Stanza Stones
The Anthology

with Simon Armitage
and young writers from across Yorkshire
stanza stones trail

South Pennines Watershed

RAIN STONE
DEW STONES
SNOW STONE
Stanza Stones is a collaboration between imove, Ilkley Literature Festival, Simon Armitage and Pennine Prospects.

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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

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and young writers from across Yorkshire

Edited by Antony Dunn
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
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Rachel Feldberg  
"Director, Ilkley Literature Festival"

In 2010 Ilkley Literature Festival and imove 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.
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.

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
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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
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
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
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
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
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 (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
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
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*
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
I come from dutchpot 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% Jamiancan,
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
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,
riding 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_
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
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 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.”
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
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
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.
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
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
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!
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
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
**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.

Maireenn Collins
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 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
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.

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**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
‘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,
captured 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
unravelled 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
turnstiles 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
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 juggs 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
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_
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 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
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.”

Siân Hughes

Northern School of Contemporary Dance students dance our poems on NAB Hill
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 origined 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
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.
Walls: root-webbed, moss knit
rot-gap mouthed,
limping and staggering downhill, tilt and bulge
till the knobbled 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
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
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

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- Gen Walsh, Group Leader
- Anna Turner, Group Leader
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- David Lawton, age 15
- Jasmine Simms, age 15
- Isobel Turner, age 15
- Poppy Turner, age 18
- Dylan Wilby, age 18

**Ilkley Young Writers**
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- Michelle Scalley Clarke, Writer and Facilitator
- Naomi Burns, age 14, The Unseen Moor
- Rachel Burns, age 17

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- Amina Weston, Group Leader
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- Shaliyah Grant, age 13
- Josiah Ndlovo, age 12
- Bobbi-Lea Powell, age 11, My Interesting Identity
- Tavelah Robinson, age 15, Prison Cell
- Jacob Sharry-Broderick, age 12, Yah Ge Mi
- Marion Smith, age 14
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- Clare Carlile, age 16, An Ode to Pule Hill
- Beth Dudley, age 16, Pule Hill
- Joshua Fogg, age 16, The Artist
- Chloe Nicholson, age 17, The Visit
- Jessie Smith, age 16
- Zoe Wilkinson, age 17, The Moor

**Poppy Turner, age 18**
- Stanza Stones Project Director & Director of Ilkley Literature Festival: Rachel Feldberg
- Stanza Stones Project Manager: Glenis Burgess

Poem Snippets:
- 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

- Poem Snippets:
- 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

- Poem Snippets:
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- Michelle Scalley Clarke: Writer and Facilitator
- Naomi Burns, age 14: The Unseen Moor
- Rachel Burns, age 17: The Power on the Moor

- Poem Snippets:
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- Nathaniel Benson: Environment
- Jamal Gerald, age 17: The Stage
- Shaliyah Grant, age 13
- Josiah Ndlovo, age 12: I travelled to Britain soaring
- Bobbi-Lea Powell, age 11: My Interesting Identity
- Tavelah Robinson, age 15: Prison Cell
- Jacob Sharry-Broderick, age 12: Yah Ge Mi
- Marion Smith, age 14
- Abena Weston, age 13: These cracks in the rock are history
- Vasana-Lee Williams, age 10: I come from...
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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

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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

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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

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