

Inside Your Mouth Are Mountains

A collection of experimental texts by
participants in a three-week writing
course at Camden Art Centre.

Inside Your Mouth Are Mountains was held from January to February 2022 to coincide with Allison Katz's exhibition, *Artery*, at Camden Art Centre. Laced with puzzles and puns, *Artery* is a show of paintings which place their subjects in strange and symbolic relations to one another, and show them through enigmatic apertures: a red window, the doors of a lift, the space between two parted lips.

In our work together, we tried to find new entryways into writing through objects and their materials; artworks and the spaces they are shown in; and our voices, bodies, and movements. Together, we challenged ourselves to use words to draw or paint things rather than describe them, to swap our usual 'palettes' of vocabulary for unfamiliar tones, and to follow Deborah Levy's advice: *why not write something you don't understand for the life of you, and see what happens?*
Here is a glimpse of what did happen.

Fiona Glen,
course leader

CLASS REGISTRATION

intention

intensity

soggy

sensing

fleecy mandible

singeing

excavate

animated sugarbowl

globule

unfazed

pomegranate

whistle

meditating

palimpsest

thoughtful

algarroba

trot

moss

nibble rugged

dig

breathing

lukewarm

windy

float

gusty

wet

sack

flâneur-ing

RACHEL LILLIE
dawn chorus

wet hands at 5am
wipe washing ridges of dust
wet hands at 5am
thrashing scales onto ice
wet hands at 5am
dipping wringing soap suds
wet hands at 5am
cracked limbs and sea shell cries
wet hands at 5am
split with resentment
wet hands at 5am
slippery sorry guilt
wet hands –
the man rises finally
the men go back to sea
she grabs the glass goblet, throws it
shards of ice
she sweeps
she guts
she gets up

LUCY STEWART
A snag

Kerish-suh-suh-sushhh it feels like.
Ripped like ham from the wound.

A thread of tired, old cotton nestles left to a new shred of nail. Intertwined. Uncomfortable.
Like those two you see over there that just shouldn't be on a date.

With a jerk they wrestle. Whipped up like cream.
Kerish-suh-suh-sush-shhhh a pull upwards, to the right- up! up! up!

The shred snaps. Drifted. The latch detached.

My teeth are on alert now.

CLARA PEREDA
Thermal perception

The corner is comforting
But also cold, unexpectedly

I find the familiar
When looking for solitude
I embrace it
And solitude becomes now the imprint
Of fantasy
An abandoned desire

Steps over wooden floors
I wished they were always
This gentle whisper
They scape the rumbles
Of those at home

Frames never fitting
The sizes they are meant to be for
Yet still allowing
For variation to belong

Supporting
Without apparent conflict

I am unable to feel powerful today
Knees are bending
And there is an openness to rest
Built in the architecture's foundation
As an accepted
Way of sitting

Side to side it lingers
The back that once said
'This is my place'
In an alien place

Shadows have texture
This is reassuring
Almost relieving

I am not a teacher only
And this is relieving too
I have no hard feelings

ILEANA GRIGORESCU
The last six Wordles of February 2022

A **trove** of five-letter words flares up in my mind's eye at any given hour of the day but the hour of Wordling. Letters hang tightly on my tongue and won't be spat out when I need them the most, leaving me with a dumb stare like a tongue-tied **bloke** at the sight of a shiny feathered bird. It's **vivid** in my mind how *peace, money, a smile, a story, a dream, power*, the colour *green* or *amber*, a *zebra*, a *mango* or the *truth* would fit into the five squares, but big simple words get self-conscious when you put them on the spot. The minute you don't consider words they **spill** out of you like an *eager fault*. A word uttered in a whisper, grumble or **chant** can raise eyebrows and mouth corners, rise people to their feet, slam doors, pump blood faster, pump blood to the ears. And sometimes, the right word can be a blitzkrieg and make you **choke** on any other word you planned on returning.

HARRY LEITCH
Love Letter

Etched borrowed skin my voice is scrawl is smear is inky figures
open mouthed vowels looping bulbuls dangle consonants
they, I
scratched you biro
stuffed you papier-mâché
coughed lumpy prose littered stories
sonnet rose the taste of spit
memory of ring plucked hands in fondly squished text see the touch of a lover
a perfect fold a perfume puff a cheek who creased in smile

near silence of pen stroke paper duuuuuh duuuuuh I feel you so write you before I bleed out I
must I must

tongue shudders gluey coral taste buds seal in slime and send and hope
envelope seam urgent angle swells margins full
fantasy smudged 'what I would do to see you' in late night eyes
peeled orange lamplight
writing passion A4
obsession in cursive
self-conscious at the ident
finger delicate stains I wept my words

plain oblong glare dirtied hand chases duuuuuh on the line is faint fragile

they joked about writing in blood
they joked about eating the page
cut white triangles confetti blown into faces held under tongues as treasure
my voice is membrane heart and hand
token artefact message object
bundled syntax
mine and yours.

VINCENT HEWETT
IN_OUT

IN
OUT
COOL IN
warm moist OUT
Caught in mask
Cool slips in over edges
Two holes bridged over
Gum lip teeth
Keystones

IN
OUT

COOL IN COOL in
Cool in, cooling lip
Teeth clenched from fatigue
Non-stop smooth forget-about-able
IN OUT IN OUT

Cool in reaches up canals
steamy blooms
IN / OUT
IN - OUT

OUT. IN OUT. IN
Upon history IN + OUT
Open. Close.
Very forgettable . very
Forgettable.
I have Forgotten Out out in
Out + out.

FIONA GLEN
Good morning, Nicholson Baker

I'm going to sit here in the dark.

Underlayer

resembles

a threatened toe-hole.

(At night)
(the edges)
(of the hole)
(come alive)

tickle and pester...

Manoeuvrable, balled-up,
sometimes I think whole
continents are tipping

I would become wakeful–
have to have darkness–
knew I would have to wake up–
wouldn't bother–would trouble–
I'm going to sit here in the dark.

would wake up–

Tried to retreat (wouldn't want that) but isn't
much I can do (didn't want that) when it's
very dark like this the sock slips off
skin (didn't work, seldom does).

Monstrous, a

GIGANTIC FISSURE!

two exposed toes!
trapped in a mask! a monster's
sloppy mouth!

[too-small]
[chewed-up]
[fire-meat]

i lose

my sense of scale *foundering!* sea of lava! *melting!* i lose

ENTIRE FOOT EXPOSED

threatened retract catch the edge keep

cool, coolness, coolness.

In the daytime, a hole seldom bothers me.

DAISY MOREY
from Body

Stutter you stutter
 Stutter and course
Twitching undercurrent
Hostile accomplice to the drawn out,
Ruined pulled exasperated
Tapered stretch -
Wrapped double
Bones you won't support.
Half-hearted compensation
For grinding, pushing
Sanctified weight.
 You must move or you will fuse.
Into drawn out compression
Drawn out drawn
Hung drawn and
Laid upon the pulling rack,
Elongated wretch
Can you feel the force of
Your grinding
Wasted
 Cut me out from inside
 Of you

Bow sweep stop ON THE SPOT●

D	D	D	D
I	R	R	A
P	I	I	Z
	P	Z	Z
		Z	L
		L	E
		E	

Yes

And - (close) – open

WIDE

A W A K E !

Walled Peeling Against

Up Against

D	R	I	P			
R				T	I	P
O				O		
P				E		

SHERAN FORBES
Untitled: A Stationary Position

A cursory glance of a circular face
A discreet double ... no ... triple vision
peers out from the wall in a permanent
state

for the face
of coiled golden locks
with an A for an eye and an M for the
other
of lips that are pursed and
resembles a letter

K

Gazes over white trainers with
vivid green stripe stepping, one after
the other, after one, then again, the other towards
the heart of a beat ... two three four

beat ... two three four

There they go black canvas bag with
bold orange lettering
arm in arm with grey rucksack covered in years of grubby
adventures and through cabbage tickers
with veins that swell
they weave in and out ... and ... across the heart
of a beat

Towards knees that are bent where a book lays to rest
very
nearly
midway through
its leaves
stretched out wide like the wings of the cockerel
that struts from the dark

Adjacent to the circular face with
double ... no ... triple vision
that peers out
from the wall and along comes another face, a curious face
peers right back and now face to face
Its hand reaches
touches and clicks
the circular face with
double ... no ... triple vision
that peers out

from the opposite
side of the wall

Of another with legs outstretched
crossed over
just below the knees
ankles rolled flat a book balanced and I think to twin self
how useful our knees happened to
be

Beneath the flow of the canal that ducks under, not over
Towards the head that turns left and then right its
Polo neck black covers the apple that's twists right again, then left then
Straight ahead,
The couple that chuckle, their echo and a squeak of a heel

Crosses white shoes with C and K letters twirling with cream plimsoll pumps whose laces appear
to be still undone
talk, walk, walk talk ... vanish ... past the canal ducking under,
Not over ... adjacent to the

face

of coiled golden locks
with an A for an eye and an M for the
other
of lips that are pursed and
resembles a letter

K

RACHEL LILLIE
An Able.

A head in plain view
is brimming to the bulge.
Not out of sight, out of mind.
Willing and wanting, but for all that it wants
it's not able.
But the hand does not want, or cannot want.
And the head in plain view is willing but not able.

Able.

Able.

Like velcro that doesn't stick. Not able.

A vessel full of promises. But not able.

Able.

Eager and knowing but not nearly enough, not good enough. Not able.

To get out what is in but I'm going to get in. OWWWWWWWWWWWW!

It's not coming. But there they are.

Plucked out a creature that prowls and purrs.

It's clever and coy. It knows what it wants.

It's reluctant, not shy. Eyes widen, frightened or thinking. Wanting but waiting.

Quietly confident.

An Able.

But still, it's not willing.

For all that it wants. It wants.

Watching and looking. It searches.

It's all there and some more, it's filling a jug that's already too full and nothing to
catch the spill. So we wipe it all up with a kitchen towel. It's sodden and messy and
all of a sudden it feels better.

We rinse it and try again. Able.

FIONA GLEN
bowling with cabbages /

/ clues like birds in flight

THE
SPOT-LIT
SCARLET
STARLET

Tributary, a tribute, a
trick, that impossible
stand-up to follow.

An unfolding fan,
a peacock feather, a
clutching case of wing.

brushed velour of red oils is soft for the
stumpy-bottomed rugby ball slumped
drunk on one cruciferously splitting side

crown perched proper on a yellow quilt
is victorian nursery portrait of the pale
plump royale heavy with their new head

Velvet voice, killed me softly with
song sliding up the gullet---
that quirky spudnik, taste juicy as couture---
corny cock-a-tease, all felt so film noir---
until the bite: cat gut my tongue so good.

Velvet voice, killed me softly with
song sliding up the gullet---
that quirky spudnik, taste juicy as couture---
corny cock-a-tease, all felt so film noir---
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DAISY MOREY
from Mouth

I am reduced from
Mine body and confined
To that soft taffied expanse between
Temple and socket – But she
Glares out from the mouth-
 What reason have you
 To walk so agape, Eyeing the
 World with your tonsils and molars
 In varying shades of bodily hubris.
I would pluck them all from you,
Save you the trouble of reducing them
To shelled mulch in your state of
Effervescent decay –
 A whole new set, a new
 Woman, new character to divulge.
If you must explore the world through
Abrasions
On taste buds at least make it a sight
To behold, ecstatic sojourn of entropy.
You forge a path worth minding.

virus tripping

(back)

inside body

grass crawling

(back)

over digital adhesions

body mapped

body cabled

body clocked

body traversed

body sent softly

(back)

to be cradled

vines singing turn

turn, turn, turn

dance, dance, dance

MAX BLAKSTAD-PETERS
Saran Wrap and Sea Urchins

Anchors chosen in bare
Thread, collective memory
Woven from wicker and
Clothesline, butter, rubber,
That floating courtyard
Where my aunt used
To wash her neighbours
Yell at each other,
Photocopied pages, figs
And *algarrobas*, kids
Playing in submarines and
Anchors that (*leak kerosene and*) would not
Work in real life

A yellow fish attacked
Me, then changed its
Mind
A yellow fish asked to
Borrow my goggles if
So that we could
Watch SpongeBob together,
I had chewing gum
In my hair so my goggles
Got stuck
I told the yellow
Fish,
“Make yourself at home,
Put gum in your
Hair, see if you
Can fit”
The yellow fish squeezed itself into my submarine, its
Ribcage squeezed and
Leaked at the seams
My knees almost covered my eyes

As a little sardine
I almost got tangled in
The outstretched
Arms of high schoolers,
A few years before
I almost missed my
Swim or traded it
For a Game Boy save
File

LAURA NÍ FHLAIBHÍN
rice mouth

the last dinner before
gloopy msg sweet and sour prawns
I cut into small pieces
boiled rice
leaping back to feasts at this table
marvelling at the wonder of prawn crackers
their ability to dissolve nearly entirely on my six year old tongue
crunch and then slippery spread and fizz
prawn cracker oily traces on my six year old fingers
oil fingerprints on and under
this kitchen table and legs and woven basket chairs
and on the chrome bathroom handle
and all the way to the front door glass
prawn cracker oil fingerprint drawings
all over my nan's house
my house then too

now regurgitated boiled rice grains gathering
and gloopy msg sweet and sour prawn syrup
on my nana's small dinner plate

the last dinner she will eat from these beloved plates
floating willow world
sealed in blue and navy glaze

the willow tree in the front garden
with all the offshoots
to plant

rice returning
swallow tracts and swallow sacs and saliva stones
(to be referred to the speech and language therapist at the nursing home, for further
investigation)

rice reservoir spaces in the
orifices and hiding places of her mouth

the last dinner here -on a floating willow world tableau
at the pine kitchen table and basket chair and
willow tree visible from the window is
being regurgitated from her mouth and teeth
and returned as a gift
in a granular excavation
as painting materials
to the floating willow world.

ILEANA GRIGORESCU
Rolling thread

I looked around on the tube
And I liked the faces around me
I liked them so much that I thought
If the tube gets stuck in between stations
Or if we're under attack and this is my regiment
We will easily find things to talk about
Laugh about
Cry about
And these people will become knots in my thread ball
Sentimental loops that won't let my thread unravel neatly and unremarkably
Until there's no thread left
No one will be able to put that thread ball together like I never happened
Because the knots cannot be undone.
But the tube got to Canada Water
And the people d i s a p p e a r e d
They had thread to roll out
And I had my phone to stare at.

MOLLY ASTLEY
scrunchie sky

velvet scrunchie sky
jewelled uniform days
plaited hair, sequin clouds
arms in the air, open mouth
to move
feet

how to
 arrange wings
 how to organise fields
how to capture childhood
and remember it well

heavy green lanes - insects swarming
 overhanging trees know the importance of balance
I am reaching
 to touch fingertips but can't quite
reach —

extension of possibility extension of longing
and reason, reaching backwards
is not advised,
but it is easy melancholy

CLARA PEREDA
Pasta light

In the middle of the lips
A void in the surface we can enter
A textured connection that is asking
For me to stay

I have been wanting to tell you
Before this entanglement
There was presence as much as loss for both of us
Continuously creating bridges with the knowing

Shadows belong to existence
And I feel grateful for the sign
A reminder
That this is not to be dismissed
But rather precious

Almost vanished
What once felt solid
Once stable
When never permanent

I would like to resonate
And find intimacy
But the dark spot is too loud
And quietness too revealing

I recognize
I recall
Those yellow dots as light
As moon traveling
At a speed that leaves the body behind

Light in low relief
Instead of matter
Light as object to be eaten
Pasta light
And a reflection that is too vivid
To be a reflection

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