



# Words Can Fly

Mindful and Uplifting  
Poetry for Children

DONNA ASHWORTH

Illustrated by  
EIRINN McGUINNESS

# Words Can Fly





I dedicate this book to every child who has ever checked in their cupboard for monsters. After many, many years, I can confirm I've never found one.

What a thing! - D.A.



## A TEMPLAR BOOK

First published in the UK in 2025 by Templar Books,  
an imprint of Bonnier Books UK  
5th Floor, HYLO, 105 Bunhill Row,  
London, EC1Y 8LZ

The authorised representative in the EEA is  
Bonnier Books UK (Ireland) Limited.  
Registered office address: Floor 3, Block 3,  
Miesian Plaza, Dublin 2, D02 Y754, Ireland  
compliance@bonnierbooks.ie

Copyright © 2025 by Templar Books

Text copyright © 2025 by Donna Ashworth  
Illustration copyright © 2025 by Eirinn McGuinness  
Design copyright © 2025 by Templar Books

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

All rights reserved

ISBN 978-1-785-30717-1

This book was typeset in  
Mr Eaves and Brown Now  
The illustrations were created digitally

Edited by Sophie Hallam  
Designed by Laura Hall  
Production by Che Creasey

Printed in Latvia



To my parents, whose  
unwavering love and strength  
ignite the fire in my belly. I  
dedicate this book, and all of  
my achievements, to you.

- E.M.





# CONTENTS

Welcome to this book.....8

Youier.....18

Why you are youier.....19

Exercising kindness.....20

Phones and brains.....22

What is happy?.....24

Friendships come and go....26

Have you ever  
planted a seed?.....29

Messy threads.....11

Talking.....12

Fitting.....14

Butter side down....16



Pets.....30

Chocolate.....32

Positive thinking.....34

Sleepy heads of spring.....37

Pineapple pizza.....39

Our lights.....40

Snow in summer.....43

Over rainbow bridge.....44

Love.....46

Blending.....48

Step.....50

Middle.....52

Sometimes we're never picked.....55

Your words.....56

Constellations.....58

Grannies, Grans and Nans.....60

Grandads, Pops and Grandpas.....61

Signs.....62

Only.....64

Moving on.....66

Summer is funner.....69

Siblings.....71







Words can fly.....	72
Faults.....	76
Raincloud.....	79
Ordinary.....	80



Rewrite.....	108
Glad out of grumpy.....	111
Gratitude.....	112
About.....	114
Everything in nature is growing.....	117
Hope.....	118



Planet prayer.....	82
Hopetivism.....	84
Fear.....	86
Foundations.....	88
Growing into school.....	92
Autumn is amazing.....	95
Voices.....	96



Wonderful winter.....	121
Goodbyes.....	122
For tomorrow.....	124
Sadness.....	126
It is sadder... ..	129
Poetry is permisson.....	130

Anxiety.....	98
Gratitude goggles.....	100
Joy.....	102
S'Munday.....	104
Screen time.....	106



<i>For parents and carers....</i>	132
<i>For teachers.....</i>	133
<i>Poetry index.....</i>	134
<i>About Donna.....</i>	138
<i>About Eirinn.....</i>	140
<i>A note from Donna.....</i>	142





# Welcome into this book...

where everyone is welcome and all feelings  
are accepted, just as they are.

Join Dave, Brian (the dogs), Sheldon, Mani (the cats) and I, as we remind  
one another life is a pick-and-mix of all things – and kindness and love  
make everything just that little better.

I like choosing a random page every day . . . somehow, the message always  
seems to fit. Perhaps for you or a friend? What is the poem trying to tell you?  
How does it make you feel?

No matter what, it's all perfectly imperfectly okay. Poetry is not just for school, it's the  
sharing of thoughts you can't quite find words for, or finding new ways to tell people  
how you feel. It's a way through the noise of a busy brain into a more peaceful place.  
And it can be fun too . . .

Come on in, and take your fill  
this book requires your part  
if you're wondering where to go  
then this page is the start

let all your troubles flee your mind  
let fresh words fill your head  
the only way to be is kind  
you'll see, once you have read

so take a seat and cosy in  
the time is ticking by  
sit down and let the pages show  
that words can really fly fly fly





**Messy threads**

A poem is a messy thread  
you pull out from your brain  
and use to stitch a picture  
to make some sense again

you take the thoughts all jumbled up  
and sew them into lines  
until your stitches make a shape  
and you're left feeling fine

and if you read a poem  
that someone else has sewn  
the pattern might be quite like yours  
and you'd feel less alone

so pull those messy threads out  
and weave them into art  
and you'll be left with tidy brains  
with space for thoughts to start.

**Messy threads**

A poem is a messy thread  
you pull out from your brain  
and use to stitch a picture  
to make some sense again

you take the thoughts all jumbled up  
and sew them into lines  
until your stitches make a shape  
and you're left feeling fine

and if you read a poem  
that someone else has sewn  
the pattern might be quite like yours  
and you'd feel less alone

so pull those messy threads out  
and weave them into art  
and you'll be left with tidy brains  
with space for thoughts to start.

**Messy threads**

A poem is a messy thread  
you pull out from your brain  
and use to stitch a picture  
to make some sense again

you take the thoughts all jumbled up  
and sew them into lines  
until your stitches make a shape  
and you're left feeling fine

and if you read a poem  
that someone else has sewn  
the pattern might be quite like yours  
and you'd feel less alone

so pull those messy threads out  
and weave them into art  
and you'll be left with tidy brains  
with space for thoughts to start.

**Messy threads**

A poem is a messy thread  
you pull out from your brain  
and use to stitch a picture  
to make some sense again

you take the thoughts all jumbled up  
and sew them into lines  
until your stitches make a shape  
and you're left feeling fine

and if you read a poem  
that someone else has sewn  
the pattern might be quite like yours  
and you'd feel less alone

so pull those messy threads out  
and weave them into art  
and you'll be left with tidy brains  
with space for thoughts to start.

**Messy threads**

A poem is a messy thread  
you pull out from your brain  
and use to stitch a picture  
to make some sense again

you take the thoughts all jumbled up  
and sew them into lines  
until your stitches make a shape  
and you're left feeling fine

and if you read a poem  
that someone else has sewn  
the pattern might be quite like yours  
and you'd feel less alone

so pull those messy threads out  
and weave them into art  
and you'll be left with tidy brains  
with space for thoughts to start.

# Talking

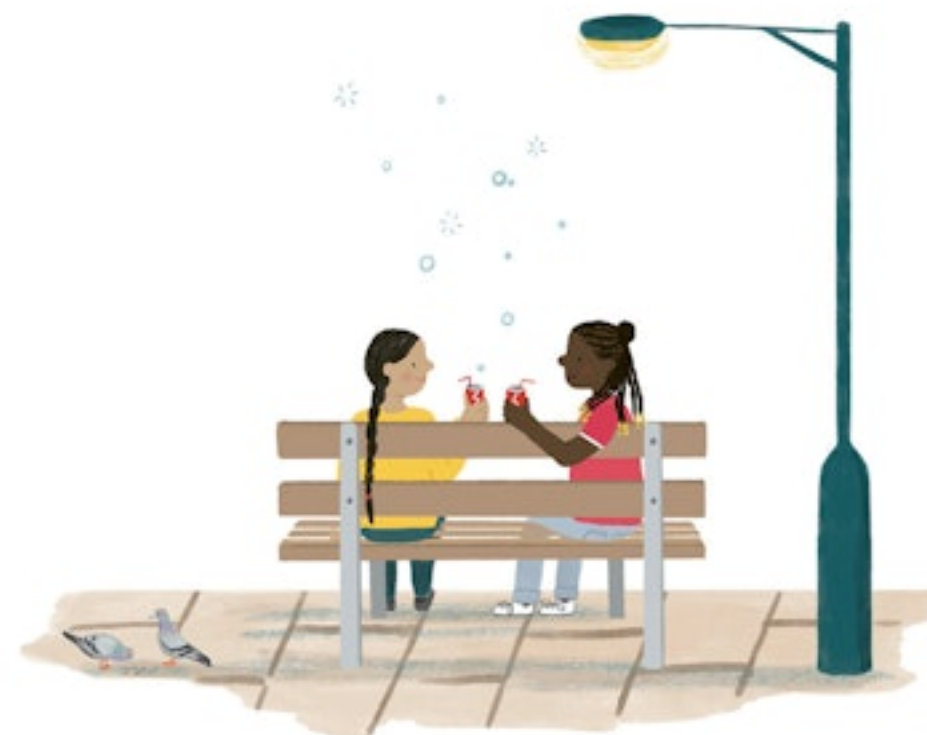
It is always good to talk  
about the worries in our head  
or the fears we feel at night  
of monsters hiding under beds

talking is the light that shines  
through the foggy night  
bringing comfort to our minds  
seeing everything's alright

and sometimes words are tricky  
when the feelings aren't so clear  
but just begin, your words will win  
and find somebody's ear

start with saying *I feel*  
or *do you ever wonder?*  
and watch them go, the words will flow  
like rain that follows thunder

keeping them in inside  
I think would be a flop  
they'll fizz like bubbles in a drink  
one big shake, and they will **POP!**





# Fitting

Puzzle pieces have to fit  
to make a picture  
but you can stand out if you like . . .  
because humans are not puzzle pieces

*we make a whole picture by ourselves  
we mustn't change to be like someone else*

if everyone did that  
we would be left with just one picture  
when we could have so many more

*all colours, all sizes  
all being free with no disguises*

puzzle pieces have to fit  
to make a picture  
but the only time you have to fit  
is when you're playing hide and seek.



## Butter side down

If you drop your toast at breakfast  
and that toast falls to the ground  
why does it always land  
butter side down?

the science will say  
it is all kinds of things  
like gravity and how  
a falling object likes to spin

but I think it's because  
some days are just that way  
like traffic lights and stop signs  
getting in your way

like soggy socks, rainy days  
and playtimes spent inside  
when all you want to do  
is go out and seek and hide

oh, silly me, hide and seek  
that's what I meant to say  
maybe I'm just having  
a butter-side-down day.





## Youier

Imagine if the moon refused to shine  
because the sun was shinier

if streams ceased to flow  
because the rivers were flowier

if snow didn't dare to fall  
because rain was fallier

if planets did not glow  
because stars were glowier

if tigers did not roar  
because lions were roarier

if flowers didn't flower  
because their neighbours were flowerier

if a breeze didn't blow  
because the gale was blowier

and trees did not branch  
because the forest was branchier

*what a world it would be if nature compared*

*you, my friend, must stop all that*

no one can be more you  
you are **youier**.

## Why you are youier

No one sings just like you  
no one thinks just like you  
likes the same amount of water  
in their drink, just like you

no one laughs just like you  
plays in the bath just like you  
walks across the lines along  
the garden path, just like you

no one grows just like you  
picks their nose just like you  
no one runs, or jumps, or bats, or balls  
or throws, just like you

you're the best at being you  
if they could test what you do  
there's no other in this world  
who could contest, *that's the truth.*



## Exercising kindness

Kindness is like any sport  
practise makes you better  
just like standing in the rain  
for longer, gets you wetter

kindness is an energy  
it feeds upon itself  
and slowly trickles down  
like honey spilt upon a shelf

and kindness is contagious  
there is a magic in its hue  
if you do something for someone  
chances are they'll do that too



sometimes it's not so easy  
when the world feels quite unkind  
to find that goodness in your heart  
and bring it to your mind

but when you do, you will be glad  
as sparkles fill the air  
and a smile lights up a cloudy face  
from their mouth up to their hair

yes kindness is like exercise  
it builds your kindness core  
and the joy you get from happy friends  
makes you want to do it **MORE!**





# Phones and brains

Though I have an android  
and you an iPhone  
we can still talk to each other  
as soon as we get home

and though one uses software  
that's different from the other  
we can watch our favourite things  
without an ounce of bother

our brains are like that too  
they don't always wire the same  
but we can still connect  
to enjoy our favourite games

learning to adapt  
to the differences we see  
is part of being human  
and it helps both you and me

my hearing is up loud  
and yours is down quite low  
you like sticking to the rules  
but I like saying no

I don't like busy rooms  
loud noises make me small  
yet you feel most at home  
when you're in amongst it all

I can't walk so fast  
but you just love to run  
yet you wait till I catch up  
and that's how we have most fun

each head, each brain's unique  
and each of us is brilliant  
accepting and adapting minds  
is what makes us resilient.



# What is happy?

If happy was a colour  
I think it would be yellow  
golden, light and bright  
a shiny little fellow

if happy was a taste  
I think it would be sweet  
and if it had a smell  
it would not be stinky feet

no, I think it would be cake  
or fish and chips outside  
waiting at the fair  
for a rollercoaster ride

if happy was a place  
it would be my bed at night  
tucked up safe and warm  
with my toys there by my side


and happy feels like friends  
coming to my house to play  
on summer days with water guns  
and homework out the way

but sometimes it is simpler  
like a cuddle with a cat  
on days where nothing happens  
but you're quite okay with that

happy is a feeling  
and I know it when it's here  
because everything feels yellow  
and I smile from ear to ear.







# Friendships come and go

I don't know why it happens  
but some friendships fizzle out  
even though there was no argument  
to fizzle out about

I don't know why it happens  
but some friendships fade away  
leaving memories and confusion  
and wishing we could play

I don't know why it happens  
but some friendships do not last  
and all the fun and laughter  
becomes a memory in our past

I don't know why it happens  
but I know that it's okay  
they come and go but you must know  
that some will come and stay

and the ones that stay are gifts  
they are sunshine through the cloud  
if one's all you've got, it's a lot  
you should be very proud

because friendships are like star-drops  
we just catch when magic's near  
some you must let go but some will grow  
with strength from year to year.



Have you ever planted a seed  
and watched a brand new flower rise?

Wow, you've been doing that  
since the day you opened your eyes.





## Pets

Pets have little lives  
but they live them BIG  
they play BIG  
they eat BIG  
they love BIG

but they only stay  
for a small amount of time

so we must treat every day with our pets  
as BIG-ly as they do

and love them BIG too

they're a small part of our lives  
but their whole life is you.





# Chocolate

It's hard to be someone  
whom everyone likes  
I am not even sure  
it is possible

for example, I heard  
that some people  
don't like chocolate

and if chocolate itself  
cannot please the whole world  
then I think perhaps  
neither can we

but when people do like chocolate  
they really like it an awful lot

they save their money to buy it  
and share it with their best friends  
and favourite family  
(but never pets!)

and when they eat it  
they close their eyes  
smile, as though they're thinking  
lovely thoughts

and feel very wonderful  
for just a short moment in time  
in this busy, crazy life

so, I suppose  
what I'm trying to say is  
you can't be liked by everyone

but to some  
you can be chocolate.





# Positive thinking

Positive thinking

is not pretending  
bad things don't happen

it is deciding to imagine  
the good things happening instead

and using hope  
like a magic wand  
to make that good come true

positive thinking  
is deciding not to waste  
your brilliant imagination  
on worrying

but using it instead

to create all the most  
glitteringly fabulously positive things  
you can find

within your  
spectacularly, mightily mighty  
magic-making mind.







## Sleepy heads of spring

Spring feels like jumping into a swimming pool and waking up after a long, sound slumber. Everything is fresh and new and coming back to life. Even us. Light is creeping in around every corner and the air just feels full of promise, excitement and new beginnings. Look around you in springtime and take heed of the gardens and forests. It is time to rise, time to stretch and grow taller, like the buds sprouting from the earth. It is time to be hopeful and light, to get excited about what is ahead. Life is happening, all around us.

Wake up sleepy heads, spring says, let's grow.

We have much to be brighter for.





## Pineapple pizza

If you ask for pineapple on a pizza  
someone, somewhere will say ewww  
we can all agree this fruity fact  
is a universal truth

and that could make you think  
that your taste in food and drinks  
is not as normal as everyone else  
but so much food would be left on the shelf

if everyone said gross  
and no one chose the cherry sauce  
or drank the guava and dragonfruit flavour  
and everyone just wanted Quavers

what would pineapples think  
if they could only be chewed  
or drunk in a drink?

let the pineapples have their day  
let them be eaten in the most delicious of ways  
with cheese and tomato on a pizza base  
for that pineapple-pizza-loving face.





# Our lights

I think everyone has a light

it isn't sparked by our cleverness  
or the awards upon our shelf  
it fires from deep down inside of us  
somewhere we can't even see

and that light is all our own  
no one can take it away  
unless we let them

when we walk into a room  
it is our light that people see  
without even realising

and it is that light that draws in friends  
who like the way our particular light shines  
it's not that it is better than any other light  
it is just the kind of light  
their light is drawn to

if we hide that light of ours  
because someone said it was too shiny  
or not shiny enough  
the people who would like it  
would not see it  
and they may walk right past  
never even knowing it was there

so let your light shine out

even on days when we don't feel bright  
that light of ours still twinkles  
the only thing that can switch it off  
is believing it is not good enough  
no light can survive that fate

our lights remain bright with approval

not approval from anyone else  
but simply approval from ourselves.







# Snow in summer

Sometimes I am sad

even when the weather is sunny  
and my eggs are perfectly runny  
and my baby brother just did  
something really quite funny

sometimes I am sad without reason  
like snow falling in the summer season  
like a scratchy cat who has no fleas on

it makes no sense

but I think maybe that's the clue  
that sadness can just visit you  
doing something as normal  
as lacing a shoe, it's true

and when sadness visits, I just let it  
hang around, I don't upset it

because everybody knows  
without rain, no flowers grow  
sadness comes and sadness goes.



# Over rainbow bridge

My pets are over rainbow bridge  
they can't come out to play  
they're busy living their best life  
with the animal friends they've made

they run and run the whole day long  
in fluffy clouds they sleep  
they eat the grass that's made of cheese  
and find more balls to keep

they're never lonely, never sad  
they don't need to visit vets  
they're happy all the hours long  
what a life they live, my pets

my pets are over rainbow bridge  
and though I miss them dearly  
I think of them so light, so free  
and feel their love so clearly.





# Love

Love is all the kisses  
planted on your head  
when you are drifting off to sleep  
and curled up safe in bed



love is in the sandwich  
made with your favourite cheese  
and all the plasters carefully placed  
on scratched and bleeding knees



love is asking are you well  
and did you eat your snack?  
it's in the water poured for you  
to keep your health on track



love is in the yucky drinks  
we sometimes have to swallow  
to fill our bones with vitamins  
so they are strong, not hollow



love does not land soft sometimes  
it can be quite the shout  
when cars are driving far too fast  
and someone yells watch out!



yes, love comes in so many ways  
you may not colour red  
with hearts and hugs and kisses  
love is sometimes shown, not said.



# Blending

Families can be small or large  
though all it takes is two  
and families can be blood or choice  
as long as they love you

a family can be one thing  
and then something quite new  
when people love more people  
and you get to love them too

a family is not simple  
because love is everything  
so making sure your team is tight  
can be a tricky thing

and all you need to know is  
that nothing's black or white  
there's every colour in our hearts  
and blending those is nice

if you are mostly purple  
and they are mostly blue  
and dad is orange, mum is green  
imagine all those hues

it can take some time to see  
that blended rainbow in your pot  
but when you do you'll realise  
your family is **a lot**.





# Step

Maybe you have  
a stepsister or brother  
a stepmum or a stepdad?

maybe that is fun for you  
or perhaps it's sometimes sad?

maybe it's confusing  
when birthdays come around  
and you need to go between two homes  
always moving round?

but think of it like this  
a step can take you up  
but you can turn  
and go back down  
and down again  
or up



steps go in both directions  
they're never just one-way  
your life has just got bigger  
and that's always pretty great

there are more people who love you  
more people you can hug  
more people to play games with  
and care, when you've caught a bug

more people to like your artwork  
more people means more laughs  
these steps in life bring more to us  
not less, just do the maths.





# Middle

Some people always win  
and some people lose a lot  
and some people in the middle  
think they don't matter a jot

if only they could see  
this life's a shape-y riddle  
and there's no shape without a bottom  
and no shape without a middle

the tops of shapes are great  
but bottom is quite vital  
and middle is the filling  
without a trophy or a title

sometimes you'll fall flat  
and make the solid base  
other times you'll reach the top  
and win the race you grace

so just keep making shapes  
and help others make theirs too  
because wherever you have placed  
is just a place . . . it's not for good.







Sometimes, we're never picked  
for a game we'd like to play  
but you know you can always start  
your own game, anyway.



# Your words

There are certain fine things

one must always say . . .

I like you

you're funny

and how are you today?

but as with most things

the opposite's true

here are some words

we should not hear from you . . .

I don't like your face

your hair is a mess

I hate your new shoes

why did you choose that dress?

when words reach your tongue

carry out a quick test

is it kind, is it helpful

is the message your best?



could you choose kinder letters

and speak those instead

or should you just send them

back into your head?

because words do a job

they deliver intent

so be careful to check

you said what you meant

and not what the monkey

who lives in your mind

spat out with some mischief

when he didn't feel kind

speak with much care

do you sound like you?

check on your words

are they kind, wise and true?



# Constellations

Imagine, if every single person who has ever cared about you, were to light up together in the night sky. Can you imagine it? What a galaxy of stars that would be. Your twinkly constellation would be brighter than Orion's Belt, the Plough and the Big Dipper. Imagine then, adding in everyone you've ever been kind to, animals as well. What a star-bright map the inside of your good heart would make. On days when you feel a little dull, think of your sparkly night-sky constellations of love, and let them light you up.





# Grannies, Grans and Nans

Some people say **Granny**  
and some may say **Gran**  
some choose **Grandma**  
and some may say **Nan**  
but no matter the name  
we all can agree  
that **Grigis** and **Nannys**  
are loved as can be  
they always have time  
to listen and play  
and they never stop laughing  
at the fun things we say  
whatever they bake  
it tastes super sweet  
and hugging them  
is the best part of my week  
some people say **Granny**  
and some may say **Gran**  
no matter, we love them  
as much as we can.



# Grandads, Pops and Grandpas

Some people say **Grandad**  
and some say **Grandpa**  
some choose to say **Pops**  
and some say **Granda**  
whatever you call yours  
I know you'll agree  
that they are the best  
if your kite's in a tree  
or if there's a problem  
you just can't work out  
ask Grandad, he'll know  
he'll be there in a shout  
there's nothing in life  
that your Pops won't make better  
he'll teach you to fish  
or to write a nice letter  
some people say **Granpaw**  
and some say **Grandad**  
no matter, we love them  
they make our hearts glad.





# Signs

Have you ever seen a feather  
softly floating from the sky  
and watched your parents pick it up  
then smile and happy cry?

it's because they feel these feathers  
are signs from someone dear  
someone we can no longer see  
but our love keeps them quite near

and some people choose pennies  
and see these as their sign  
that angels in the heavens  
are requesting them to shine

for some it's redbreast robins  
who chirp a caring song  
is it the song our loved ones sing  
are these birds passing it on?

and rainbows drawn in colours  
across the rain-drenched sky  
are often someone's happy sign  
that loved ones are close by

all these signs bring comfort  
when we feel far apart  
reminding us that love is all we need  
to heal our heart.







## Only

An only child suggests  
that one is somehow *less*

but you are so much more  
than *only*, you are **ALL**

and that is not small

you are **EVERYTHING**  
not *only*

and if you ever feel lonely

remember how loved you are

you were wished for on a star  
and it came true

along came you

more than enough for two.



You are **EVERYTHING** not *only*





## Moving on

It's hard to leave a house  
that you've lived in for so long  
it feels like something's left behind  
that can't be brought along

the bricks, the walls, the roof, the drive  
the garden, trees and path  
can't be packed up in a box  
and mostly neither can the bath

and though those things seem dear  
as you lament what you can't take  
it's really all the memories  
these things have helped you make



and memories can be brought with you  
they're light, they wrap up fine  
the memories of fun water fights  
and all those sunny times

you can also bring the cosy parts  
the blankets and the throws  
which wrapped you up on wintry days  
and warmed your frozen toes

and love lives in the people  
not the walls or rooms  
the things you need are yours to bring  
so let them light your gloom

it's hard to leave a house  
that has felt like part of you  
but home is where the heart is  
and your heart is coming too.





# Summer is funner

Summer is funner,  
everyone can agree. The trees are  
in full bloom and nature is riotous, colourful  
and almost as ecstatic as leaving school for summer  
holidays. Summer is ice-creams and late nights, where  
even the sun doesn't seem to want to go to bed. It is life at  
its most lifelike, summer. As though all the other seasons are  
just preparing us to be here in this moment, running through  
sprinklers and eating ice-cold watermelon. Picking daisies for  
our hair, birds singing their encouragement as we play and  
the feeling we could run and jump the entire summer day.  
Summer is funner. And the only thing to do when  
summer is upon you, is throw your hands up in  
the air and jump in.





a friend for life when life gets hard

## Siblings

if you are lucky enough to have a sibling  
annoying you every day

*stop for a moment and be glad  
and yes I know they make you mad  
when they call you silly names  
or cheat to win a silly game*

but one day  
you will look at them and see . . .

*a friend for life when life gets hard  
someone to send a birthday card  
or call when things are not so great  
a sibling is a life-long mate*

if you are lucky enough to have a sibling  
annoying you every day

*give them some sibling love  
they are a gift from up above*

(I said **love**, by the way, not **shove**!)



# Words can fly

Did you know that words can fly?  
allow me to explain  
here is what those words can do  
as they up and leave your brain

they trip down to your mouth  
and jump right off your tongue  
and float like little feathers  
bringing comfort to someone

if the words you choose to speak  
are funny, giggly ones  
they will bounce into another's brain  
and fill it full of fun

if the words you choose are kind  
and not feelings run amok  
they will fly into another's heart  
and undo rusty locks

if the words you choose are mean  
or hateful and unkind  
they buzz like angry wasps  
and sting the person's mind

and from that sting a seed will pop  
and make a plant of sadness  
that plant will find its power  
from all the hate and badness





likewise, when the words are kind  
they also bloom and grow  
a flower of every colour  
will take their root and glow



and maybe you can see with me  
that garden in your mind  
the field of flowers you're growing there  
perhaps it's now the time . . .



to make sure all the seeds you cast  
are seeds which will grow bright  
the seeds that face the sunshine  
and thrive on giving light



and whilst we're here, let me be clear . . .  
when nasty seeds come in  
you can flick them from your soil  
before their growth begins



and cast them to the clouds  
to disperse amongst the air  
those seeds won't find a place to grow  
just floating around there



keep your garden colourful  
with plants of every kind  
and help your friends grow their plants too  
in the gardens of the mind.





# Faults

If someone calls you a name  
or tells you that something you like  
or something you do  
is silly . . .

it is easy to think  
that this must be true  
that something must be  
very wrong, inside you  
but no, the problem  
is not what you do  
it is all in the heart of  
who's looking at you

the person who said this  
is not seeing you  
they are seeing a mirror  
reflecting their truth  
so let them say what  
they feel they must say  
you will go on being you  
as you do every day  
true to your heart  
in each possible way  
knowing kindness  
won't look  
for faults  
anyway.







## Raincloud

There will be days when it feels as though no one wants to choose you, or play with you, or ask you around to tea. Days when nothing seems to go right and your heart feels heavy. We all have them. Days when it feels as though we have our own personal raincloud following us around, squeezing cold water on our heads. But the thing is, that raincloud will dry up, as all rainclouds must. The sun will eventually come out, that's a fact, and a little rainbow might just stretch out from your cloud's marshmallow middle, filling the air around you with colour and joy, if you let it.

So yes, you may have your own little grey raincloud, following you around some days, but you could also have your own rainbow too. Think about that for a moment . . . there it is.



# Ordinary

Extraordinary things are wonderful  
like fireworks on bonfire night  
but have you ever found a stone  
that had perfect shiny stripes?

or had a butterfly land  
upon your shoulder blade  
whilst the sun twinkled through the trees  
as you played within their shade?

what about the taste  
of ice-cream in the sun  
or hot chocolate when it's cold and grey  
and you're inside having fun?

the little things in life  
are often overlooked  
but if we peer with seeing eyes  
we may find our senses shook

for ladybirds are magical  
and birds sing like Taylor Swift  
bubbling streams for paddling feet  
are nature's little gifts

so yes, life has its big stuff  
and those things can blow our minds  
but don't forget to search the small  
there's much magic you can find.





# Planet prayer

Everything that makes this world  
exists inside of you  
we each are born of atoms  
we are all just passing through

a star is full of elements  
and you are built the same  
just slightly rearranged  
moulded in a different way

this planet spins in place  
a tiny speck just going around  
yet we all stay upright  
when the world turns upside down

so take a little moment  
to wonder at this life  
how magical the moon is  
as it orchestrates the tides

and think of all the species  
far too many kinds to name  
relying on the atmosphere around  
to stay the same

it is worth the extra work  
to keep this planet cool  
even if that means  
walking back and forth to school

wearing clothes a second time  
and turning off the lights  
never wasting water  
it is gold dust in our pipes

be kind to Mother Earth  
she has taken so much strife  
be careful with this planet  
as you go about your life.



# Hopetivism

Some people are optimists  
some people are pessimists  
and in the middle  
sit the realists

optimists look  
for the bright side of everything  
pessimists look  
for the worst that can happen  
realists look at the facts

I am none of the above  
perhaps you are like me?

I am a hopetivist  
a mixture of all three of these things  
but with hope added in

so perhaps I won't always see the bright side  
but hope certainly stops me  
from only seeing the worst  
and when you mix hope with the facts  
you get something quite lovely . . .

## HOPETIMISM

facts, a little fear, and a whole lot of hope.







# Fear

Fear can make us jump and shriek  
when startled by the thunder  
till we find our cosy blanket  
to safely hide and cower under

fear is looking out of windows  
high above the ground  
our stomach loops a loop  
like a crazy ride going round

fear can make us freeze  
or even run quite strangely fast  
but when the danger passes  
fear moves on, it doesn't last

fear is there to keep us safe  
and help us get away  
from things that tried to eat us  
back in olden days

but sometimes fear can linger  
when there is no danger there  
fear gets confused with what's unsafe  
and what just makes us scared



like homework we don't understand  
or friends who cannot stay  
like Mondays after weekends  
we don't want to wish away

this fear can bring us worry  
stop us living, hold us back  
unless you learn to spot that fear  
and stop it in its tracks

so be afraid of too-high heights  
being hurt and falling down  
but don't be afraid of failing  
or letting teammates down

don't be afraid of joining in  
or not being good enough  
don't be scared to show your artwork  
when your finish feels too rough

it's okay to fear the darkness  
you can always flick the light  
fear keeps us safely in one piece  
but lets our brave shine bright.



# Foundations

Most of our growth we cannot see

like a tree

with an underground web of roots  
reaching deeper than its height is high  
spreading out determined fingers  
into the nurturing ground

yet all we see is the trunk above  
and the branches and leaves it wears





or the iceberg  
floating brightly  
its craggly icy peaks  
a superior sight to behold  
but nowhere near as majestically mighty  
as the boundless base of it  
cloaked by sea



most of who we are  
cannot be seen  
and the work we do  
does not always show

but it is there  
making us stronger  
creating a steady base

so our leaves can bloom  
our peaks can peak

and our foundations

will never be shaken.



# Growing into school

The thing about big school  
is that it's big, right?  
and the thing about you  
is that you're small, right?

but that won't always be so

each day you go to school  
is a day you are growing  
you can't always see it

it's not always showing

but it's always happening

and pretty soon  
you will be big enough to see  
that this school fits you  
like bees fit their knees



so whilst it's still too large, remember ...

each day that passes  
is a day you're growing in  
getting used to maps and rules  
that once made your head spin

and please oh please  
remember this too  
that your friends and other fellows  
feel exactly as you do

and whilst we are here  
remembering, let us not forget ...

that all these new faces  
are just friends you haven't met

yet.





## Autumn is amazing

Sometimes autumn can feel a little sad, as the leaves fall away from their branches and summer follows too, waving farewell for another year. But as with all things in life, there is magic to be found if you look . . . Autumn is golden, quite literally, as Mother Nature's paintbrush throws out all the shades of earth and bronze she can find. To make up for all the summer colours that fade, she paints purples and oranges and ambers, not greys. Autumn is leaf-kicking walks and the first crunch underfoot. It is fireworks, sparklers, Halloween and hot chocolate by the fire, with cold toes warming up and noses pink with life. Autumnal moods are not sad, not really. Just a time to reflect on a summer well spent and the wonder of this seasonal world we are lucky enough to live in.



# Voices

Do you sometimes hear  
some little voices in your head  
telling you to stay up late  
to refuse to go to bed  
telling you your drawing sucks  
and isn't up to scratch  
or telling you you're bad at football  
right before a match?



pay attention to these voices  
as you go about your day  
work out if one is good  
and one is leading you astray  
tell them to pipe down  
and speak up only when they're asked  
and tell them you're the one in charge  
when it comes to taking tasks.



are these voices kind and wise  
or are they very naughty  
are these voices on your side  
or do they want to get you caught  
are they steering you to trouble  
do they want to hear you shout  
or are they all the things you've learned  
just trying to get out?



voices in our head are just  
thought-monkeys in our minds  
one is full of mischief  
and the other very kind  
so turn the nice one's volume up  
and the other, turn him down  
you don't need a naughty monkey  
in your mind, making you frown.



# Anxiety

*Anxiety, oh my-ety  
oh why, oh why, oh why-ety?*

why do I feel so anxious  
why is my heartbeat fast  
why do I want to run and run  
and run and run so fast?



*anxiety, oh my-ety  
oh why, oh why, oh why-ety?*

where is my normal breathing  
why won't it settle down  
why are my hands all sweaty  
my face a frozen frown?



*anxiety, oh my-ety  
oh why, oh why, oh why-ety?*

place my thumb against my finger  
and then the same, the other hand  
place them on my eyes like glasses  
concentrate on feeling calm



*anxiety, oh my-ety  
oh why, oh why, oh why-ety?*

now breathe it in and count to three  
breathe out and count to four  
focus hard on something simple  
like the window or the door



*anxiety, oh my-ety  
oh why, oh why, oh why-ety?*

now start to hear your heartbeat  
slowing like a storm  
that's running out of rain  
making way for sun so warm



*anxiety, oh my-ety  
oh why, oh why, oh why-ety?*

release the anxious bubbles  
crashing crazily round your chest  
make space and fill with breathing  
that soothes your mind to rest



*anxiety, oh my-ety  
goodbye, goodbye, goodbye-ety!!!*



## Gratitude goggles

Have you ever had an eye test? Did the optician place goggles on your eyes and switch out the circular lens to make you see more sharply or less? I think about that when I am practising gratitude. My gratitude goggles, I call them . . . If I am feeling 'poor me' or have awoken with a thump and a strump, I try this first. On my goggles go, and quite like magic I look at everything differently. I have to make my bed? Isn't it great that my bed is so soft and my favourite stuffed panda is sitting there. Then, I start thinking about how funny giant pandas are, and how rare. And how great it is that I am alive at the same times as them, and off I go, being all grateful . . . It is quite magical. Try it. Pop on your gratitude goggles and see . . .





# Joy

Joy is not the shiny toys  
sat on a toy-shop shelf  
it's the having friends to play with  
when you've been all by yourself

it's the having family visit  
bringing cuddles, treats and fun  
it's running through the grass  
laughing loudly with someone

joy is when your song  
fills the radio in the car  
and you're all singing along  
even though you're not going far

joy won't stay all day  
she pops in and out like sun  
you can't keep her there for ever  
she's supposed to go, and come

and when she does be ready  
to smile and wave your hands  
these moments wash away  
just like your castles in the sand

but they leave a joyful memory  
a star within your mind  
and there's always pots of golden joy  
in every day, to find.





# S'Munday

At 4 o'clock each Sunday  
I start to think of Monday  
and the things I need to do  
and the ways it makes me blue

and though Sundays are my fundays  
I think they're spoiled by Mondays  
creeping in before their time  
pushing back their starting line

but listen, here's the thing  
we must stop this happening  
Sundays are a day of rest  
we can't let them flee the nest

Monday has twenty-four hours  
do not give it Sunday's power  
do your spellings and your maths  
then fizz some bubbles to your bath

splash and linger for an hour  
go outside and smell the flowers  
be protective of your Sunday  
do not let it become S'Munday.





## Screen time

Do you know that screen time  
can happen in your mind?  
when batteries run out  
you can go there anytime

a good imagination  
is like data never-ending  
no need to download content  
your brain is always sending

a world of wizards casting spells  
why not, let's make that so  
the spells are yours to shape  
there's no one to tell you no

just pop inside your mind  
when the iPads are offline  
and see a world of wonder  
you can access all the time

do you know that screen time  
can happen without screens?  
it's about the access to all things  
and space where you can dream.



# Rewrite

A lot of things happen in every day  
and sometimes we get in each other's way  
arguments blossom, from something quite small  
it's hard to recall how it started at all



a lot of things happen in every day  
emotions and tiredness can change what we say  
and when we look back, we are sorry we chose  
the words that we did, when our frustration rose

so all you can do, is let go, start again  
apologise if you have upset a friend  
and say something kind to rewrite what was drawn  
tell them you care and your cross-ness has gone



a lot of things happen in every day  
but don't let them linger or wander away  
the people you know, are your people, you know  
apologise, dry your eyes, come on, let's go.





## Glad out of grumpy

Everyone wakes up grumpy sometimes, but the next time you do, remember . . . If you stay grumpy, everything around you will become grumpy too, it's true. Door handles will sharply poke you as you pass and pets will hiss and run away. Your friends might catch your grumpy from you, and before you know it your teacher will have it and the whole world will be in a giant grumpy pickle. But if you break through the grumpy with gladness, remembering all the things you have to be pleased about (clue: they are everywhere), magic happens. Door handles just open doors again and pets wag their tails when they see you. Friends will smile when your smile beams their way and the whole world will shimmer with a little extra shine, made just by you. And the superbly powerful way, you can make glad out of grumpy.

# Gratitude

Gratitude isn't about  
saying thanks and please  
that's just good manners  
(and I know you have those)

being grateful is knowing  
that the air in your lungs  
is keeping you alive  
and the food on your table  
is not always on everyone else's

gratitude is seeing the people  
who work around us every day  
so we can do the things we like  
and understanding how lucky we are  
to have whatever it is we have  
no matter how *simple* or *small*  
because some people, somewhere  
would think them *majestic* and *mighty*

gratitude is not just saying thank you  
it is being thankful  
for everything  
because even the things  
that don't seem so great  
often bring lovely surprises  
if we just gratefully wait.





# About

It's not about your sea-blue eyes  
or the curls within your hair  
it matters not your shape or size  
or the kind of clothes you wear

it's not about your clever traits  
or the sports you like to play  
it won't matter if you can't run fast  
your life won't work that way

it matters if your words are kind  
and your ears are listening in  
it's all about your seeking mind  
and the way you spread that grin

it matters if you tell the truth  
and treat your friends with care  
it's all about your loving heart  
and those who'll nestle there

it's not about the tests you take  
or the medals on your shelf  
it's all about the thoughts you make  
and the way you treat yourself

you cannot judge by looks, you see  
or the things you have achieved  
you only know the person  
from the things you don't first see.





Everything in nature is growing  
and remember, you are nature too  
every day your growth is showing  
in ways that only you can do.





# Hope

Hope is the baby blackbird  
sitting featherless in the nest  
who watches and believes  
he will fly like all the rest



it's the caterpillar climbing  
into its dark cocoon  
knowing he will come back out  
much brighter, pretty soon



it's the focused little spider  
climbing up the water spout  
who scales the pipe another time  
despite being washed right out



hope is the winter forest  
bare of all its leaves  
having dropped them to the ground  
to wait for spring to breathe



hope is in our pockets  
even though we didn't pay  
it comes from giving up  
then getting up, another day.





## Wonderful winter

Winter is wonderful.

Except, perhaps, for the dark mornings that make it hard to get out of bed. And coming home from school in darkness too, that can be tough. But if you slow down just a little, like the nature outside, winter can be magical. The twinkly lights that pop up everywhere in place of the sun. The cosiness of sofas and candles smelling of cookies. Family cuddles that seem to happen so much more; not to mention snow days, frosty breath and crisp, cold mornings that feel warm somehow. Winter feels warm, somehow. Perhaps because it is mostly celebrations, joy and fun, and if it starts to get too cold, we can be like the trees and use our ancient wisdom and patience. Don't fear. Light always comes back, you see. Spring always comes again. And winter can be wonderful, if you just cosy in, and let it.



# Goodbyes

Goodbyes are never easy  
that's something we all know  
leaving someone's company  
when you just don't want to go

or the ending of a party  
when it's time to go to bed  
but you haven't finished sharing  
all the games within your head

and some goodbyes are harder  
because there seems to be no when  
we don't get to make another plan  
to be with them again

and those goodbyes take time  
to settle in our hearts  
just hearing someone's name out loud  
can cause fresh tears to start

and sometimes it can feel  
as though they'll truly disappear  
from your mind, with all its worry  
it may seem hard to keep them near

but memories never fade  
and your people live in those  
you won't forget that laugh, or how  
they wrinkled up their nose

the words they said will stay  
and the stories that they told  
live in your mind for all of time  
even when you're old

so yes, goodbyes are hard  
from that there's no escape  
but all the things you loved in them  
are yours, all yours, to take.



## For tomorrow

I hope tomorrow is one of those days that feels like sunshine. A day when laughter is loud and the only tears are happy ones. Where schoolwork is easy, friends all agree and pets are extra cuddly. I hope today is chocolate-flavoured (or better still, chip-flavoured!) and full of things that bring smiles and fuzzy-covered dreams when you finally fall into a bed as soft as a cloud. I hope today is one of those days for you. But if it's not, do not fret. Simply pop today under your pillow when you curl up to sleep, and take all that hope and plant it there too. It may just grow overnight, using the mud of today as its soil, into a day full of sunshine for tomorrow.





# Sadness

If sadness was a colour  
I think it would be grey  
murky, dull and flat  
like a sunless rainy day

if sadness was a taste  
I think it would be sour  
but not like fizzy sweets  
more like lemons dipped in flour

and the taste would make you feel  
like you don't want to eat  
and you don't want to play  
with your friends out on the street

if sadness was a place  
I think it'd be the park  
but when everyone's gone home  
and it's getting strangely dark

sadness can feel heavy  
and as though it's just for you  
it can make your world unsteady  
it can make you feel quite blue

but the thing about this sadness is  
it's often not that bad  
it looks much worse than it truly is  
in fact, it's often glad

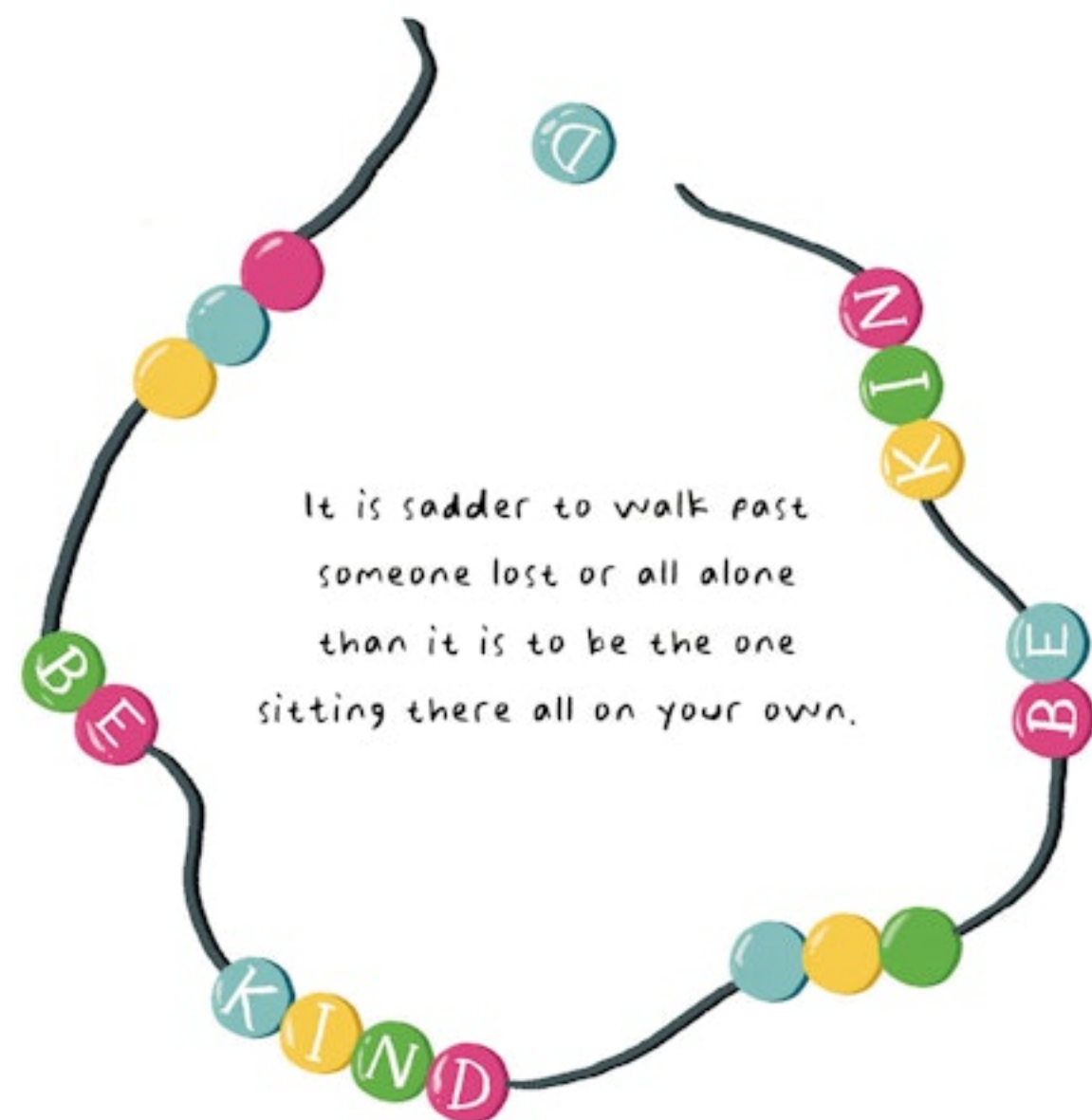
because sadness comes from loving  
if you're missing someone dear  
sadness mostly comes from caring  
that's why sadness comes with tears

sadness is the peak of mountains  
of feelings we can store  
when we probably should have freed them  
making space for joy to soar

it's not trying to hurt you  
or drain your life of fun  
it could be there to hold a place  
of a special lost someone

so do not fear when sadness swoops  
to visit you again  
you can ask it in and give it tea  
and treat it like a friend

it won't outstay its welcome  
it will take its leave quite soon  
and you can open up your window  
to let joy back in your room.



It is sadder to walk past  
someone lost or all alone  
than it is to be the one  
sitting there all on your own.



# Poetry is permission

As you open the pages  
of a poetry book

you enter a mindset cocoon  
a place where the thoughts  
in your mind can be still  
and your heart can take over the room

there are words here to spell  
what you couldn't before  
in each page you can lay down your fears  
let the soothe of the words  
warm the cold from your bones  
use the rhyme to kiss dry any tears

there's no judgement in here  
there's no right and no wrong  
just others who've gone where you've been  
you can rest here awhile  
let the past slip away  
let the poems describe what you've seen

as you open the pages  
of a poetry book  
you'll find refuge from life and its mission  
you can unpack the bags  
you've been dragging so long  
you can *be*  
poetry is permission.



## For parents and carers

I hope you enjoy sharing the poems in this book with your little ones. These texts have been lovingly designed to spark thoughts and conversations, and unwrap topics which can often arrive entangled with confusion or fear. I have organised the themes for your ease when you need to find something specific, but I also recommend the random-page method... see what comes up and be open to the chats that ensue. These bonding moments of big-chats-disguised-as-an-ordinary-moment, are the ones which may just stay lifelong. I can remember some myself. And the ones that don't feature as memories are nestled deep within our hearts, helping us stay kind and loving. What a thing.



## For teachers

I would be delighted if you chose to use these pieces in your lesson plans, particularly for emotional, social and mental wellbeing but also, of course, for practising language and poetry skills. For me, the best way to begin writing poetry is to think of a feeling and a topic and go from there. Am I trying to convey the scary feelings brought on by a big change? Then my emotion is fear and my topic is change. It's helpful to think of how these feelings may smell, taste or look if they were visible. Or if they were an animal, what would they be? I find that no subject is out of bounds with children when viewed through this simple lens, even grief. If grief were an animal to me, it would be a mysterious wolf that howls by the moon, alone in the dark of night. Scary if you don't realise that he is simply calling for friends who understand what he is feeling, and that in the morning the sun will be on his face and he will look fluffy and feel safe again. Even wolves need family, understanding and love.

I would love to hear how you have used the poems and what they brought about within your teaching worlds.





# Poetry index

## Emotions

Anxiety.....	98
Fear.....	86
Hope.....	118
It is sadder... ..	129
Joy.....	102
Love.....	46
Sadness.....	126
Snow in summer.....	43
Sometimes we're never picked.....	55
Voices.....	96
What is happy?.....	24



## Family

Blending.....	48
Grandads, Pops and Grandpas.....	61
Grannies, Grans and Nans.....	60
Only.....	64
Pets.....	30
Siblings.....	71
Step.....	50



Dear reader,

You may use this book any way your heart wishes, but I love to choose a random page and see what the message is. If you are specifically seeking solace on a particular topic or hoping to cover a certain theme, this index will serve as a useful guide.

Love Donna





## Change

Autumn is amazing.....	95
Everything in nature is growing.....	117
Foundations.....	88
Growing into school.....	92
Have you ever planted a seed?.....	29
Moving on.....	66
Planet prayer.....	82
Sleepy heads of spring.....	37
Summer is funner.....	69
Wonderful winter.....	121

## Differences

About.....	114
Faults.....	76
Fitting.....	14
Middle.....	52
Our lights.....	40
Phones and brains.....	22
Pineapple pizza.....	39
Why you are youier.....	19
Youier.....	18



## Grief and loss

Goodbyes.....	122
Over rainbow bridge.....	44
Signs.....	62



## Mindset

Butter side down.....	16
Constellations.....	58
Exercising kindness.....	20
For tomorrow.....	124
Glad out of grumpy.....	111
Gratitude.....	112
Gratitude goggles.....	100
Hopetism.....	84
Messy threads.....	11
Ordinary.....	80
Poetry is permisson.....	130
Positive thinking.....	34
Raincloud.....	79
S'Munday.....	104
Screen time.....	106
Talking.....	12
Words can fly.....	72
Your words.....	56



## Friendships

Chocolate.....	32
Friendships come and go.....	26
Rewrite.....	108





# DONNA ASHWORTH



**Donna Ashworth** is a pet-loving poet who lives in the bonny hills of Scotland with her sons Felix and Brodie, her dogs Dave and Brian, her cats Sheldon and Mani (short for Maneki Neko, which is Japanese for 'lucky cat') and her bearded dragon Benny (who loves to shower every day!).

Donna has been writing poetry for adults since 2020, having published over ten poetry books, and finally decided it was time to create a book for children too.

'I'm a huge believer that magic is around us everywhere, if we just learn to see it . . . and who could be better at that than children? Life is so much more fun when we remember how to laugh, play, make friends and stop and talk to every animal we meet.'

Donna has almost two million followers across social media and would very much like it if you would follow her too, to see what the pets are up to and what wise words she has to share with you next . . .

# EIRINN McGUINNESS



**Eirinn McGuinness** is an illustrator from Dorset, England, who can usually be found exploring the coastline with her sketchbook and surfboard. When Eirinn isn't scribbling or riding waves, she is also a primary school teacher who loves to share her passion for art, books and learning. She finds inspiration from the young people she works with and gets immense joy from watching her students grow.

Getting to bring Donna Ashworth's wonderful poems to life on the page was a very special experience, especially because *Words Can Fly* is Eirinn's first illustration project to be published. Now she can tell her students that your dreams are achievable, and chasing them is most definitely worthwhile!





## A note from Donna

Thank you to YOU, who picked up this book and honoured it by reading the words and looking at the pictures. A book is only happy if it is read, so thank you for that joy.

Thank you to whomever bought or gifted this book because again, words can only fly if people let them . . . if they help them on their journeys from bookstores, through the skies and into hearts.

A HUGE thank you to the illustrator of this beautiful book, Eirinn McGuinness, who made everything come alive with her imaginative and heartwarming drawings and who captured my pets, Dave, Brian, Sheldon and Mani so perfectly!

Thank you to Lara Bruce (and her amazing mum Susanna, of course), for the expert help in your role as chief-child-editor. And to all the boys and girls at Lara's school, and to my sister Mrs Monteith and her class at Comely Park Primary School. Your suggestions and fun-filled ideas were so wonderfully inspiring (I especially loved the suggestion of pineapple pizza!).

And last but not least, thanks to Sophie and Laura, and my amazing team at Templar for all their joyful dedication and hard work. You are in the business of making magic and I am beyond thrilled to be a part of that with you.



Words can indeed fly, my friends.



What a thing

to sit back and watch!





# Praise for Donna



‘Beautiful and uplifting.’


**Davina McCall**

‘A little corner of calm within  
life’s storm – wonderful.’


**Cat Deeley**

‘Like a warm hug, Donna’s words  
are comfort for the soul.’


**Tamzin Outhwaite**



‘So inspiring, so heartfelt...  
the way Donna writes is beyond beautiful.’



**Lisa Snowden**



‘Donna is a true wordsmith.  
Her writings never fail to move me.’

**Nadia Sawalha**