

## **Welcome to Creative Bursts: short creative activities to do at home with your children.**

Creative Bursts are created by Sarah Webb and supported by MoLI – Museum of Literature Ireland.

Sarah Webb is an award-winning children's writer and children's book champion. Her children's books include *A Sailor Went to Sea, Sea, Sea*, illustrated by Steve McCarthy which won the Irish Book Awards Junior Category and *Blazing a Trail: Irish Women Who Changed the World*, illustrated by Lauren O'Neill which won the Irish Book Awards Senior Category. Her latest book is *Dare to Dream: Irish People Who Took On the World (and Won!)*, illustrated by Graham Corcoran.

MoLI is committed to youth creativity and alongside the free primary schools tour and workshops programme, we also run Bright Sparks – a series of art and story workshops facilitated by Irish writers and illustrators where families embrace the opportunity to play and create together.

To get lost in a Creative Burst all you need is a pencil or pen and a notebook or piece of paper.

The writing games and prompts are aimed at around age 9+ but could be done with younger children if you give them a bit of help. Also included are more challenging story prompts for older or more experienced writers of around 11+ (every young writer is different).

Remember grown-ups – please join in too! It's great for children to see you being creative, making mistakes and having fun on the page!

### **Today's theme is: Hidden Stories**

#### **Warm Up**

To get started let's warm up those writing muscles. You could start by writing this quote into your writing notebook, copybook or sheet of paper. You could give it a fancy frame or border if you like!

“And above all, watch with glittering eyes the whole world around you because the greatest secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places. Those who don't believe in magic will never find it.” - Roald Dahl

If you've already got that one in your notebook, how about this:

“Art is the only way to run away without leaving home.” - Twyla Tharp, American dancer, choreographer and writer (look her up, she's really cool!)

### **Creative Bursts Challenge #1: Hiding**

Where do you like to hide?

Is there a special place where you like to get away from it all?

Do you bring a book, or a notebook and pen?

When I was a girl we had a wooden climbing frame in our back garden – it had a special platform – like a tree house – and I loved dragging cushions and rugs up there and making my own hidey hole. I'd bring a book and stay there all afternoon in the summer.

I wrote a tree house poem inspired by this:

High up in a leafy tree  
Shaded from all company,  
Is the place I love to be,  
Hiding in my tree house.

Happy is sky  
And happy is free,  
Happy is reading  
High up in my tree.

Now design your own special tree house and write a poem or a story about it.

## **Creative Bursts Challenge #2: Finding Stories in Junk**

Do you have a drawer in your house that is full of broken and lost bits and pieces? Old keys, single earrings, foreign coins?

Place the most interesting of these things in a shoe box or on a tray. Ask your grown up to help you pick things.

If you have a very tidy house, find some interesting things around the place instead.

Now pick some of these items and write a story or a poem or draw a picture inspired by the things.

You can ask yourself the following questions:

Who owns this thing?

Where and when did they lose it?

Where do they live?

What do they want?

This last question is really important – figure out what the person who owns the thing **WANTS**. Do they want to travel the world? Overcome a dragon? Find their long lost sister?

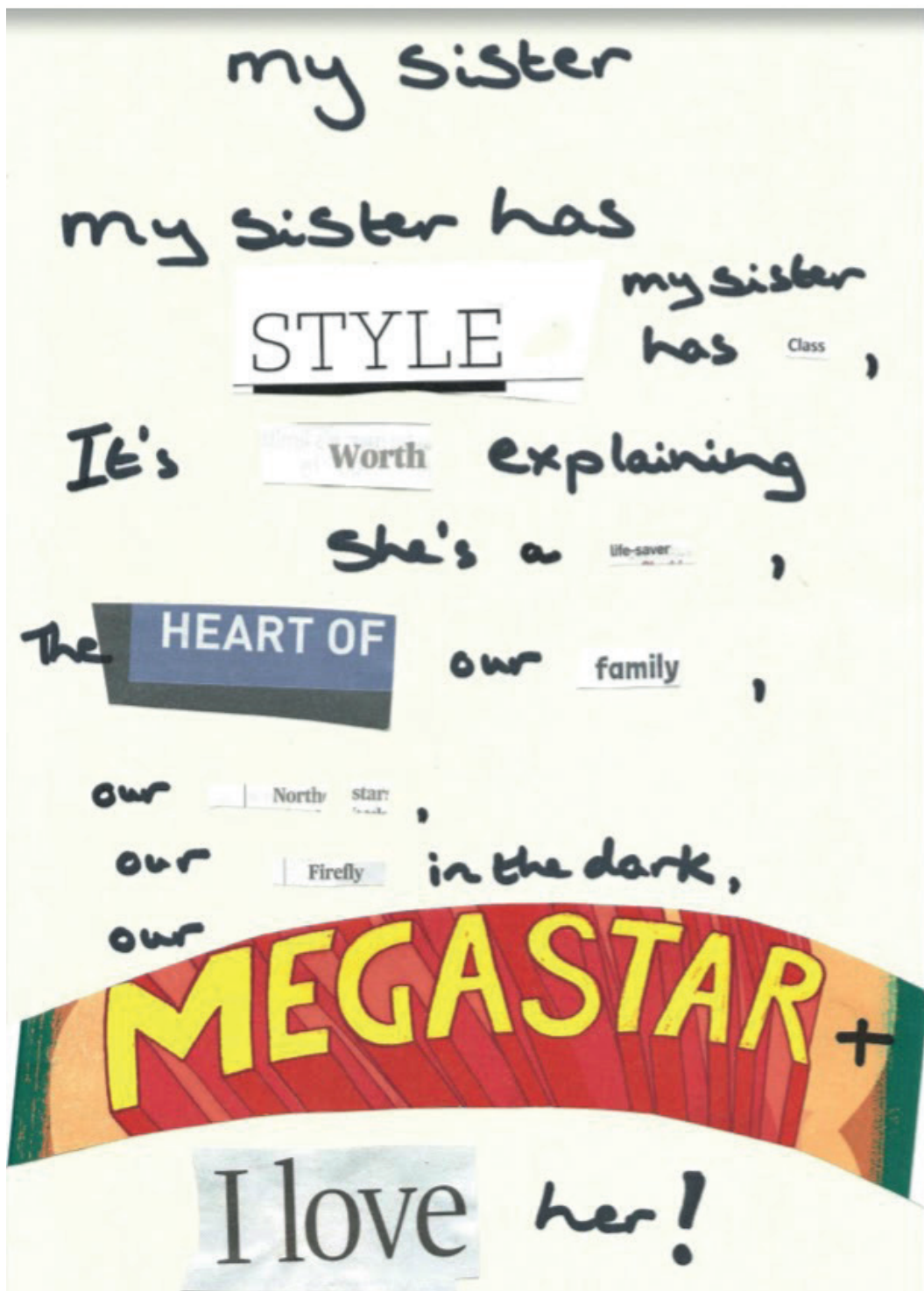
Once you know what they truly **WANT** you can start writing their story with confidence.

### Creative Bursts Challenge #3: Stories Hiding in Junk Mail

There are lots of stories and poems hiding in newspapers, magazines and junk mail. Grab some printed material from the recycling bin and cut out as many different words as you can.

Then pick out your favourites and create a poem out of them – adding in extra words as needed.

Here's a hidden poem I wrote about my sister:



Now create your own poem. Here are some possible themes for you:

My sister  
My brother  
My mum  
My dad  
My granny  
My grandpa  
My dog  
My cat

### **Creative Bursts Challenge #4: Blackout Poems**

Poems are hidden in the strangest of places – like newspapers, magazines and junk mail. I even found a great poem in some recent election flyers!

Blackout poems are fun to create. You start with an existing piece of work – an article from a newspaper or magazine, a flyer that comes through your door or any kind of page with text on it.

Then you take a thick black marker (or any dark pen or pencil you can find) and mark over any words that you don't want – leaving the interesting or unusual words.

You never know what amazing poems you might find 'hidden' on the pages of one of the Irish newspapers.

Our Laureate na nÓg, Sarah Crossan produced these fun blackout poetry cards for young writers to play with. I blacked out some of the words to create my own original poem.

Find about more about Sarah and the work of the Laureate check out the website and download extra blackout poem cards here:

**[www.childrenslaureate.ie/wearethepoets](http://www.childrenslaureate.ie/wearethepoets)**



~~those old things are not clean. Wear some nice shoes please, she says  
in her soft Irish voice that's both gentle and firm.~~

~~The only nice shoes I have are heavy and blister my heels. I'm about to  
tell Nana this, when her eyes meet a spot on my hoodie.~~

~~'Now come on, Apple, what are you playing at? You don't have a clean  
top on either?' she asks. I scratch at the spot where I dripped egg yolk  
this morning. I'd forgotten about it, and you'd think by Nana's tone  
and big bulging eyes that the blotch was poisonous. 'It's my favourite  
top,' I say. And I want to wear it. I want to wear it with my smelly  
trainers.~~

~~'Get yourself up those stairs immediately and change, young lady,'  
Nana says. She pinches her mouth into a prune. When she does this,  
there's no arguing. When she does this, I always wish my mum were  
still here.~~

~~In my room, I squeeze into a dress and a pair of too-tight lace-up  
shoes. The last time I wore this outfit was six months ago to Nana's  
friend's funeral. Since then, Nana hasn't stopped talking about death.  
She says things like, 'Oh you'll miss me when I'm six feet under like poor  
Marjorie or I don't want everyone wearing black to my funeral, Apple. A bit  
of pink here and there won't harm. It's not good for a thirteen-year-old to  
be around someone who thinks she's going to drop dead any second.'~~

~~I told~~ **Apples green.**

She reminds me  
of a mouldy apple.

I don't  
like

**#WEARETHEPOETS**

Now black out some of the text below to create your own poem.

'So what is the narrator saying about real love? Mackenzie gave us a big hint.'

'It's boring,' Jim Joyce says.

No one laughs. We like Mr Gaydon now we know him. We like him more than we like Jim.

Del throws his hand up.

Mr Gaydon looks our way. 'You're new,' he says.

'New to the school, yes. Not new to the world. Very much established in my own life,' Del says.

Pilar giggles. So do a few other girls. Jim Joyce does not look happy about this.

Mr Gaydon gives Del a thumbs up. 'Fantastic to hear that. So what were you about to say?'

'Well, I think that the poem is about how love is quiet, you know. The woman in that bit Iona read loves someone, but you wouldn't be able to guess unless you were watching her really closely. Basically, the poet means that you don't have to fly your sweetheart to Venice to show her you love her. Sometimes you can just buy someone a Toblerone.'

'A Toblerone?' Mr Gaydon asks.

'It's the triangles that make it romantic.'

Mr Gaydon laughs. 'What's your name?'

'Del Holloway.'

MoLI also encourages you to create your own blackout poetry from a page of *Ulysses*, by James Joyce – you’ll find MoLI’s version on the next page. Did you know that schools can visit MoLI for free and see the very first copy of this famous book; which has a beautiful blue cover - an ode to the Greek flag because the book was inspired by an epic Greek poem called *Odyssey* by Homer! You can find out more about how your school can visit MoLI on the Learning Section of the MoLI website.

Or you can take a piece of junk mail or a page from a newspaper or magazine and black out some of those words.

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I hope you enjoyed today’s Creative Bursts!  
And remember what Einstein said: ‘Creativity is intelligence having fun.’

Keep writing,  
Sarah

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# Blackout Poetry

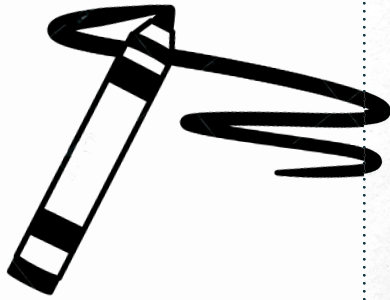
Use a black marker to edit and create some poetry of your own!

We love blackout poetry! All you have to do is remove or “black-out” words to create new sentences and meanings. There is no wrong or right way! It will give you lots of unexpected ideas.

Here’s a couple of tips:

- 1. Choose your words** - Skim the piece and circle words that pop out for you
- 2. Pick words that form an idea, image, or emotion** from above and below
- 3. Black out the remaining words** - you have made true original!

**NOW GO FOR IT!**



This is a page from *Ulysses*, one of the most important books ever written. A Dublin man named James Joyce wrote it, and the very first copy ever printed is upstairs in this museum!

– I’m coming, Buck Mulligan answered.  
He turned towards Stephen and said:  
– Look at the sea. What does it care about offences? Chuck Loyola, Kinch, and come on down. The Sassenach wants his morning rashers.

His head halted again for a moment at the top of the staircase, level with the roof:

– Don’t mope over it all day, he said. I’m inconsequent. Give up the moody brooding.

His head vanished but the drone of his descending voice boomed out of the stairhead:

*And no more turn aside and brood  
Upon love’s bitter mystery  
For Fergus rules the brazen cars.*

Woodshadows floated silently by through the morning peace from the stairhead seaward where he gazed. Inshore and farther out the mirror of water whitened, spurned by lightshod hurrying feet. White breast of the dim sea. The twining stresses, two by two. A hand plucking the harpstrings merging their twining chords. Wavewhite wedded words shimmering on the dim tide.

A cloud began to cover the sun slowly, shadowing the bay in deeper green. It lay behind him, a bowl of bitter waters. Fergus’ song: I sang it alone in the house, holding down the long dark chords. Her door was open: she wanted to hear my music. Silent with awe and pity I went to her bedside. She was crying in her wretched bed. For those words, Stephen: love’s bitter mystery.

Where now?

Her secrets: old feather fans, tasseled dancecards, powdered with musk, a gaud of amber beads in her locked drawer. A birdcage hung in the sunny window of her house when she was a girl. She heard old Royce sing in the pantomime of Turko the terrible and laughed with others when he sang:

*I am the boy  
That can enjoy  
Invisibility.*

Phantasmal mirth, folded away: muskperfumed

*And no more turn aside and brood.*

Folded away in the memory of nature with her toys. Memories beset his brooding brain. Her glass of water from the kitchen

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