with flowers in my soul.

I'm not a calculator and I'm not a blank piece of paper,
but I am smart.

I'm an African palm tree moving in the wind leaving leaves behind from bad memories.

I can sometimes be a pain like African mosquitoes nibbling upon your skin,
my name is unique like every grain of sand in Africa
sunbathing under the bright sun light.

I am the outside of a coconut growing on a tall stiff African tree and the inside is my warm milky heart.

I am a shell lying in the middle of Ethiopia beach singing along to the sea.

I am the bark of a palm tree connecting my family together with my roots popping up as high as possible.

I

I'm the queen of sun shining everybody's world with flames of light.

I am sugar cane tasting and smelling sweet.

I think of myself as an angel bringing happiness to earth, making it into a joyful heaven.

And that's who I am and if you don't understand these words you don't understand me.

Bobbi-Lea Powell



SHEFFIELD YOUNG WRITERS

Stanza Stones
The Anthology

*Sheffield
Young Writers*

Sheffield Young Writers is a writing group for young people (aged 14–18) from in and around Sheffield. The group, which started in 2005, supports young people to develop as writers through a range of creative writing workshops with regular and visiting writers and through related writing projects and opportunities. The group has around 17 members and meets informally on Wednesday evenings in the Central Library in Sheffield.

SYW is part of a South Yorkshire network of young writers groups run by Signposts. The groups come together and share their writing through open mics, publications and cultural visits.

www.signpostsonline.org

*"Writers is a place I can
be myself and not worry
what everyone thinks."*



Sleepers

They say sleepers dwell in these hills,
Amongst carnivorous rocks
Moulding babies from spoil.

They watch fossils form from man-made rocks,
Eroding their beds into rubble.

Men are eating themselves.

Cry in peat holes sleepers.
Taste fire made to conquer destruction.
Feed upon heather charred,
and listen to your children burning.

Burning in this world.

Jessie Smith

"Writers is a nice
escape from stress
and school work,
it's great to have a
place to just explore a
shared love of English
when it's not about
deadlines or essays."



Stanza Stones
The Anthology



*Sheffield
Young Writers*

The Artist

The morning air is brisk, and this man,
Well, he just wants to take the risk
Does it for the thrill,
The feeling he gets,
When he's finally up there, on the edge,
Balanced on that tiny rocky ledge.
It doesn't matter which one,
Not to him.
As long as there's space, and it's quiet, it doesn't matter.
Not to him.
This morning, it's Pule Hill.
But as he always says, it makes no difference.
"Just another theatre in which to perform,
Another gallery in which to display my... art."
For him, it's always just another challenge to face,
Just another canvas on which he'll bare his "grace".
So he sets off, no safety equipment,
No baggage which he might resent,
Just him, on the cliff,
Clinging on,
With both elegance and effort
Vital, to ensure the absence of a mess up.
For almost an half an hour,
Even through that 7:37 shower,
He battles,
And he struggles,
Working his way up, and up,
Higher and higher,
Into the sky,
Almost.

But then he stops.
An observer might think he was stuck,
Or was unsure of his next step.
He pulls out his tools,
The only equipment he ever chooses to use.
He's done this before, it's obvious,
The way he simply glides across the rocks,
With no care,
For his safety,
Or what might be,
If he were to, say, slip.
Within minutes he's done,
An hour hard work, round trip,
Just to create that masterpiece,
That a person couldn't miss.
Upon return to the ground,
He stands back,
Grins, then brushes off the muck,
For there, scrawled out on the mighty rock,
Is now stained for evermore,
The words: "JewBoy was 'ere, 1994"

Josh Fogg



Stanza Stones
The Anthology



*Sheffield
Young Writers*

Earth

Dig my hands into the peat
Ebony dirt under my nails
Swallowed by soil
I want to become this place.
Dark and rich
Damp and cool
Vegetating, swelling
Returning to the earth
Which birthed me.

Moor

Here is perennial
Refined wilderness
Surrounded by solidity
Corralled by history
I cannot fly, instead
I am absorbed,
Embedded.

Lyz Brown

The Visit

This visit is unknown,
Cold. Unplanned.
I am drowning
In the sheer
Brutality of its existence.
Of
The realisation that
Here
I live utterly within a crowd.
That here, I am
Seen and yet unseen,
Heard and yet unheard.
Completely, utterly,
Alone.

I pick up
Bundles
Of wool, roll them
Between my fingers until
They are soft with
Grease. I wonder if I
Wipe it on my cracked, groaning
Boots I'll walk on water,
Or clouds. Maybe
It'll stop my lips from bleeding.

This has the
Crack
Of marrow between
Pearly White jaws.
The hush of a breath through
The cotton grass.
The extinct
Howl of freedom.
The warmth of peat.
And,
Sheets of rain
Hammering into lanolin-soaked
Skin.
The essence of being,
All drawn from our wounds until
They are scars.

Chloe Nicholson



Stanza Stones
The Anthology



*Sheffield
Young Writers*

The Moor

I envy the Moorlands.
The harsh habitat for those most deserving,
Open and accepting,
With that stinging slap of wind to redden the cheeks.
Hair thrashing to and fro,
Twirling strands escaping away to the skies.
The blistering chill
Rattling your bones, as arms hug tight for protection.
A lonely speck upon the vast rash of heather,
No contest.
Knees buried in the past echoes of legs wading through the elements.

Sudden gales bring you fragments of speech,
Lost through time.
The steps you take have been pursued before.
That stone has caused many a fall.
The buildings grow higher and wider, petrol chugs and pollutes,
But not the moorlands.
No.
Wild rocks stand proud
Over the miles of terrain, the miles of history that dominate.

Who can know the secrets in those waist-high branches;
The unscathed egg, aloof from the nest,
The forgotten shoe, victim of a marshy struggle,
The crouched skeletal figure, years past animation,
Lost through time? Preserved for eternity.

Zoe Wilkinson

Pule Hill

for those few minutes
I was happy
surrounded
by the hills, the rocks, the clouds
I didn't remember the hell
waiting at home
I felt less alone
than I did surrounded by family

I cared for nothing
other than the there and then
I didn't feel the cold
biting at me
or the rain
drowning my skin

The freedom the open space brought
was the most free I've ever felt
light, giddy, happy
free from the anxiety
the paranoia
the panic

I felt the most alive
that I had in weeks
I enjoyed being alive
I wanted to stay alive

the relief
the heavy emotions lifting off me
was better than I'd thought it could be

out there in the middle
of nowhere
surrounded by people
I know love me
as much as I do them

we turned back
and I fell
down to the sodden peat
remembering
feeling
the anxiety
paranoia
and depression
take hold

Beth Dudley



Stanza Stones
The Anthology



*Sheffield
Young Writers*

An Ode to Pule Hill

The rocks themselves form love letters.
So finally I can
fold other papers into five,
rip along the lines.
The fire loves the headlines.
You loved them too.
I give the bright coloured
confetti of magazines a marriage
of sky and earth to try instead.
I am divorcing the news today –

this place asks nature of me.
These inverted grass foundations can
seal the cracks in their decaying lives.
Just like it holds me now,
on a stubborn, folding church,
cradles me now,
on rolling rock vertices,
as purple bracken swallows me now,
into the folds of a new line:

because from here I can see
the back of my head.

Clare Carlile



A member of Leeds Young Authors
on a visit to Ilkley Moor

ILKLEY YOUNG WRITERS

"Roll up, roll up! For only £1 a week, wherever you live, if you can get yourself to Ilkley this fantastic deal could be yours. Writing! Biscuits! Juice! If you come to Christchurch Hall in Ilkley at 6.30pm any Monday before the end of the world, we'll throw in a free zumba band. Take part in activities such as - guided writing, themed sessions, group activities, writing poetry and performance. Eighteen lucky people aged 12-17 from seven different schools have already snapped up this fantastic offer.."

Ilkley Young Writers is open to anyone aged 12-17 who loves writing. It is run by Ilkley Literature Festival and led by Michelle Scalley Clarke, author, playwright, performer, creative writing and performance facilitator and Becky Cherriman writer, performer and creative writing facilitator.

www.ilkleyliteraturefestival.org.uk

Best Moments

"The exercises that Simon Armitage gave out to us, that was great."

Naomi Burns

"I loved the movement dance workshop because everyone was really welcoming and nice plus I love to dance."

Orla Regan

Stanza Stones
The Anthology

Ilkley Young Writers



The Crazy Man's Ballad

Based on Ilkley Moors

I am the man they call crazy
I wander my woods alone
If you're lost then come to me
And listen to my tone

If you dreamt you were a butterfly
A philosopher once said
Would you think you were yourself, dreaming of the butterfly?
Or the butterfly dreaming of you instead?

Wusha wusha my wicked wood
You loved me from the start
Dark moor forest trooping north
Towards my cold stone heart

Take the path to left, not right
If you understand my woe
A stranger new is only lost
If they declare it so

My wicked wood is thorned black or white
Depending on how you see
Is necromancy (with a waltz)
The same as dancing with me?

My wicked wood could be silver or gold
Speckled with rose lightning dew
Is necromancy (with a waltz)
The same as dancing with you?

Amy Luxton

Very cold and muddy!

Sam reading at the
Stanza Stones Showcase



"I have found nature inspirational. We went onto the moor and did workshops with other dancers and writers and performed at the Ilkley Playhouse which was fantastic."
Sam Fletcher

"It was awesome and I have written stuff I have never written about before"
Charlotte Hall

Stanza Stones
The Anthology



Ilkley Young Writers

The Crying Valley

In the raw of twilight, the servant girl charged
through the violet heather
her pale blue cloak sweeping against the earth.
The woven basket that was packed with crab apples
shook violently in the October wind.

The heather rustled

The sky darkened

The heather stopped

The trees swayed

She knew that nobody ever came out for fresh air
in mid-October. It was out of the question.

Madame said it was the bitter chill that dulled the villagers.

The clouds passed

The ferns danced

The wind howled

The pheasants cried

It couldn't be, the girl thought. She had no courage to speak
or to whisper. Nor did she have the courage to look behind.
She stiffened and walked on rushing through the iciness
that circled the air as if she was being followed.

The basket quivered as the girl pursed her parched, arid lips.

She couldn't cry now. That was the worst thing to do.

She opened her eyes gently. It was like being whipped
on the back of the neck, the reed clutched in raw fingers.

The cloak flapped

The basket dropped

The girl fell

The pheasants flew

Orla Regan

No Accident

Nature.
No Accident.
Amphitheatre of rock,
Patronising.

Wind,
Screams through branches,
Shoves, punches me,
Violent.

Gritstone,
Grates my skin,
Coarse, rough,
Proud.

Grass,
Nature's carpet,
Thick beneath my feet,
Soft.

View,
Infinite horizon,
Outlook-changing beauty,
Breath-stealing.

Nature.
For now,
An uncorrupted Oasis,
On a wretched planet,
Peace,
Tranquility,
She doesn't care about:
Wealth,
Nationality,
Race.
She treats us equally.

Nature,
No Accident.
No Prejudice.
Living, Breathing,
Not lost yet

Sam Fletcher



Stanza Stones
The Anthology



Ilkley Young Writers

The Moor, The Moor

The moor, the moor,
The beautiful moor.
A dreamy lonely beautiful moor,
A place to walk or chat or play,
A place to watch animals all day,
Go for a hike or a gentle stroll,
Have a picnic for your brunch.
The moor, the moor,
The beautiful moor.

Ella Sanderson

My Ilkley Moor Experience

I look down at smooth rock face; see birds and rabbits and insects,
Sound of laughter, love and life, as I watch people scanning the landscape
The sweet scent of natural freedom bombards my nose
My mouth filled with fresh air rejoices my throat
The grass, stone touching skin really starting t'annoy me.

Oliver Gibbs

The Power on the Moor

It seems like I'm alone up here, but I'm not.
There's something else, that's older and bigger than me
That resounds around the air
Like a giant's breathing.

It advances from the horizon and races across its land,
Bending the hunchbacked trees that cling to slopes with roots as strong as shoelaces,
Summoning swarms of dust to dance into the sky,
Its icy fingers carving out the cliff,
Crumbling it like the ruins of a castle,
And yet, somehow, it guards it more fiercely than anything could.

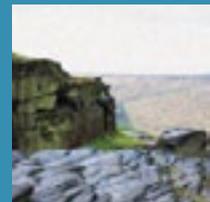
Guards the moor against the trespassers, attackers,
Who scratch scars into the rock, their crooked letters like clawmarks
To prove they were there,
Or to leave a message for others,
People like me.

Maybe one day my name will join the signatures of generations
Which the power on the moor has tried so valiantly to hold back.
It couldn't stop them – or me. I'm here. But it hasn't lost yet –

The cliff roars and the air is swept from my mouth as those unstoppable giant's breaths billow
Through my hair, my coat, seizing my scarf and flinging it back over my shoulder, as if it wants
To blow me right over the edge, off its land – trespasser.
Everything I can hide behind is blown away.
I am exposed, I am alone.

It seems like I'm alone up here, but I'm not.
There's something else that's older and bigger than me,
As powerful and eternal as the tide.
It wants to get rid of me, but I'm no trespasser,
I just came to look, to marvel, to laugh
As the air might laugh,
That giant's breathing in the sky.
It won't stop me, after all.
It's only the wind.

Rachel Burns



Stanza Stones

The Anthology



Ilkley Young Writers

Low Wood

The warmth of summer caused by cerulean skies is
A cute and cuddly hedgehog that's spiky
Which is just around ten in the morning, or
A lilac ballerina's tutu of netting, meaning
A little extra percussion in Spring of the Four Seasons,
Just like a calm, sophisticated word.
But it will *never* be a canary.

Charlotte Hall

The Unseen Moor

The people below; they laugh and they play,
The trees up above; they dance and they sway,
The sounds of the birds with their calls and their cries,
The wind whistling round my ears and in my eyes.

The freshness of grass and the wind and the rain,
The freshness of happiness and freedom and gain,
The wondrous feeling on the end of my tongue,
Blue sky, wind, air and the sense of good fun.

The warmth of the sun bearing down on my back,
The warmth of happiness and the weight of my sack,
The trees still sway not feeling a thing,
They can't see the world they're living in.

Naomi Burns

I feel like the lone daisy

I feel like the lone daisy;
Perched, friendless amid the long grass
I feel like the heather;
Straggling yet sturdy, growing out
Of a crevice in the imposing rock

I feel like the leaning tree;
Bowed down by the ferocity of the wind and time
I feel like the scattered pinecones;
Small, inconspicuous, taken for granted,
Part of the background

I feel like the dead bracken;
Windswept, trodden on, pushed
Aside after brief glory
I feel like the rusty litter;
Out of place, abandoned where no-one
Wants me to be, ugly, detested.

I feel isolated,
desolated.

I feel free.
Free from my metal box
Where I'm shut up inside, 24/7
Whilst receiving signals from the outside world
The truth broadcasted through blue sky.
In storms the aerial sways,
Giving faulty connections, like the
Faulty connections that happen
every day in my life.
But maybe the truth broadcasted
Is really lies.
Would we be better off without the lies?
Up here I think so.
Up here I feel isolated,
desolated.
Up here I feel free.

Mairenn Collins



Stanza Stones

The Anthology



Ilkley Young Writers

The Amphitheatre of Rock

I am the man they call crazy,
living in an amphitheatre of rock.
There's no sound of laughter, love or life.
Will there ever be the warmth of summer,
cerulean skies?
Not where I am.
They say I'm crazy
because I feel like a lone daisy,
perched amid the long grass.
Perhaps I feel like the heather, struggling yet sturdy,
my pale blue cloak sweeping against the earth.
I weep for comfort, a desperate need.
Why am I stood on like an insignificant weed,
despised by those who breathe?
Why do I feel as if I'm in a coffin,
a constant cry of birds in a small space?
I do not know of wealth or freedom, why would I?
The moor, the moor, the beautiful moor.
I am the man they call crazy.
This coffin is not sweet, there is no smell.
I am secluded, hurt and, to others, madly unwell.
Why can't I sing another song in my head?
Why the cry of birds? Why not the music's words?
Perhaps the Spring of Four Seasons.
Do there have to be reasons?
I'm not afraid to say
as I lie on this honey-coloured hay,
I will never be a canary.

Group poem, Ilkley Young Writers



Young writers from Tadeeb International New Writers' Project, Leeds Young Authors and Ilkley Young Writers enjoy a master class with Simon Armitage

Tadeeb International New Writers' Project

Tadeeb International New Writers' Project was formed as an adjunct to the dual-language (Urdu-English) journal, Tadeeb International, in order to foster new writing. In the several years of its existence, it has met at the University of Bradford, with the blessing of The School of Lifelong Learning and Development.

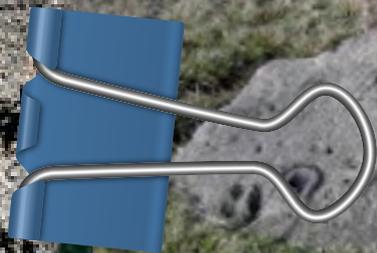
At present, there are nine active participants. Our meetings take the form of an open forum - no holds barred on what is discussed - personal, political, artistic, etc.

We share our latest poetry with each other and this always leads to discussion about the form and meanings of the pieces, what prompted them, and how they could be improved or developed.

www.tadeeb.com

Stanza Stones
The Anthology

Tadeeb International
New Writers' Project



We've all appreciated the chance to get out onto the moors, meet and discuss with members of other groups and enjoyed the insights and opportunities offered by Simon Armitage's workshops. Most of our Stanza Stones Anthology poetry sprang directly from the workshops.

The Showcase was a great occasion to share our poetry with the other groups and theirs with us.

Everyone at the workshop with the Leeds film students found it fascinating to make the crossover into visualisation of the written word and are looking forward to the next stages of this part of the project.

On the moors we felt the connections with the past through the graffiti, the feeling of freedom in the wider spaces and the chance to reflect on our lives and the world from outside the normal routine.

Greed

I stare at my two rain clouds Two –
too many to be allowed. You both
decorate my sky. Yet you both
cloud my mind

rain clouds, my two rain clouds,
both my true rain clouds.
You descend and relieve my scorching skin.
You bring new life when doubt sinks in.

But there is land untouched and dry. Thirst
dying for your powers and might I expel you,
rain cloud? Never come back. Bless a new
sky. Never come back.

Now, will my sole cloud still make the trees grow high? Will it
still heal the land when it runs dry?

Rain cloud, please come back.

Govinda Lakha

Razia Afzal reading at the
Stanza Stones showcase



Stanza Stones

The Anthology



*Tadeeb International
New Writers' Project*

Untitled

'carrot or coriander me love, with a buttered bun?'
on the cushioned grass we lay once,
the damp patch wet my bum; I watched as he
lay down a soft white linen sheet
his mouth curled into an 'O' as he spoke
and the moment felt wry, as if the damp
clogged up my throat, yet
he spoke silkily, softly,
so solemn despite the cool wet wind.

Ayesha Hussain

Gravitas

Trapped,
caught spinning in the wind,
wings outstretched,
we begin this thing properly.
Fear's my autograph.
Hear my maxims as fact;
nothing but me and the wind.
But that's what's stopping me.

Stuck in the air
a predatory offering
from the offspring of an osprey
struck while singing
this kite's flight
unravelling from its strings,
inked quill plucked.
Carved on a canvas of granite
pale letters engraved
on slabs of grey.
Shaded equally,
dusk steals light
from day again.

On dusty shelves
in an office space
miles away
far from this place,
two jars sat facing...
The first held a monarch butterfly,
eyes glittering, dreams fading,
a living photograph.
Captured.
All of that...

The other stores a dragonfly,
paper-clipped
wings hidden,
drawn-behind curtains,
its future uncertain.
Don't be perturbed,
instead, chase a pursed kiss,
burst raincloud's
first instance;
dripping instincts.

Tectonic plates shift,
the cliff-face drifts apart
cracking a gap-toothed smile
with stone-trapped
turnstile wild.
Arterial lead
something worth mining;
blood from stone
times ad infinitum.
Barrel-rolling easily in the night sky,
bats' shrieks shrill upon high;
blinded by light, dawn broke,
shattering guile with divine might.

Hindsight's the right one.

Qasim Shafiq



Stanza Stones
The Anthology



*Tadeeb International
New Writers' Project*

ان اونھے بہاروں پر میں کب کیسے آگئی؟
یو ہیرو سے دنیا کو دکھائی رہی۔
ایسے لگ رہا ہے جیسے ایک بادشاہ ایسے جہاں
کھ دیکھ رہا ہے۔
کیا یہ وہی دنیا ہے جس سے میں آئی ہوں؟
اس دنیا میں اور اُس دنیا میں جس آسماں کا فرق
ہے۔
بہاں کی ہوائیں وہ چور کر اور سینے سے لگا کے
غرض اُپر کہتی ہیں۔
ایسے لگ رہا ہے کہ میں ہواوں میں ہوں
میری وہ ہواوں میں لہرا رہی ہے۔
کیسے کوئی اس جنت کو چھو کر واپس
اپنی دنیا میں جا سکتا ہے؟
دل چاہتا ہے کہ ان بہاروں کے ساتھ مل کر ایک
پر جاؤں۔

Untitled

When and how I arrived to this place I do not know,
I stand here on these hills stunned with fascination,
The wind meets me with a warm embrace and a kiss on the cheek,
and then whisks me away with it as it travels up the hills.
The grass is underneath my feet but my spirits are flying high with the wind.
I stroll over the hills and look down towards the land and it feels like I'm a
king looking down upon his kingdom
I find it hard to believe that this heaven is part of the world that I have come from,
Yet the difference between this world and my world is like the distance
between these hills and the sky above it
How can this be?
How can anybody leave this heaven and return back to their average land,
My wish is to become one with this land.

Tayaba Fiza

Sulking Winds

Erratic and magnetic winds begin to murmur and hurdle towards me.
He shifts the aligned elements of ballistic parasites that re-fine the flashed hordes beneath the skin.
It whistles in my ear, as a midnight shape-shift is breathing underneath man-made materials.
A connection is intervened with nature and man, as I reside the precautions of machines.
Humans carve their memorials above heaps of silver dusted stones; as I touch each daunted carved message, I begin to see images of the travellers before me, the birth of the seed, as I undermine the instituted vibe.

“1850” signals a straight message, which is nearer to home, as he never came alone, always with his former friends; created social isolation as the journey continues.
The Easter Island heads, caressing each tribe, which levitates the inter-locked channelled culture.
A historian would venture for a magical adventure, but he is strayed as he is boned to his grave.
He jugs and tugs on to the bushes, as an attempt to push the creativity that is listed in his head becomes wasted blue bottles, gaining a divinity from the frozen iced sun, which forms a version of the anti-clockwise victimisation, implying a new formality.

His blood salvages the cliff; he was forced to conform a frail masterpiece. Animals gain a dependency from the companionship, by licking and locking the taste of desperation for food, which was intended to bury the hunger.

A heaved bulky land wants to restore the prosperity of untamed attraction.
I watch horses grunt and moan, as a humorous behaviour adapts into another human, who becomes naked and bare, as the windy haze days gnarl to re-cremate embedded fear, as it mimics the deformed definition of a mirage, as the perfection, destroys the heavy abstract memories that linger within an abundant human mind.

I see the dead man’s shadow, as he speaks with the voice of Odin, as the winds ravish to chime, he splits into partial sublime.

The journey has ended, but I turn away as the prosperous land will always remain the same, but will the “1850” ghost find another adventurer, to re-enforce the gut-menacing blame?

However, he passes the treachery of victimisation, which consumes a new abbreviation.

He claims a curse; do not accept the lingering trick he promotes, as he did have a spinning lust of envy; the exhalation of the cursed moor justified moral deficiency.

Razia Afzal



Stanza Stones

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Simplicity

That's what I found out here.

A world away from problems, ailments faced every day.

Modernisation, politics, man-made social landscapes, with no room for nature.

No room for your thoughts to think beyond what they create.

Imagination has no open fields to play in.

Even now, standing here, battles rage inside of me, but for what?

It's still unclear:

Why can't I enjoy the stillness, grasp this beauty,
Or allow this pure air to whisk away my worries with its pace?

Physically here, but mentally work, family,
Unattainable questions raised by society circulate.

Like Where am I going in life?

Or classics such as Will I ever be rich?

Amongst the thoughts I catch a glimpse of a girl standing deserted.

STOP THINKING!

There it is, Realization, that in the end,
None of it matters, it never did.

It was their struggles, paint-brushed
In my brain, and now I'm here
Away from all of it.

Oh how easily that paint peels.

I remember who I was, who I am beneath the social and cultural layers.

Zenam Bi

Untitled

Why don't you just take a walk outside, live, live outside of the confines of the box,
let your troubles stop;

drop.

Step like you're stepping into a new zone, one unknown yet known, step like you're
stepping into the twilight
zone not plagued by the hum of overhead drones and the groans of the injured citizens caused by
enslaved patriots
given weapons quickly becoming dangerous;

How can I be patient when they keep bus'ing their guns, a constant click-clack like
the Africans beating century-old drums but those didn't burn;
now I'm concerned about the mothers and sons and those that didn't have anyone.

'Click', see the instant switch, a different face on the flat screen plasma that funded
the creation of a bomb dropping on the homeless;
pull up the military and ask them, "What is your purpose?"
Why do so many come back and commit suicide
if this war was for democracy and justice?
Your lies have no substance so repeat with
the truth, "What is your purpose?"

So while you sit inside the opposite of a humble abode on your purpose built
commode to ease your screen viewing,
I'm out here making observations about star constellations
hoping I begin to hear what they sayin';
I gotta keep praying like it's my dependency;
I don't chase supremacy via titles or paper –
I don't like the taste of ink;
someone please give this fool a breathmint.

You represent the people I warned you about; I kept saying it but nobody listened.
Now you come asking for my help like I'm the overseer,
the mystic one whose answers will take your fear away;
you destroyed the world and you knew it;

Now you beg for retribution.

Syed Mujtaba Hassan Ali



The Writing Squad

The Writing Squad is an ongoing project that supports talented young creative writers across Yorkshire. Funded by the Arts Council and supported by Sheffield Hallam University, over the ten years since its inception it has recruited five squads of writers, each of 15 members aged between 16 and 20. They work with us over a 2 year period where they attend four Day Schools a year when they work with professional writers in different genres (chiefly prose fiction, poetry and scriptwriting, with also special days for more targeted needs, like performance or radio drama) and have access to a permanent course tutor and collective online interaction. After the 2 years they become our graduates and are supported in various ways with tutors and mentors, special days and even financial support for specific projects they are working on if needed. The Stanza Stones project has been a great way in which our poets from various squads have been able to come together and work with other groups to create a unique body of poetry and performance. Currently there are seven members involved with the project.

www.writingsquad.com

Stanza Stones
The Anthology

The Writing Squad

Joe and Russell filming us on Nab Hill

Missing Nab Hill

Sleek men stole copper from the train tracks.
Their sly pluckings leave my carriage stranded
just outside Alnwick.

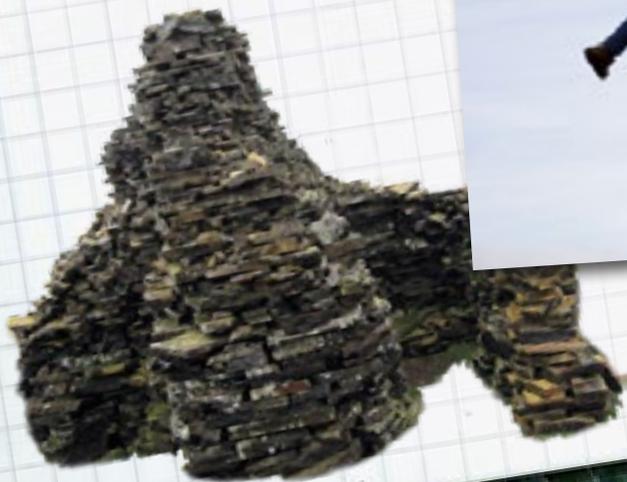
I'm late for the walk in Howarth
so watch the hills from this hotel car park;
the splendour of their height,

trace the soft outline of them,
recall your sleek frame.
The way you stretch on your side,

defy the fierce morning. The surface of these fells
is a fine layer of hair
your chest is covered with similar moss

cairns are positioned
like *jenga* pieces.
They cleave the wind.

Cara Brennan



"The whole project is inspirational to me because I'm what you might call a 'Landscape poet' like a landscape photographer. The trip to the Oxenhope Moor the first time was very evocative. Seeing the cairns for the first time was mysterious and the experience of the project has helped to inspire me more that landscape and how we live in it is still highly relevant to people that enjoy poetry."
Síân Hughes



Northern School of Contemporary Dance students dance our poems on NAB Hill

Stanza Stones
The Anthology



The Writing Squad

The False Trail

The fell-walker smells water,
its churchy strangeness in the air.
It is singing underfoot
from the hill's chambers.
His steps are sucked by moss
bidden by the underworld's gods.

He knows flies make wet air
their home, that drink the buzzing
blood of walkers as their food.
The valley closes over like a hand.

Sheep rally round where the sky-pushed
path drops to a gully so that he suffers
water's denial, is drawn
to where even the sky lies down.

Katherine Horrex

My Stone Angel

Summer 2011

Yorkshire voice, fast as thick water,
old as cracked stone.
In this red box I rest.
Waiting for words not skin-shrouded.

Then after the most human thing
with the least words and most sound –
peace.

My father pins postcard, welcome
to the world, above me.

Graveyard they say

Morbid they say

Bad luck they say

But this stone speaks.
Speaks to me.
Even small skwaling, inhuman me.
Speaks to me of centuries,
gritstone green with lichen lodging
in cracks of smile and crafted curves.

I called it Fermintie.
Since;
ideas flown, my smile
crafted, concepts grown into me –
like a compost for seeds –
I look for my language.

My muse does guard graveyards.
But stonily placid the speech, soft;
is originated older, over yonder,
Yorkshire. In the grit's home.

Something happens when I hear
Ted be Crow
when the breeze whips burn into cheeks.
Wind-workers hover at height,
beating uplift back to the land.

I understand when I stand on
that sacred chocolate-orange sponge
that to dig it is criminal
but to burn it smells bliss
next only to that greenwood hiss.
So stare at Stanage against storm sky,
watch clouds chase to hop
the hope of Robin Hood's stride.
Listen to wild birds' laughter,
try to hear the pebbles' chatter.

It is the stones that speak that is
my own native divine language.
The bitter grit mined for mill-floor,
the honest Babel was made from this.
So hands that work it out of moors
and into house and toytown,
Remember, you're tearing the oldest church down.

Siân Hughes



Stanza Stones

The Anthology



The Writing Squad

Oxenhope

Up here the wind batters, punch-bag steady,
withers my lips,
cradles me skull-cap cold.

The wind wants my bones,
clavicle, fibular, femur.
It'll flay me, peel and pare me, already white
in the wind-burn gale.
It wants my ribs beached high – to play them
knife carrying harpist,
wants them whitening, bleached like the grasses

everything sepia'd, washed out, jaded,
it's wearing you out.
Hunker down, Mammal, the lichen whispers,
see how we cling close, layer ourselves flat,
rock skim, stain spread.
It leaves only the low growing, low built:
causeystones, leats, rail tracks,
leaves the snug-tight, the dug in deep
as a scar: cross-cuts, flues, watercourses
– deeper –
bell pits, shafts, adits,
disembowelled moor-land
hacked up in spoil heaps.

Lie down on this sprung floor, hollow it out.
Feel your heat leach, salts depleting,
feel the heather's tiny fingers knot you down,
rain soft and insidious.
You're cooling, Mammal,
because the wind is a taker,
a ventriloquist and trickster
sings tinnitus, spin you away,
it's a snatcher and a sneak-thief
it takes sheep
hides their bones away
in bog hole soggy, laughing with one jawbone,
it ferrets its fingers into small gaps, winkles in and out
searching, always searching for what it lost
calling
constant faithful prayer.

Because this is how the wind likes it, nothing higher than heather
just the two plates of the firmaments, bird wing stitched.
It likes thin walls, membranes flung up
a cold-water tent gaping the hills, hunger song roaring.
Rain soft and insidious.

It wants gritstone bones: lintels, chimney-breasts
pummelled in slow assault, flattening, beaten,
levelling smelt-mills, chapels, farm-steads;
takes back lodging shops, toll houses, cottages,
breaks the backbone, cracks and caves it
plucking the scurf of stone slates till the flake and fall.
Rain soft and insidious.



Stanza Stones

The Anthology



The Writing Squad

Walls: root-webbed, moss knit
rot-gap mouthed,
limping and staggering downhill, tilt and bulge
till the knobbed hill-spine topples
grinds and judders into slow sliding stacks
banked and heaped,
shudder-shatter of debris bitten and spat out.

Then moss-knit, root-webbed
a humped up, warp-turf graveyard of somebody's labour.
Stone enclosures broken
boundaries broken, spilled and tumbled
sheep-tracks trickling, the wind
rubbing out lines on the map,
whole fields, farms, their stone's slow morph
shape-shift, drift
into grouse-butts, sheep-pens,
cairns collect.
Gritstone strays, filched and ferried
migrates
into scout-huts, bird-hides. Cairns collect,
calling
constant faithful prayer.

Charlotte Wetton

The King of Nab Hill

*“Every time I think that I’m getting old,
and gradually going to the grave,
something else happens”*

(Elvis Presley)

There being a limit to the places
a supposed-to-be dead King of rock and roll
can visit, the grey squirrel quiffed old man
slows the conspicuous pink caddie
to a purr by the beckoning stile.

A fumble of arthritic fingers
and walking frame, shades donned, trademark point
salute delivered to the aged stranger
in the wing mirror and the obscure
mission can commence its shuffling passage.

A laboured groping and the stile
(his latest groupie) is straddled, conquered,
blue suedes settle on the soft sponge of peat.
Immigrant at the threshold of green dusk
looks up, past the grass twitching with laughter,

to the crest sprinkled with turbines – sentinels
perpetually rolling their white, blind eyes.
A struggle up the brittle bracken, left hand
shaking, pelvis no longer under control.
Greens and browns underfoot in cataract

permutation – an unreadable hieroglyph.
The journey seems as long as a Vegas bar tab
but the crown welcomes with the adulation
of a crowd of curlews. Wind pushes
with the virulence of an ex-wife
falsifying his hair into a fin.

Pulled deeper into the stiff rhinestoned collar,
a shimmy stuttered to the shelter
of a half-fallen cairn and the weary frame
is lowered onto the sun-bleached lichen.
Hunger is found in the empty pupil

of a lone sheep for this figure who charmed
everything except the vast nocturnal.
No longer a king, a prince, or a knave
but a child blinking myopically into
the emptiness of wild sounds
from the limitless hilltop.

Steve Nash



Stanza Stones
The Anthology



The Writing Squad

Sestina for the M62

Across this country cuts a road,
coast to coast like a coronary vein
paves a path to be taken through shadow.
From one foot in one sea to the other if you follow
the trail of cat's eyes that stare into space,
and vanish the moment they've shown you the way.

Marked out on the maps of an army of runaways,
windbitten and wide-eyed and seduced by the road;
the cities it promises, marooned in the space
that unfurls to an earthscape unscathed and unveined.
And the waifs and the aliens one by one follow,
forgetting their names and detaching their shadows.

West port to east under cover of shadow,
takes less than a night if you know the way:
the signs to ignore and the ones you must follow.
If you can remember to keep your eyes on the road
and ignore the staccato of your pulse in your veins
and not let the engine lessen its pace –

as the moor ruptures back into measureless space
and the ground drops away, tumbling into the shadows,
and the horizon tears at its lashings in vain,
curdling the sun-stained skies into whey.
And the bruise-purpled heather washes onto the road,
a violet tsunami silhouette falling low.

As the wave plunges earthwards you pray not to follow,
not to drive right into the beckoning space
hanging shimmering between the void and the road.
The landscape collects itself, absorbing the shadows
that dance over its skin, blocking your way
with an upsurge of entrails and tangled root-veins.

The land is alive (a little sacred, a little profane)
and you climb from your car and, mesmerised, follow,
and hold your breath as it staggers and sways,
and close your eyes as it falls into space,
and open them to see nothing but a freshly cast shadow
and your car still running in the middle of the road.

This motorway threads through the moors like a vein,
one human-laid road for humans to follow –
over miles of buried, prehistoric space, where
ancient bodies sometimes rise from the shadow.

Amy Christmas



Stanza Stones
The Anthology



The Writing Squad

Communion

In a spare bedroom in a draw there are some hand-drawn maps.
They are my inheritance from a man during a troubled venture.
They are labelled like this:

“diamante eye,” “lost wallet,” “red is disappearing.”
It is a breadcrumb trail. I venture too.
The last map

is just a dot and the words, “There is nothing more beautiful
than music from an open window.” I thought
I would never find it

until I climbed a Moor and held a harmonica to the wind
and the window opened in my hand.

Andrew Cook

Longley School

Longley is a special school in Kirklees which caters for young people with complex learning needs. Students worked with Shrikant Subramaniam from Manasamitra.

I get frightened standing under big rocks.
They are giants going to eat me.

John

Rocks are very hard
some are smooth like touching skin.
They are big and small

Daniel

Small rocks are lovely to walk on
They make a nice crunchy sound under
your
FEET

Umair

Rocks are frightening because they are bigger
than me

Zara

I like rocks on the moors
They look sometimes like colours ---
blue, green and brown

Sabina

I love skimming little
stones because it is
FUN
They make a swirly water pattern
and it is
FUN

Michael

Little rocks are big
rocks small
They got little when they fall

Tanis

Rocks are wonderful
Rocks are beautiful
You can find them on the beach
Beach rocks are pebbles
You can see big rocks
on the moors
They are hard and scary
They look like sad and
grumpy faces
They need a friend.

Marcus



Acknowledgements and project participants

Stanza Stones Project Team

Poet	Simon Armitage
Lettercarver	Pip Hall
Landscape Architect Consultant	Tom Lonsdale
Apprentice to Pip Hall	Wayne Hart
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Stanza Stones Project Director & Director of Ilkley Literature Festival	Rachel Feldberg
Stanza Stones Project Manager	Glenis Burgess

For Ilkley Literature Festival

Festival Manager	Gail Price
Administrator	Laura Beddows
Development Worker	Dawn Cameron
Marketing Officer	Alex Beardsley
Marketing and Sponsorship Director	Abbey Vale
Graphic Designer	Richard Honey, dg3 design
Anys Williams at Anita Morris Associates	Press Officer

Calderdale Young Writers

Elaine Duffy	Group Leader
Gen Walsh	Group Leader
Anna Turner	Group Leader
Chad Burney, age 16	On That Hillside
David Lawton, age 15	Rosa
Jasmine Simms, age 15	The Mortal
Isobel Turner, age 15	I see for miles, beyond the moor
Poppy Turner, age 18	Crow Poem & Lady Gaga Visits Pule Hill
Dylan Wilby, age 18	Ilkley Moor

Ilkley Young Writers

Becky Cherriman	Writer and Facilitator
Michelle Scalley Clarke	Writer and Facilitator
Naomi Burns, age 14	The Unseen Moor
Rachel Burns, age 17	The Power on the Moor

Mairenn Collins, age 14	I feel like the lone daisy
Sam Fletcher, age 14	No Accident
Oliver Gibbs, age 13	My Ilkley Moor Experience
Charlotte Hall, age 15	Low Wood
Amy Luxton, age 16	The Crazy Man's Ballad
Orla Regan, age 13	The Crying Valley
Ella Sanderson, age 12	The Moor, The Moor

Leeds Young Authors

Khadijah Ibrahiim	Director
Paulette Morris	Group Leader
Amina Weston	Group Leader
Jess Watson	Group Leader
Nathaniel Benson	Environment
Jamal Gerald, age 17	The Stage
Shaliyah Grant, age 13	Field
Paris Kaur-Spencer, age 14	I can hear the past
Josiah Ndlovo, age 12	I travelled to Britain soaring
Bobbi-Lea Powell, age 11	My Interesting Identity
Tavelah Robinson, age 15	Prison Cell
Tila Robinson, age 15	I Open the Box
Jacob Sharry-Broderick, age 12	Yah Ge Mi
Marion Smith, age 14	Existence
Abena Weston, age 13	These cracks in the rock are history
Vasana-Lee Williams, age 10	I come from ...

Sheffield Young Writers

Vicky Morris	Group Leader
Matt Black	Group Leader
Lyz Brown, age 16	Earth & Moor
Clare Carlile, age 16	An Ode to Pule Hil
Beth Dudley, age 16	Pule Hill
Joshua Fogg, age 16	The Artist
Chloe Nicholson, age 17	The Visit
Jessie Smith, age 16	Sleepers
Zoe Wilkinson, age 17	The Moor

Acknowledgements and project participants

Tadeeb International New Writers' Project

Helen Goodway	Group Leader
Razia Afzal, age 20	Sulking Winds
Zenam Bi, age 28	Simplicity
Syed Mujtaba	
Hassan Ali, age 17	Untitled
Tayaba Fiza, age 20	Untitled
Ayesha Hussain, age 22	Untitled
Govinda Lakha, age 24	Greed
Qasim Shafiq, age 28	Gravitas

Writing Squad

Danny Broderick	Course Director
Steve Dearden	Project Director
Cara Brennan, age 22	Missing Nab Hill
Amy Christmas, age 25	Sestina for the M62
Andy Cook, age 20	Communion
Katherine Horrex, age 23	The False Trail
Siân Hughes, age 21	My Stone Angel
Steve Nash, age 29	The King of Nab Hill
Charlotte Wetton, age 28	Oxenhope

Longley School

Yvonne Talbot	Teacher
Daniel, age 16	Rocks are very hard
John, age 16	I get frightened
Marcus, age 16	Rocks are wonderful
Michael, age 15	I love skimming
Sabina, age 15	I like rocks on the moors
Tanis, age 15	Little rocks are big
Umair, age 15	Small rocks are lovely
Zara, age 15	Rocks are frightening

Media Fish (part of Leeds Young Film)

Martin Grund	Programme Manager
Debbie Maturi	Director, Leeds Young People's Film Festival

Alfie Barker, age 15
Ed Cheseldine, age 17
Alex Hull, age 15
Freya Jackson, age 16

Laura Jordens-Harris, age 14
Jamie McLoughlin, age 19
Aidan Morton, age 16
Gage Oxley, age 15
Ruby Pickup, age 14
Dylan Smith, age 15

North Yorkshire (Youth) Dance

Donald Edwards	Choreographer
Gail Ferrin	Director – Get Moving & NYD

Ella Brookes-Sykes, age 15
Laura Ferrin, age 18
Rebecca Ferrin, age 15
Lilianna Gajewska, age 15
Joanne Halford, age 15
Millie Howard, age 13
Hollie Lowe, age 15
Connie Smith, age 12
Hannah Smith, age 15
Georgia Steel, age 13
Ilana Weets, age 17
Aimee Wood, age 14

RJC Dance

Kathy Williams	Director
De-Napoli Clarke	Artistic Producer
David 'Booma' Duncan	Youth Dance Co-ordinator
Anthony Bartlett, age 18	
Regina Eigbe, age 17	
Lemarah Goodison, age 17	
Dominique Odain Hamilton, age 17	
Chante K Henry, age 18	
Lily McCann Tomlin, age 17	
Kyle Nelson-Walters, age 17	
Reemel Active Phillips, age 17	
Kemmar Reid, age 17	
Omari Swanston Jeffers, age 17	
Pareesha Webster, age 17	
Meleekah Zakers, age 17	

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Samuel Baxter, age 17	
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Reay Clarke, age 15	
Nicole Cullen, age 14	
Lucy Davies, age 16	
Demi-Lace Drury-Lawrence, age 15	
Hannah Dunwell, age 16	
Adam Fields, age 16	
Ruby Gaunt, age 17	
Katie Glover, age 17	
Anna Holmes, age 17	
Mason Jubb, age 18	
Reece Mc Mahon, age 16	
Kaya Moore, age 16	
Fern Moutrie, age 16	
Gabriella Rawdin, age 18	
Hannah Shields, age 17	
Penelope Sowden, age 16	
Ellie Sutcliffe Veitch, age 16	
Kelly-Marie Walsh, age 17	

Leeds Trinity University College

Documentary Film of the project

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Mohammed Ali	Senior Technician
Kenneth Relph	Senior Technician

Leeds College of Art Students

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Michael Smith	Teaching Staff
Mat Clarke	Teaching Staff
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Paul Price	Resource Box Maker
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Rhys Bryant	
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Sarah Hatton	
Timothy Holland	
Phil Jones	
Lija Jursins	
Adam Khalid	
Ryan Lancaster	
Sophie Linney	
Chris Lloyd	
Hollie Lowry	
Wisdom Makubile	
Joel McCusker	
Daryl Nicolson	
Siobahn Parkhouse	
Robyn Pearson	
Daniel Schofield	
Tom Stephens	
Matthew Taylor	
Jessica Watson	

Manasamitra

Supriya Nagarajan	Artistic Director
Shrikant Subramaniam	Dance and Education Officer

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Tom Wayman

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Andrew McMillan

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Ntombizodwa Nyoni
Antony Dunn

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