



# Poems to enjoy together at home

Written by our National Memory Day  
Poetry session poets and participants

## Childhood Recollections

Chocolate fingers remind me of childhood.  
We didn't just eat them – we sucked the chocolate off.

Mum gave us sardines on toast: good for you, but boney!  
We had tins of iced gems in our Christmas stockings.

I remember bottles of warm milk left out in the playground.  
Straws were a novelty.

The silver tops were pecked by blue-tits  
and in winter, the cream on the milk froze solid.

Being an only child, I was a bit spoilt.  
I didn't like pork.

I came to this country with my parents  
at the start of the war.

I was going to be a vegetarian  
but I liked sausages and chicken.

In winter, there were log fires and coal fires,  
red legs and backs. We toasted bread in the fire

and cheese on a toasting fork. Chestnuts in the ashes.  
There was a man selling chestnuts outside the station.

We had baked potatoes on bonfire night.  
We remember dense fog, frozen windows, ice patterns.

09.10.2018

By Tewkesbury Library Memory Café Group (*compiled and edited by Sarah Steele*)

## When we are wild

**When we are wild**, we are tigers  
on safari, tigers swimming.  
We are angry, slashing claws and tearing teeth.  
Wild, wild upon the heath.  
We are messy and free, unencumbered.  
We breathe deeply, it takes our breath away.  
We smell hay and pine.  
Even Maureen gets wild sometimes.  
We are vivid in the marshes, the ways  
we join the river. We are Vs of geese.  
We migrate, we babbling gallumphuses  
each and every one of us.

**When we are domestic**, we conform,  
hampered. We have rules.  
We always wanted to be an actress.  
We are completely different to anything else.  
We are abandoned apples.  
We are *Fancy saying that about your own mother*.  
We are fed-up washers-up.  
We are cooks, sat on settees, watching soaps.

26<sup>th</sup> November, 2019

By St Anne's Social Group (compiled and edited by Caleb Parkin)

## Oceans and Opium

**I love** the cricket and banks  
of wildflowers, my family  
and Harvey the Staffie.  
Creamy, dreamy, deluxe  
Strawberry yoghurt.  
Fruit cake **without** marzipan.  
Going to the salty sea for  
ships and chips. The feel  
of sunshine, *what's that?*  
Bring me sunshine, being  
alive, walking in the countryside  
among the trees. Sitting  
in the quiet.

**I long for** peace and quiet,  
tranquillity. By the River  
Severn, the River Alph.  
The quiet after the grandchildren  
have gone home. A sunset  
over the sea. Digging  
at Downend Allotments.

**My journey is** chaotic, hectic,  
very busy – but nice. More  
exciting than the destination.  
The tranquillity of the sea  
between offices. Full of  
music, soothing, avoiding  
that autopilot. Driving mindfully,  
though sometimes in a bit  
of a trance. The comfort  
of routine.

**I feel free when** – most of the time,  
or on my own, your life's your own.  
Taking the dog out, off to church,  
plenty of people to mix and speak with.  
When I'm in the woods, the Lake District.  
On the beach, not noticing others.  
When my mind is clear, which  
is never. All the time, especially  
when the mome raths outgrabe.

28<sup>th</sup> February, 2020

By Fishponds Activity Group; compiled and edited by Caleb Parkin

### Orange sky, sunrise or sunset?

Shining on Jean's summerhouse  
was this orange sky,  
it looked like there was a light on  
in the summerhouse  
it was so beautiful.....  
Funny you should say that  
Michelle said, it calls to mind  
the orange sky  
over the water  
by the Tamar  
the sunset reflecting  
over the water  
where the Tor Point  
ferries cross.  
Albert thinks of sea fever  
I must go down to the seas again  
to the lonely sea and the sky  
and all I ask is a small cup  
full of Earl Grey  
and Bergamot.  
And Netta's brought  
the Jaffa cakes  
while Paul's built a bonfire  
with flames of orange-yellow  
and George has the toasting sticks  
so we'll all have marshmallows.  
Now the sun has set  
the moon peeps out  
with a star to steer her by.

21/3/18

By Plymstock Memory Café (Netta, Paul, George, Jean, Albert and Michelle) compiled and edited by  
Claire Coleman

## Love, Longing & Freedom

I love myself, the spring –  
especially an early one.  
I love the pheasants, pigeons and magpies;  
Cadbury's Dairy Milk and Lindt.  
I love a new life, childhood;  
white wine – but it's got to be Chardonnay.  
I love the freesia, delphinium and daffodils.  
I long for a win on the lottery,  
for peace and quiet,  
for freedom and equality.  
I long for the memories I have lost,  
those who have passed on.  
I long for a nice cup of tea  
with jaffa cakes, garibaldi  
and chocolate digestives.  
I am free when I walk the dogs  
at Crox Bottom or when I'm in  
my garden. I am free when  
we race shopping trolleys,  
when we stroll through Bath.  
I am free when I'm on my own;  
on a sun-lounger, on holiday  
as Gregory Porter sings to me.  
I am free in Victoria Park,  
or listening to Bach, reading  
poems by Pam Ayres.

4<sup>th</sup> February, 2020.

By Withywood Memory Café compiled and edited by Caleb Parkin

## Today I Remembers –

I flew across the heavens  
In a peaceful, graceful, glider  
The feeling was of ecstasy  
I couldn't get much higher  
But nature had in store for me  
An even greater lift  
Escorting me across the sky –  
A flock of tiny swifts.

When I was a baby  
A little newborn mite  
Held against my mother's heart  
It skipped a beat one night.  
She's heard upon the radio  
A special dedication –  
Under Ted, with his dulcimer,  
Was sending congratulations.

When I was a youngster  
And had to go to school  
The Head Girl was a piece of work,  
A stickler for the rules. She relished giving punishments  
For minor silly crimes  
She made us learn darn poetry  
Instead of writing lines.

I was on an airplane  
The clouds spread out beneath me  
They seemed like worlds lit by the sun  
I saw the clouds in 3D.  
They weren't like in the cartoons –  
Blobs of white on blue  
I wished that all my grandkids  
Could see this wonder too.

22<sup>nd</sup> August, 2019.

By Pensilva Memory Café (compiled into a poem by Mel Johnston)

## A Winter Verse

Smoking chimneys  
The cosiness of home  
Log fires and hibernation

Feeding the birds  
Cold hands  
The smell of pine trees

Happy nostalgia  
Snowdrops, icicles  
Holly, ivy, mistletoe

Roasting chestnuts  
Mulled wine  
Hot chocolate

Silent night  
The bitter cold  
Frozen stars

Carols  
Christmas presents  
Church bells

Family fights  
Sledging, skating  
Mittens and gloves

Snow, frost, ice  
Cheeseburgers  
Darkness  
...Lights

4<sup>th</sup> December, 2019

By the Crownhill Memory Café poets (Compiled and edited by Heidi Stephenson)



