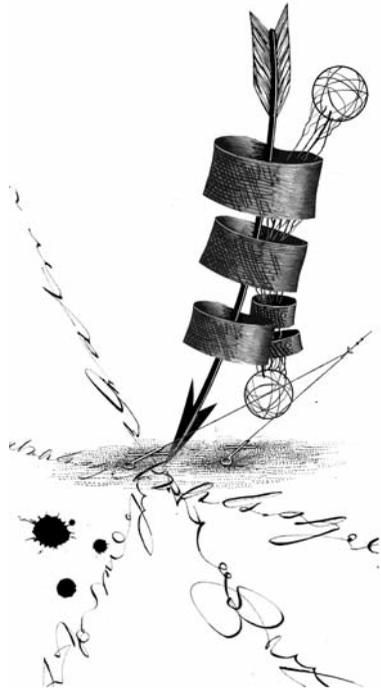


# THE POETRY TOOLKIT

*foolproof recipes  
for teaching poetry in the classroom*



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The Poetry Trust gratefully acknowledges  
the support of the Ernest Cook Trust,  
the Barbara Whatmore Charitable Trust  
and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.



**Barbara Whatmore  
Charitable Trust**



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## ***the poetry toolkit***

For over fifteen years The Poetry Trust has been running workshops for teachers. The workshops bring together teachers from all key stages to work with a poet, to read, discuss and write poems. Originally set up by Michael Laskey, these have been run very successfully throughout Suffolk, Norfolk and Essex. This toolkit draws on the experience of these workshops to provide advice and ideas for writing poetry in primary and secondary schools.

Many teachers express a lack of confidence in teaching poetry. Teachers in primary schools especially say they feel they don't know enough about it. And to be honest many of us were put off poetry by the way we were taught at school. Our workshops aim to dispel fears and to extend the teaching repertoire. Teachers tell us that the experience of writing themselves, being in the position of their pupils, has been a revelation. They also tell us that they enjoy the chance the workshops offer to be creative themselves, and that the ideas that the poets use to generate their writing work successfully with children too.

We have tried to distil some of the lessons of the workshops. We also provide a record of many of the ideas that poets used as part of their workshops. All these ideas work well with children and you should be able to use them as part of your own teaching. However, you might also like to capture some of the experience of writing for yourself. Before you use the ideas in your work with those you teach, why not try them yourself? By engaging with the writing you will gain an idea of the nature of the task and its possibilities.

## ***why poetry?***

Good poems use language in ways that are fresh and help us see the world with new eyes. Pupils who read and write poems become skilled in using language carefully, in playing with syntax and structure for the best effect; in weighing each word, attending to the smallest detail, hearing the rhythms and cadences of spoken language. They may gain an understanding of the way words can carry complex and subtle meanings and experience the exhilaration and pleasure there is in stitching words together. The language skills they learn will benefit them in all areas of the curriculum and beyond.

## *reading poems*

In all these workshops the poets used poems as a starting point. They used their own poems and those of other poets. By and large, they did not use poems written especially for children. You will be able to find many of the poems from the workshops here. Where we do not have permission to print the poems, we have tried to provide a link to a copy of the poem or a reference.

Once you have used the toolkit, you should have a better sense of the kinds of poems that can inspire the children you teach. Although every workshop is different, there are threads that run through all of them and which are not only the preoccupation of poets but fundamental to children's writing. Poets invite us to write about the ordinary and the extraordinary, to make the ordinary strange and the extraordinary familiar. They provide many different ways of looking closely, of attending to detail and recording the particular. They pay attention to words, especially verbs and nouns, they resist cliché and relish the accurate naming of objects and the precise description of actions. They attend to the sound of the word as well as its meaning, to the patterns of sound that words create together, and the new meanings in the spaces between words, or when they rub up against each other.

Again and again, poets challenge us to look closely, maybe to find a simile or a metaphor; and, in doing so, create something unexpected. That element of surprise in a poem is essential for both writer and reader.

We hope that you will feel encouraged to read a wide range of poetry. The more that you read and listen to poetry, the more attuned you will become to what interests and delights you, and to what is likely to engage those you teach.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Naomi Jaffa". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with some loops and flourishes.

Naomi Jaffa  
Director  
The Poetry Trust

## **warm-up exercises**

Many workshops begin with a short, playful activity to help young writers begin to loosen up and think about language in different ways. Some of them can lead into the writing of a group poem, taking lines from everyone and shaping it together.

**Favourite words** – Michael Laskey begins every workshop by sharing a few of his favourite words (*bottle, itch, scrum, tremble, rhinoceros*) – not clever or difficult words but words that are a pleasure to say, that feel good in the mouth. He then asks the class for their own favourites – and depending on their age and ability, either to say them out loud or to write down as many as they can for two or three minutes.

If they've written them down, he then goes round the class a couple of times – each pupil saying one word, and allowing it to be savoured, enjoying the juxtapositions and runs of sound.

All kinds of variations are possible – you could encourage nouns and verbs, place-names, brand names, the particular vocabulary of a trade or branch of knowledge.

Here are two starting exercises from Jackie Wills:

**Making up colour names** – this exercise can be done either inside or outside. Use Dulux colour charts or colour charts on the internet for specialist paint companies as inspiration. Think about shades, tones, subtle differences and where the colour is found or go wild with them – old trainer grey, for example. You are not constrained by commercial acceptability!

**Statement in neon** – what would you say in neon? Or on the side of a house, or on a billboard? It's very expensive, you have very few words. Think like an artist or a headline writer. Surprise us, too. Is it a question, is it a statement?

**Warming-up with metaphors** Anthony Wilson will often begin by holding up a triangle of plain paper and asking pupils what it is – *it's a hat, a headscarf, a sail, a mountain, a sandwich, a bikini bottom...* The pupils immediately get the idea and love using their imaginations to transform the one-dimensional shape into a range of alternative objects of differing scale.

Lawrence Bradby uses a large ball of paper – *a cauliflower, a planet slowly turning on its axis, a tear rolling down a face* – and then develops this to make a list poem, using many children’s ideas and shaping the poem together.

You can bring in other special objects which work just as well – a marble, a child’s brick or simply use what you have in the classroom, such as a ruler, a table or window.

As an alternative approach, Michael Laskey sometimes brainstorms different kinds of containers – *kettle, cage, nest, sea, train, school, computer, galaxy...* and lists them on the board. He then asks each pupil to choose four or five (of varying sizes) and write a line about each one with specific detail

*A broken kettle with its cord knotted*

*A nest in the hedge with three speckled eggs*

*A computer that’s crashed taking time to reboot*

You then ask the pupils to choose the one they’ve written that gives them the most pleasure and to read it back.

Ask the pupils to consider how well their chosen object works as a metaphor for their heads (the container out of which these descriptions have come). You can go on to build a group poem of these ‘self-portraits’.

## **Amanda Dalton: Poem Jigsaws**

### ***choosing the right word***

Amanda says that this is a bit like Fridge Poetry, without the fridge or the magnets! It's a good way to help pupils to understand the way poetry uses word order, syntax and language concisely. It also means that they begin with a good stock of words, or words and phrases, so that what they come up with is likely to be strong.

In this activity pairs of children are given a poem that has been cut up into words and phrases that they can put together again in their own way. The idea is not to reconstruct the original poem but to use the original poet's material to create something new.

- Find a short poem, preferably between six and eight lines. It should not have a regular rhyme scheme.
- Hear their work and then give them copies of the original. Talk about the similarities and differences.

Amanda told us that one teacher she knows keeps lots of sets of different short cut-ups in her classroom and encourages pupils to use them when they have a spare moment.

If you find a number of poems with similar themes or tone, children will enjoy trying to combine them. Different coloured card for each poem is very handy if you choose to do this.

# Jean Sprackland: An object talking

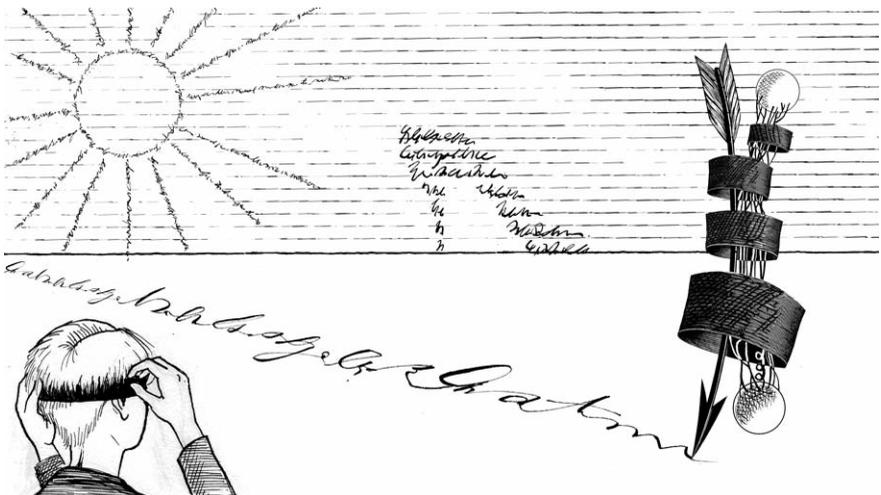
## *a fresh take on the familiar*

Children enjoy the fun of finding a voice for an inanimate object. There are many poems that use the idea of an object speaking, such as Paul Farley's in the voice of a light bulb ('A Thousand Hours' from *The Boy From the Chemist is Here to See You*) and Sylvia Plath's famous 'Mirror'.

[www.bit.ly/toolkit01](http://www.bit.ly/toolkit01)

Jean read us *Ten Pence Story* by Simon Armitage [www.bit.ly/toolkit02](http://www.bit.ly/toolkit02) and talked about using this poem with younger children, either by providing a selection of objects – a seashell, an old watch, a cracked cup – or by asking them for ideas.

You can find some inventive ideas for this exercise from *Writing Poems* (Bloodaxe 1993) by Peter Sansom. In Chapter 9 of *Jumpstart* (Poetry Society 1999) Cliff Yates outlines the particularly effective way that Peter and Ann Sansom use this exercise.



## Dean Parkin: Telling Lies

### *a different way of looking*

Dean says one of the pleasures of writing poems is that you can tell lies without getting into trouble! It's just using your imagination.

- Instruct the group to write three lies about the sea (the sky, the moon the stars, the sun, the clouds etc. can also work well)
- Encourage them to be wild and imaginative with their lies avoiding the obvious or the dull (the moon is made of cheese). Give them a few examples of what they could write:

*The sea is made of blue ink and green paint*

*The sea hates it when it's drawn as a wavy line*

and here are a few lies made up by a Year 6 Group:

*The sea is cold because it hasn't got a coat on*

*The sea going up and down is a sign it's still breathing*

*The sea feeds on rubbish but even he can't manage it all*

*If you smack the sea it will splash you back*

*The sea has a small cousin who is a pond*

*The sea will wave to you when you turn to leave*

As you can see, what starts off as a lie becomes a mix of word play, sometimes truth, and off-the-wall creativity. It gives the students a chance to use their imagination without forcing it and with a sense of fun.

This exercise can also be built into a class poem - get the group to choose their favourite lie from each pupil as they share them with the class, write down each one on the board, then look for obvious first lines and last lines and order the rest of the poem (losing any extraneous words in the process).

It can be a great performance poem, involving the whole group by getting each pupil to read their own line.

## Jane Anderson: Eavesdropping

### *noticing the familiar*

- Tell the class that they each have a very special microphone that can pick up sounds through walls and they are to imagine that they are at home, in their room, listening to what's going on in the rest of the house.
- Read *Eavesdropping* by Jackie Wills (see page 9).
- Talk about the poem. Notice the way Jackie Wills makes us hear what's going on. Look at the way she uses verbs. You could ask questions about the feelings in the poem. Or get the pupils to ask questions about the poem.
- Get each pupil to make a list of things their microphone can hear. Remind them to name the person making the noise, to use detail, and to be precise about where in the house (or outside) the sound comes from.
- Read back. As writers read their first drafts, listen out for examples that work well. Try and reflect back to writers what it is they have achieved and maybe what is missing, what you would like to know more about.
- Allow redrafting time. Ask the children to check the verbs they are using. Does every verb in their poem work hard?
- Peter Sansom suggests a variation of this exercise in which you imagine that you are a surveillance camera. Think of what it sees at different times of the day and night.

## **EAVESDROPPING**

I hear the wrench my brother smashes  
on the garage floor as he tries  
to put a Norton engine back together,  
the Bells whisky my father slops into a tumbler,  
followed by ice, a tap turned on,  
my other brother imitating machine gun fire  
in the loft where he plays war games.  
I hear my mother typing in the new room  
making the dining table shudder  
as she punches each key, our dog,  
Steve, barking at the kitchen door,  
Penny, my cat miaow for supper –  
and myself on the phone again, straining  
for background noise, anything familiar.

**Jackie Wills**

from *Fever Tree* (Arc Publications 2003)

# Jeni Smith: This is a Photograph

## *visual imagination*

In this exercise the poem is a written photograph. It can be of oneself or someone you know well enough to write about in detail – friend, family or maybe someone you see regularly, the school bus driver, the fish and chip shop assistant, a neighbour. Your poem can be based on an existing photograph, but you have greater freedom if you invent one. You can guide the group through the exercise by asking them to respond to the following questions or prompts:

- Who is the subject of the photograph/poem? What makes you think of them? Where they are most likely to be, what they would be doing, what they would be wearing? What objects might they be holding or have near them?
- Decide the moment that the shutter clicks. Catch your subject in movement or stillness. Imagine how they would look, what gesture or expression the photograph has caught.
- Describe the moment. Include the detail of the place, the quality of light, the time of day, a detail of what the subject is wearing, their posture, their expression. Think about and maybe say what they have just done or are about to do, what are they in the midst of?
- What words are being spoken? Perhaps you can hear a snatch of a song or background noises (a kettle boiling, a dog growling, a lorry reversing, the wind clanking the gate)?
- You can end this poem in a number of ways – by writing a couple of lines about what happens next after the photograph is taken or by focusing on what's going on just outside the frame. Hold these suggestions until most of the poem has been written. They may or may not need it.

# Anthony Wilson: Praise poems *make the ordinary extraordinary*

Praise poems are common in many cultures. Anthony read us 'Frogs' by Norman MacCaig [www.bit.ly/toolkit03](http://www.bit.ly/toolkit03). Jackie Wills uses 'I Am Taliesin' (page 12), a self-praise poem.

- With the class list some surprising things that could be praised – chicken nuggets, the corner shop, your front door, your shoes, paperclips or slugs. Encourage them to avoid the obvious or the clichéd.
- Ask them to choose one thing each and if they need help, suggest some different phrases that they could use:

*I love it when...*

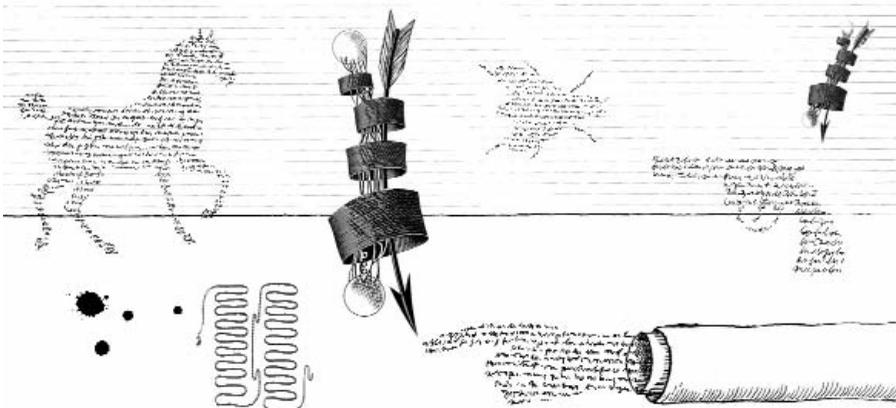
*I like the way...*

*I want you to know...*

*I envy...*

*I praise the...*

*Thanks for...*



## I AM TALIESIN

I am Taliesin. I sing perfect metre,  
Which will last to the end of the world.  
My patron is Elphin...

I know why there is an echo in a hollow;  
Why silver gleams; why breath is black; why liver is bloody;  
Why a cow has horns; why a woman is affectionate;  
Why milk is white; why holly is green;  
Why a kid is bearded; why the cow-parsnip is hollow;  
Why brine is salt; why ale is bitter;  
Why the linnet is green and berries red;  
Why a cuckoo complains; why it sings;  
I know where the cuckoos of summer are in winter.  
I know what beasts there are at the bottom of the sea;  
How many spears in battle; how many drops in a shower;  
Why a river drowned Pharaoh's people;  
Why fishes have scales.  
Why a white swan has black feet...

I have been a blue salmon,  
I have been a dog, a stag, a roebuck on the mountain,  
A stock, a spade, an axe in the hand,  
A stallion, a bull, a buck,  
I was reaped and placed in an oven;  
I fell to the ground when I was being roasted  
And a hen swallowed me.  
For nine nights was I in her crop.  
I have been dead, I have been alive.  
I am Taliesin.

**Anon**

(Welsh 13th century)

# Ann Sansom: Our Own Lives

## *using what we know*

A list can provide a good framework to assist the writing of a poem. ‘I Come From’ by Robert Seatter (page 14) is a list poem which uses specific details to evoke his childhood.

- read the poem
- share similar examples from your own experience –

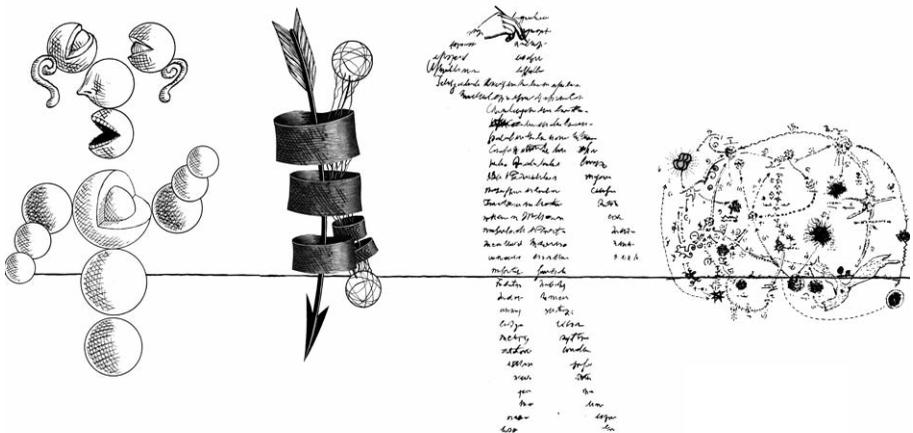
*I come from two sisters and the bathroom always busy*

*I come from slow Sunday dinners with rhubarb and custard*

*I come from Grandad John carrying a block of neapolitan ice-cream wrapped in the Lowestoft Journal*

*I come from Arsenal posters and a dog with a torn ear*

- Get the children to write their own poems, suggesting they use *I come from* perhaps to start every third line.



## I COME FROM

I come from a suburb waiting forever  
for the train to London,  
from smashed windows, graffiti,  
fog on the platform,  
skinheads and fights  
if you look the wrong way  
I come from clean handkerchiefs,  
dinner money, God  
*please* and *sorry* one hundred times over,  
draft excluders and double glazing  
I come from *Chambers Etymological Dictionary*,  
maths tables, 11+, *Look & Learn*  
an almost complete set of *Observer I-Spy* books  
a family of teachers and yet more teachers,  
an Orkney grandfather, a Shropshire grandma  
from no accent at all  
I come from kindness  
I come from doh-re-me: *The Sound of Music*  
recorders, clarinets, a pianola  
all the way from Scotland  
I come from rats behind the garage,  
and a man who followed me  
back from the library  
I come from silence  
I come from a garden  
from my father mowing the lawn into the dark  
from fences, walls, gates and hedges  
Cuthberts seed packets, *The Perfect Small Garden*  
from the sound through the night  
of trains, trains, trains

### **Robert Seatter**

from *On the Beach with Chet Baker* (Seren 2006)

# **Heather Loxton: Starting to Teach Poetry**

## ***the recipe for writing good poems in the classroom***

### ***read like a writer***

Read lots of poems together. Immerse yourself. This has to be the starting point. Students will find poems they like, that perhaps are funny, poems that speak to them. They love sharing and reading aloud with each other. Choose a poem to read with the class. After reading it aloud, ask them to read it to themselves two or even three times.

### ***starting to write***

I find it helpful to establish a few rules before writing.

- No talking. No questions. If you need to ask something, write it down. Ask at the end.
- Don't worry about spelling or punctuation.
- Don't worry about writing in sentences. Once you begin you mustn't stop writing until the end. Keep the pen moving. Don't stop to think. Go with your first thoughts. Just write. Repeat lines if necessary.
- Write in the simple present (or past) tense. Avoid present participles if possible. e.g. I walk or I walked (rather than I was walking). The present tense is good. It keeps the writing immediate, makes the writer feel as if they are there.
- Write about things you know.

I try to avoid subjects that inevitably lead to cliché – it's really difficult to write about nice things without resorting to cliché. I ban words like soft and fluffy!

Everyday happenings, things that others can associate with, often work best for young writers. To take a familiar everyday event or object and see it in a new way that surprises is magic.

## **redrafting**

- Read it through.
- Use the simple present or past. It's more direct. Try to avoid participles, '-ing' verbs.
- Be specific. Not tree, but horse chestnut. Not snack, but cheese and onion crisps.
- Forbidden words – cute, sweet, wonderful, soft, adorable.
- Absolutely NO lambs, kittens, sunsets, fluffy clouds.
- Use your own idioms.
- Avoid adjectives and adverbs if possible. Accurate nouns and verbs are stronger (see modifiers).
- Remember the five senses.
- Be careful with rhyme. Go for the right word rather than a forced rhyme.
- Read your poem (out loud or silently). Listen to its rhythm – does it sound right?
- Research if necessary: e.g. proper nouns – the name of the river, seaside resort, the species of bird.

## **modifiers**

Read through your first draft. Use adjectives sparingly. Keep only those that are specific (these are often words that can also be nouns). I don't particularly care that a shed is dirty; sheds often are. But if it smells of two-stroke motor bike oil, that's more interesting. (See Bradley Cutts' poem, *Me and My Dad*, page 19.)

Also, adjectives are often a bit abstract – visual descriptions are better. 'Beautiful' doesn't mean much – your idea of beautiful won't necessarily be mine. But I can picture 'a few copper coins, and white hairclips' in a 'red leather purse'.

### **line breaks**

The first draft is usually more like prose than a poem so they have to decide where the line breaks will be. Word processing at this stage is good. If I'm working with a group who haven't written very much poetry, I often begin with a published poem.

Give everyone a copy of the poem without line breaks. (*The Shoes* by John Mole is a good poem for this [www.bit.ly/toolkit05](http://www.bit.ly/toolkit05). It is only three sentences long and so much more powerful after the line breaks have been put in). Then I model the early draft of a poem written by one of the class.

Students are usually eager to have everyone read and work on their poem. Put the early draft up on the white board. Ask for suggestions as to where the line breaks should go. The suggestions should be in the form of questions –

Would it be a good idea to put the line break after *shoes* so that the lines are really short?

What would be the effect of a longer line, *These are the shoes Dad walked about in* ?

### **save as**

I encourage students to keep every draft. Word processing makes this easier. After making changes, save as 'Version 2'.

### **workshop**

When line breaks have been put in and the poems have been redrafted a few times, we workshop them in groups, ideally of approximately 10-12.

I photocopy each child/pupil/student's poem so that there are enough copies to share one-between-two.

The child who has written the poem reads it aloud to the rest of the group. Then, after reading it to ourselves, we go around the group and ask questions. I ask them to try to keep the comments in question form because questions are more thought-provoking and appear less judgmental. I encourage students to frame their questions in a way that expresses tentativeness. 'I wonder why she's told us she is sad when she shown us that in the

previous verse?" Everyone has a turn. Don't forget to question the title. Titles are important and often neglected. Could your title work a bit harder? The poet Mandy Coe says, "This small but powerful component of a poem can play many roles by guiding, tricking or confirming."

The questions often lead to heated debate (students often challenge or contest ideas) but the person whose poem it is, isn't allowed to speak – they make notes, add and cross out – until the end.

### ***questioning***

Questioning empowers students. I find that it encourages an active engagement with the poem. It encourages reflection (and it helps the teacher to assess understanding). But, importantly, questioning a poem, as a writer, sparks ideas. Demystifies. Shows the possibilities of words. Of course we want to know what the poem is about but also how it works.

I ask students to jot down any questions the poem raises. Then I divide the class into small groups. Some of the less demanding questions will be answered in their group. Other questions will lead to discussion as students build on each other's responses. By building on each other's ideas, more questions will arise. With this kind of questioning and exploratory talk, I find that students become increasingly prepared and able to clarify tentative thoughts. They are more prepared to take risks and are more confident in offering divergent ideas and opinions.

When I teach a group who hasn't worked like this before, I model different types of questioning. Is she frightened? Why do you think that? Is the darkness real? Can you imagine...? Does this remind you of when you...? How did you feel when you read...? Why has the poet chosen that word/phrase? What is the effect of the alliteration on line...? Why are the lines shorter in this verse? What does this mean? What evidence do you have that...? What word/phrase/line suggests that? Why did the poet want to write about...? How did the poet create that rhythm?

After a session like this it's a good idea to spend time talking about and categorising different types of questions, in order to build a shared language for questioning. Making the process explicit means it is much easier next time.

## ME AND MY DAD

When I was young I used to help my dad every night after school.  
I loved the familiar smell of oil: two-stroke for my motor bike,  
Shell oil for topping up the cars. I tidied the spanners  
in size order. I'd lift the 13 mil off its hook and hand it to my dad.  
I knew exactly where everything was.  
The angle grinder's screech hurt my ears as it echoed off the huge steel doors.  
Like a surgeon, Dad would call for mole grips.  
I'd pass them into his latexed hands, then watch  
him lock clean metal over the rusted hole.  
As rain clattered on the asbestos roof, I'd sit on the electric heater  
(which was covered in grease from my hands)  
watching orange sparks shower around him as he welded metal patches.  
The cold made the scars on my hand go purple.  
When I got a slight shock from the radiator, my dad would laugh.  
We'd have a chuckle together and discuss each other's day.  
I don't go there after school any more. Now I play football with my mates,  
hang around the village, have a laugh, stay out till late.

**Bradley Cutts** (aged 13)

*Parkway Middle School, Haverhill*

# Michael Laskey & Dean Parkin

## *how to write a good poem*

**A poem can be about anything** – your brother, your pet hamster, going swimming – anything that matters to you. Things that happen in your life: special occasions or everyday events, a friendship, a smile, a broken window. Things that amuse or disappoint you, scare you or make you happy.

**Use your senses** – see, smell and hear the things in your poem and share them with your reader. Try thinking of yourself as a camera – show the reader in words the pictures you can see.

**Build your poem with details and objects.** Here are some examples of things from previous winning poems from the Suffolk Young Poets Competition: polystyrene take-away food trays crusted in Chinese sauce, dusty, cracked concrete, waves uprooting sea cabbages, a washing machine spinning, a battered black handbag with a stiff clasp and crumpled lining, rain on an asbestos roof.

**Use your favourite words**, words you like to say. Poems don't need to rhyme or have special flowery language. Enjoy all the different sounds you can make. Have fun!

**Use comparisons**, be inventive. Surprise yourself.

**Read your poem out loud** and see how it sounds. Which bits did you like best? Have you used the same word twice? Have you used two words where one will do? Can you find any better words? Is your poem too long? Is it in the right order? See if you can improve it.

**Now try reading your poem to a friend.** See what they make of it. Do they understand what it's about? How could you make it clearer? Are there any boring bits? Make changes.

## ***what The Poetry Trust can offer your school***

The Poetry Trust is one of the UK's flagship poetry organisations. We discover, celebrate and promote the best contemporary poetry to the widest audience through an international live and digital programme, artist development, education and creative learning projects, courses, prizes and publications. All year round.

The Poetry Trust runs the annual Aldeburgh International Poetry Festival (in its 22nd year in 2010). The Festival always opens with a reading by winners of our Suffolk Young Poets Competition and a reading by a well known poet or writer. These have included Alan Alhberg, John Hegley, Roger McGough and Michael Rosen. School bookings for this event are welcome.

### ***teachers workshops***

Keep an eye on our website for details of Teachers Workshops. If you would like to be notified about these directly, please email [\*\*info@thepoetrytrust.org\*\*](mailto:info@thepoetrytrust.org)

### ***school workshops***

Having a poet in school is a fantastic way to meet the creative entitlements of the new curriculum. The Poetry Trust runs poetry workshops in a range of school and community settings. Please email [\*\*info@thepoetrytrust.org\*\*](mailto:info@thepoetrytrust.org) for details of costs etc.

### ***INSET sessions for staff on using poetry in the classroom***

Sessions can be tailored to your needs. We are happy to run teachers workshops at department meetings, lead school-based poetry CPD or work with staff to develop plans for poetry within your school.

### ***workshops for pupils***

We are happy to work with pupils of all abilities and ages both inside and outside school hours. These workshops can be tailored to fit one of the following three models:

**a) One Day Model** – a poet working with up to three groups of 15 pupils; or a poet spending a whole day with a group of pupils. The workshops would involve reading and writing poetry and could be tailored to fit the needs of those involved. Depending on the young writers’ experience, workshops might emphasise getting started and generating ideas or might spend more time on the craft of writing, and of responding to and revising poems. These active creative sessions not only enhance pupils’ understanding and enjoyment of poetry, they strengthen confidence about writing and expression.

**b) Poetry Focus Model** – five days across a term to meet your requirements. This allows for the development of skills, work on drafting and crafting. This model usually ends with a reading for families.

**c) Poet in Residence** – based around the Poetry Focus model; the poet runs workshops for pupils, teaching, ancillary staff and parents.

### ***work with initial Teacher Training providers***

#### **A one day poetry workshop for PGCE students**

Suitable for primary and secondary trainees and especially useful for primary trainees who are not English specialists. The day includes approaches to reading poems with pupils, making a poetry-friendly classroom, and hands-on experience of writing exercises that work in the classroom.

\* \* \*

We would love to see you at one of the readings organised by The Poetry Trust – either during the annual Aldeburgh Poetry Festival in November, The Poetry Prom at Snape Maltings Concert Hall or at The Cut in Halesworth, Suffolk.

Please contact us for more information, join the mailing list or simply let us know how this Toolkit has worked for you.

**[info@thepoetrytrust.org](mailto:info@thepoetrytrust.org)**

**[www.thepoetrytrust.org](http://www.thepoetrytrust.org)**

## **books**

### **The Poetry Book For Primary Schools**

by Anthony Wilson with Siân Hughes

*The Poetry Society 1998*

### **Jumpstart: Poetry in the Secondary School**

by Cliff Yates

*The Poetry Society 1999*

These are two teaching poetry bibles! Both authors are poets and teachers and have a good sense of the demands and pleasures of both poetry and children in classroom settings. These two books are full of practical ideas for classroom use, and contain springboard poems, examples of children's work, and much more – essential.

### **Our Thoughts are Bees: Writers Working with Schools**

by Mandy Coe and Jean Sprackland

*Wordplay Press 2005*

This is the ultimate book about working with poets in school. It is detailed and practical whilst maintaining a clear vision for the place of writing in school.

All three of these books are available from The Poetry Society and can be purchased from their website **[www.bit.ly/toolkitbooks](http://www.bit.ly/toolkitbooks)**

### **Does it Have to Rhyme?** by Sandy Brownjohn

*Hodder and Stoughton 1980*

This is filled with ideas for writing which work well.

### **Rose Where Did you Get that Red?** by Kenneth Koch

*Harper Perennial 1973*

American poet, Kenneth Koch's seminal book about prompting children to write by using classic poems as models. This is a really inspiring book, with examples of children's poems. There's an extract from this publication available on the American website *Poet.org* – **[www.bit.ly/kochbook](http://www.bit.ly/kochbook)** – and you can also find many other good articles about teaching the reading and writing of poetry on this site.

### **Writing Poems** by Peter Sansom

*Bloodaxe 1994*

An invaluable book with workshop ideas, principles and an excellent glossary.

## websites

### **The Poetry Trust**

**[www.thepoetrytrust.org](http://www.thepoetrytrust.org)**

Our website – where you can find details of the Aldeburgh Poetry Festival, The Poetry Prom and other readings, plus **The Poetry Channel** with a changing programme of downloadable podcasts featuring poems and interviews with leading poets.

### **Academy of American Poets**

**[www.poets.org/index.cfm](http://www.poets.org/index.cfm)**

Find a poet, read their profile, listen to their poems.

### **The Poetry Archive**

**[www.poetryarchive.org](http://www.poetryarchive.org)**

An ever expanding archive of poets reading their own work. You can also take Jean Sprackland's tour of the Children's Poetry Archive for younger readers **[www.bit.ly/archivetour](http://www.bit.ly/archivetour)**

### **Poetry Daily**

**[www.poems.com/today.htm](http://www.poems.com/today.htm)**

A fresh poem delivered every day

### **Poetry International**

**[www.poetryinternational.org](http://www.poetryinternational.org)**

Poems from around the world in their original language and in English. Brilliant!

### **Poetry Jukebox**

**[www.57productions.com/assets/juke.html](http://www.57productions.com/assets/juke.html)**

Hear some of the best live poetry performers around.

### **The Poetry Society**

**[www.thepoetrysociety.org.uk](http://www.thepoetrysociety.org.uk)**

The latest poetry news, poems, membership details, education projects and opportunities and competitions for Young Poets.

## **contributors**

*The Poetry Trust is very grateful to the following poets and inspiring tutors for their invaluable and generous contributions to The Poetry Toolkit.*

**Jane Anderson** – The Poetry Trust’s Education Outreach Worker 2004-2009. Former Head of English and Assistant Headteacher at an inner London comprehensive. Freelance creative writing tutor and arts education evaluator. MA Creative & Life Writing (Goldsmiths College).

**Lawrence Bradby** – Poet, artist and one half of the Townley & Bradby duo, making interventions, performance walks and artists’ books.

**Amanda Dalton** – Next Generation Poet 2004, award-winning radio dramatist, educator and youth theatre leader.

**Michael Laskey** – Poet, editor (founded *Smiths Knoll* magazine), tutor and founder of the Aldeburgh Poetry Festival which he directed for its first ten years.

**Heather Loxton** – Head of English, Parkway Middle School, Haverhill, whose pupils are frequent winners of the Aldeburgh Poetry Festival’s Young Poets Competition.

**Dean Parkin** – Arvon Jerwood Young Poet 2004, performer and writing tutor. Creative Director at The Poetry Trust.

**Ann Sansom** – Poet, tutor and co-director of The Poetry Business in Sheffield and co-editor of *The North* and Smith/Doorstop Books.

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**Jackie Wills** – Poet (one of *Mslaxia* magazine’s ‘top 10’ new women poets), tutor, Aldeburgh Poetry Festival poet-in-residence in 2004.

**Anthony Wilson** – Poet, educator and researcher, Poet in Residence for Primary Education at the Poetry Society (1998), co-editor *The Poetry Book for Primary Schools*.

Published March 2010

Also available as a free PDF download  
[www.thepoetrytrust.org](http://www.thepoetrytrust.org)

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Registered Charity Number 1102893

Typeset by Dean Parkin  
Illustrations by Peter Blegvad  
Printed by Leiston Press, Leiston, Suffolk



Supported by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

The Poetry Trust gratefully acknowledges  
the substantial support of  
Arts Council England.