

castle writers goes digital

NORWICH CASTLE MUSEUM
AND ART GALLERY



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Welcome to Castle Writers - online! Our monthly creative writing workshop, inspired by items in the museum's collection, has gone digital. The following pages have been designed in partnership with author and tutor Amanda Addison, and are for you to use at home. There are several writing prompts for you to choose from - you can do as many as you like.

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Happy writing!



July 2020

Food and Drink

Using the Norwich Castle collections, you'll learn how to use writing about food and drink as a way to help create authentic settings and characterisation. The inclusion of food and drink in storytelling is a fantastic device for setting time and place, and also tells us a lot about our characters' social and cultural context.

Cornelis Engelsz, *The Supper at Emmaus* (1612), oil on canvas
(C) Norfolk Museums Service



Warm-up Exercise

In this brief warm-up exercise, we're going to explore food and memory.

What is your favourite biscuit? It can be a past or current favourite. Free write for five minutes about your biscuit.

Free writing is a continuous, stream-of-consciousness style of writing. Try to keep your pen on the paper and try not to edit (ignore that inner critic!). Many writers use this technique as part of their daily writing routine.

Have a go at
five minutes
of free
writing!

Writing Exercises

Using the Collection

- 1 Of our selected images, choose one which speaks strongly to you. Immerse yourself in a five-minute free write in response to the image. Be brave and see where your pen takes you!

Create a List

- 2 Using the images as prompts, create a list of words to inform your creative writing. Here's an example using Peggy Somerville's *Strawberries*.

| VISUAL ANALYSIS e.g. colour, shape form, texture | METAPHOR/SIMILE for one of the visual qualities | IMAGINE how the food tastes or smells | WHO might eat or drink it | BACKSTORY what does the meal tell us about the social/historical/ cultural backstory? |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| - lipstick scarlet - soft, plump, squishy | - as red as a fed leech! | - sweet - smells like summer | - meal set up for one (single glass) | - summer setting - light, bright day - affluence and plenty - maybe arranged by a servant |

Reading for Inspiration

- 3** Explore extracts from other writers to inspire your own creative writing. Try Nigel Slater's *Eating for England* or *Toast*, in which he uses food and drink to vividly recreate 1960s England. Joanne Harris's novels *Chocolat* and *Peaches for Monsieur le Curé* both have food at the heart of the story. Plus check out a food-related extract from Heidi Swain on the last page.

Prose Extract

- 4** Combine the skills you have developed in the free write and word list to write a paragraph or two using your chosen image as a starting point. How might you link food and character in fiction? Another great example is Bernardine Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other*, in which one chapter explores Carole's change in eating habits following a move from the family home where her Nigerian mother often cooks to Oxford University.

About the Artists

Cornelis Engelsz

Engelsz was a painter of the Dutch Golden Age, born in Gouda in 1575. This painting is considered one of his finest. At the back of the everyday scene can be glimpsed a small room featuring a miraculous scene from the Bible, in which two of Jesus's disciples realise that they are breaking bread with the resurrected Christ.



Peggy Somerville



Child prodigy Peggy Somerville first had works selected for exhibition at the age of three and had her first one-woman show at just nine years old! As an adult she lived in Suffolk, developing her striking work as a British impressionist and producing notable works inspired by the coastal town of Aldeburgh. Although her early fame faded, she was later rediscovered.

Ivy Smith

Award-winning East Anglian artist Ivy Smith is known not only for portraiture but also etchings, lino prints and woodcuts. She studied at the Royal Academy and the Chelsea School of Art, and her work includes a portrait of David and Richard Attenborough which was a public commission for the National Portrait Gallery.





Peggy Somerville, *Strawberries* (1950s), painting
(C) Norfolk Museums Service



Ivy Smith, *The Smith Family Golden Wedding* (1986), painting
(C) The Artist

Further Inspiration



24 hour ration pack, issued by the Ministry of Defence in 1995
(C) Norfolk Museums Service

You can use objects as well as paintings to inspire and inform your creative writing. Why not try using this image of a 1990s Ministry of Defence ration pack in one of the exercises above?

Extract from *The Secret Seaside Escape* (2020) by Heidi Swain

Published by Simon & Schuster UK

"What exactly are these?" I asked, looking at the sizzling shells.

"Fresh cooked scallops and chorizo," Sophie said proudly. "There's a little chilli too and some honey to balance out the heat."

They looked fantastic served in the scallop shells and I hungrily dived in, dipping buttered crusty bread into the spicy sauce.

"Oh Sophie," I groaned, after the first delectable mouthful, "they're orgasmic."

"Well," she laughed. "I don't know about that, but we thought they were pretty good."

"What's orgasmic?" Sam asked throatily, leaning over my shoulder.

"These scallops," I said, blushing. I hadn't realised he was behind me.

He reached around and pinched one of the shells, dithering as the heat scolded the ends of his fingers. I spun around just in time to see him pop it into his mouth.

"Hey," I protested, as he looked down at me and raised his eyebrows, his mouth working appreciatively. "Hands off, they're mine."

I wasn't sure if his pupils had widened because of the food-heaven ecstasy the combination of flavours had unleashed or because of our close proximity.

Enjoyed this resource?

If you have suggestions for improvements for this resource, or simply have some feedback on your experience of using it, please let us know. You can chat to us on Twitter [@NorwichCastle](https://twitter.com/NorwichCastle) using the hashtag #NorwichCastleWriters, or email norwichcastle.bookings@norfolk.gov.uk.

Want to share your work? Join the conversation online using the hashtag #NorwichCastleWriters

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