

Poetry Walks

These are some suggestions that you can use whilst you are on a walk or when you get back from a walk to hopefully inspire you to write poems. As with any writing activity, it is up to you how closely you stick to the ideas given ... and if for whatever reason a walk is not an option, hopefully the last activity will help.

I Spy

After period of walking, your choice on how long, stop and look around you and choose two things. These can be something you've seen, heard, smelt or even felt.

Write a short poem using both of the items ... for example celandines and spring sunshine, bluebells and blue sky, chalk cliffs and flints.

Or challenge yourself by taking two very disparate things and smashing them together in a poem (a reference to Richard Osman's house of games for any of you who have seen this on television!). Haiku often take two very unrelated things and bring them together to great effect!

*The sound of someone
Blowing his nose with his hand;
The plum blossoms at their best.*

Basho

Bear in mind they probably didn't have handkerchiefs in Basho's day but you get the idea.

Pin the poem on the donkey

At your next stop read through the poem below which could be about the feeling of wonder and reverence on any walk in the countryside not just on a moor:

The Moor

*It was like a church to me.
I entered it on soft foot,
Breath held like a cap in the hand.
It was quiet.
What God was there made himself felt,
Not listened to, in clean colours
That brought a moistening of the eye,
In movement of the wind over grass.*

*There were no prayers said. But stillness
Of the heart's passions -- that was praise
Enough; and the mind's cession
Of its kingdom. I walked on,
Simple and poor, while the air crumbled
And broke on me generously as bread.*

R. S. Thomas

Now pinpoint one word, phrase or line which resonates or interests you. Use this as a starting point for your own poem.

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Pooh Sticks

When walking anywhere in the Surrey Hills, it is easy to think that it has always been this way with woodland, open common and idyllic ponds and rivers.

Long before the Industrial Revolution, the Tillingbourne was one of the most industrialised river valleys in England. Stretching from its source at Leith Hill to the Wey at Shalford, 11 miles of constant flow led to approximately 50 water wheels at its height, powering 32 mills and supporting 12 different industries such as gunpowder, paper making for bank-notes, iron-working, wire-making, fulling (a step in woollen clothmaking to clean the cloth and make it thicker), tanning and pumping water, as well as the more conventional flour, grist and malt milling.

At your next stop, again your choice on how long since your last, imagine yourself on a bridge next to the Tillingbourne or a hammer pond in that time and environment, or imagine your walk to the bridge in that time, what would you see, hear, smell?

Hide and Seek

Sometimes trying to write straight from activities like the ones above does not work so if this is the case, choose any of the items from any of the activities and free-write.

This involves writing whatever comes to mind on the subject you have chosen – if you need a specific subject, start with the picture below of the Surrey Hills and see where that takes you - write continuously without thinking or stopping for 2 or 3 minutes. If your mind goes blank, write the word or sentence you have just finished until you are ready to move on or stop.



Once you have done this, look back through what you have written, search through for a phrase, theme or thought that you can use to write a poem.

Enjoy your walk!