

'Environment' Calendar



Grass Roots Open Writers

2014

A MESSAGE FROM



Grass Roots Open Writers is a very friendly and supportive community writing group.

We hope you enjoy reading our work and that you'll be inspired to write your own.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION - OR TO SHARE YOUR WRITING WITH US

Please visit the GROW website: www.grow.btck.co.uk

Email: grass.roots.open.writers@gmail.com **or Phone / Text** 07932 231491

or just come along to one of our fun and relaxed workshops.

Skill Sharing Workshop

Every Wednesday*

10.00 - 13.30

Roosevelt Court Residents Lounge, Stonehouse Drive, St Leonards

Creative Writing Workshop

Every Thursday*

10.00 – 12.00

Bevin Court Residents Lounge, Stonehouse Drive, St Leonards

Creative Writing, Arts & Crafts Workshop

Every Alternate Friday[#]

14.30 - 16.30

The Alex Room, Yvonne Robertson House, Hastings Road, Bexhill

[#]Please check the GROW Diary on our website for dates.

*Except during School Holidays.

We also organise social events and outings for our members.

I Dream To Be Free

As I stand in my enclosure
watching the world go by
I have often heard people remark
as they stare into my intelligent eyes
I wonder what she's thinking;
I wonder what's on her mind
They say an elephant never forgets,
well I will never forget my home
My mind starts to wander,
to happier times,
when I used to be free
I dream to be free,
to see my friends from the herd again,
I'm an African elephant and I'm here
in the zoo to serve a purpose, educate you,
And to create young,
to be reared, then taken away
Some of them go to on to be part
of another exhibit in another zoo
The luckier ones have the chance
to be released to where they belong
With every one that goes back to the wild
I can't help but feel jealous,
when is it my turn?

The zoo is a sanctuary to
preserve endangered species
I understand that without zoos
there would be no wild elephants,
but I dream to be free
to roam the African plains

With every passing day that goes by
I stand in this enclosure,
with my long nose outstretched through the bars
I have everything an elephant could want
There is water for me to drink,
grass to graze and trees for shelter
I have two other elephants to keep me company;
and an indoor area for shelter
The keepers bring us food
and care for us day and night;
it is a life of luxury
I hate to sound ungrateful but
I dream to be free
even just for a month,
a week or even just a day

by Liz Jury

January

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
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Winter in Wales

When I was in Wales the weather was bad, especially in the winter. I remember when I was about seven years old, the weather was so cold. We had about 36 inches of snow, up to the window sill, and it used to freeze. Back then it was so cold with all the icicles on the windows, but it was really good fun.

We used to have no central heating, only coal fires. When my Mam and Dad, my two brothers, my two sisters and I went to bed we had to put our coats on top of our blankets because it was freezing. We three girls used to sleep together in one double bed and we used to put our cold feet on each other. Sometimes we had to use a hot water bottle for us to share. My two sisters kept warm by hugging each other.

We had to bath in the living room in a tin bath in front of the coal fire. Us girls bathed first then the brothers bathed next. We had a big living room but when it was very cold we moved into the smaller rooms, to keep warm.

We used to go to school in the snow. If the teachers could not get to the school we used to go into other classes with teachers who were there. They were great days, a long time ago. Even though it was very cold, we had so much fun. I remember reading the encyclopaedia and using the words to make up a song. I had great times with my sisters and I love them.

What a difference today. They see a little snow, send the children home and close all the schools.

Maria Gethin

February

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Swathes of Sitka Spruce

Sterile, devoid of life, except for
 The cloven hoof of passing deer.
 Sentinel led, deep green fronded
 Constrained with no space for light.
 Multiple eruptions on the far reaching
 Landscape of wild Scotland; invaders
 In the native home of the Scots Pine
 Where Red Squirrels and Crossbills
 Habituate endemic in ecological balance.
 A balance we are endeavouring to restore
 When once the only the choice we had
 Was to plant swathes of Sitka Spruce.
 Regimented; standing to attention, like
 Battalions of men who fought for justice,
 In foreign fields; the needs of which to serve,
 And restock; stripped the land of the North
 Into a mass representation of no-man's land.
 Tree stumps and severed limbs. Nerves; as
 Brittle as snapping twigs. Trampled Flora,
 As the trenches filled with slime and mud.
 Now (as agriculture reclaims the battlefields)
 In their broadleaf woodland; bending with the
 driven wind; young saplings, thrive alongside
 Toughening bark of their slow maturing cousins
 And whist Wildcats skulk and hunt in the shadows
 Our young men are still
 being felled in Foreign Fields

Jan Hedger

'Swathes of Sitka Spruce' started as just a few words, following a discussion, in the Tuesday writing group a couple of years ago.

Having lived in North East Scotland for seven years previously, and having travelled the country – I saw and walked round many of its forests – always struck by the regimented, tightly packed, plantations of Sitka Spruce – a canopy of darkness and gloom, where nothing else grew and wildlife was sparse.

I was partly aware, through the media and conservation sites, the extent and the monetary value, to the economy, these forests produced in cheap home-grown logging and timber. There was even a period, where investing in these plantations, was offered to private land holders as a tax break, and this loophole was later exploited as a tax haven for the wealthy.

These trees, however, are not native to Scotland – so where did it start? In order to finish and to do justice to 'Swathes of Sitka Spruce' I did some research.

The native woodland of Scotland, was re-formed after the Ice Age, covering the retreating tundra; in Scots Pine (predominant) Aspen, Oak, Rowan, Holly, Willow and Alder - it became known as the 'Caledonian Forest' which is a poetic name, from a Latin word meaning 'wooded heights'.

Trees were only part of the landscape – there were open 'savannah's' – heath, scrub and bogs. Creatures and plant-life colonised and grew in number. Certain trees formed their own pockets and life within and around them. With climatic changes, the Viking invasion, exploitation and the growth of farming; the land and its forests ever changed.

March

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Although deforestation in Scotland, goes way back, the biggest and most catastrophic change, came about through war – bringing us to the words of 'A Sitka Spruce'.

Due to demand for timber, pre WW1 (and our own having been depleted) Britain had been importing from abroad. With the outbreak of war, this was no longer possible – and with the increasing need for wood for our troops in France and to power industry at home – forests across Britain were stripped bare and left as devastated as the broken landscape of Flanders. Tree cover dropped to around 5%.

In 1919, the British Government – fearful of being reliant only on imports – formed The Forestry Commission (still going strong today and in ownership of many of our forests – they do an excellent job) In order to re-stock quickly and to be sustainable – introduced species, such as Sitka Spruce were planted to create dense plantations – the only remaining native forests were both felled and under-planted. Like the Grey Squirrels competing with the Red Squirrels – the introduced species took over and shaded out our native species. Conservation, then was almost unheard of and not on the Governments agenda.

Now we appreciate, and understand more, the need for protecting what we have – and the important ecological balance, woodlands native to our shore – have in balancing our own eco-system. Many creatures, that once roamed and hunted in our forests, were lost – we owe it to those that remain, a re-planting of their natural habitat. This, is exactly what has been happening. Over recent years – the Forestry Commission has played a huge part in re-generation of native species – so once more, these glorious trees, reclaim their place. It remains an ongoing project. Scotland is one of the main areas of re-generation.

Having finished my research – it kept coming back to me, on seeing WW1 images of both, the stripped Scottish landscape - where little care had been taken and trunks ripped from the ground – exposing roots; branches, splintered and broken, the ground deeply rutted from rusty archaic machinery – and the barbed wire strewn and splintered wood fragments, alongside bone and limb - abandoned in the desolate no-man's land of France.

This is what shaped 'Swathes of Sitka Spruce' - a past, a present and a future; of us, as humans and of the land - there has to be an ecological balance and a wish for peace, for both, and for sustainability.

Jan Hedger

For more information see www.treesforlife.org.uk/forest/humanimpacts/deforestation.html
<http://discussionsart.files.wordpress.com/2010/08/tree-cover-in-scotland3.pdf>

April

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Sunset

Sunsets can be very beautiful and colourful, you can see many different colours in a sunset depending on where you are at the time.

Some sunsets I have seen for myself, some of them on TV. The sunsets I have seen on TV are sunsets over mountains or over deserted landscapes. Even the ones I have seen on TV look pretty good

When I lived in London, you would see the sun disappearing behind the big blocks of flats, you just got the glare through the window.

Now, I live in Hastings. I like to watch the sun set over the sea front. It can be quite spectacular, as the sun sets, it looks like it is sinking into the sea.

Sometimes it looks like there are two suns, one sinking into the sea, one coming up from the sea.

Andrew Gager

Environment

I was born in Barbados. We were very poor. The atmosphere was the same year in and year out. Summer was all year round. There was no such thing as winter. All weather was the same.

Most of the time it was very sunny but around September and October we used to get lots of rain. Some times we had big storms, like when we have bad weather here, with lots of rain.

Marion Alleyne

Noise Pollution

The beats of music
You tap along to the sound
Noise can hurt you ears

Jan Humphreys

Mixed Seasons

Night has become day
Winter's days are dragging long
Before the day starts

Ryan Powell

May

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Frack Off

People at the bottom
people at the top,
some with very little
some with quite a lot.

Drill your own head,
no brain found
Number 10 again,
what a bright idea.

we oppose this,
invest in green
technology,
it is
common sense,
not more
fossil fuel, expense.

Stephen Taylor



Early Evening News

Such hurt and pain
Across the world
The breaking news
As lives are curled
Up and thrown away
Reporters seek a bright
New angle. A child
Has burned, a plane
Has crashed
A bomb exploded
And quakes have razed
A city to the ground
Killing hundreds,
Trapping many more
A ship has sunk
The crew all drowned
And a tornado has ripped
A family apart
The death toll is rising
While we complacently
Eat our baked beans on toast
And wait for the soaps to begin

Ashley Jordan

June

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30						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29

Elements of Alliteration

Breezes Banter Bashfully
Winds Whip Wildly
Gales Groan Gloriously
Hurricanes Howl Hungrily
Tornados Twist Traumatcally
Cyclones Circle Centrifugally
Showers Scantily Saturate
Drizzle Dampens Deceptively
Rain Rampages Rampantly
Rain Refreshingly Rejuvenates
Downpours Drench Deviously
Floods Frequently Flash
Hail Hurtles Haphazardly
Sleet Scornfully Soaks
Squalls Scatter Spasmodically
Thunder Tempestuously Trembles
Lightning Lustrously Lights
Storms Shatter Spectacularly
Mist Merely Muddles
Fog Frustrates Fearfully
Frost Fancifully Flickers
Ice Idly Illuminates
Snow Softly Settles
Blizzards Blind Blatantly
Sunlight Simmers Seductively
Sunshine Sensationally Sizzles

Jan Hedger

Decisions

Some degree of care is needed when making decisions and this is fact is scientifically proven. We have heard of the Butterfly effect and the Probability theory but these seem rather vague till we look a little deeper into their meaning.

The Butterfly effect is simply explained as the last straw which broke the camels back. Why is it called the Butterfly effect? If we look at long term weather forecasts, we can see that the predictions can often be faulty.

The Butterfly effect is an example of how two opposing weather systems are so finely balanced, that the slightest weight or disturbance on either side can dramatically cause this balance to tip.

When we make important decisions it is worth considering the Butterfly effect and the probability factor. While the Probability theory is an extremely complex mathematical theorem, it is worth asking ourselves: What is the probable effect may result in our decision?

This is not intended to suggest we should procrastinate over every choice we make, but to state that the best laid plans etc. Of course, we have, and need to make decisions all the time, but a little care can go a long way in helping us make the right choices. I hope!

David King

July

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
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Sunflower Anthem

We stand like a Wordsworthian host
of golden sundials; with
deepest brown at our epicentre;
heads exalting the all seeing saffron eye
of the one burning with radiant desire,
to envelop Tuscany fields in its searing heat.
Mesmerised; in the grip of continuous rays
we are hypnotised, unable to break, till the eye
closes, in a spreading sunset of deepening sleep
and the guardian of the night, bathes us in a
cool and spirited illumination of softness.
Collectively; we sigh and lower our heads
a little; resting on towering green stems,
until the eye blinks away sleep at sunrise

Jan Hedger

Guardians

Angels watch concerned
The loved fight for survival
Nature's way guides all

Ryan Powell

Fukushima Sunflowers

Planted throughout Fukushima
A million golden rays of hope
To soak up the radiation
And cleanse the earth.
Visited by mutant butterflies
With mismatched wings
And twisted feet
And we wonder

What will happen next?
What will children yet unborn
Have to face and do
Because of what we've done?
The reactor is still leaking
Into the sea and land
It's in the food, the air, the dust
Our skewered world

We spin and worry, then forget
Yesterday's news
Fades from our mind
Soon we'll see the sunflowers
Nodding brightly on the hills
And we'll stop to look and smile
Whilst the deadly radiation
Quietly kills

Ashley Jordan

Ashley Jordan

August

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24
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Whatever Next?

Sun shining, sky's blue
What season is coming soon?
Any one it's fun.

Ryan Liffen

Autumn

It is autumn again,
I notice the leaves,
I don't want to leave,
I have found an essence here.

Time calls me,
the hours, the minutes,
the days, weeks, months
I escape in my music.

Mother nature whispers patience,
I stare at her breast,
I feed from the nipple
of her human kindness.

I feel replenished.

Father time proclaims excitement,
further down the line,
farther on, journey, adventure, music.

Stephen Taylor

This is what Autumn means to me

The changing colours of the trees
The cold and blustery autumnal breeze
The drop in temperature
before winters freeze
This is what Autumn means to me

The reduction in daylight
The crisp autumnal days so Bright
The dark, ever lengthening Nights
This is what Autumn means to me

The sound of the wind
howling against the door
The season of gathering of food to store
The wilds animals
always looking for more
This is what autumn means to me

Liz Jury

Changing Seasons

Summer air slowly
Getting colder while Autumn
Comes before Winter

Ryan Liffen

September

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Autumn

As I wake up on another Autumn morning, the air outside is covered with a thin mist. I think I will probably need a jumper today. I go downstairs to get the dogs, and go out onto the shiny dew soaked grass. As I walk past my car, I see that the windows are covered with a thin layer frost that seems to sparkle in the morning sun. I can wipe it off with my finger, it is not iced over like it sometimes is in winter, but is a sure sign that Winter is coming. The mist is starting to clear now, and as we continue into the fields. It feels strange seeing the fields so bare after being so full of crops over the summer months.

We are going into the woods now, the squelch of the dew soaked ground is replaced by the crisp crunch of leaves under foot. I love going for walks in the wood in the Autumn. The trees are turning from a vibrant green to deep reds. The dogs enjoy chasing the squirrels that are scurrying around the woodland floor collecting acorns for the winter storage.

Conkers and chestnuts are starting to litter the woodland floor. Nature is preparing to go to sleep, but don't worry it is not dead, ready to come alive again in the spring. I have tied my jumper around my waist now, Autumn can be a deceptive season. This is turning out to be a lovely warm Autumn day.

As we head out of the wood, the Autumn feel continues, hungry wild birds are raiding the hedgerows which are alive with wild berries.

As I breathe in deeply, the air always seems to be much clearer in the Autumn. I can smell something else Autumnal now. A Bonfire stimulates all my senses I can hear the familiar crackle of the wood as it burns I can see the smoke now as it rises above the hedge in thin wispy waves. But most of all, I can smell the smoke, it is the kind of smell that you can taste in the back of your throat.

Liz Jury

October

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
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Autumn Poem

As I wake on yet another cold autumn day
In my comfortable warm bed I would do anything to stay
As the wind bangs and rattles against my window frame
The leaves fallen from the trees dance as if they are playing a game
I begrudgingly force myself to get up and face the day
As I step outside to a bright, crisp Autumnal day I pray the rain stays away
It is the season of change, between warm summer and winters bitter cold
The leaves are changing from lush green, to a spectrum of colours from red to gold
As everyone brings out their winter coats, storing their summer dresses away
We are presented with yet another glorious, sunny Autumnal day
The woods are a hub of activity with squirrels gathering food to store
For harder times when they know they will need more
It is a season of productivity with field mushrooms
As people clear the leaves from garden paths with brooms
As a life line for wild birds before winters harsh chill
The hedgerows offer an assortment of berries, they can have their fill
It is the season of harvest as farmers gather their crops
Before they are killed off as the temperature drops
At the end of a long day, I come in and sit by an open fire
Until once more to my bed I will retire
At the end of the day, I am glad I got up for a reason
I should make the most of this beautiful Season

Liz Jury

November

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
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Winter

I love to see the winter's snow
it gives the landscape a sparkling glow
all of the fields are covered in white
I especially love it when
the winter sun shines bright
All of the trees in the winter are bare
gone are the brilliant green leaves
that they wear
I go out to do my jobs
with coat, hat, gloves and scarf
To do my horse, walk the dogs, feed the calves
the woods are quiet now;
animals are in hibernation
to sleep for the whole of winter's duration
I rush to get everything done,
before winters long nights
I can't see to do things in the fading light
I come in from the bitter cold
to get warm by the fire
All wet clothes are put straight in the dryer
Thank god for central heating
From winter's chill, it provides a warm greeting
When there's nothing to do,
I love to snuggle up warm in bed

but first of all I have to
make sure everything's fed
I always find in winter, I eat more food
there's always lots more there,
to leave it would be rude
Typical winter foods like soup and mince pies
To summer salads and barbecues,
I can say goodbye
The thing that I really hate
is the frosty mornings, de-icing my car
with all that ice on the windscreen, I can't see far
I don't like the winter's dangerous icy roads
Dangerous driving conditions; all traffic slowed
The thing I love about winter
is of course Christmas time
Beautifully decorated Christmas trees
Children jumping up and down with glee
I love to hear the Christmas carols and songs
they make the nights not seem so long
brightly wrapped Christmas presents galore
Piled up so you can't see the floor
I love to see holly
with its brightly coloured berries
here's hoping this Christmas will be merry

Liz Jury

December

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