

To mark National Poetry Day, Literature Works is delighted to share with you a new piece by Plymouth Laureate of Words, Rosemarie Corlett.



About the origins of this piece, Rosemarie says: *'Earlier this year, I facilitated a Creative Writing workshop around the theme of Climate Change with the Global Climate Cafe at Theatre Royal Plymouth. A participant mentioned visiting the orchard at Ham Woods, and that there were a variety of trees, including medlar, mulberry, cherry, fig and walnut. I wanted to go at harvesting time to see the apple trees. I visited, hoping to find the orchard, and was stunned by how vast the woods were and how diverse the wildlife was. I got lost and ended up sitting, taking in my surroundings and writing this poem sitting on a carved out bench in the rain. It was so beautiful and austere in early autumn.'*

To learn more about the Plymouth Laureate of Words project and Rosemarie's activities, head to the [Literature Works Website](https://www.literatureworks.org.uk).



National Poetry Day

Plymouth Laureate of Words

'Ham Woods in September'
by Rosemarie Corlett

PLYMOUTH CULTURE  The Box

Ham Woods in September

- **By Rosemarie Corlett**

Instead, a laundry bag of forest.

The ivy switches on and smothers
another ash tree. And all the ferns are left

inside out. Like a cat in a window,
the birch barely moves.

Yellow leaves follow one another

down the path and everything
seems to exist by the process of
moving through something else –

the bracket mushrooms like modern balconies
extending out of the oak tree.

A collective, inexhaustible pushing gesture,

happening at all different volumes.

Trees always reaching out
until they settle down into old relaxed fingers.

A kind of safe chaos – the family home.

This place demands time to be
written about. Trees, like music, require

a great deal of attention.

They need time. And to be touched.
You must love them like cats –

discover their difficult personalities.

Then their roots on a ledge
might reconfigure as stairs. Or two trees side by side

will expand against the sky like a

pair of lungs, two ghosts assuming a form
we can assimilate. We can make the sound of wind

with our hands through the ivy.

We can make the sound bigger by putting our ear
to the dry stone wall and this will function

like a cheekbone, allowing the sound to resonate.

A spider whose entire body
is a wood coloured drawing pin with eight single

eyelashes animating it. The smell of root-filled

ledges that show us how to crumble (how to share).
With all the austerity and lush decisiveness

of a brutalist block of flats, with succulents bulging
out of the concrete.

A seaside crazy golf with no theme in winter –

where a landscape casually rejects its own bleakness
and becomes entirely provocative.