

## Ideas on how to construct a poem

I try to take myself off once a week to what Julia Cameron calls a “writer's date”. For me this means taking my dog for a walk somewhere that I don't normally walk so I don't bump into people I know to talk to. But it is though usually where I have been before because then I don't have to be concentrate on the direction of the walk but can just walk, think and see what pops up. I generally take my phone with me so I can take photographs. This helps to remember what I've seen but also I then use the photos as writing prompts later. I also take a notebook and am learning to jot down phrases that pop into my head.

I make note of things that interest me, odd lines, colours, sounds etc. Then I go to a cafe that I know is dog friendly, does good coffee and nice breakfast. I am an early riser so generally I have driven to my location, walked, made my notes and arrived at the cafe by about 9.30am. But you can do this at whatever time of the day works best for you. It is just that I find my brain works best in the mornings.

Once I get to the cafe -

1. So I sit there and look at what jumped out and then make some alliteration lines with it – for instance from my latest walk
  - marching masts marching over mountain tops
  - white birds wade in white tipped waves
  - or singsong lines
  - lappy, clappy, chatty waves
  -
2. These I pull into a shortish unconnected lines – ie

*Mighty masts marching over mountain tops conveying energy from afar*

*Lapping, clapping, slapping chatting waves conveying messages back and forth*

*On white tipped waves ride white sea birds feeding on the incoming tide*

*Bleached driftwood long lies stranded on beach above the tide line – travelling from afar now resting, watching, waiting.*

3. Once I have asked myself “What am I trying to say” I then take those lines and write a longish often quite wandering poem which I know what direction I would like for it but need lots of those words to see where it is I want to go.

This is from last time

*On white tipped waves ride sea birds*

*Feeding on the incoming tide*

*Above the high tide line waits*

*Bleached drift wood log*

*Much travelled now stranded*

*Leading away are two paths*

*But birds and driftwood never need to choose a path*

*One lies here because of the pattern of the tides*

*The birds are here due to instinct or design*

*Yet me I need to choose which way I must go*

*Knowing that even if the destination is the same*

*The view will be different because of my choice.*

Note too that I got rid of some ideas – eg the mighty masts.

4. I think read through the words and think again of what I really want to say. It is about destination, of about really how whatever I choose I will die in the end and go to heaven but will have seen different things whichever way I go. But this is a long and wieldy way of saying it. I need to condense it into something a bit more easy to manage and a bit more interesting.

Here is what I finished up with

*On white tipped waves riding, feeding sea birds*

*Sun bleached driftwood stranded above the tideline*

*Two paths lead onwards along the coast*

*Same destination. Different views*

*[Abergwyngregan Nature Reserve – Friday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2022]*

And that says everything I want to say but condensed.

5. It is worth remembering that what we want to write does not come out fully formed and so needs time to change around. As I often say to my writing group – it needs time to percolate.