

Four Ducks on a Pond

*Four ducks on a pond,
a green bank beyond,
a blue sky of spring,
white clouds on the wing.
What a little thing
to remember for years,
to remember with tears.*

William

View from Kings Manor Farm Café

*Cars' metallic gleam, tax discs, gravel,
grass, sorrel stained, dots of poppies,
drifting shadows, a lone blackbird,
a wandering rowan, fence posts
marching away across empty pasture
where cows once roamed,
dung heaps, patches of dull green between,
misty rain blowing over the ribbon of saltings,
a solitary oak before the pewter strip of river,
reed beds, dark woods, trees pearl grey,
grey mist, grey sky, grey on grey.*

Drawing Ahead and High Tide Poets

The poem *Four Ducks on a Pond* makes a good starting point for looking at a particular view, starting close up and moving gradually into the distance. Writing or drawing or both may follow. Here the groups discussed the poem then let their eyes travel slowly, noting details at each stage of the visual journey. The examples given were written collaboratively and scribed by Lydia.

Collaborative writing activities like this are particularly useful to help create group interaction and confidence when several different groups are working together. Individual writers can then apply the same approach to their own poems.

It's worth noting that the last three lines of *Four Ducks* are an example of the poet 'telling' us what to think or feel. This can make an interesting discussion point for some groups. What are the feelings and thoughts that the landscape evokes for them? Do they need to describe these in their poems or do they think that the lines they have written about the landscape show the feelings they have without spelling them out?

This approach can also be used to record changes in the same landscape at different seasons. The writing will record the journey of the eye.

Guidelines:

- Look out the view you have chosen
- Focus on what can be seen close up. Write what you see.
- Travel to the mid distance. Write what you see.
- Travel to the far distance. Write what you see.
- Include two or three details for each stage of the view.
- Start a new line for each detail.
- Leave a double space to separate each stage of the journey.
- Return to the starting point and take your eyes slowly over the whole view. Is there anything you want to add?
- When you read the poem aloud, listen for sounds or patterns you may want to work on.

View from Estuary Moor

*Broken fence
Swaying reeds
Grey leaves of purslane.*

*Purple sea-lavender
Empty winding creek
Bright green glasswort
Gulls gliding, diving.*

*Twisted pine
Curving woods
Shades of green.*

*Waving flags on rigging
Overlooking clouds
Watery sky
Crane on quiet horizon.*

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