

**LEDBURY POETRY FESTIVAL COMMUNITY PROGRAMME  
POETRY AND PICTURES POETRY WORKSHOP  
MAY 2020 : JOURNEYS**

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**EXERCISE ONE: This is a warm-up writing exercise called Words In Names**

Write your full name on a piece of paper (or use someone else's name).

Now spend 5 minutes listing as many words as you can find that appear in your name. Try to find at least ten words and try to find words with lots of letters, for example, I have the word JANUARY in my name SARA-JANE ARBURY!

Next write a short piece/poem/story using as many of the words in your list as possible. You may repeat any found words.

This is also an unusual way to create unique messages for friends and family members by using their names as the starting point!

**EXERCISE TWO: The theme of this exercise is JOURNEYS**

This part is about looking closely at artworks and considering two example poems on this theme.

"People have always moved around the world. Early humans were nomadic, travelling in search of food, shelter, and safety. Today, people move for many different reasons, including economic, political, cultural, religious, and environmental. Sometimes, events beyond people's control, like war or natural disaster, leave them displaced and forced to migrate. Other times, people migrate voluntarily, perhaps in search of better work opportunities or a different lifestyle. For many artists, their own migrations and those of their ancestors shape their identities and the art they produce. As people move, they bring their traditions, knowledge, and beliefs with them. Often, as much as they absorb the culture of their new home, they influence it with their own traditions."

(Preface to *Migration & Movement* exhibition, MoMA, Manhattan)

Take a close look at the following artworks. Consider how they work as art, how and why they were created, how the artworks make you feel etc... (Titles of paintings and links below)



### **René Magritte: Le Domaine d'Arnheim**

<https://www.christies.com/features/When-artists-dream-of-far-flung-lands-10390-3.aspx> (follow the link and scroll down to the picture)

The Belgian Surrealist, René Magritte, named this painting after the short story *The Domain of Arnheim* by Edgar Allan Poe. In German, the word 'Arnheim' means 'home of the eagle', which is reflected in Magritte's imperious bird-mountain (look closely!)

Magritte had never been to the Alps, but in 1926 he came across a photograph of the mountain range in a travel brochure and used it as inspiration for his bird-mountain. He was so pleased with the results that he painted the Alpine vista another nine times. It became one of his most enduring symbols.

### **Ford Madox Brown: The Last of England**

<https://medium.com/thinksheet/how-to-read-paintings-the-last-of-england-by-ford-madox-brown-73eb9e41840f>

This painting is in the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. Brown began it in 1852 when emigration from England was at a peak, with over 350,000 people leaving that year. The painting depicts a man and his wife seeing England for the last time. The white cliffs of Dover are disappearing behind them in the top right of the picture.

In the foreground a row of cabbages hang from the ship's rail, provisions for the long voyage. In the background are other passengers, including a pair of drunken men and a family. The father is barely visible except for the pipe he holds; his daughter has her arm around a curly-haired boy. There is a fair-haired child eating an apple behind the man's shoulder.

In order to mirror the harsh conditions in the painting Brown worked mostly outside in his garden, and was happy when the weather was poor – he recorded his feelings of delight when the cold turned his hand blue, as this was how he wanted it to appear in the painting. He was seen as strange by his neighbours who saw him out in all kinds of weather. His diary noted that the "ribbons of the bonnet took me 4 weeks to paint".

### **Carry Akroyd: Winter Thrushes Head Home**

<https://www.carryakroyd.co.uk/prints/> (follow this link and click on the title of the picture to call it up)

### **Jerri Finch: Abundant Splendor**

<http://jerrifinch.com/painting-journeys.htm> (follow the link and click on the image of the man in the air on the far right of the screen as you look at it)

### **Jacob Lawrence: The Migration Series, Panel No. 3 (1940-41)**

<https://www.phillipscollection.org/collection/browse-the-collection?id=1153&page=3>

Follow this link to find out more about the life and work of Jacob Lawrence

<https://lawrencemigration.phillipscollection.org/>

The Migration Series is a group of sixty paintings by African-American painter Jacob Lawrence which depicts the migration of 1.6 million African Americans to the northern United States from the South that began in the 1910s. Lawrence conceived of the series as a single work rather than individual paintings and worked on all of the paintings at the same time, in order to give them a unified feel

and to keep the colours uniform between panels. Viewed in its entirety, the series creates a narrative that tells the story of the Great Migration. Lawrence created the sixty paintings in the series in 1940–41 when he was twenty-three years old.

The panels depict the dire state of black life in the South, with poor wages, economic hardship and a justice system rigged against them. The North offered better wages and slightly more rights, although was not without its problems.

Now look at these two poems about journeys: *Sea Fever* by John Masefield

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/54932/sea-fever-56d235e0d871e>

and *Out Of Africa* by Grace Nichols

[https://prezi.com/pudzhk1\\_zo3-/out-of-africa-by-grace-nichols/](https://prezi.com/pudzhk1_zo3-/out-of-africa-by-grace-nichols/) (scroll down for the poem)

Think about the form, patterns and repetitions in the poems, the 'word music', what each poem is saying to the reader, how you feel when you read them, etc.

### **EXERCISE THREE: Write a poem inspired by an artwork on the theme of Journeys.**

This part is about writing your poem.

Choose an image to work with. Make notes about it. What does it make you think about? What do you notice about it? How does it make you feel? What do you think about when you look at it?

Next, write a detailed description of the work of art. Include words that indicate size, shape, colour, light/shade, objects, figures, positions etc. You may notice details in the painting that you hadn't before.

Finally, write a poem in response to your work of art. If you need inspiration, look back at the notes you have made. Remember, there are many different ways to go about this.

Some suggested approaches:

- Write about the scene or subject being depicted in the artwork.
- Relate the work of art to something else it makes you think of or a memory.
- Write about the experience of looking at the art.
- Speculate about how or why the artist created this work.
- Imagine a story behind what you see presented in the work of art.
- Imagine what was happening while the artist was creating this work.
- Speak to or directly address the artist or the subject(s) of the painting, using your own voice.
- Write in the voice of the artist.
- Write in the voice of a person or object depicted in the artwork.

Your poem could be written in the style of one of the example poems.

And, of course, you are perfectly free to do your own thing!

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