

Spontaneous poetry

A process for creating poetry inspired by the working methods of artist Ewa Partum:

<https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/performance-at-tate/case-studies/ewa-partum>

1. Prepare

Choose a theme, subject or idea to write about.

'Brainstorm' and write down all the words you can think of relating to and describing the subject – verbs, nouns, placenames, adjectives, pronouns; add some conjunctions and any other words that will help form sentences.

Cut the words out, so that each word is on a separate slip of paper.

2. Throw and collect

Choose somewhere that you can throw the confetti of words without losing them – indoors is preferable.

Take handfuls of the words and throw them into the air, allowing them to fall to the ground.

Now collect them up, setting aside the words that landed face down to use another time.

Gather up the words that landed face up.

3. Write

Using the words that landed face-up, begin to form sentences, part sentences, exclamations and expressions.

Continue arranging and rearranging as different sentences suggest themselves.

Once you are happy with the results, stick them into place on a sheet of paper or sketch book: these are the poems. You might like to write them out in full elsewhere or incorporate them into visual artworks.

Green North Yorkshire *[excerpt]*

Near Hinderwell

The Restless Lapwings tumbling flight

Furrows hazy blue.

And Ralph's Blackbirds

Sing vivid recollections

While bickering Crows

Fly home

to St Hilda's darkening Holy Well.

David Elliott 2024