

Through the Skylight

*Cobwebby glass, smudged marks, patterned grime
bare oak twigs against lush fir
twigs like criss-crossed fingers
a bunch of dead leaves dangling
knotted branches, greeny lichen
tight buds will burst
but not today
clouds swamped behind (Spring)*

*Green shining acorns at tips of oak fingers
oak hands draw crazy patterns against the sky
clouds float by on a barbed wind
splash of blue-white sky
two swallows flitter and dive (Summer)*

Lines from High Tide Poets and from Shalfleet and Yarmouth Primary Schools

This is a simple activity which confines the act of looking to within a single frame. A piece of landscape is seen from indoors looking out through a window or doorway to perhaps a tree, a building, or a piece of sky. At Kings Manor we asked groups to look through the skylight of the classroom and to record what they saw at intervals during the day. It works as a collaborative writing activity or as an individual writing or drawing activity. It can develop an awareness of the extraordinary within the ordinary. It can be used to show changes over a single day or it can form a series of pieces recorded across the seasons. We used these guidelines:

- Look through the window and write a line about what you see... either in your own notebook or on a flipchart as part of a collaborative poem.*
- Look again at different times of day and record any changes you notice - sun to shadow, effects of wind or rain, bare branches to full leaf.
- You can make the lines into an individual list poem in your own notebook.

This can be extended into a whole group activity of re-drafting and editing to make a finished piece of collaborative work. The exercise also works in a range of contexts as a way of focusing attention and observation, including contexts such as prison or hospital where direct access to the outside world maybe limited or non-existent.

Materials

Flipchart or large paper for collaborative writing activity
Marker pens
A4 or A5 Plain paper
Writing and drawing materials

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