



**This book belongs to you.**

**To celebrate your strength,  
courage and hope during 2020**



# A little note to you...



I could not have got through this year without The Recovery College. Having regular contact with our team and our students has given me the positive connections for me to stay well. This has been the most extraordinary year, a roller coaster of extreme highs and lows. The Recovery College has given me a space to feel grounded, focus on what matters and keep a healthy structure through these challenging times. I am grateful to every single person who has joined us via Zoom - we are all students in life - we grow and learn and support each other.

This commemorative publication is a valuable marker to remind us of our resilience and our incredible ability to be creative, even in the most complex of times.

Pam x

And on that note, my favourite saying is:

'Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.'

Viktor E. Frankl

**This publication is dedicated to David Cousins**  
Our Friend, Colleague and Agent for Positive Change

# Meet the team...



I'm Kylie.

My favourite saying is: To infinity and beyond.



I'm Caroline.

My favourite saying is: Be still and know...



I'm Tom.

My favourite saying is: Common sense is not common.



I'm Julie.

My favourite saying is: When the student is ready, the tutor will appear.



I'm Lisa.

**My favourite saying is: No matter what has happened today, and whatever pain I have felt, it won't be as bad tomorrow.**



I'm Kay.

My favourite saying is: If you look the right way, you can see that the whole world is a garden.



I'm Sue.

My favourite saying is: Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.



I'm Edyta.

My favourite saying is: A positive thinker sees the invisible, feels the intangible, and achieves the impossible.



I'm Madeleine.

My favourite saying is: Stop, breathe, think.



I'm Lesley

My favourite saying is: *He* doesn't have to be perfect to be wonderful

# Paula

*Hannah, Scamp and I went exploring, got lost and were trying to find our way back when I saw the 'fast lane' sign. It reminded me of the Eagles song 'Life in the Fast Lane'. My caption is 'Sure to make you lose your mind...'*



# Pam

My cousin was dealing with lots of very difficult things. Shortly after losing her father in February this year, with her husband upstairs in quarantine with suspected COVID-19 and home schooling her two children, she was told by her employer she was being made redundant.

I offered to facilitate an art class via Zoom for her young son, so she could have a break. I invited my Mum and Dad too, as they were shielding in their own home. I decided to facilitate the Shield of Resilience activity from our Recovery College Building Resilience course. This is where we identify things we like doing, things we value, things we are good at and our hopes for the future. Usually we draw a shield representing these different elements.

I realised that what connected all these things for me, was love. Love is the source of my resilience. This is my shield.



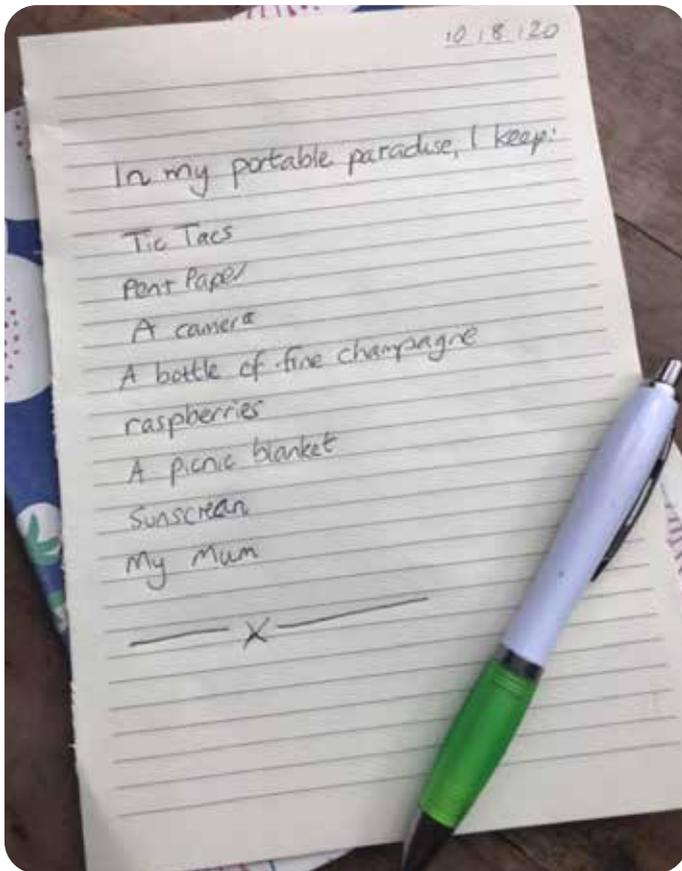
My daughter turned 30 during lockdown and I made little cupcake versions of her favourite birthday cakes from when she was a little girl.

My family usually has a big get together at Easter. I set up an Easter party via Zoom, with games and an Easter hat making competition, which we made out of recycled and found materials, so that no one had to go to any shops.

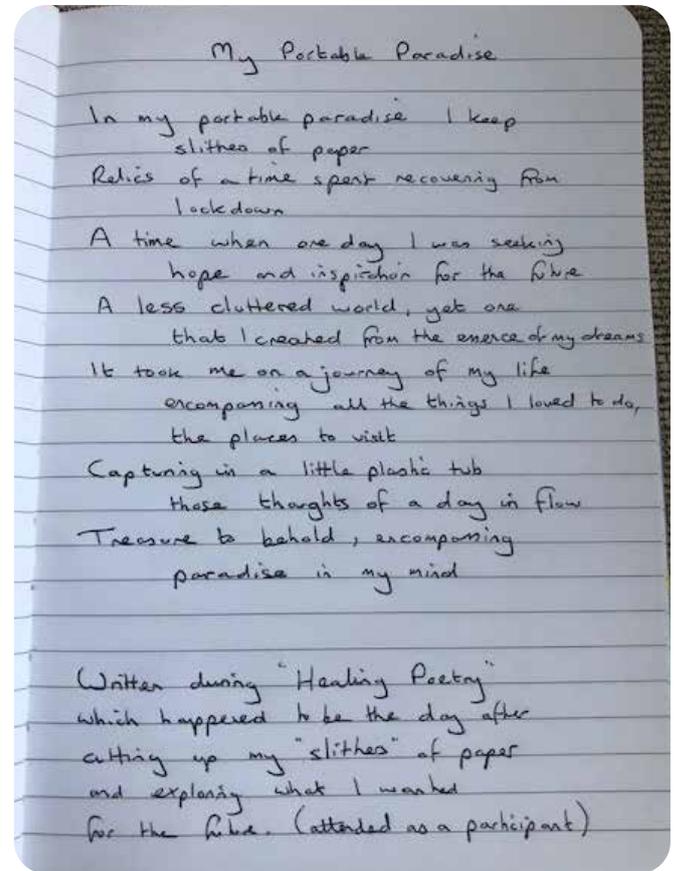


# Portable paradise

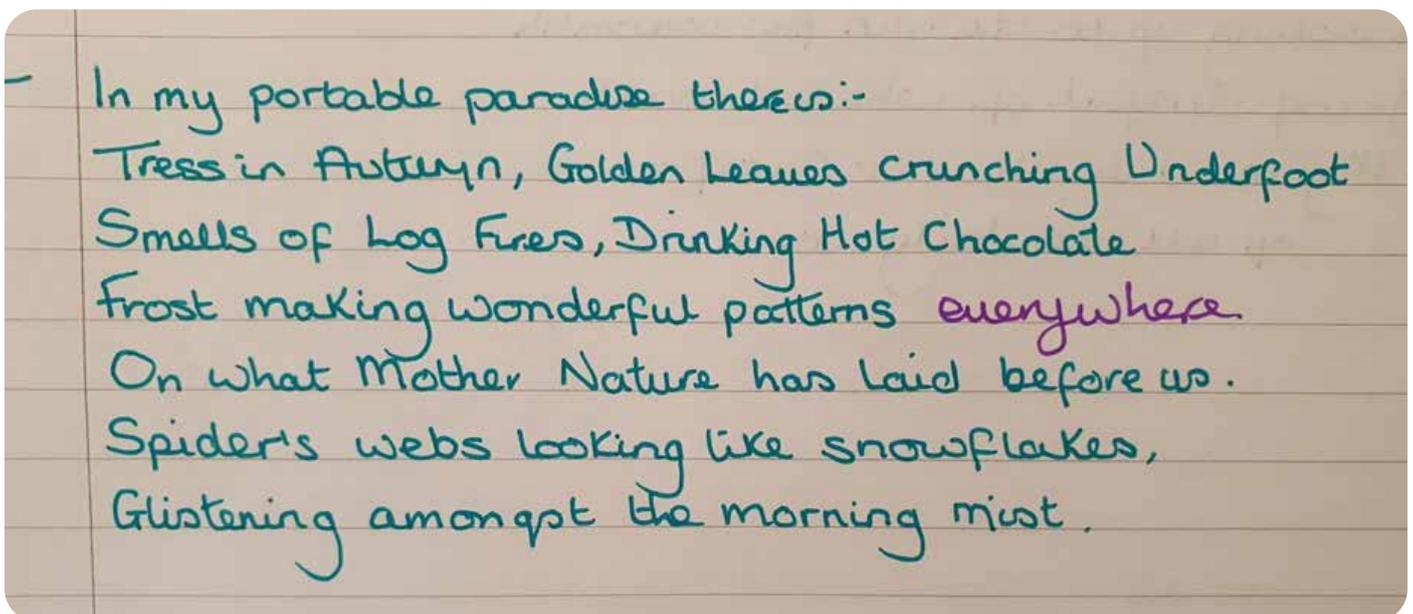
If you could create your own paradise and keep it in your pocket, what would you include?



Kylie



Kay



Aileen

# Angela

## In My Portable Paradise

In my portable paradise I would see all my bunnys running around and being happy and having fun playing with each other and also playing with my cats all running around the green fields and the green grass there be blue Skys with fluffy clouds in the sky then there be a beach with sea and water splashing agast the rocks.

By Angela



# Lizzie



When I painted this I was thinking:

There are times when we need to break down barriers and explore bigger things in life. They may be unreachable but at least we would have tried.

They may be only dreams, but at least we would have dreamt them.

# Edyta

This green follows me,  
The blades of grass sway,  
My hand skims them softly.  
I feel a pleasant breeze on my skin,  
I am safe, happy and delighted.  
The Sun is shining.  
I feel warm rays on my skin.  
I am lying on the soft grass  
Feeling fulfilment and peace.  
The Universe is open to me.

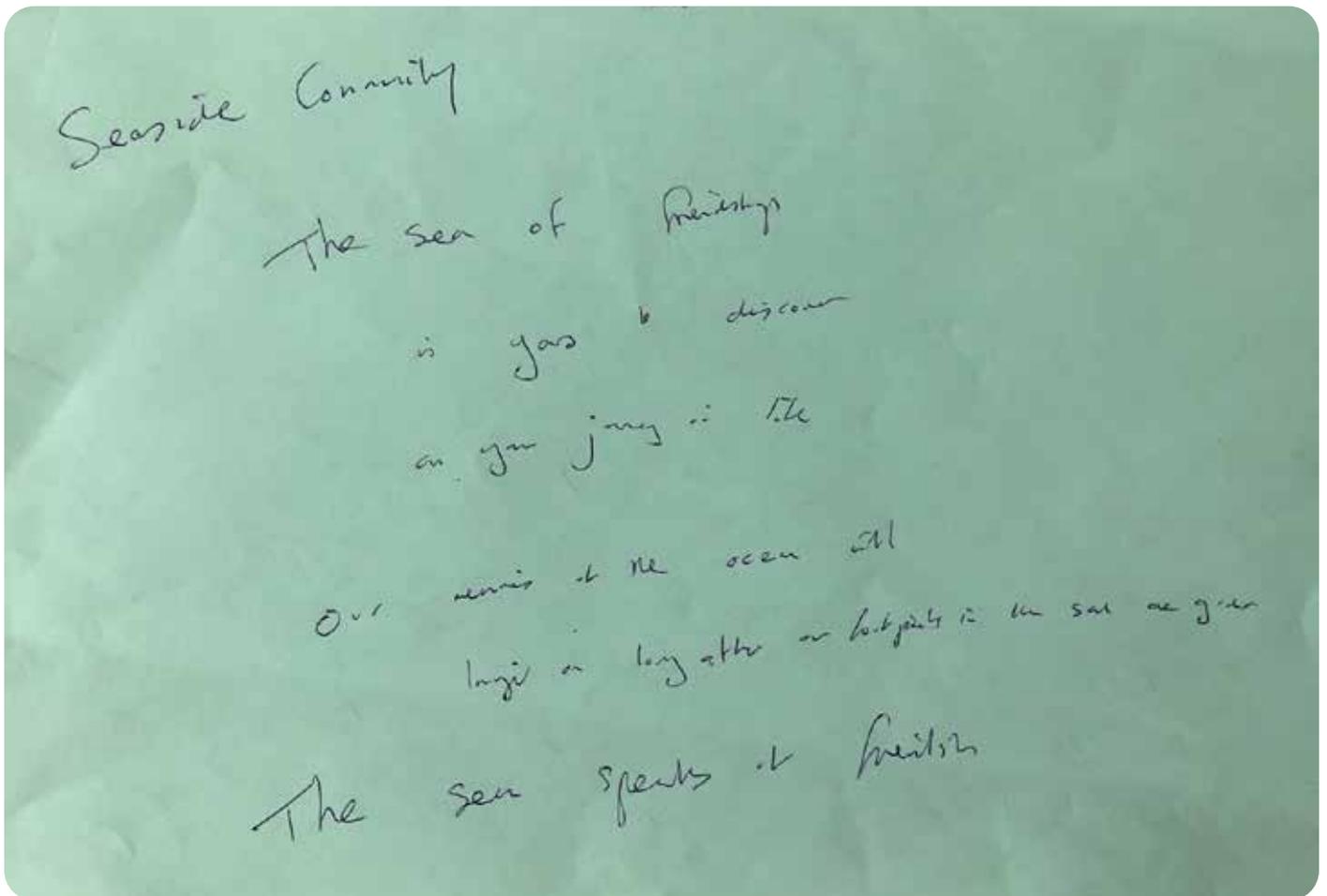


# Kay

While shielding during lockdown, my artist friend (who lives in Scotland) and I embarked on a project together. We have only met once in person, but over time have developed a close friendship from a distance, based on our interest in each other's work and our sense of belonging in relation to the sea.

In 2019, we created a book inspired by the Thanet coast and enjoyed the process so much, that during lockdown we decided to write another book, focusing on the coast of Scotland. Writing the book really gave me something to focus on and I'm very excited that we are currently putting the finishing touches to it.

This is a poem that I discovered amongst my papers. It was in my handwriting and it somehow just appeared on the page. I have a vague recollection of writing it when I was trying to come up with something to put at the front of the book.



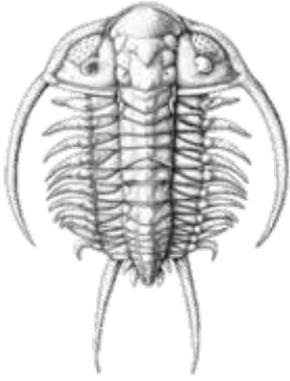
# Jo

In my portable paradise, I keep

a wilderness with rare wildflowers  
on the strand by the ocean



a fossil of a trilobite from millions of years ago



the playfulness of my dog Lucy even though she is gone

now a willow tree dancing in the rain

a tiny portable paint box, brush and sketch book

my husband's kiss and the feel of his hand in mine

songs and stories of the world that unite us all



Tranquillity and friendship



the taste and smell of honey  
fresh from the comb

# Adam

My son and I have been busy planting lots of fruit and vegetables in our back garden. So far we have tomatoes, pumpkins, cucumbers, peppers and potatoes - using our fencing as the base for many of the plants.

I hope we will get plenty of pumpkins so I can give them to all of our neighbours.

I have also bought an Artemisia plant so that I can make Artemisia tea which is supposed to help fight viruses.



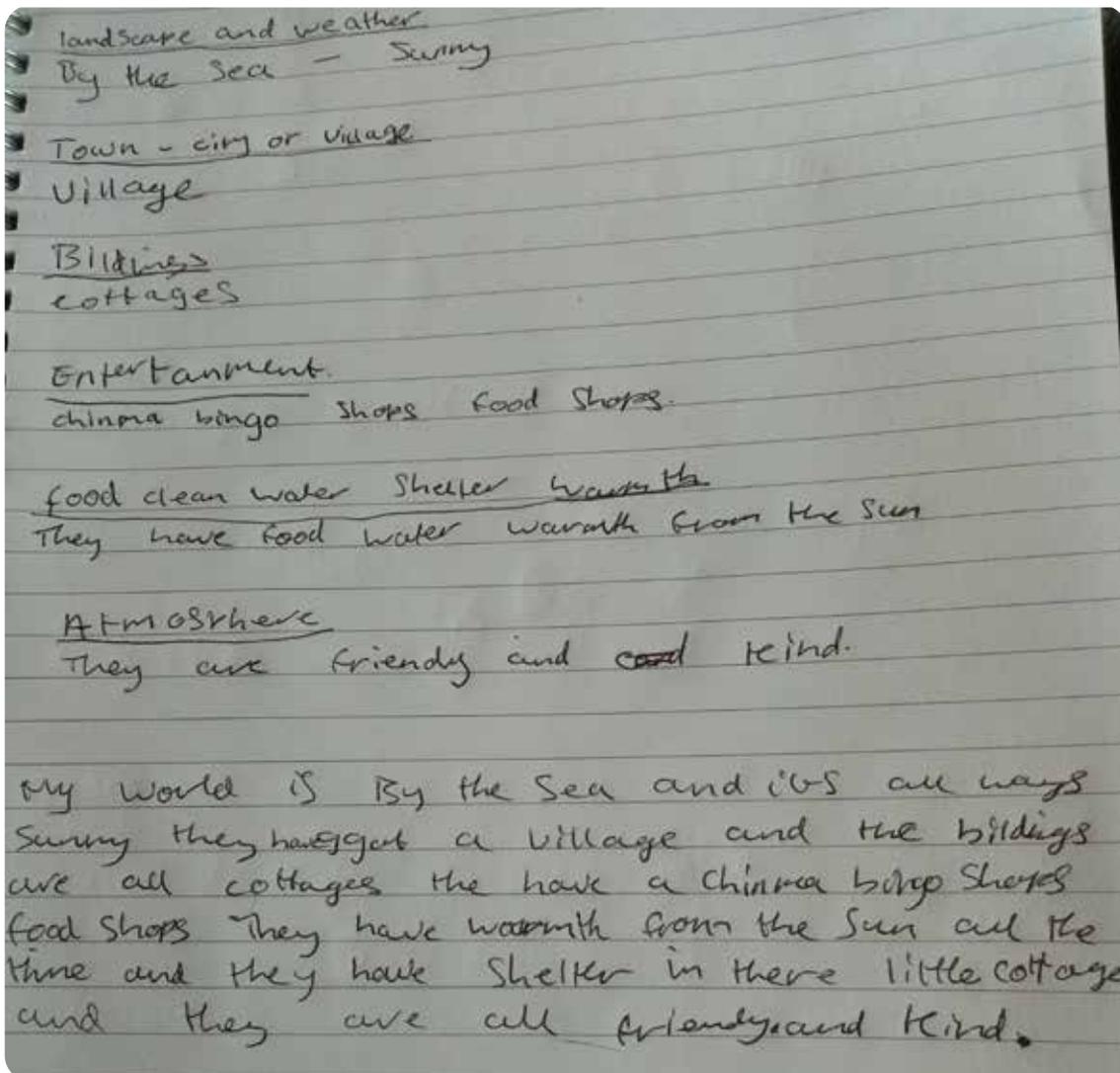
# Joan

look what joan made...



# Angela

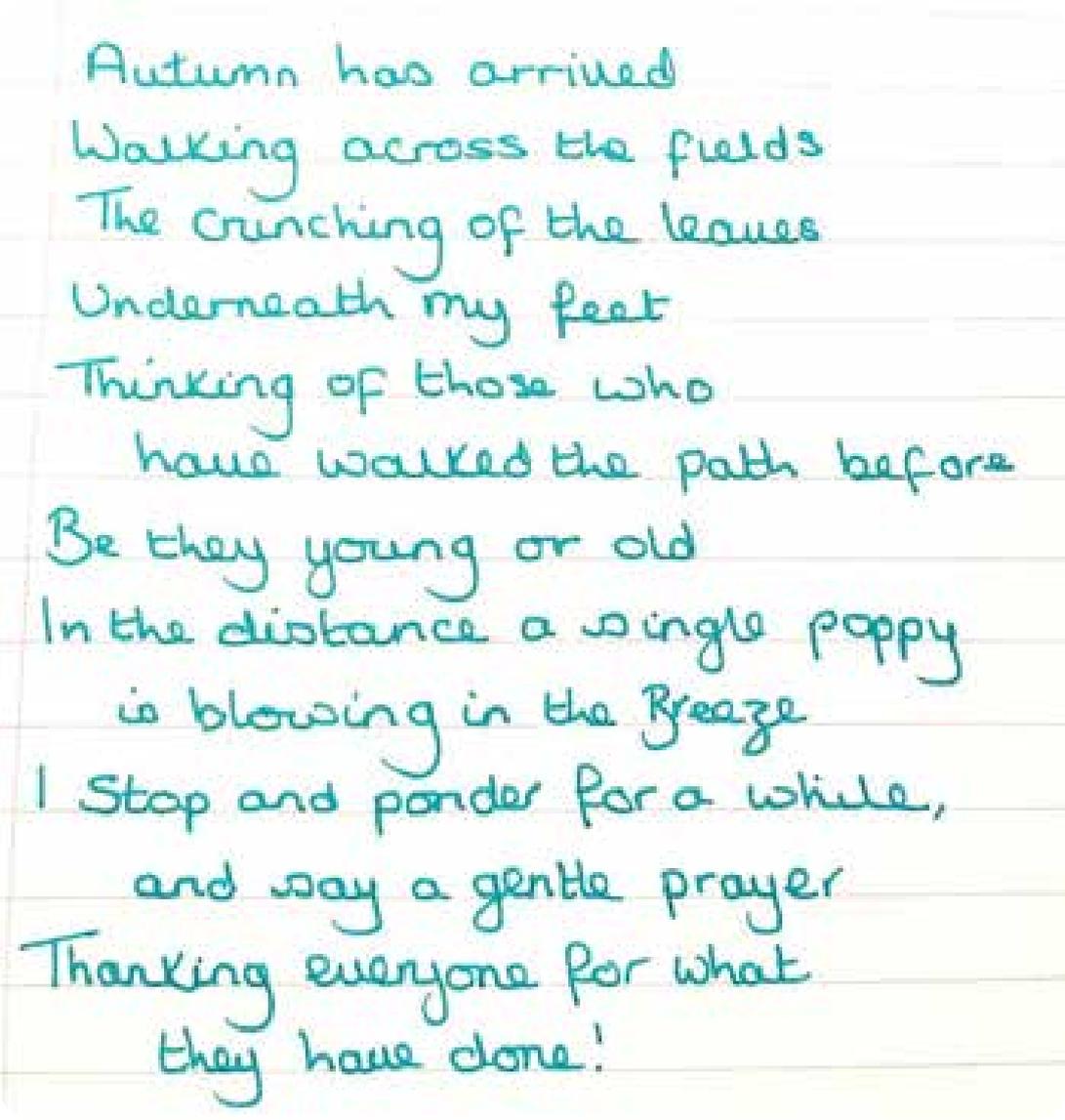
If you could design your own world, what would it look like?





# Aileen

If you could design your own world, what would it look like?



Autumn has arrived  
Walking across the fields  
The crunching of the leaves  
Underneath my feet  
Thinking of those who  
have walked the path before  
Be they young or old  
In the distance a single poppy  
is blowing in the breeze  
I stop and ponder for a while,  
and say a gentle prayer  
Thanking everyone for what  
they have done!



Joe

# HERE I STAND STRONG

HERE I stand strong  
Against all my demons,  
Got angels in my life,  
Still had Lucifer in feelings,

I don't like the way they preaching,  
And then just spyin on us,  
Even predicting our feelings,  
I don't like the way we get treated,  
But no way I won't be defeated,

I just can't stand the disrespect,  
That we now wake up and accept,  
You got perry coke snorting MPs,  
You got puppets in power on strings,  
But somehow we're the ones seen as the threat,  
It don't make sense,  
Trillions of tax money spent on defence,

They act so unruly it's spooky,  
They act so unruly it's spooky,  
• Why would they wanna try fool me,  
They act so unruly it spooks me,

I hate to be so honest cos it hurts,  
About how dishonestly we f\*\*ked this world,  
And how it's all meant to go unnoticed,  
But this bubble is about to burst,



We gonna need one huge pin,  
Glass smashed in this invisible prison that we're in,  
You might think I'm little too deep sometimes,  
I'd call that shallow I'm just sharing my mind,

If I was getting paid pennies for my thoughts,  
I'd be at the top of the list down Forbes,  
Taking over moguls, CEOs of corps,  
Sometimes I'm the quiet guy, so listen when I talk,

Put the news on the tv and I see the worlds torn,  
Subject don't matter it's always going on, BBC, ITV, Sky and Channel  
4, Subject don't matter it's always on,

They act so unruly it's spooky,  
They act so unruly it's spooky,  
Why would they wanna try fool me,  
They act so unruly it spooks me

But scrap that last verse I have had enough of news,  
I don't need to turn it on I am free and I can choose,  
To sift through the other shite see what else is new,  
But all the stories stay the same as if we're in a loop,  
No chat before they shoot, nab you up with your crew,  
Not talking gangs I'm talking feds, I bet I had you fooled,

CONSTANT WAR NOT EVEN ON COUNTRIES,  
DO ME A FAVOUR EXPLAIN THAT ONE PLEASE,  
THERE'S A WAR ON DRUGS, (LOST)  
A WAR ON TERROR, (LOST)  
WAR ON RACISM, (LOST)  
AND TRUST ME THE LIST GOES ON,  
IS IT JUST ME OR IS THIS WRONG,  
COS HEAR ME OUT FOR A SEC WON'T BE LONG,

THE UAE IS A MEMBER OF THE UN,  
OFF THE BAT DOESN'T SOUND TOO BAD YET,  
BUT SOME AGREEMENTS WERE LEFT TO FORGET,  
PUSHED ASIDE LIKE THERE WAS NO VALUE LEFT,  
THE RIGHTS THAT GOT LEFT UNSIGNED,  
BOILS MY BLOOD AND I CAN'T LET IT SLIDE,  
NEARLY ALL HUMAN RIGHTS, (UNSIGNED)  
CIVILIAN POLITICAL RIGHTS, (UNSIGNED)  
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS, (UNSIGNED)  
RIGHTS OF ALL MIGRANT WORKERS, (UNSIGNED)  
TRADE BILLS WITH THESE CROOKS, LONG AS YOUR CAR'S RUNNING FINE

THEY ACT SO UNLAWFUL IT'S SCARY,  
THEY ACT SO UNLAWFUL IT'S SCARY,  
WHY WOULD THEY WANNA TRY SCARE ME?  
PERHAPS IT'S THE TRUTH THAT WE DAREN'T SEE.

## Lisa

Lisa has been focussing on healthy eating after the birth of baby Oliver!



## Edyta



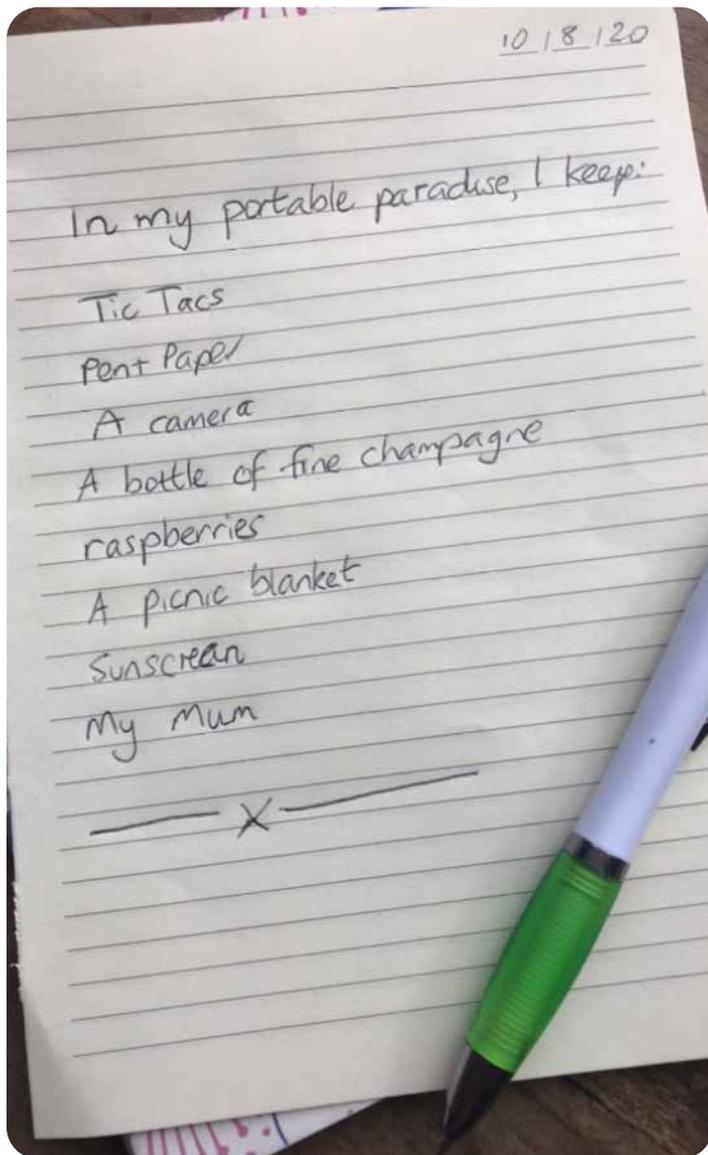
edyta has been zoom-ing her parents in poland her cat and their dog have been having conversations over the internet

early riser edyta captured the morning sun at westgate

# Kylie

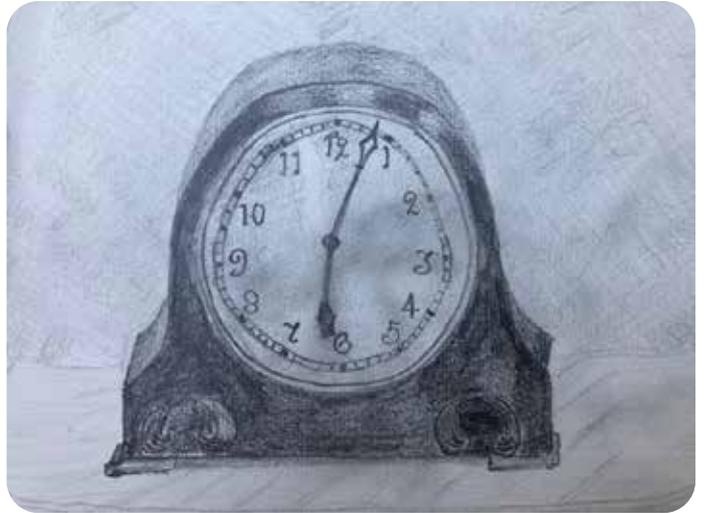
Kylie made a list of all the things she would carry in her pocket, if she could, that bring her happiness.

Kylie has also been busy making beautiful soaps and a blanket for her friend's baby.



# Kay

Kay baked some yummy hot cross buns, grew some delicious potatoes and joined an online beginners' drawing class!



# Lesley

Lesley loves journaling and created some beautiful pages in her book to help her reflect on her feelings.



# Julie

Julie tried growing some food during lockdown.

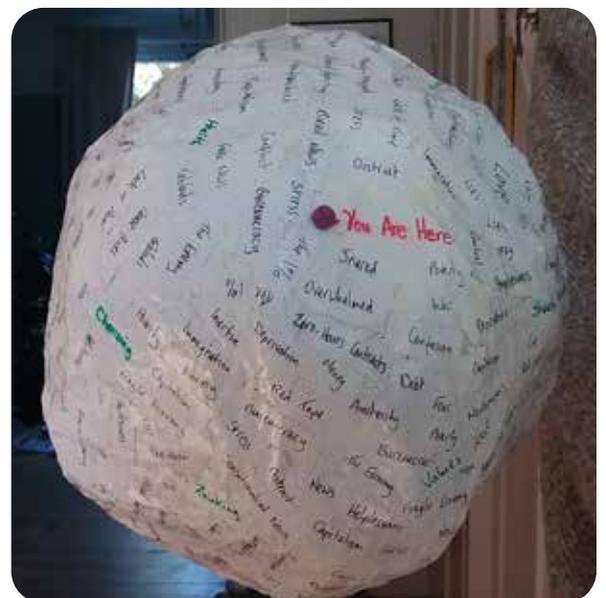
'There is something amazing about picking something straight out of the garden, giving it a quick wash under the tap, and then eating it. I will be doing this again next year now'.



Using found sea glass and some mosaic tiles, Julie decorated one of her outside steps.

'I made this piece of art at the early stages of lockdown, when the news was reporting how the environment was improving and there were blue skies over Delhi for the first time in decades. I was going to call it Blank Canvas and it was going to be a big white ball – a representation of planet earth in its full potential – a real chance for us to make changes to our lives so we didn't return to business as usual when the pandemic was gone. But the more I thought about how we would collectively make these changes, the more evident the barriers to that effort became clear to me.

I began the depressing exercise of covering the rock with all the barriers. But some days I fought back with what I know we all possess – when we dig deep and the stakes are high – qualities such as a sense of justice, determination, people power and the courage to stand up for what's right'.



# Caroline

Having had mental health problems all my life and the doubt, fear and chaos that can often preoccupy me, I find that when I am quiet - when I remind myself to "be still and know" - I am transported to a deeper place of knowing that goes beyond my mental health, beyond my self-doubts, beyond what is happening in the world... to a place of calmness and tranquillity. I am constantly learning new and creative ways to explore and find this inner voice of calm and being part of Recovery College is part of that journey.



## Where we are now...

Our garden is dark-a-blade with flower stock-

Oxeye daisies store rich earth with geraniums.

My hair grows long & wild-

Yours is curling at the back of your neck

in soft, grey waves - I kiss you there.

We hold each other together with

hugs we are missing

Sing 'Happy Birthdays' from other side  
of screens -

watching the first steps Edward takes in Lockdown.

Photos, phone calls, video clips from friends

who are 'okay' or 'hanging by a thread'

bring comfort when confidence slips,

The longing for loved ones lingers  
in dreams

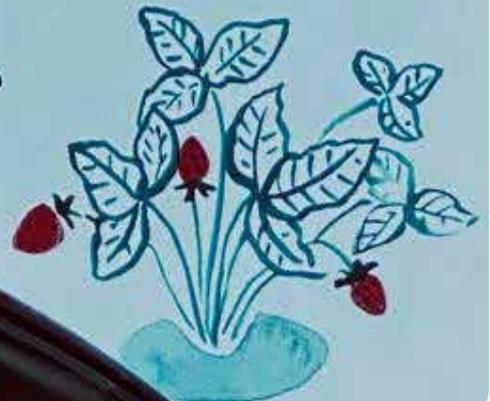
mixes joy with pain,

hope with dread.

Like the rain that turned up  
today -

It's just when we are now.

Early  
June, 2020



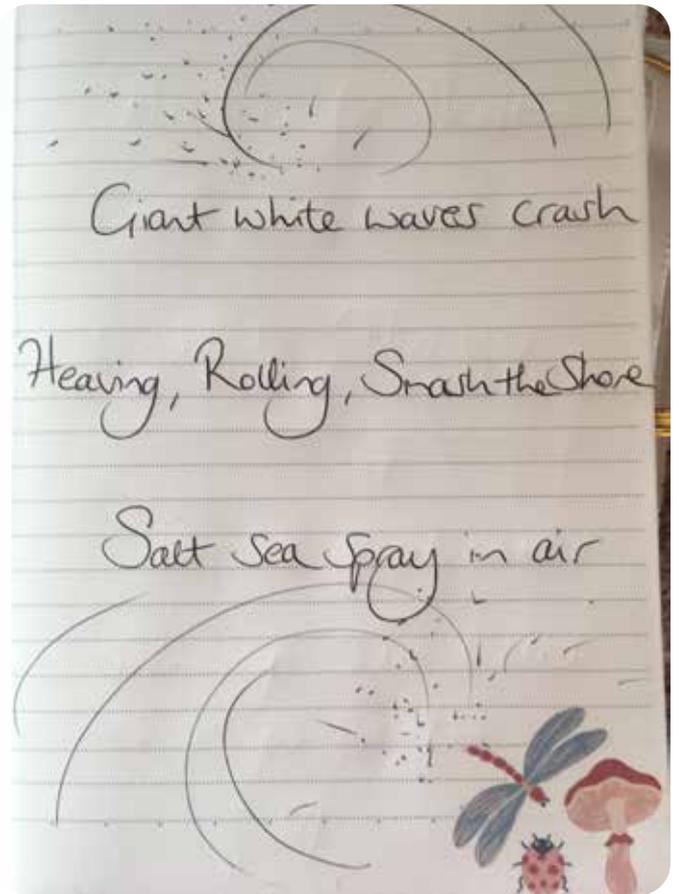
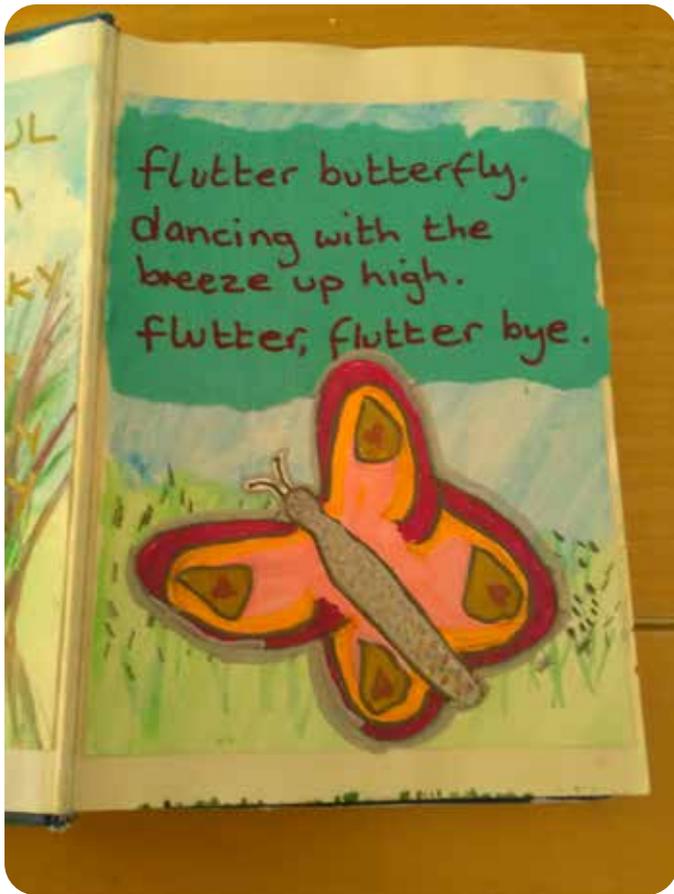
# Tom

Here is Tom helping his neighbour across the river during lockdown.

Tom has brought the Recovery College team joy and calmness during our team meetings, where he meets us over Zoom – usually from his boat. During the sunny days of summer he would be on the deck with a lovely smile and we could ask him questions about how far out he was from land and what the weather was like. Sometimes he would sleep in his boat overnight and tell us stories of being on the water at night.

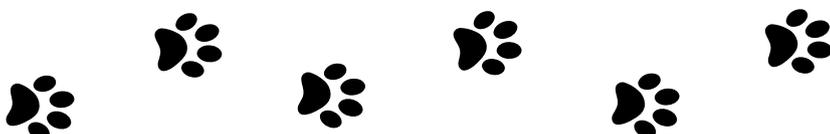
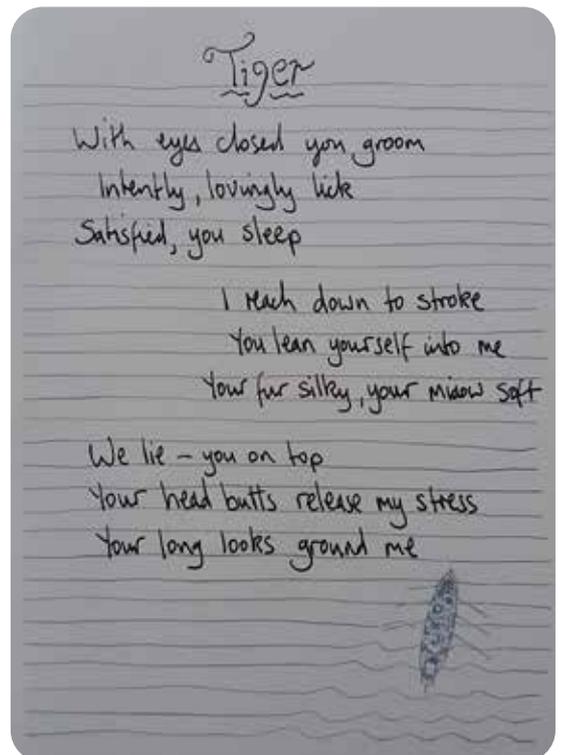


# Haiku corner



Lesley

PAM



Julie

# Things to be grateful for...

**Sense of touch** – for letting you feel the texture of your clothes, the breeze of the wind, the hands of your loved ones.

**Sense of smell** – for letting you smell scented candles, perfumes, and beautiful flowers in your garden.

**Sense of taste** – for letting you savour the sweetness of fruits, the saltiness of seawater, the sourness of pickles, the bitterness of lemons, and the spiciness of chilli.

**Your speech** – for giving you the outlet to express yourself.

**Your heart** – for pumping blood to all the parts of your body every second since you were born; for giving you the ability to feel.

**Your hands** – so you can type on your computer, flip the pages of books, and hold the hands of your loved ones.

**Tears** – for helping you express your deepest emotions.

**Disappointment** – so you know the things that matter to you most.

**Happiness** – for you to soak in the beauty of life.

**The Sun** – for bringing in light and beauty to this world.

**Sunset** – for a beautiful sight to end the day.

**Moon and Stars** – for brightening up our night sky.

**Rainbows** – to look forward to after rain.

**Oxygen** – for making life possible.

**The Earth** – for creating the environment for life to begin.

**Mother nature** – for covering our world in beauty.

**Animals** – for adding to the diversity of life.

**Your bed** – for you to sleep comfortably in every night.

**Laughter** – for serenading your life with joy.

**Life's challenges** – for helping you grow and become who you are.

**You** – for being who you are and touching the world with your presence.



Tel: 07787 266421

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Turner  
Contemporary



  
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