

The feeling of hope and new beginnings of early spring, together with this month's National Walk in the Park Day and World Poetry Day inspire our Elevate artists to reflect on the season with words and images to delight you.



elevate **your mood**

bringing colour and inspiration to you

Issue No.7

Take a walk in the park

Stephanie Jalland



'Tompkins Park, Brooklyn' by William Merritt Chase

Spring is here, chilly air, bright sunshine, hedgerows and trees alive with busy birds chirruping and whirring. Flowerbeds are beginning to bloom and it's warm enough at times to wrap up and sit on a park bench for a while and watch the world go by.

Tuesday 30th March is National Walk in the Park Day.

A delightful celebration to join in with if you are lucky enough to live near a park. I love everything about a local park - from the municipal flower beds and neat paths, to the carefully placed benches to catch the sun. Most of all I love the life and activity and folk of all ages enjoying a little bit of paradise. The word 'paradise' comes from a Greek modification of an Iranian word **paradeisos** meaning 'enclosed park'. A park is a paradise.

An elderly patient in bed once told me, when asked where she would like to go if she could?
"Back to the park."



Her eyes lit up, and there and then, through her description, 'back to the park' we went:

"I would sometimes borrow a pram from someone and take the children out for the afternoon. Sitting under a tree in the park with a book, looking at the flowerbeds and being able to walk away and still hear the music from the bandstand. Parks are always different; the layout, the planting and in those days the bands playing. I could tell from the music drifting in the air, which park it was coming from."

Take a walk in the park if you can, even if it is in your mind and heart, it is so very good for you.



'Aberdare Park Bandstand' by Darren Wyn Rees y - (CC BY-SA 4.0)

The feeling of hope and new beginnings



Hannah shows us her home made bug hotel

As March heralds the end of the winter and the beginning of spring, I'm sure many will breathe a particularly deep sigh of relief, as one of the toughest winters we have experienced for sometime. I do enjoy observing and celebrating each season, but this year, I feel ready for the feeling of hope and new beginnings that spring is deservedly reputed for. Spring bulbs that line the paths and hedgerows cause daily amazement, for their perennial resilience, coverage and yield, and serve as a reminder that there is much to look forward to in nature, for many months to come.

Over winter, our mature forest garden

became a work-sink for vast swathes of unexpected time at home. Now, after five months of pruning, coppicing and clearing, all available banks are lined with compacted 'habitat piles'. With so much to clear, a few bonfires warmed and lit up particularly chilly days and evenings, and afterwards, the glowing embers provided a hot oven for foil-wrapped squash and potatoes.

Seedlings season began in late February, with tomatoes and celeriac. It is particularly vital to start the former early, as this cannot be fast-tracked later on. We plant ample tomato seedlings, in case any fail later in the process, and often give away seedlings to any fellow growers who get caught out. Last year, we tried a range of tomato growing methods, to maximise our chances. Some were planted out small, others were potted on and we nurtured any that self-seeded. After two years of struggling with slow pepper growth, the pepper demise will be replaced with extra tomatoes this year.

In March, we are still munching through stores of fruit preserves and freezer berries, along with apples, squash, garlic and oca from cold store. From the ground, we enjoy brassicas, parsnips, and leeks, but it is challenging to live entirely off home-produce at this time of year, so the green grocers provide convenient colour and variety to our plates.

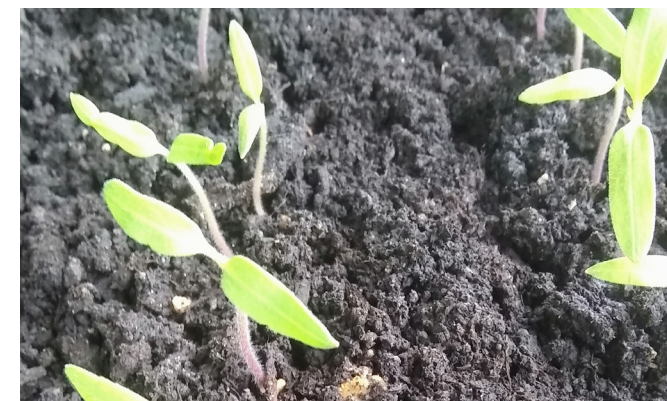
Whilst the produce is quiet, the ornamental garden is rewarding, as we enjoy a tidy outlook, with minimal input. The extra solar light is palpable and the winter cut-back has brought favourable light to the fruit, the polytunnel and vegetable patches.

The garden, and all its resource, purpose and offerings, has become a constant source of comfort in this challenging year

*Early spring observations from an off-grid small holding in Somerset
- Hannah Lefeuve*



At the time of writing, as I prepare to go in to hospital myself, I can relax a little in the knowledge that the garden needs little attention for a few weeks. Nonetheless, I will keep the garden, and particularly each of the flowers, in my mind throughout my time in hospital. The garden, and all its resource, purpose and offerings, has become a constant source of comfort in this challenging year and I hope that these writings, from my garden, will conjure pleasant images for you too. I created a bug hotel and put some bird seed out, to ensure I have visitors whilst I'm away and during my recovery.



Seed Words

A blank page must be filled.
It's a compulsion.
Put down something,
Anything.
Then Pause.
A fallow moment,

I see a garden plot
Waiting to be turned over,
A forkful at a time.
How long it takes
Depends on the soil:
Whether there's loam
Beneath the weeds,
Or stoned, or builders' rubble.

Nothing can grow
Until the earth is turned.
Planting must wait
Until the plot is cleared.

It's hard labour.
Back-breaking.
Mind-breaking
Sometimes

But then sun warms the soil,
A robin comes to feed
On new-mined worms;
A wild flower offers up
It's gentle scent;
A bird sings after rain.

One sense wakens another,
Raking up memories.
The words arrange themselves,
The plot's revealed.

From Greencroft Poetry & Creative Writing Group and the Greencroft Centre Art Group. This Project has been supported by the Mind Millennium Awards Scheme, Salisbury Arts Centre, Southern Arts and ArtCare.

Would you like to contribute a poem, image or your thoughts on spring into summer for a future edition? See back page for details.

Wellbeing and World Poetry

David Davies looks at how World Poetry Day links to our health



Swifts turn in the heights of the air;
higher still turn the invisible stars.
When day withdraws to the ends of the earth
their fires shine on a dark expanse of sand.

from 'Distances' by Philip Jaccottet, translated from French by Derek Mahon

Many of the things we care about most seem the hardest to talk about. Our hopes, feelings and memories; our seasons, nature and wildlife; our roots, background, culture and family members; our friends, jobs, language and our health. Feelings, like all these things, often seem hard to pin down and therefore often hard to express and share.

I want to be your friend
Forever and ever without break or decay.
When the hills are all flat
And the rivers are all dry,
When it lightens and thunders in winter,
When it rains and snows in summer,
When Heaven and Earth mingle —
Not till then will I part from you.

Anonymous, china, 1st century BC

Poetry can be a simple and powerful way for us to make sense of ourselves in the world. Reading poetry, like writing poetry, is a creative activity – the benefits of reading to one another; giving and receiving, and the sense of sharing and fun – can be a great contribution to our wellbeing and a great link with our memory.

This month sees World Poetry Day (celebrated on 21st March) which highlights how poetry shared internationally can reaffirm our common humanity. Our poetry demonstrates that we, as individuals everywhere in the world, share similar questions, feelings and the same need for

care and wellbeing. Like our NHS which relies so much on staff who originate from all around the world – Salisbury District Hospital alone has staff from over 70 countries – poetry conveys a sense of connection, contribution and diversity and shows how our wellbeing depends on this.

...where are they going
The flash of a hand, streak of movement,
rustle of pebbles.
I ask not out of sorrow, but in wonder.

from 'Encounter' by Czeslaw Milosz, translated from Polish by Czeslaw Milosz & Lillian Vallee

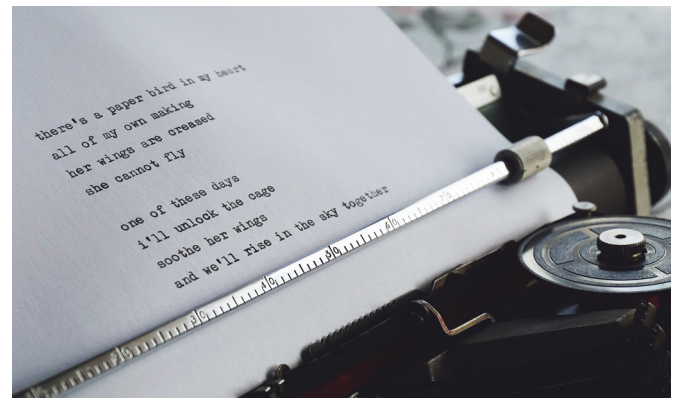


Image: www.pexels.com - Suzy Hazelwood

Write your own poem - choose one word from any of the quotes in the article. Write the word vertically down the page, next to the margin. Use each letter to begin a word for a line – keep the lines short.

Thanks for reading. It's been good to be in touch. Contribute your own reflections, a poem or image for our next edition on the general theme of spring into summer?

ArtCare, Block 29,
Salisbury District Hospital,
Salisbury, SP2 8BJ

sft.artcare@nhs.net
www.artcaresalisbury.uk
www.starsappeal.org

 **ArtCare**

