















STORIES, POEMS, AND SPARKS









FROM ADULTS IN GLASGOW



"After these storytelling workshops I feel more confident."

"These sessions make us think out of the box."

"I was able to get in touch with my inner child to connect with her. The sessions helped me with approaching my life and feeling in a more expanded way."



"In the morning I felt choppy, but now I feel sunny. I always cheer up knowing that I will come to the session."

"I explored the importance of storytellers in our life and how they are keeping the legacy of stories and transfer the lessons learned from these stories in our life whatever your nation or culture is."



"I felt relaxed at the end of the sessions. My mind went off from what was going out there in the world and my home."



"I will describe myself as a different person after these workshops. Now I can do the attempts to do new things or to show how to do things to other people. Because the workshops have pushed us from our comfort zone in a gentle way. I would have not done that before".

Photos by Daiva Ivanauskaitė and Trinidad Cabezón Droguett



CONTENTS

2	About
_	About

3 Special Thanks

I am

bie
ķ

- 6 I am by Bee
- 7 I am by Margaret Cameron
- 8 I am by Theresa
- 9 I am by Alice Mulholland

Family Memories

- 11 I Miss Someone by Syeda Zaidi
- 13 A Smile On My Face by Helen McNicoll
- 14 Nine Pairs of Socks by Mary Bennet
- 15 Christmas in Iona by Theresa
- 16 My Three Children by Asraa A. Abdulhussein
- 17 A Day to Remember by Margaret Cameron

Nature and Us

- 21 A Special Encounter by Helen McNicoll
- 24 Family of Foxes at My Door by Helen
- 25 In The Lavender Field by Nancy Bain
- 27 My Beautiful Friends by Zerina Tanikawa
- 28 Sun by Nancy Bain, Octopus by Theresa, Me and Bees by Bee

29 My New Friend by Debbie

Life Lessons

- 31 Liberty by Yasmeen Masud Shah
- 35 Be Like A Traveller by Yasmeen Masud Shah
- 38 Three Frogs by Fathima Shihama Razick

It will happen one day

- 41 My Dream Home by Asraa A. Abdulhussein
- 42 My Dream Home by Debbie, My Dream Home by Alice Mulholland
- 44 Saffron by Lababa Naqvi



Photo by Daiva Ivanauskaitė

ABOUT

This book contains stories, poetry, memories and little sparks that were created by the participants of the Village Storytelling Centre's Community Adult programme Oh The Stories We Could Tell in 2022-2023. Three wonderful groups were part of this project: Pollok Voices consisting of adults from Greater Pollok; This Woman's Voice, a group of women from Newlands Auldburn meeting in the Pollokshaws Community Hub; and Voices of Peace – women refugees, asylum seekers, and new Scots that gather at the Village from all over Glasgow.

Each group met weekly, making friends, feeling relaxed and connected. They were inspired and supported by each other, trying out something new, sharing their life stories, creating fiction and poetry. They played games as well as doing silly and serious exercises. Some of them courageously performed publicly at the Village Storytelling Festival 2022. They told and wrote words, but also made art pieces. Some of this art you will see in the book illustrations.

We are very proud of the achievements of our participants. Their work is full of truth and imagination, playfulness and wisdom. Please take this book and read it with love as this is how it was written for you.

Community Storytellers Daiva Ivanauskaitė and Trinidad Cabezón Droguett

SPECIAL THANKS

We would like to thank our funders at Impact Funding Partners, Sanctuary Housing Association, GCVS Wellbeing Fund, Souter Trust Fund and Glasgow Area Partnership.

We are very grateful to our partners at Pollokshaws Area Network, especially Fiona Eadie and Marie Scott at the Pollokshaws Community Hub and Garden and all their lovely and helpful volunteers. We also want to thank community links practitioners at Alliance Scotland based in the Pollok Health Centre, Milk Café and their Women's Wednesday Group organisers, and everyone else who made connections with the participants possible.

Thank you to the Village Storytelling Centre volunteers Beth Cockburn, Jessica Green and Theresa Campbell for transcribing participants' stories for this book. A huge thanks to our talented artists who helped us with our project: visual artist Greer Pester, fine artist Lababa Naqvi, and visual artist and designer of the book Hannah Brackston.

We are also grateful to our wonderful colleagues at the Village Storytelling Centre who proofread the stories, helped to reach the people, did accounting and raised the money for this project.

And last but not least we, facilitators and participants, want to thank our families and friends for continued support throughout this journey!

I AM...

POEMS



I am summer, which is very hot and warm I am a dog that is sometimes kind I am pink that is a lovely colour I am music that keeps you relaxed I am Debbie

Debbie



I am yellow, the colour of the sun. The sun is a shimmering colour of happiness.

I am blue, the colour of the waves. the waves are strong, they batter of the rocks.

I am a whale because they are highly intelligent and are gentle giants.

I am thunder, I have an awakening sound. I am thunder and my belly rumbles.

I am spring, the renewing of flowers growing, trees and the baby animals being born.

I am Bee and this is me.

Bee



I am a green lover as I wear this color often

As a cat I can be your best friend or enemy

I am spring
as I spring
to the hotter months and this brings lots of

clouds

I am the noise that says it's time to go home to your family

I am Margaret

Margaret Cameron



I am pink, pink is the colour of an elephant.
I like elephants when they spray water all around.

I am bell ringing. Bell ringing is the sound of a wedding taking place.

I am snow when it first snows, when it is crispy and refreshing.

I am Theresa.

Theresa



I am mauve, a rich vibrant color. I am often seen on flags or rich robes, Also in flowers, sweet peas and asters.

I am a dog, I will be your faithful friend all of my life. Feed me and love me as I love you.

Spring is a lovely season with new plants peeping from the ground.

Baby chicks in the nest twittering and attempting to fly. A promise of new things to come.

I wake up to the morning chorus of birds in my garden seeking food and water.

My name is Alice but I don't live in a palace or Wonderland.



FAMILY MEMORIES

POEMS AND STORIES



'Painted Rocks and Concepts'

I Miss Someone

I miss someone...

I don't.

Hied.

When I close my eyes in the morning and night throughout my life,

In the mirror, an empty chair, a pair of slippers no longer there...

I miss someone...

I don't.

I lied.

When darkness around me after the sunset in the star on the sky

On the roof at your old house, when we walk and talk together.

I miss someone...

I don't,

I lied.

On the big days in my life, though when I was born you took me first in your arms, I miss

On my birthday you cooked delicious food, I can't taste again, I miss

On the graduation you gave me a beautiful blue bag, it was a lot for me, I miss

On my holidays, the only place I want to spend my childhood it's no longer, I miss

On my wedding day I saw shine in your eyes, I never forgot, that was all over the world for me.

I miss someone...

I don't,

I lied.

When the grass grows in your backyard, I miss



The flower blossoms in the spring season, I miss

The leaves fall and colour change, I miss
The cold waves on long winter nights, I miss
In your weak eyes and body bound with age, I miss
Wrinkles on your face, with your grey hair, I miss
Softness on your hand, like a velvet touch, I miss
Day after day, month after month, year after year, time
marches on, my memory's fades, and the details begin to
blur, I miss

Maybe you are just a faded photograph of that time, I miss I will look like you with my grey hair, wrinkles told to stories of my journey too.

I miss you and one day I will be missed like you.

Syeda Zaidi



A Smile On My Face

This photo always brings a smile to my face. It is a photo my mum and dad had taken at a photographic studio. It is a picture of my older sister Elizabeth and myself. I was a baby about one year old and my sister was nine.

We were also very close growing up and into adulthood. We lived together in our family house. In later life, I looked after my sister through her many illnesses until she passed away. I will always remember the good times and holidays we shared together.

Helen McNicoll



Nine Pairs of Socks

Being part of a big family has good points but many bad ones. I was one of nine children and my jobs in the morning started a lot before school. First, I had to get the coal fire on and blaring away for my sister to get up for work. She would heat all her clothes to the fire and, believe me please when I say, if the fire wasn't lit she would give me a fair slap. Then she would go back to bed until it was ready. That is true. Then it was time to make her toast and tea and then off to work. At 7am it was the school for the kids, but they were not a problem.

At night time after dinner when all that was over and the washing of dinner was finished, my job was almost done. Only the socks came off to be washed and no washing machine, so I was on a washboard with nine pairs of socks scrubbing away.

Mary Bennet



Christmas in Iona

Many years ago, when my children were young and still believed in Father Christmas, we went to Iona leaving from Oban. We took two ferry rides to get to the Island of Iona where we were going to spend Christmas. We were shown to our room which has one set of bunk beds for my children and a bed for myself. The first thing I saw in the room was a beautiful butterfly with the most vibrant colours. I saw it as a sign of an Angel or several angels looking after us. It was a beautiful feeling.

All the adults were given a chore to do and my chore was to clean and set the open fire using coal. The Christmas tree was in. They called this the drawing room. I loved when the fire was on and I knew the children were safe playing games. I used to sit by the fire and just loved the fire, as the other people came into the drawing room. I used to listen to the people talking openly about things that had happened in their lives. Some things that they spoke about were very sad but it just made my life seem trivial and I just listened and I was able to move on in my life with my two young children.

What a lovely Christmas we had and I truly remember it with true happiness.



My Three Children

This photo is of my three children when they were all in primary school. This was before my eldest started secondary school. This was a great memory because it was nice seeing all of them in one picture.

Family: Janat, Jaffer, Rayhanna

Asraa A. Abdulhussein



A Day to Remember

It was the first week of the school holidays, 6 weeks of different walks. Today is the first one of the summer of 1959.

It was a bright morning. We had lots of things to get ready for the very excited weans. This was carried out with lots of noise. My job at 5 years old was to gather up all the balls, bats, and some jam jars for the tadpoles. The older boys would catch them to take home to show our da.

Ma had all the food ready, all lovely. Peaches with butter and jam, mixed fruit flavour, slices of the dumpling. Ma had made some bottled water, in Irn-bru gless bottles as they had a stone lid with which we could close so no waste. Not to forget the knitted blanket, our lovely picnic mat of lots of colors. This mat got used for lots, mostly a tent.

Almost time to get on the move. Ma told us how to behave and some do's and don'ts for the journey to the Mary Queen of Scotland Tree. This was for us all to keep safe on the main road to Darnley. Some of the pavements were narrow.

With a head count, holding hands as a large family, we set off from Darvel St. Nitshill heading to the Nitshill Rd. Once safely on the straight road, we had then the chance to sing. We walked past Remos chip shop and discussed what our choice of food we would choose on our homeward journey as this was a highlight of the day.

Still singing and chatting the train bridge was just ahead of us. We could hear the noise from the bridge. Looking up there was a train going over the tunnel from Barrhead to Glasgow. All excited we waved to the two carriages that were fast. Some people waved back. Our Ma said when she was little she did the same and got waves back. It was a friendly feeling and us happy kids smiling from ear to ear.

Asking our Ma, "Are we near there?" "Still a wee bit to go. You can sing ten green green bottles", she said. That should be us there happily singing our verse of ten green bottles. There was a lot of noise: bells ringing as we walked passed the fire station, then a second engine at its back. We all stood very still and quiet watching the both engines headed in the direction, we had just walked when my older brother asked Ma "Where do you think the engine is going to?" laughing out loud. Ma said, "To get out a cheeky cat from a tree", as we waved to the firefighters when they closed the door tight.

In a few minutes the tree came into sight and it was a lovely tree with long branches reaching out to give you a cuddle. The sun was coming through. It was beautiful then but even better now. This Sycamore tree, our Queen sat with her husband Lord Darnley. I was there a few weeks ago. Back to our picnic.

On crossing the road Ma gave us weans a talk on how to behave and not to get lost. The grass had been cut. It smelt lovely and looked very tidy. We chose a game of rounders. First, we planned to play with our shoes off but as the grass had been cut recently this couldn't happen as the grass was so jaggy. We were all jumping around and our shoes had to go on fast. This caused us all to laugh for a long time haha.

One more game before we set up the picnic blanket after a chat. We decided on girls and boys games. The boys got football and us girls played, "I dropped a letter to my love" which was a circle game. This was so much fun. You dropped a letter at someone's back and where you dropped they had to chase you, catch you with lots of girls screaming and shouting. As we played we could hear the boys shouting loudly about a goal and a penalty and someone was offside. Everyone was happy and hungry by then.

The sun was still shining as we all set the picnic blanket full of all the food we liked. There were water bottles we had been keeping cool

in the stream. Bread and butter with mix fruit jam. This was yummy! Homemade pancakes also with jam or bananas. As we got our plates full we chatted very loudly about how the day was going and what was to happen next.

The next stop was the burn. Again, shoes and socks off as we went into the shallow end of the water to be safe. It was cold at first, but it soon got warmer on our feet. Our Ma was saying "you lot are too quick over there". She joined us. She tucked her red dress into her pants so not to get wet and came in to the water with us and had us all singing, "Singing in the rain". Singing made our ma beautiful. It was time to get our feet dry and shoes back on. It was time now to say goodbye to this lovely tree. All having a cuddle with the tree to say "goodbye" to it and "we will see you in a few weeks". Just then someone shouted, "Tommy, Tommy!" We have lost Tommy! All shouting at him and looking into bushes. Then a wee blond three year old looked up and said "What's all the fuss?" "It's home time you lot", Ma said. One last tidy up and some tadpoles to collect from the stream. At the tree again, a head count making sure she left with the same amount. Homeward bound we were. We all had a small slice of dumpling for the road.

Quieter on the road home past the fire station. The engine was back inside. The doors closed. No one for us to wave to. Then the train bridge. This was quiet too. Now we were near the Remos chip shop. This was where we were to get something nice for our tea. It was a nice treat, something we didn't have very often as it was one meal between two. You had to get someone to share with, so Betty and I had fish and chips. When the order was ready it was all wrapped in old newspaper to keep it nice and hot, ready for eating. It was a short walk through the orchard back to the bottom of Darvel St. to where my life began.

Getting ready for a picnic is a great memory for me.

Margaret Cameron

NATURE AND US

POEMS AND STORIES



'Pollok Voices on Tour'

A Special Encounter

Coming across a photograph of myself taken when I was a pupil at Craigbank Secondary School, in Damshot Road, Pollok. It brought back memories of an encounter I had with an animal. To say I was not over fond of this animal is an understatement.

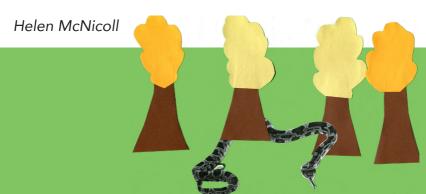
Let me set the scene.

Me and my school friend, June, looked after the animals that were kept in the science labs. Let me describe June to you. She's 5ft 3 inches tall, and had long red hair, and a twinkle in her eyes. She was a bit of a prankster. Which sometimes got her into trouble. I looked after our two brown and black guinea pigs, called Andy and Mandy. I loved to run my fingers through their coats when I had them out of their cage, when changing their bedding and giving them fresh food. I also looked after a lovely light brown hamster, called Hammy. He just loved being on his wheel. I could have watched him for hours as he spun his wheel around with his front paws. June looked after the other animals, which I will tell you about later.

As our science labs were high up and from the windows you could see over the fields and trees to Pollok Park. This particular day, the weather was so nice. The sun was shining. There were fluffy white clouds in a lovely blue sky, making me wish that the school day was over, and I could be out there enjoying it. It was getting a bit stuffy, so I opened a window and leant out. I could feel a warm gentle breeze on my face. I was totally engrossed as I watched the breeze make its way through the grass and trees, making the tree branches and grasses sway. When all of a sudden, out of the corner of my eye, in the reflection of the glass, I saw a long brownish-green neck, with glittering beady eyes and a forked tongue, going in and out, and it was coming towards me. I turned around and froze. June was standing in front of me, with a snake in her hands. I am totally petrified of snakes. Would it bite me? Was it poisonous? These thoughts were whizzing around in my head. Then June being the

prankster, she started to chase me. I screamed. I'm sure they could hear my screams down in Pollok Park. I started to run, trying to get away from that thing. I ran up and down between the lab benches, and round the floor of the room. I was running around so much, the room was becoming a blur, and I was getting so hot. I was shouting at June, to put that cold, slimy creature away. June said, "They are not cold or slimy, they are warm blooded animals. It's only a grass snake, it won't hurt you". "I don't care, please, please put it away". Eventually, she went to put it away in its tank, only to discover she had not put the lid back on, and two of the snakes were missing.

As you can imagine, I bolted out of the lab like the devil himself was after me. No way was I staying in that room with snakes on the loose. It just made me shiver thinking about the snakes slithering about that room. June looked high and low for them. She was in cupboards, under sinks, in drawers, but there was no sign of them anywhere. She came to the door and opened it, "It's alright you can come back in, they are not here". "You are not kidding me on?" I said. "No, I will not do that to you. I did not know you were so scared of them". I came back in the room, "Oh no, oh no" when I saw the window was open. Maybe, it was the allure of the warm sunshine and the smells from the outside which called to them, and they slid out of the window and down the walls. Then they made their way to Pollok Park, through the grass and trees. Even though I'm not fond of snakes, I will not harm them. I like to imagine that they live a very happy life in their new environment.







HELEN

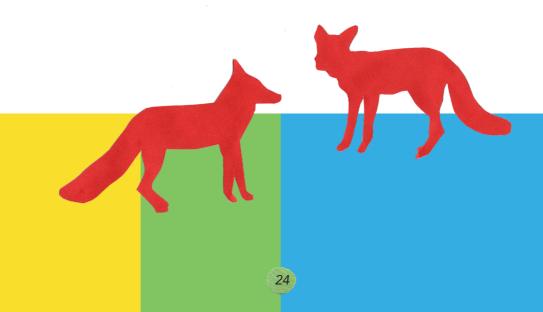
Family of Foxes at My Door

I have a story for you. For 16 years I have been feeding the family of foxes, generations of them. Parents would come with their offspring and later the new foxes with their offspring.

I do not know where they live but they are always there every night at 11 pm waiting for me at the gates to the Auldhouse Community Church, just behind the Tinto Primary School. They are city foxes, Glasgow foxes. There, used to grow an old tree. Now it is cut down. And the stump of it makes a nice table for the foxes. I put on that table their food: cooked or raw meat, or tinned dog food. They are also fond of peanuts, fruit and cheese.

A couple years ago some of the parents of the present foxes used to feed from my hands, they were so used to me. I have created a very special bond with that generation. Now their children do not feed from my hand... They are more careful.

Told by Helen



In The Lavender Field

The lavender plants were ready to be harvested. I was about 7 or 8 and I had strayed into the middle of the field. Of course I shouldn't have been there, but I couldn't resist being right in the middle enveloped in the heady aroma.

Now, whenever I touch a lavender plant, or open a drawer containing a lavender bag, I am transported back to that field in Norfolk.

Nancy Bain





My Beautiful Friends

Inside of me is always whispering that you were all sent to this planet as guides, helpers and companions for us humans.

You are the most varied species in size, shape and colour, yet there is no comparison or discrimination because you accept and respect each other's differences. Probably your society is much more advanced than ours as you know we are still on the way to achieving this state.

You are always deeply connected to mother earth, cherishing and absorbing the full spectrum of her beauty; lovely wind, water, snow, grass, flowers and trees, and at the same time you are encouraging us to enjoy being barefoot more often when we are outdoors.

You love sniffing out all of nature's gifts and I feel you are getting your vitality and life force by doing this.

Your sixth sense is far more developed than ours. You know your loved one is coming even if she is still miles away.

Though your life span is much shorter than ours, you are always living at present and enjoying your life fully while naturally giving out your love, and I love to see your tails wagging with joy.

Your heart is always open and you are not afraid of showing your feelings fully. That's why some of us who find it difficult to open up to other humans can easily be open to you, because you naturally help us to unfold our hearts and we feel your love.

This is your super gift for all of us. Thank you. Thank you. I love you very much.

Zerina Tanikawa

Sun

When the world is sad and weary, and darkness makes everyone sad and dreary, then I awake... your own bright sun.
Come out folks... have some fun.

Nancy Bain

Octopus

The wind blew so much when we were by the sea that the octopus was blown onto the sand and it looked like he was dancing.

Theresa

Bee and Bees

I usually wear bright colours, however, today I wore dark palm trousers with a sage green top.

I love bees. Bees print, bees make me feel that spring is on the way, but with wasps... Wasps make me feel angry and sad. When they sting they don't die right away.

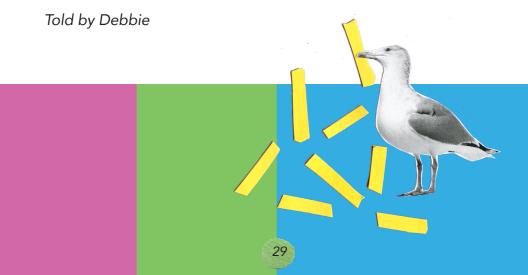
Bee wrote this about bees.

My New Friend

One day I decided to go for some fish and chips. I went inside the Remo's shop in Nitshill and I asked for one fish and chips, with vinegar, brown sauce, and a coke. The smell in the shop was so good and I was getting so hungry! Once I received my fish and chips, I went outside and sat down on a fence next to the dentist clinic. I started to eat when I saw something looking at me. A seagull was on the ground staring at me and my food. I kept eating when I realized the seagull was getting closer to me. Suddenly, the bird tried to get my fish and chips with its beak snatching my box. I tightly held my box, pulling towards me. The seagull did not give up. We fought back and forth, when the box blew away and fell on the ground, with all the chips on the pavement as well as the fish... At that moment a dog came and ate the chips and took the fish away with him. I was very disappointed. I think the seagull felt the same.

I went to the shop and bought another fish and chips. I sat down again on the fence when I saw the seagull looking at me. This time, I took one of my chips and offered it to her. The seagull took the chip and stayed beside me on the fence.

I thought that maybe I made a new friend.



LIFE LESSONS

POEMS AND STORIES



'Box of stories'

Liberty

Liberty! Liberty! Her inner voice chants at the image in the mirror. Hah! Anything, but liberated! What a contradiction, Liberty. She was named Liberty - Freedom by her headstrong, feminist Grandmother. How she wished she was as bold, confident and free spirited like her Grandma, Celine. She was constantly dogged by the fearful "protector", whose constant whining and whimpering overpowered her peace of mind. Her crippling inner voice she called Maya.

Maya specialised in reminding her of that. What a hot mess she was. "Remember how you fell on sports day and all the children laughed at you? No, you're not taking up any kind of sport, you're no good at that, no good for any competition. You are so clumsy and incompetent, so save your face of humiliation and embarrassment. Be quiet, keep your head down and stay in your safe and cosy comfort zone. Don't you dare even attempt to tiptoe outside the re-assuring lullaby of a secure safety net."

However, this caused Liberty so much anguish and unhappiness. There was this tornado of fire swirling fiercely in her, stirring her soul to dizzying heights, desperately seeking a way out of this dark dull hole. Oh, how wonderful it would be to break free of these shackles of self-doubt, limiting beliefs and unhelpful conditioning to feel the exhilaration of wild fire adventures. Free to explore... EXPLORE!!! Take a leap of faith to wonder and wander...in awe ...

Perhaps living by the sea and listening to the sound of the waves and bird chatter, together, creating chorus for aquatic nature. The smell of seaweed and fresh sea breeze ...the taste of saltiness as she embraces the sea water, the grittiness of the sand moulding the feet above. The eyes joyously feasting on the beautiful marbled colours of sunrise and sunset. The moonlight kissing the sea water like secret lovers in the night.

Perhaps, this is pure bliss ...perhaps, that is freedom. Watching never ending swishes of waves, aqueous rollercoasters of nature. Not having a care in the world, rolling at their own pace, gushing in high and low tides on their own terms. Hmmm... perhaps.

With a sigh and a soup, Liberty sits at her window ledge. Watching the pouring rain, raindrops knocking at her window while she slurps her soup. The sound of slurping marrying harmoniously in tune with the sound of bang, splitter, splatter of the force of the raindrops splattering against the glass window. However, the knocks from her inner self were far more forceful with the consistent calling of her name. Banging louder and louder, rhythmically, thumping her head, creating swishing ripples diving down to her belly causing it to flutter like butterflies and gargle like fizzy pop.

Liberty ... Liberty ... Liberty... can you hear that, Liberty? How they are in sync within their own space, doing what they're meant to do. Their purpose in life? Raindrops on the outside of your being and the slurping soup drops swimming down within you, creating a haven of sauna-like serenity? This is life's melody in all circumstances, in duality. The coldness of the raindrops and the warmth of the soup. Day and night, Ying and Yang, happiness and sadness, low mood days and high mood days.

Knock knock knock, hello hello hello, she chirps chime fully. High notes, low notes, neutral notes... variety is the spice of life. Don't be afraid of failures, always give it a try ... even if it's baby steps... Rome wasn't built in a day. And... look! How magnificent and magical Rome is. Remember how you stood in awe of the Colosseum and marvelled at the ginormous bricks? And how atmospheric the Roman Forum was standing proudly in all its glory despite parts in ruins with the knocks of life events? This is why I'm called Melody, the ever changing and never standing still for anything, in constant motion alongside tick tock, clickety clock that you call - Time. This is the rhythm of life... so be present in the here and now, savouring each second, each moment, come what

may. This is the very reason to not listen to Maya, your dream like past. Remember the meaning of Maya - an illusion, a mirage, that's all it is now, she is. Yes, your protector, but over protector and a hindrance to your freedom and growth.

You have the power to slip away from her reins and leap into the present with me, Melody. Come with me Liberty, let's live life to the full, with all its grit and grime, alongside its grace and glory.. remember...duality?

No no no dear Liberty, whispers a wondrously wispy Misbah. I am light, the essence of your spirit, your soul. There's danger in going with the flow, riding the merry go round melodiously with monkey mind Melody, orchestral in her worldly ways. She will take you to dizzying heights like Cinderella going to the ball and then suddenly hit a deep low note ripping a chord and causing you to come crashing down at the stroke of twelve and become like Humpty Dumpty who had a great fall.

The world of sing song and dance... Joy riding without breaks... no balance ... no quiet... no peace... trapped in a carnival with eye dazzling lights. Come journey with me, dear Liberty, come within to the land of bliss, your spiritual home. When the going gets tough, draw within, be the soul gardener and nurture your garden of Serenity, pluck out the weeds of despair and darkness, and plant it with seeds of hope, trust and faith .. wait patiently as that's where the free spirited wild flowers bloom and cherry blossom trees of resilience, mushroom. Where you will fly gracefully like hot air balloons... thereafter you will taste true freedom... very very soon. And be in Liberty.

It's all within you, all that you need. Where pure love resides, as a brightly lit dove, peace as it's armour, hope and compassion as its wings... yes, Freedom is within you. You only need to know thyself. Be thyself. Be kind to thyself and all will balance out. Just a little sprinkle of Maya, a dollop of Melody and lashings and lashings of

Misbah are the ingredients of Liberty.

Liberty, you are Liberty with a capital L. The big fat L for love. Light and Luminous Liberty.

Yasmeen Masud Shah



Be Like the Traveller

Be like the traveller Belonging Nowhere and everywhere

Bow

The world is a fleeting shrine
To share, to rest and digest
Created by the Divine
We are - but on borrowed time
On a mortal life line
So, look for the best
Whilst going through each test
Exploring, growing, emerging
As a curious traveller
Observing all but belonging nowhere and everywhere

Flow

Ride the waves of emotion
Keeping heads above water of the deep deep ocean
Swim through the depths of darkness
Trust, allow to be drifted off to shores a yonder
To wonder and wander
Like a treasure Hunter traveller
Belonging nowhere and everywhere

Glow

Look up and marvel
At luminosity and sparkle
Winking down at you
Putting you in a trance,
Doing their twinkle, their dazzling jiggly dance
Unfazed, unchallenged by the glistening of the moon

Be it summer or winter Be it snow or storm They do not conform

Being true to themselves
They stay in full form
Wee sparks of fiery light
Illuminating vast space
Pulsing with grace at their own pace
Like the nomadic Bedouin traveller
Belonging nowhere and everywhere

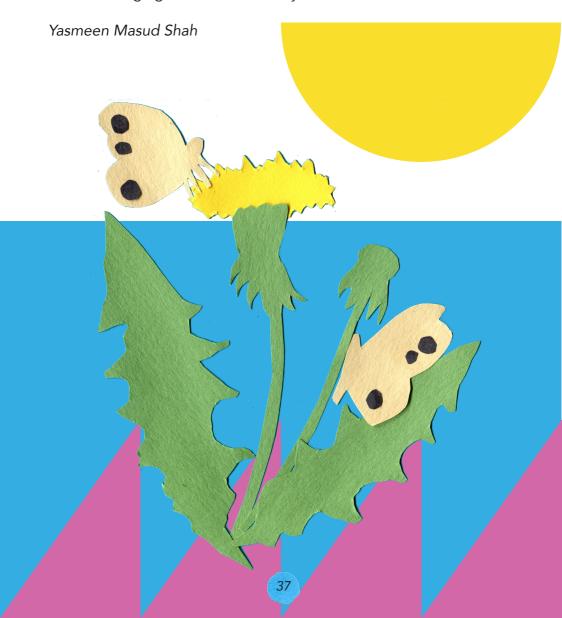
Sow

Reap and sow
Wherever you go
Imagine, create, flourish
May every surrounding be nourished
With luscious green orchards
Be that soul gardener
The kind nurturing traveller
Belonging nowhere and everywhere

Grow

Learn and blend
Honouring all types of friends
Saying no to animosity
No room for hostility
Encouraging diversity
Because dear friend, dear stranger,
When you travel, you come to know
We are all one and the same
With the exact same end game
Here today, gone tomorrow...
because we are all travellers belonging nowhere and everywhere

The planet is one
There is enough space for everyone
So, let's come together and share
Share our delights,
Our delicious stories as travellers
Belonging nowhere and everywhere



Three Frogs

Blind frog, mute frog and deaf frog were friends for a long time. All frogs have always been living in the shade at the river next to the forest. Up the hill there was a big mountain and the three frogs dreamt to explore and to play on it.

One day they told their family of frogs about their dream to climb the mountain. And the next day the blind frog was the first frog to get to the mountain. All the frogs cheered and encouraged the frog until he reached half-way. Then suddenly some frogs started to discourage the blind frog by saying "you are going to fall, you will hurt yourself". And the blind frog feared to continue and got down the mountain without reaching the top.

Later the mute frog wanted to go, however even before starting his journey the rest of the frogs scared him by saying "You are going to fall". So the mute frog did not even try to climb up the mountain, not a little bit.

The last frog who was the deaf frog started off the journey. But even then, the other frogs at the back kept telling him not to go. However, because he could not hear, the deaf frog reached the top of the mountain and achieved his goal.

The moral of the story is about achieving your goals without listening to other people's opinion and, by doing so, all of us can achieve our goals successfully.

This is a story Fathima has heard from her father.

Fathima Shihama Razick



IT WILL HAPPEN ONE DAY

POEMS AND STORIES



My Dream Home

I wish to have a house of my own in Iraq. In the future when I visit my whole family will gather there and all have a good time. I want to buy a house which consists of four bedrooms, so that each of my children can relax.

امنيتي في البيت

تمنى ان يكون لي في المستقبل بيت واحد يملئة الفرح والسعادة وراحت البال واتمنى ان يحضى أولادي بمستقبل زاهر ومشرق واتمنى ان يكون البيت كبير وواسع يحتوي على أربع غرف حتى يتمتع كل طفل في غرفة مستقلة به ويكون موقعة جميل وله كافة الأشياء التي اتمناها

Asraa A. Abdulhussein



My Dream Home

My dream home would be a caravan by the sea, where it is nice and sunny and quiet. There are waves splashing and a lovely restaurant nearby that sells nice seafood.

There is green grass by, with buttercups that look lovely and nice, comfortable beds.

Debbie

My Dream Home

A little cottage by the sea, with a small garden which I could sit in on a sunny day. Where I could walk along the beach and pick coloured pebbles. I would make a small path with the pebbles.

Perhaps a nice garden, bench and lots of flower pots, with pansies and marigolds in them. In the garden I would have a small wind mill.

Two bedrooms, one for my family to visit and one for me.

Perhaps a short walk to the nearest village and shops.

A nice sitting room, with comfortable furniture and large TV and a music centre.

Near a sandy beach, where I could walk on a sunny day.

Alice Mulholland



Saffron

It was a usual day for Firuzeh. She was home from work. She took a quick shower and walked into the living room, looked around her cozy place where everything was neat and tidy. She took a deep sigh, shrugged her shoulders and walked towards her open kitchen which was in the living room. She made herself a cup of tea and sat beside her big window. This was her favorite spot in the house. Her comfy chair and the big window where she would sip her tea while looking out the window, watching children play, neighbors walking and the empty house right in front of her place. The empty window with no curtains. Only this time the window had curtains which were drawn open. She smiled thinking, "so finally someone moved in the empty house!" She could see that the window was open and there was a pot on the stove. She smiled again and opened her window. The strong aroma of Saffron flew in filling her eyes with water. They were tears!

The aroma of Saffron has always been special to her. It always took her back to her childhood, when she was in Iraq with her parents and siblings. They used to go to this restaurant which was close to Imam Hussain's Shrine. They used to have Saffron rice with lamb curry. Firuzeh loved the flavor of rice. She and her sister Fariba would eat rice and giggle over every little thing while their brothers Ali and Haider would play with their little toy cars while eating their rice. Firuzeh and Fariba would often request their parents to stay for longer in the restaurant as this was the time that Firuzeh felt very close to her sister Fariba. They would make future plans of getting married to their prince charming, of having a swimming pool in their house and what not. "I will find my dream man one day!" Firuzeh whispered in Fariba's ear. "You know I had a dream where I saw my soulmate." Fariba's eyes opened wide with excitement as she said, "who was he?" Firuzeh said, "I don't know but I just know that he was my soulmate, he said that he will come and find me one day and take me with him. You know he had blue eyes and curly hair, and he was wearing a white shirt with his sleeves rolled up to the elbow." Firuzeh said dreamily. Fariba hugged her and said,

"Firuzeh you will meet him one day. You know Firuzeh, one day I will have my own restaurant and I will cook the same Saffron rice, in fact mine will be even better!"

Firuzeh didn't realize that she was crying as she came back to the present world out from her memories. She stared out the window, the pot was not on the stove now. Probably someone took it off the stove while she was busy in her childhood memories.

"Why don't you get married again Firuzeh?" Asked her friend Noor the other day at work. "It's not that easy Noor," said Firuzeh. "You know Fariba used to say the same thing on and on, that I should find myself a good guy and get married again. So what if it didn't work out the first time, I should still find the right guy and enjoy my life. But after Fariba left this world, I don't seem to have any interest in anything at all. Fariba was not only my sister, but she was also my best friend and my biggest support."

Firuzeh was married for a short period but got a divorce as it didn't work. She never felt alone though as Fariba has always been there for her through every thick and thin. But now after Fariba had gone, she felt alone and lifeless. She and Fariba wanted to open a Café together where Firuzeh would do all the interior and Fariba would deal with the kitchen as she was a great cook. But everything shattered after Fariba's death.

Firuzeh was sipping tea sitting at her usual spot in her comfy chair looking out of the window. She could see someone standing beside the neighbor's window. I think it's a guy she thought to herself, she could smell the Saffron again. She got up from her chair, put on her sneakers and decided to go visit the new neighbor. She stopped for a second, nodded to herself and went into her room, changed into a nice long sun dress and took the jar of cookies that she had baked yesterday with her.

Firuzeh knocked on the door, she could still smell the Saffron, it

was stronger now. No one answered, she turned to go and at that very moment someone opened the door. "Oh Hello!" She heard someone say. Firuzeh turned back to see a guy standing wearing a big blue and white apron and a blue cap over his head. "Hi, I am... erm...your neighbor and I just thought I would say hello to you, I baked these cookies and thought you might like them," said Firuzeh. "Aww wow gee thanks! Why don't you come in? I was just about to make a cup of tea, please do join me," said the neighbor. Firuzeh stepped in and looked around the room. It was similar to hers, but the interior was different. Firuzeh could smell the Saffron again and she turned to see where it was coming from, she saw her neighbor taking off his apron and cap as he turned to her saying, "Oh sorry I didn't introduce myself;" He extended his hand saying "Hi I am Reza!" Firuzeh's eyes went wide open as she shook his hand and at the same time looked at her neighbor Reza who was smiling and looking at her with his blue eyes, curly hair wearing a white shirt with his sleeves rolled up to his elbows. "Oh, and sorry for the strong smell of Saffron I am actually about to open a café and Saffron rice with lamb curry is going to be my signature dish!" "Hi, I am Firuzeh, and I love Saffron rice with lamb curry!" Firuzeh smiled to herself as she remembered what Fariba had said, "Firuzeh you will meet him one day!"

Lababa Naqvi



Lababa

"This has been magical!"

"I didn't realise how therapeutic the sessions were. I think I've found my happy place and it was surprisingly energising."



"This experience emotionally touched me and took me to childhood memories when grandmother was telling us stories."

"The creations are marvellous!"

If you want to know more about the work of The Village Storytelling Centre, please get in touch:

info@villagestorytelling.org.uk

- www.villagestorytelling.org.uk
- **f** The Village Storytelling Centre
- @VillageStories
- Ø /villagestories

The project Oh The Stories We Could Tell was funded by









