

The Start

Bark chip ground marks pathway through thick thorny blackberry bush terrain. Bushes of the land that made them. Paths man-made. Sun on my head and writing hand. Rowan trees, berry-laden act sentry either side of herb garden gate. Church bells peel middle distance, rush of cars nearby. In meditation, I embraced all noise, then put it outside my earth planted mind. This earth that supports us met my form; I am sunk into the ground, spine held by vertebrae alignment, gravity my friend.

Sunlight bears witness to school children's commute. Blackberries for breakfast. See the wild fruit, to know them and name them is to remember ancient lore of a child's late-summer days. Pure bitter sweet for the birds, for all of us. Lightly focused awareness, reaching out with my mind's eye not my fingers this time, freed by the wild found outside. Gentle observation, with calm, cleared thoughts, present in the moment.

Developing a wild nature within, not so domesticated, not so reduced in this place, this head space. Drifting comes naturally to the small white butterflies, their numbers double as I pass by. The cause of their lift off, witness to flight as a beautiful, alien thing. Long fissure in the ground splits concrete path. Always look back from whence you came, drifting and looking go hand in hand walking through wonderland. Transitioning, crossing thresholds, gathering all I take from this experience. -GB

10 Minutes of Free Writing: Unchanged

Time taken, pen shadows on the page, dove cooing, cars rush busily to their destination marking our time and placing us in a space of urban sprawl around this garden marred by chatty noisy workers splitting wood behind us. Jets soaring with engine roar across the blue white bright sky and not seen but noise drift getting quieter and quieter and then not heard here but heard in all its noise elsewhere in the city, county of Lincolnshire.

Pen shadow chasing the ink on this page - sun up in front of me and this notebook- annoying chatter behind us - bird chatter is below the noises of cars and chatter of man but heard sweetly and held close to my heart. My soul is peeping over my head daring to stretch and allowing me to see it was awakened by the sitting with my plant companion of earlier. I feel that the plant and my soul are friends, already have a relationship of which I know nothing - yet. Yet. I want to listen to plants now and make that a part of my real life. I can do almost anything I want in the way that I want to. I must not listen to the voices outside or give them any power. Just listen to a plant. -JB

Untitled

I

"Distracted from distraction by distraction"
To the land where the liquorice grew

Now there grow blackberries - stained hands
That thorns would have us eschew

Wandering lonely? The clouds clear
Drifting we find our own way

The highs are naturally felt here
Where grasshopper legs play all day

II

What, can the trees teach us?
Can we find roots amidst global whirl?

As hassle carries, we tarry
Sheltered as sweet chestnut stir

Far from harried we feel ourselves grounded
Terra firma, we breathe green and blue

The Squirrels chatter and scream at us
Their burials will be rooted too

III

Summer's lease must be broken
The seasons arrive and pass through

All of us must steal from nature
But just how much are we due?

To cross a deadline is fatal
Crossed thresholds will be as well

Consider the why and the where of it
The tragic commons, our own peril

IV

Boundaries are passed and then noted
Silver shoes flash by silver birch

You may have found your tribe here
If flash and noise you besmirch

Take an eyeglass down to the microworlds
No instant karma or toll fee to pay

For the leaves are weighing heavy now
Slip-sliding to cold-dark decay

-MD

Writing wildly were...

Gaynor Brown
Jacqui Brown
Louisa Chase
Marcus Dredge
Emma Covrill
Andrew Falconer
Frances Morgan

Wild gratitude to...

Everyone at Lincoln Creates and especially Olivia
Liquorice Park
Kevin
Natalie and Will at Happy Culture
Adam
APS Printers
Finally: Andrew, Emma, Frances, Gaynor, Jacqui, Louisa & Marcus - I couldn't have wished for a better bunch of wildlings.

wild writing

edited by Ruth Charnock

Introduction.

At the beginning of September 2022, a group gathered each Wednesday for four weeks in the Liquorice Park herb garden to write (along with its guardian, Kevin) before moving down to Happy Culture cafe to turn over our words.

As it turned out, much of the writing, some of which you can see here, didn't happen in the park but came later. Instead, these sessions wandered down paths and off them, through thickets, into bramble tangles, drawn by sudden green patches of light. We watched the summer tip, gently this year, into autumn. We rubbed blackberries into our skin. We found out the names of trees and plants and birds and wondered at our need to know these names. We made kin - with each other, with our plant friends, with the noises we wanted to hear, and those we didn't.

These sessions were made possible by the generous support of Lincoln Creates at Lincoln Big: an initiative to foster working relationships between local creatives and businesses, and by the gracious hosting of Liquorice Park and Happy Culture cafe.

'Wild Writing' was launched with the intention of exploring our felt desire for relationship with the other-than-human, through embodied interactions, conversations with each other and the trees, and, of course, through writing. My intention is that these will be just the first wild writing sessions to take place in Lincoln's green spaces. Now, more than ever, we need to remember our place in 'the family of things', as Mary Oliver puts it.

We hope you enjoy these words. And look out for more wild writing events in 2023!

-RC

Dr Ruth Charnock
Editor and facilitator of the
Wild Writing workshops.

Contact me:
Email: ruth.charnock@hotmail.co.uk
Instagram: @ruthcharnock
Website: www.ruthcharnock.com

Original
painting by
LC.

fissure

to be fallen through like before sleep
the crack in the path a new axis
pulls both ways pulls apart you could
talk about how it is to
hold space or
lose ground but no we don't know
what it's like to lose ground
to feel ground fracture

but and what if you don't want to hold space
see what it holds ease a hand inside
a thought experiment what happens next
by next I mean next time it dries out
like this what next hands split hot
dry remember it

now what it was like when
leaves wet heavy with light
trace where it was toe to clay
feet remember hand remembers hot
split seam
figure ground

-FM

An audience with the asters

Come listen to the asters sing their song of summer's end. That's why you're here, wet with dew, batting away bored wasps who have no work to do. Together we're revelling in the faltering sun, stirring memories of a heatwave's unrelenting rays. Remember when we hid from it? Stay indoors, they said. Keep your windows closed. Now we make like cats, plotting courses from one bright pool to another. Someone asks, is this the final act? Or are the asters just the warm-up for autumn? There's always one who doesn't get it, always one who likes the darker nights, the coolness, the cosying up. Who doesn't marvel at the leaves when they show their true colours but then they fall and fall and fall.

Here we are again, buds like jazz hands, amid the dying and the dead. We didn't battle the brambles to get where we are, hell no, our troupe's too smart for that. We waited our turn in the spotlight. We watched them flower and fruit and be plucked by birds and boys and girls and watchful grandparents clutching empty ice cream tubs. The attention must be nice, while it lasts. Did you hear that tree quartet last week? They were digging it. Two rowans, an oak and a lime. Was it a lime? Taking their turn on the breeze, finding it, feeling it. See the saplings swaying along, learning the groove? They knew. They're tuning up, readying for the scales; moderate, near, fresh, strong, severe, whole.

We're ready too for summer's curtain call. But before our closing number, some questions from the audience. Who'd like to start? Why are you always fashionably late? Take a look around. A drought don't silence us. Are you just fancy daisies? Rude. How did you get here? We do not like your tone. How do you cope with fewer bees? Don't get us started. Are you edible? Dare to try? Would you say your petals are purple, violet or lilac? Does it matter, when every single one is fabulous. If you could be any flower, what would you be? Next? What matters to you most? Community, we asters are stronger together. How do you cope with summer's end? The show must go on.

-AF

On the dilemma of wearing shoes

Go off the path, they said
But I had shed my shoes
Must I domesticate bare feet
against the pain of the wild?
Perhaps there are places I am not
meant to reach
I am no pioneer, frontiersman
pushing through
Exquisite sensitivity is sorely
needed now

-LC