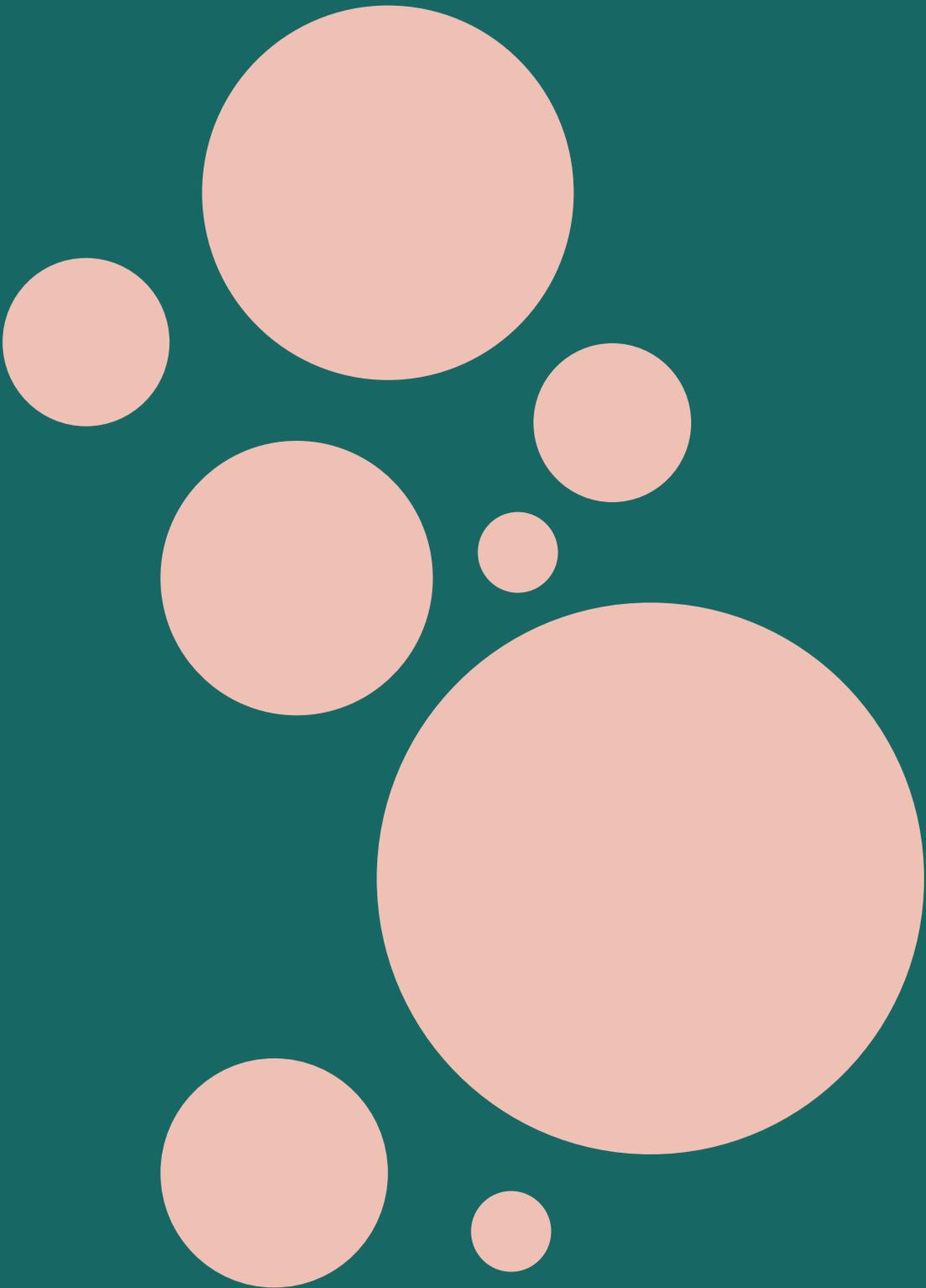


# 8 ways to write a poem

during a pandemic



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# Introduction

The collaborative project, 'In Touch', creatively explores shared ideas, feelings and recurring themes across the hospital community.

During 2020 and 2021, Keith Jarrett has been our poet in residence, funded by Imperial Health Charity and The National Lottery Community Fund. Working over the five hospitals at Charing Cross Hospital, Hammersmith Hospital, Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea Hospital, St Mary's Hospital and the Western Eye Hospital, he has been connecting remotely with patients and staff to document their experiences during the pandemic.

This project will result in an anthology and an onsite visual display, so please do use the free return envelope to send us your poem, if you wish to be included! For videos to help guide you through some of the activities here, or for further information and resources related to 'In Touch', visit our website:

<https://www.imperialcharity.org.uk/arts/patient-engagement-programme/creative-links/poet-in-residence>

The 'In Touch' project was commissioned to reflect on the COVID-19 pandemic, and the ways in which it has changed how we feel and how we connect with each other. Some of the challenges will directly address this, and it's impossible to predict what might be uncovered.

If you need to reach out for support or advice at any time, feel free to contact the services below, in addition to support from a health professional such as your GP.

## Online support/advice:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helplines/>

## Phone support by phone call or text:

Samaritans - 116 123

<https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/>

SHOUT – text service Text: 85258



# Before you begin: a note on creativity

Inside this book, you'll find eight challenges about feeling and touch. If you complete them, you will have written a poem or two by the end.

You can try the challenges in any order. The suggested time and the difficulty level will increase with each challenge, but you might find some of them easier than others. **Take as much time as you want and skip as many as you want.**

Whether you write zero poems or seven hundred, the most important thing is to prompt you to think creatively. This means thinking literally and in the abstract, and you'll be guided through this all the way!

Complete the challenges on your own, with friends or with other members of your household.

It's easier to write directly onto these pages and in the spaces provided, but you can jot on a notepad, on your phone, or on the takeaway leaflet that came through the letterbox. You can doodle with one finger in the air and store it all in your head. The most remarkable thing about creativity – and poetry, in particular – is it requires no special equipment besides the imagination.

# How to use this activity pack

## How this pack is organised:

This pack explores feeling, touch and connection and is divided into sections, marked out on the contents page.

In between some of the challenges, there are **pink Pause and Personal Reflection pages**. The Pause pages are designed to give more space to think about our sense of touch and our emotional feelings. The Personal Reflection pages are based on Keith's experiences working across the hospital trust.

At the top of each challenge, you'll see a suggested minimum time, which might be useful if you're in a hurry!

As the minimum time increases, so does the difficulty:

- light green challenges are the simplest
- the dark green challenges are most complicated

## How the challenges are broken down- you may see the following icons on the challenge pages:

-  This is where you'll find the main challenge.
-  This is where you'll see examples to help you.
-  This is where you'll be asked to think some more about the task if you have time.
-  This is where you'll find ideas to take your writing further.

**Examples:** they are provided for most of the challenges. There are also a few longer examples, so you have lots of different ideas and inspiration.

**Remember, there's no single right way to think or write when you're experimenting with ideas, so your results might look very different to the examples given here, and that's fine.**





# I Felt



## LET'S GO

List 5 things you've touched today. This may be inside your home or even outside. At least one of these should be important to you in some way.

1

2

3

4

5



## EXAMPLE

Leaky tap, Pillow, Toothbrush, Carpet, Panic



## REFLECT

- Which is the largest or the smallest?
- Which is the most pleasant?
- Which is the most irritating?
- Think of as many different ways you could rank these touches.



## NOW TRY THIS!

Circle the most interesting one and describe how it feels to you in as much detail as possible. If you prefer, draw it!



## EXAMPLE

The leaky cold tap in the kitchen. It drips through into my dreams. It takes ten twists to turn the water off. One day, I'll get it fixed. For now, it is the background noise to every thought... (and so on).



# Pause: How Things Feel

Some words related to touch...

Wet                      damp                      spiky  
soft                      slimy/sticky                      Light                      itchy  
cold                      tight                      warm/hot  
heavy                      dry                      oily

**What other words describe the way things feel? Are there others you can find?**

**Perhaps you can think of words in other dialects and languages, and words that have several meanings, depending on where you use them.**

**Let's try and use some of these words in the next few challenges.**

☆ **EXAMPLE**

Suave in Spanish, means soft. In English, we often use this word to describe someone who's charming.

# Home Feels

 LET'S GO

Which objects come to your mind when you think of home? List 5 of them below:

1

2

3

5

4

Now describe them in as much detail as possible. We'll use the phrase 'home feels like...' to start each description. Use my examples to help, and there are further examples from staff and patients in the personal reflection on the next page. As a bonus, try to include a few touch-related words from the last page in your descriptions.

Home feels like...

 EXAMPLE

- Home feels like the lumpy pillow with an imprint of my head already fading at 8am
- Home feels like the slow-building warmth of the kettle
- Home feels like the wrinkled fabric of the washing
- Home feels like the rough cardboard of weekend takeaway boxes
- Home feels like the tough smudge of toothpaste on the bathroom mirror

 REFLECT

There are so many ways we can think about 'home'. What if 'home' for you is a person, your workplace, the city in which we live? Are there different objects you can use to talk about this home?



 NOW TRY THIS!

Try giving this challenge to a close friend or family member! How might their description of 'home' be different? Read out your 'home feels like' lines, alternating with each line (person 1 reads their first line; person 2 follows with theirs; person 1 again, and so on). You can even record this as a performance!

# A Personal Reflection

It can feel alienating if you're at home and unable to meet with other people going through the same experiences. In late February, I connected online with a group of young transplant patients through St. Marys Hospital. This meeting was one way of putting some of those young people in touch with each other, something we all valued.

Being able to participate in a forum where patients shared their hopes, dreams and frustrations left a deep impression on me. Many of the participants already felt their lives were on hold while

waiting for operations; the complications that came from a pandemic compounded that feeling. The majority had hardly left their homes for more than a year, at a time when some of them were recovering from surgery, or finishing exams, or preparing to go to university for the first time.

We each took turns sharing our favourite lines on what home feels like from our points of view. Here, we were less concerned about the physical feelings of home, but about what objects inside our homes meant to us. The end result felt like a snapshot of all our lives.

Home feels like a demanding laptop with unread emails stacking up

Home feels like a soft, friendly, needy cat

Home feels like overwatered plants, crisping at the edges

Home feels like the strong door that stands firm to keep the cold out

Home feels like the essential square metal PS4

Home feels like my guitars helping me with my mental health and they keep me sitting in my own world

Home feels like a mug of hot chocolate with marshmallows on the top

Home feels like my dramatic peace lily plant that needs constant watering

Home feels really cold, while I feel like a couch potato

Home feels like peace

Home feels like my mum's delicious spicy jollof rice and chicken

# Underneath The Feeling



LET'S GO

So far, we've used the phrase 'digging deeper' as a way of stretching each activity. In this next challenge, we'll be digging even further. This requires quick thinking and can be done alone or in a group. You'll need to think beyond literal objects, so be prepared! Remember, it doesn't have to make complete sense, just imagine that you're an explorer looking for buried treasure.

We'll start with an object and use the word 'underneath' to dig one level down. We'll repeat this a few times, trying to go down as low as possible. Read my examples on the next page to help you with this challenge.

## How to do your own dig in three steps!

1. Choose an everyday object that represents the past year for you. Two obvious examples: a face mask, or hand sanitiser, if we're thinking about the impact of coronavirus on our lives. You could choose something else entirely, if that works better: your home, your phone, a ring, anything...
2. Write down something that's underneath that object on one line. It could be literal, or it could be a feeling. Maybe it's 'Underneath my home is another home', if you live in an upstairs flat. Or it could be, 'Underneath my home is 3 years of rent'. Or, 'Underneath my phone...' there could be a dozen missed calls, or a bedside table, or hope.
3. Descend 4 more levels! Again, think literally and emotionally. If you get stuck on one level, you might want to move sideways before digging further. You could also go up a level like I've done in my example ('above the grimace').



## EXAMPLE

Underneath my facemask is a goofy smile  
Underneath my smile is an uneven toothbrushing regime  
Underneath the regime are days that run into each other  
Hanging over these days are sleep-deprived nights  
Underneath the nights, the sheep count themselves while my thoughts collide with each other  
Inside those collisions, a constellation of to-do lists enters the conversation  
Underneath the to-do lists is a grimace that I carry with me to the supermarket  
Above the grimace, the mask stretches to cover my face.

 **NOW TRY THIS!**

I've added another example and ways of completing the challenge on the next page. Use the space below to write:

 **EXAMPLE**

Here's an example given to us by a patient. You don't have to write something positive!

Underneath my computer monitor is my laptop  
Underneath my laptop is a lot of pressure  
Underneath the pressure is a fabulous system  
Underneath the system are destructive colleagues  
Tearing it apart like angry children  
Underneath the colleagues are excuses and blame  
Underneath this is exhaustion

 **NOW TRY THIS!**

Other ways to dig deeper - here, I'll use my first example of the face mask, and talk you through other ways you might complete the challenge.

**Underneath my mask is a goofy smile** [Pick one of the two descriptors 'goofy' or 'smile' - I've gone for the less predictable one]

**Underneath the goofy is a heap of uncertainty** [I've chosen an abstract idea here, rather than a physical thing]

**Underneath the uncertainty is more uncertainty** [now we've made our point twice, we need a specific idea to pin uncertainty to]

**Underneath my brother's photo online are three celebration emojis** [numbering them makes it more specific/interesting... Now let's reverse a little]

**Underneath that uncertainty is a cancelled flight to see my brother** [Let's use brother for the next one and try to make the leap more surprising]

**Above the emojis, my thumb hovers for a split second** [now I've tried to find a way to wrap this up neatly]  
**Inside the split second are hopes of returning.**



# Pause: Experimenting With Your Creativity

The challenges so far have used lists and templates – or ‘scaffolding’ – to create a poem. If you’re just starting to write, it can be useful to build a poem this way. Once you’re feeling more confident, you can be more experimental and remove some of the scaffold.

Let’s take the last challenge as an example. So far, the poem follows a logical, repetitive pattern. To make it more interesting, we could remove some of the logic and the repetition.

## Quick Creative Tips for your poem (and all poems in general)

- Delete every other line, so it doesn’t follow the logical downwards journey
- Move some of the lines around
- Swap the first and last line.
- Remove the repetitive ‘underneath’ phrase.

Inside the split second are hopes of returning.  
~~Underneath the goofy is a~~  
~~heap of uncertainty~~  
Underneath the uncertainty is more uncertainty

Once we’ve removed the scaffold, we need to make sure that the poem holds together, even if it doesn’t seem logical at a first glance, by:

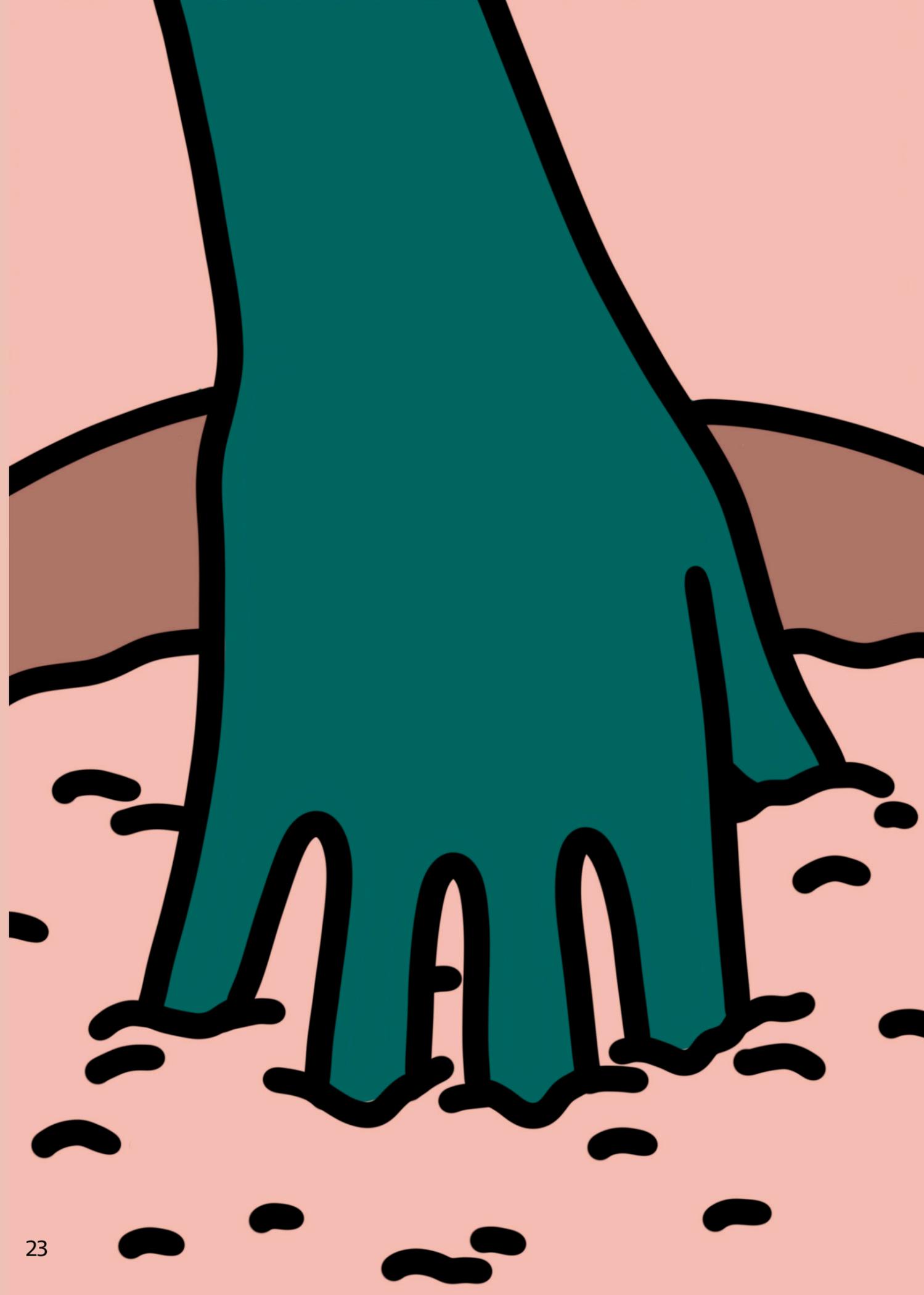
- Putting back in some of the scaffold, adding or removing words or adding more specific details
- Using a key word or line as the title, and making sure everything in the poem relates to it

Here’s how I might continue mine:

### On Almost Forgetting My Brother’s Birthday

Inside the split second **of a hovering thumb** are hopes of returning  
The uncertainty **contains only** more uncertainty  
Underneath **his** photo ~~online~~ are three celebration emojis are sitting  
My mask is a goofy smile.

As you can see, what started as an exploration of facemasks has now transformed into something completely different! See if you can apply some of these techniques to any of the challenges in this activity pack, or to any of your poems so far.



**“Our feelings are our most genuine paths to knowledge. They are chaotic, sometimes painful, sometimes contradictory, but they come from deep within us. And we must key into those feelings...”**

**Audre Lorde**

## **A Personal Reflection**

As well as the difficulties of a global pandemic, some of us have also had to deal with being away from work and friends, dealing with illness or bereavement, or having hospital treatments delayed. Life events like birthdays, weddings, or moving home have been impacted, too. We may also have encountered new connections with the environment around us, taking walks in the park. We may have had neighbours check in on us, leaving food at our door, or calling more often.

It's been a privilege being able to talk with staff from across the hospital trust as an artist in residence, staff who have expressed a range of emotions, from optimism to overwhelm, fear to fulfilment, and everything in between.

One of the most profound experiences for me was joining a team of counsellors on their regular catch-up and listening to them speak about their challenges and hopes for the future. The contradictions were striking: a feeling of being energised by the conversation, and tired by the relentlessness of the pandemic, of being able to reach more patients online but feeling limited by the reduction of face-to-face contact,

of being capable of supporting patients, while also facing similar problems as they do... and so on.

What made the moment special for them was being able to connect with each other, as they do on a regular basis. What made the moment special for me was learning a little about their experiences while also realising how similar we all are. I left with a feeling of hopefulness, of having had a shared experience.

It's important to think about our hopes as well as some of our frustrations, to deal with them side by side, and think about our creative response. When we engage our imaginations, the possibilities are endless. In a poem, I can choose to write about the limitations of my life right now, or I can reach beyond, into the future, or into a world that exists only in my head. Or a mixture of all of these!

The next couple of challenges will be looking at some of our hopes, stretching our imaginations as far as we can take them.

# I Hope To Feel...



This longer, 5-step challenge, should end in a poem. Take up to 2mins on each step. Once you get to the end, if you want, you can redo the challenge and improve the poem.

**1. What are you looking forward to?**  
Is there something you miss doing or that you're looking forward to doing again once we've got through the pandemic? Write up to 5 things.

Tip: if you're stuck, think of something small, something bigger or more general, something personal, something related to a special occasion, something more everyday...

**2. Choose one**  
Choose one of these to write about (you can always repeat this with another one later).

Tip: It's easier to write about an activity involving other people, lasting a while, in a place you know well. It's more challenging to describe a brief moment or an object.

**3. Imagine yourself there now**  
Imagine you are doing this thing. Slow down to take everything in. What are you feeling? What are you not feeling? You can write down bullet points or full sentences if you want.

Tip: Think about the textures on your hands, feet and face as well as your emotional 'feeling'. We can feel in many different ways – hot, cold, wet or dry. We can also sense oily, scaly, flaky and smooth textures as well as light and heaviness...

**4. Find a repeat line**  
One of the simplest ways to be creative is to repeat a phrase. Use 'When this is over...' or create your own phrase, which will be repeated five times. Describe a feeling/something you can touch to complete each line, using your notes from the last step.

Tip: Don't put them in an order. Think about what fits each line best. You can play with it later.

**5. Becoming a poem**  
Make the subject you're writing about the title of this poem. Exaggerate some of the feelings and get rid of the words 'feel' or 'touch'. Change at least one of the repeat phrases, so it doesn't sound too repetitive. If you prefer, remove the repeat line entirely, or just keep it in the last line.

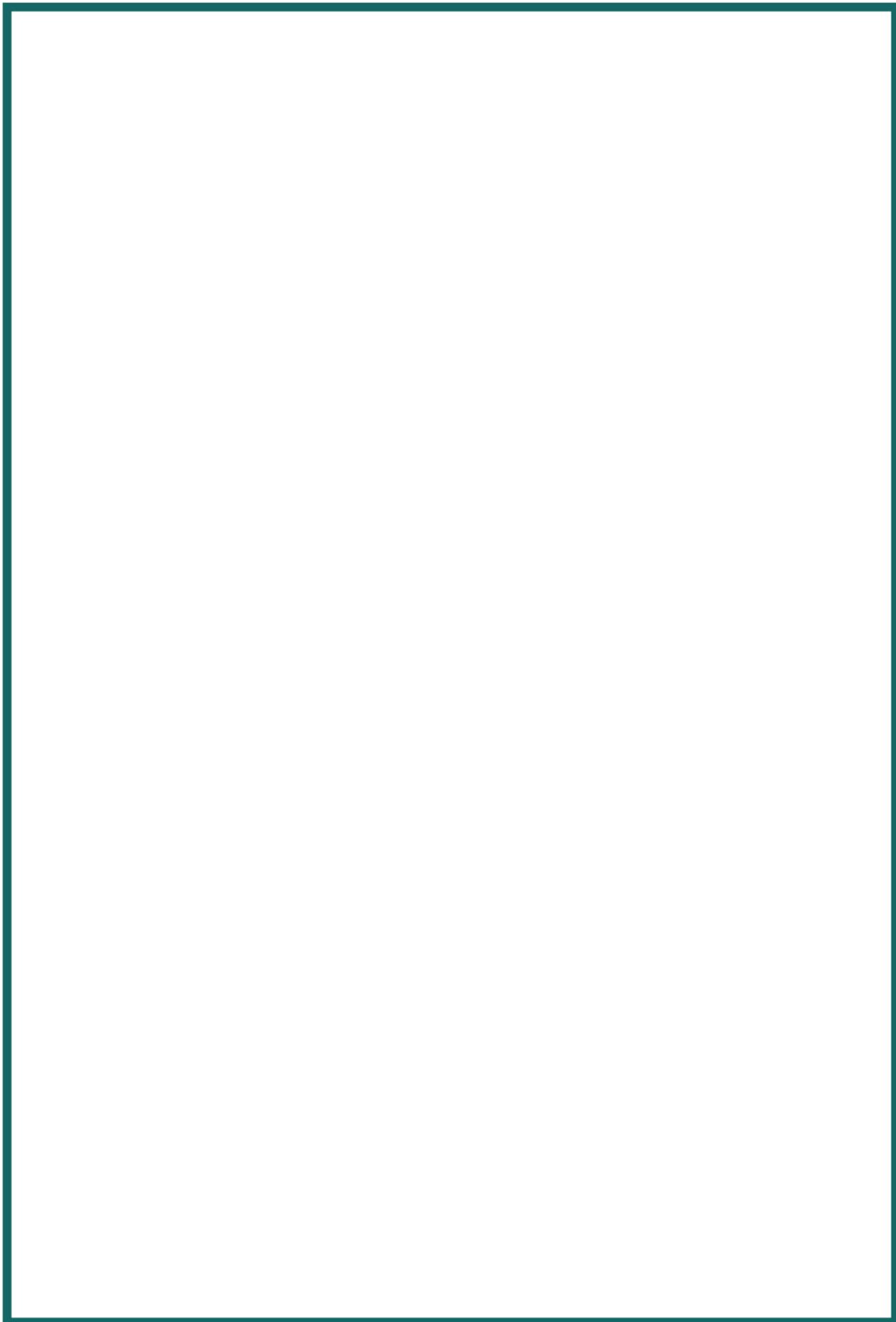
Tip: Experiment with how it sounds by swapping words around. It doesn't have to make absolute sense – but it needs to 'feel' right.

## ★ EXAMPLE

STEPS 1-2:  
(small) having friends round for dinner  
(personal) hugging my parents  
(special occasion) going clubbing on my birthday?

STEP 3:  
When my friends are round for dinner, I will feel happy and a bit too warm with the heating on; the plates will be heavy with food; I'll feel full from eating too much. My ribs will be aching from all the really bad jokes I've been laughing at. My hands will be greasy from handling the plantain chips. There'll be a lot more washing up than I've been used to lately... my shrivelling fingers! I might feel a couple of rice grains under my feet when I get up because they're messy eaters...

STEPS 4 & 5:  
Having friends round for dinner again  
When the pandemic is over, my ribs will ache from all the dreadful jokes  
When this pandemic is over, rice grains will appear under my feet  
When this is all over, I can open another window



**1. Are there other ways we could complete the task? What happens if we remove the "scaffolding" of the repeat line? What about the punctuation? Let's use my example:**



Having friends round for dinner again  
my ribs will ache from all the dreadful jokes  
rice grains will appear under my feet  
my belly will expand to hold their smiles... etc.



**2. What happens if we exaggerate further?**

my feet will be submerged in rice grains  
or my feet will drown in pools of rice grains

my smiles will expand to  
hold their bellies  
my jokes will ache from all  
the dreadful ribs etc.



**3. What happens if we swap words round to make the meanings stranger?**



☆ EXAMPLE

**When I can ... I will go to the sea**

Cast off my walking boots when I reach the beach  
Shed my socks – I'll dig my feet – grab as much sand as I can  
My toes curled like crab claws – a life of their own  
Grabbing like the machine next to the hospital  
Grind 'til the crunchy wet grains shed my skin  
Exfoliate the soles - twist and drive my heels  
The balls tingling like a drill

When I can - I will tread the water  
Dodge the rocks - pop seaweed – let sea spray lick me  
Gradual waves lap to my belly – sluiced of stress  
Strafe sandy grains – smother me in healing waves  
Embrace sunlight on my chest– charge the whole of me

When I can, I will linger as long as the light will let me  
'til the yolk of the sun melts into the horizon  
The albumen clouds fade to grey - dissipate  
Make way for the cobalt night – scatterings of stars  
Become bold – then old – become black holes

When I leave – my sandprint firm – I'll take some in a jar  
Keep it next to my bed – stretch and curl  
My toes into a mermaid's tail – my tresses laid on my Tempur pillow  
Sheathed in white – throw the sheet over me – put the ocean to bed  
Sleep and think of moving with ... to the Sea.

- Wendy Young, staff member

CHALLENGE 6: 10-12 MIN

# I Would Love To Feel...

 LET'S GO

**This requires writing down the first thought that comes to mind and not worrying about having a perfect answer. If you follow the three steps, you'll create a mini poem. My example poems are at the end and you can write your own below them.**

**STEP ONE**

**Take 2mins to write down the following:**

- **One person who you would like to be able to shake hands with or hug (who isn't with you now)**
- **A famous person you would like to shake hands with**
- **Your favourite place in the world**
- **One place you would like to go once the pandemic is over**

**You might even want to draw the person or place on a blank page.**

## STEP TWO

Choose **ONE** of the places.

**Now, describe the place you've chosen through your sense of touch only, without using the words feeling or touch and without naming the place.**

**Spend up to 5 minutes writing down some of the feelings that come to mind.**

**Imagine you're there now and one of the people you've chosen is with you. What might that be like?**

## ☆ EXAMPLE

~~My favourite beach in Barcelona.~~  
Grains of sand and cigarette butts beneath my toes as I walk from end to end. The wind blowing my cap off my head. Cheap plastic sunglasses pinching my nose. My travel towel draped over the shoulders. The sea on my skin... etc.

## STEP THREE

**Spend another 3-5 minutes shaping it into a poem. It only needs to be around five lines. It's easiest to break it down into your favourite lines and use a repeat phrase as a building block. 'Take me to...' could work, or 'I dream of...' or a line of your choice**

## ☆ EXAMPLE

I've chosen the beach in Barcelona and a bookshop in Bangalore – they both begin with B!

1.  
I dream of the grains under my feet,  
the rough towel draped over my shoulders,  
the cheap flip flops cutting through my toes.  
I dream of my cheeks stinging from the joy of early Autumn wind.
2.  
Take me to the rough pages grazing my thumb,  
the rucksack straps pinching my stressless shoulders,  
the weight of all these stories holding me to the ground.  
Take me to the held breath of bowed-head browsers  
as I squeeze myself between rows of shelves.



# Pause: How Things Feel

Happy      Grumpy      Refreshed      Loved  
Sad      Engaged      Hopeful      Melancholy  
Anxious      Connected

What other words can we use to describe the way things feel emotionally? Use the spaces below to write some of the most interesting ones down.

Perhaps you can also think of sayings or expressions that use the word 'feel' or 'touch', or words in other dialects or languages. You may also consider words that have several meanings, depending on where you use them.

★ **EXAMPLE**

A Jamaican saying springs to mind: 'If you cyaan hear, you must feel'. Simply put, if you don't heed warnings, you will feel the consequences!

Also, in English, we sometimes use the word 'touché' to acknowledge when someone makes a clever quip. In French, it simply means 'touched'.

☁ **REFLECT**

The title 'In Touch' is a play on the layered meaning of the words: when we speak about 'staying in touch', we usually mean 'staying connected' virtually, rather than 'making physical contact', although the phrase contains the shadow of our physical selves.

Even when we can't be in close proximity to other people, even during the times when we can't hug our friends and family, we can find other ways to maintain this sense of touch, and of emotion.

How do you manage to stay in touch, with yourself, and with the people you care about the most?

# How Does It Feel Right Now...?



## LET'S GO

Below is my adaptation of a writing exercise called 'The Furniture Game', because it always begins with an item of furniture. Feel free to create your own versions of this game!

### STEP ONE

Choose a feeling that is strong in your mind right now. (You can use a person if you prefer).

My Example: hope

### STEP TWO

If this feeling were an item of furniture, what would it be?

My example: a shelf full of unread books (something I personally associate with hope).

### STEP THREE

The rest of this challenge follows this pattern. To make your response stronger, add specific details, memories or focus on the senses (touch, of course, and smells, sights, sounds).

Answer any of these questions, in any order:

If the feeling were an animal, what would it be?

If the feeling were a colour, what would it be?

If it were an item of clothing/ an accessory, what would it be?

If it were a song/ a piece of music, what would it be?

If it were a form of transport, what would it be?

If it were a food or drink, what would it be?

If it were something in the air or sea, what would it be?

If it were nature related (e.g. a season or flower), what would it be?

If it were a (famous) landmark, what would it be?

[Add your own questions here - there are hundreds of possibilities!]

### STEP FOUR

You already have the beginning of a poem! Choose 6-7 of your favourite responses and play with the order, and how they sound. Use the examples and tips on the page opposite to perfect what you've written. Once you're happy with the result, share it with someone!



## REFLECT

Describing one thing as if it were something else is called using a metaphor. Similar to metaphor is personification, where we assign human behaviours to things. For example, it's not unusual to say 'the sun is smiling down on us today'... unless, of course, it's raining.

What human behaviours might your feelings have? Maybe your anger might shout, your happiness might sing, anxiety might scratch at the doors, love might decorate a cold hall... Where else can you use the powers of metaphor and personification?

☆ **EXAMPLE**

Here is an example from a staff member:

**Happiness**

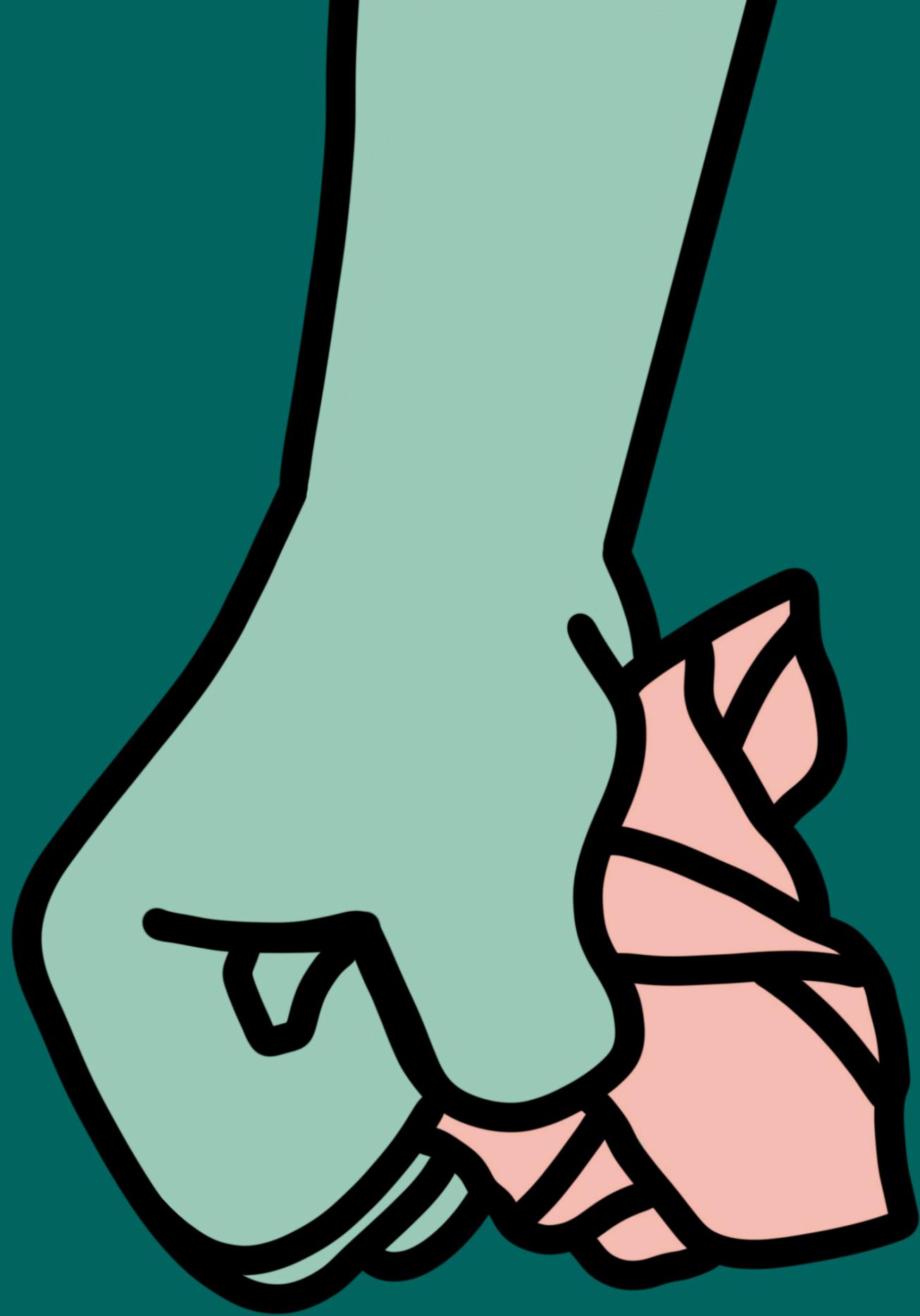
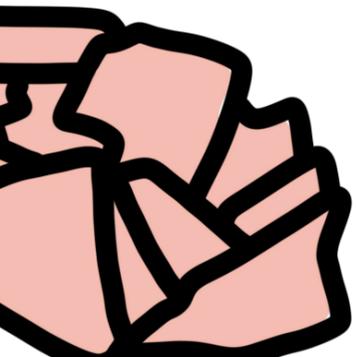
My brother's leather chair, designed to recline and read  
Birds playing in between thick clouds  
A London parakeet  
The brightest, lightest blue with a tiny tinge of yellow  
A TfL bicycle fast-peddalling towards my dinner  
A Keralan curry and a properly poured Guinness  
But only inside a cosy Dublin pub  
Nina Simone's The King of Love is Dead  
Playing through new speakers  
With all the windows open on a sunny day  
A starfish crawling slowly next to my feet  
The sandalwood cologne that fills my nose  
The fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square –  
although it's usually full of mediocrity.

Here's another short example of mine... I've changed the first line to add detail already.

**Hope**

The first sneeze of Spring  
A newly dusted shelf filled with unread books  
A cat holding out a paw at the front entrance  
Dyed-orange shorts thrown into a rucksack as I leave  
Someone practicing an arpeggio in the distance  
A bus timetable Tippexed-out  
A tadpole in a pond that I once imagined  
A dove bearing a Valentine's bouquet  
The leaning tower of Pisa, bending to listen to my dreams

If I were to come back to the exercise later, I might swap round a few more lines, or come back to the tadpole and this mysterious 'I once imagined' idea.



# A Personal Reflection

People often tell me they don't know how to write creatively. It can feel daunting if you're not used to doing it already. But if you've got this far, clearly, you can at least think creatively.

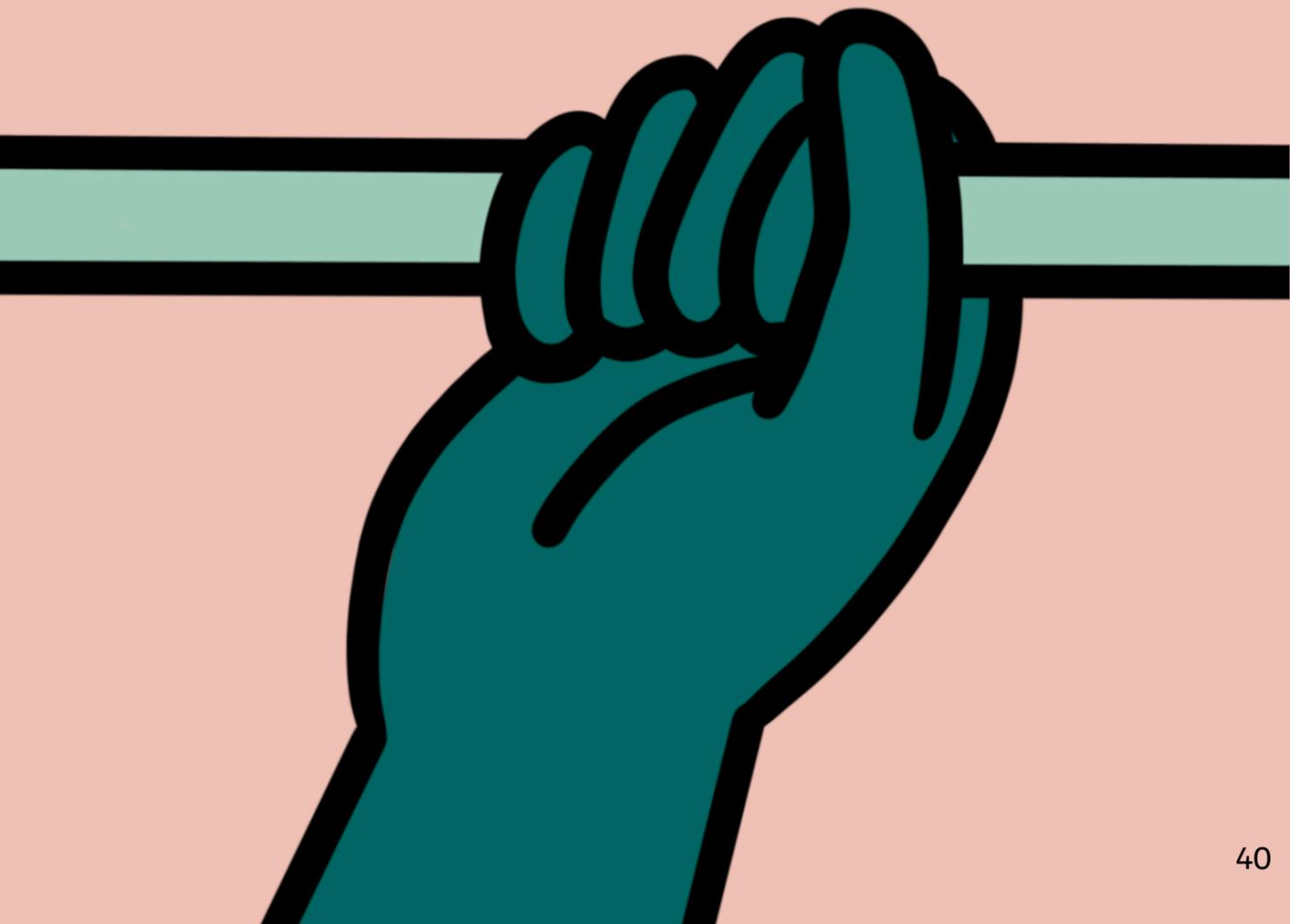
Sometimes even I find it difficult to find the right words. When I'm busy, distracted or stressed, taking time out to write can feel like a luxury, rather than a necessity, especially in the middle of a global pandemic! After I sit down to write, however, the world around me stills. I can focus on the most

minute details I wouldn't notice otherwise. It isn't therapy, but it can be therapeutic.

Some challenges will have been easier to complete than others. I hope they've given you some useful ideas for getting in touch with your own feelings, and for connecting with others. It's fine if you don't have much time or energy to spend on a poem. If you do have more time, I recommend returning to some of them and redrafting what you've written to make it even stronger.

# 10 more tips for making your writing stronger:

1. Use metaphors and personification to make the words sing
2. Don't stick to what you see in front of you; use your imagination to take you to places you've already been, or to a future that doesn't yet exist
3. Rhyme if you want, but don't force it
4. The same applies to repeated word sounds (alliteration)
5. Start with a phrase you like and repeat it to get the momentum going. Keep the repeat phrase if it works, but try to remove this scaffolding, and see if it's better
6. If you want to geek out on language, do! Spend time with a thesaurus to find the right words
7. Also, think about language parts... (adverbs often drag a poem, as do too many adjectives. A good verb is hard to find. Swapping round word orders can make a poem stranger – which is sometimes a good thing! Etc.)
8. The more you write, the better. If you waste time thinking about what you're going to write, you'll get less done than if you write first, and cross out the bad ideas
9. Sharing your writing with others will make it stronger. Collaborating, even better!
10. Reading and watching poetry, in books and online, will give you ideas for continuing your poetry journey



# All The Feelings



LET'S GO

This final, ultimate challenge will take you through a free-write, with fewer rules than the previous ones.

Free writing is exactly as it sounds, writing “freely” for a set time. The goal is to write without stopping and not worry about whether your ideas make sense or sound pretty. If you put a lot of words down, you can go back over it later and rescue all your good ideas. If you overthink and write nothing, there’s less to work with later!

Despite it being “free”, there are three main rules:

1. No stopping during the time of writing for longer than a second.
2. No crossing out or going back over what you’ve written until the end.
3. If you’re stuck, repeat the last few words you’ve written until you’re back on track.

**Part One: Before we begin**

To get ready, look back over some of what you’ve written so far. Each challenge has had a ‘feel’ phrase attached to it. See if you can fill in some of the phrases below, really quickly:

I feel...  
I’ve felt...  
Home feels...  
Underneath that feeling is...  
I hope to feel...  
I would love to feel...  
Right now feels...  
I used to feel...  
I’ve never felt / I will never feel...

**Part Two: Almost there...**

Choose one of the lines above. This will be the starting point for your free write. The next page is blank for you to write on.

# Bonus Challenge: Share Your Feelings!

Well done! If you've attempted a few of the exercises, we'd love to hear from you to see how it went.

As a bonus challenge, choose your favourite idea so far. Write a poem, ideally between 10 and 40 lines that you would like to share with us. Use the next tear-off page and post it using the prepaid envelope provided. If you would like to contribute to the anthology or you would like to receive a copy, please fill in the form on the next page. Alternatively, email [arts@imperialcharity.org.uk](mailto:arts@imperialcharity.org.uk).

This book was designed by On The Mend, in collaboration with poet Keith Jarrett and arts engagement manager Kate Pleydell. We worked with a number of teams from across Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, whose thoughtful conversations and contributions formed this book.

**THANK YOU FOR TAKING THIS POETIC JOURNEY WITH US!**

Please fill in the details below if you would like us to add your poem to the project, or if you would like to hear more from Imperial Health Charity. Your personal details are optional, and your information will be securely held by Imperial Health Charity.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you happy for your poem(s) to be included in the poetry anthology?  
(Put an 'X' in one box)

Yes  No

If yes, are you happy for us to use your name? (Put an 'X' in one box)

Yes  No

Are you happy to hear from Imperial Health Charity about our work? (Put an 'X' in one box)

Yes  No  If yes, please contact by email  post

Using this poetry activity book helped to improve my own sense of emotional wellbeing: (Put an 'X' in one box)

Strongly agree  Agree  Neither agree nor disagree  Disagree  Strongly disagree

Do you have any comments or messages for Imperial Health Charity?

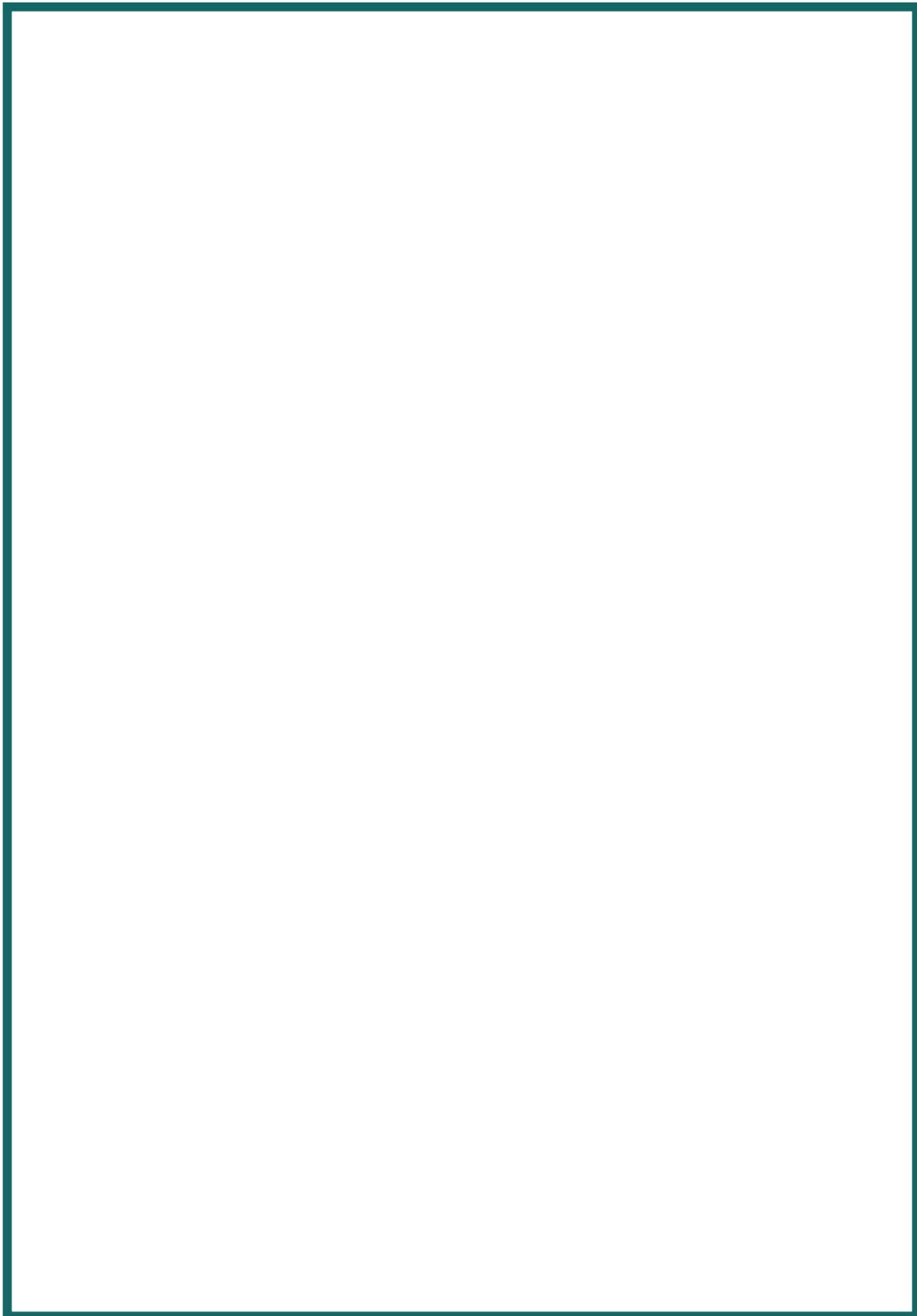
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Tear this page

Write your poem here.





**Inside this book, you'll find eight writing challenges about feeling and touch. If you complete them, you will have written a poem or two by the end.**

**The book is part of a collaborative project, 'In Touch'. During 2020 and 2021, Keith Jarrett has been our poet in residence. Working over the five hospitals at Charing Cross Hospital, Hammersmith Hospital, Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea Hospital, St Mary's Hospital and the Western Eye Hospital, he has been connecting remotely with patients and staff to document their experiences during the pandemic. The project will result in an anthology and a visual display, so please do use the free return envelope to send us your poem, if you wish to be included!!**

**The book was designed by On The Mend, in collaboration with poet Keith Jarrett and arts engagement manager Kate Pleydell. We worked with a number of teams from across Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, whose thoughtful conversations and contributions formed this book.**

**'In Touch' was generously funded by Imperial Health Charity and The National Lottery Community Fund.**

