

HACK THIS LABEL: NATIONAL POETRY MONTH EDITION!

BY MEG WINIKATES, POET, MUSEUM EDUCATOR, & DIRECTOR OF ENGAGEMENT, NEMA



Photo credit: <https://libwww.freelibrary.org/explore/topic/poetry>

WE ALL KNOW NO ONE READS LABELS, SO...

“most visitors spend ten seconds in front of an object—seven to read the label, three to examine the thing itself”

- Gail Gregg, ArtNews, “Your Labels Make Me Feel Stupid,” 07/01/10 12:00 am, <http://www.artnews.com/2010/07/01/your-labels-make-me-feel-stupid/>

“Something that didn’t require me to re-read it to comprehend the content, but that I may have wanted to re-read because it was so interesting, fun, or provocative. ...I want to be glad I took the time to read it, that it was worthwhile.

Turn ons: Texts that are clever, fresh, and make me feel intelligent.

Turn offs: Chirpy, overly familiar labels – ones that use “we” and “you,” give too many instructions to “Look at this” or “Notice that,” and end with exclamation marks.”

- Beverly Serrell, “Best Practices in Museum Exhibition Writing (2004)” <http://www.museum-ed.org/best-practices-in-museum-exhibition-writing-2004/>

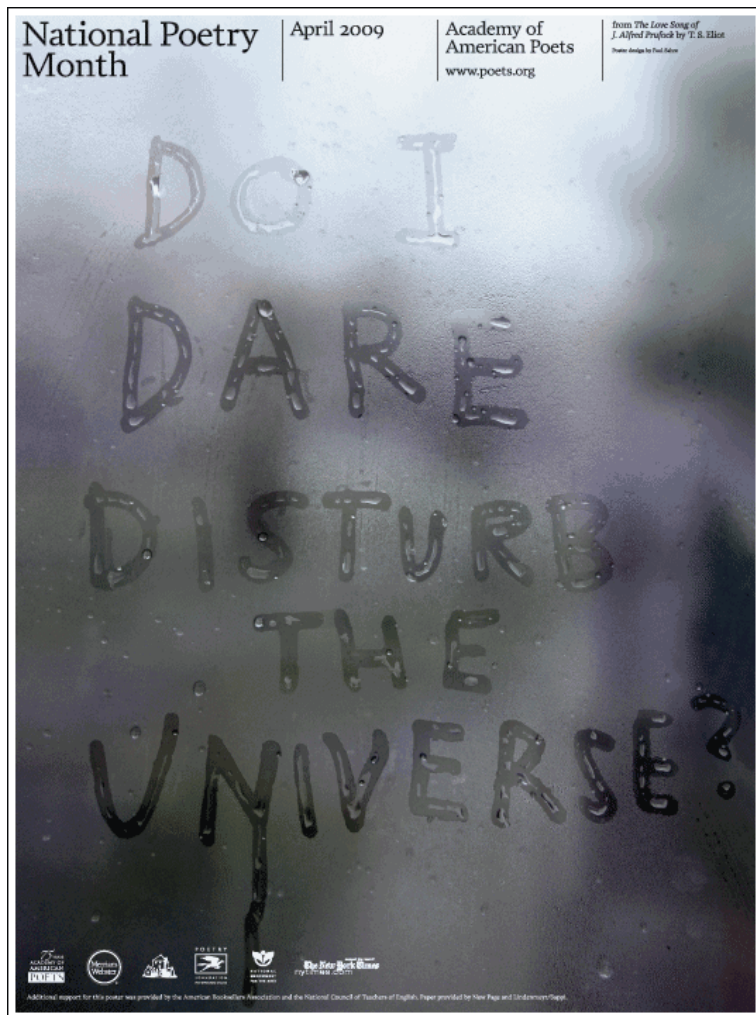
POETRY TO THE RESCUE!

“In its most recent survey...published in 2018, the NEA found that, contrary to the sharp decline it had observed in previous surveys, poetry—*reports of its death*, etc.—had in fact seen a massive rise in popularity. The number of self-reported poetry readers in the United States nearly doubled from 2012 to 2017...And while growth in poetry reading was present across all the demographics ...it was young adults who demonstrated the largest and fastest increase, with the poetry-reading rate among those aged 18 to 24 more than doubling, from 8.2 percent in 2012 to 17.5 percent in 2017. And it was women and people of color, in particular, who helped to drive the expansion.”



- By Megan Garber, “Poetry is Everywhere,” *The Atlantic*, August 20, 2018

<https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2018/08/when-poetry-isnt-poetry/567571/>

THINGS YOU MIGHT NEED FOR FIGURATIVE & LITERAL HACKING



- Markers
- Rulers
- Scissors & Glue
- Magnetic sheets
- Thesaurus
- An internet connection
- A sense of humor



Poetry is the shadow
cast by our streetlight
imaginings.

Lawrence Ferlinghetti

UNSTICK YOURSELF



KEYWORD POEMS (I.E. SPOT THE INTERPRETIVE THEMES!)

- Go through your chosen exhibit.
- Pick at least 5 labels, no more than 10.
- Pick at least 3 words that jump out at you from each label. No more than 5. Not all proper nouns.
- Write all your words on a word list.
- Use that word list to construct a poem.

COURTAULD GALLERY I



Paul Cézanne (1839–1906)

THE LAKE AT ANNECY

1896

Oil on canvas

Cézanne described this mountain lake near the French border with Switzerland as a scene one might expect to find in 'the albums of young lady travellers'. Instead of recording the standard picturesque view, Cézanne set out to explore the landscape in terms of patterns of form and colour. The tree in the foreground gives a sense of scale and distance to the castle on the far banks of the lake. The slopes of the mountains close off the scene.

COURTAULD GALLERY 2



Vincent van Gogh (1853-90)
PEACH TREES IN BLOSSOM
1889
Oil on canvas

This is van Gogh's last view of a plain outside Arles that he often painted since settling in the south of France in 1888. He wrote to the painter Paul Signac 'everything is small there ... even the mountains, as in certain Japanese landscapes, which is the reason why the subject attracted me.' The snow-capped peak on the right (a deliberate echo of Mount Fuji) and blossoming trees create a peaceful atmosphere. But the bent figure at left emphasises this is a man-made landscape.

Samuel Courtauld Trust: Courtauld Gift, 1932

COURTAULD GALLERY 3



Edgar Degas (1834-1917)

LADY WITH A PARASOL

Around 1870-72

Oil on canvas

Degas abandoned this work at a relatively early stage of preparation and it remained in the studio until his death. While some areas are quite sketchy, others, such as the woman's profile and details of her hat are painted with great delicacy. This picture belongs to a group of works in which Degas explored the effect of light on the human figure. An old label on the back of the painting calls it 'At the Race-course', which may explain the woman's elegant appearance.

Samuel Courtauld Trust: Princes Gate Bequest, 1978

COURTAULD GALLERY 4



Claude Monet (1840–1926)

**The Thames below Westminster,
about 1871**

Monet travelled to London to avoid the Franco-Prussian War. The grey hazy sky successfully evokes the fogs for which 19th-century London was notorious. Westminster Bridge and the Houses of Parliament are shown in the background. On the right, a wooden pier projects from the newly constructed Victoria Embankment.

Oil on canvas

NG6399. Bequeathed by
Lord Astor of Haver, 1971

752.)))

WHAT'S IN YOUR WORD LIST?

- Travelers
 - Patterns
 - Distance
 - Abandoned
 - Delicacy
 - Parasol
-
- Attracted
 - Blossoming
 - Bent
 - Projects
 - Hazy
 - Bequeathed

“IMPRESSIONIST WANDERLUST” BY MEG WINIKATES

The delicacy of distance projects
hazy happiness on travelers' abandoned patterns;
pilgrims attracted to blossoming parasols,
the new dust bequeathed them
by bent roads which always curve
towards home again.

WORDCLOUDS

- Take a digital file of all your label copy for an exhibit. Run it through a word cloud generator.
- See what comes up as your most-used words.
- Use that word cloud to either:
 - Construct a poem using your most popular words
 - Find a different way to say what you want to say without using those words





"Windspire" wind turbine provided by
Mariah Power

Sustainable Solutions: Residential Wind Turbines

Power from the Wind

How can a wind turbine convert wind power into electricity?

In areas of sufficient sustained wind, the rotor is turned in the same manner as a windmill. The rotating center pole (as seen here, can be either on vertical or horizontal axis) is attached to a generator which contains strong magnets and coils inside. As the magnets rotate around the coils of copper wire a magnetic field is created which induces an electric current. The current is converted to useful AC current or DC current for battery charging.

"How much electricity does a residential scale wind turbine produce?"

A wind turbine produces different amounts of electricity at different wind speeds. At higher sustained wind speeds, more energy is produced (for reasons of safety, residential turbines are limited to a maximum velocity). The energy generated from a wind turbine depends on the "windiness" of your site as measured by both the sustained wind speed and annual seasonal variability of wind. With this information, it is possible to calculate an estimate of the amount of energy you will generate over a year.

"Will a residential wind turbine be feasible for me?"

Although the most accurate way to know is to install an anemometer and monitor wind speeds over at least a year, estimates for your location can be found on wind maps. Your site may be appropriate for a residential wind turbine if:

- you have about 11 mph average wind speed
- your property is at least ½ acre and has unobstructed access to wind
- your local zoning allows structures 30 or more feet in height
- your local utility has an existing interconnection agreement for home owners.



You are looking at a Windspire, a vertical axis wind turbine that generates electricity from wind power. This model produces about 2000 kWh of electricity a year in an area with average wind speeds of 12 mph (about 1/4 the needs of the average house). It can be used on-grid to power homes, businesses, large commercial buildings and off-grid to charge batteries, carts, remote lighting, water pumps, etc. The model you are viewing is a "giromill" style, which uses vertical airfoils that, like airplane wings, use the concept of "lift". Lift enables the rotor to spin around a little faster than the speed of the wind.

How is Windspire different from a traditional propeller-style turbine?

Since it spins around a vertical axis, Windspire can catch the wind from any direction to turn the rotor without re-orienting itself. The airfoils also spin more slowly than the tips of propeller-style blades, rendering it virtually silent. Windspire was specially designed with aesthetics and minimal cost in mind.

Wind farms are large multiple installations of commercial wind turbines, usually exceeding 100 ft. in height, that convert wind energy into electricity. Wind farms are being installed by utility companies around the globe to harness this source of renewable energy.

Now, new technology is making wind power generation feasible at the residential scale. A homeowner who lives in an area with sufficient wind, can install a wind turbine that feeds directly into the home, augmenting or replacing the electricity that comes from the local power company.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

For more information go to www.eere.energy.gov/windandhydro
www.nrel.gov or www.awea.org/smallwind/



UNITED STATES
BOTANIC GARDEN
on line <http://www.usbg>

GENRE-SWAPPING

- How would you re-write this label if you worked for a different kind of museum?
 - Art becomes science.
 - History becomes children's.
 - Science becomes humanities.
- How would you re-write this label if you were writing for an interstellar (friendly) alien? For someone from a different timeline? For your best friend?

HARMONOGRAPH

Harmonograph patterns record the swinging motion of the table, a compound pendulum. Each picture is a unique record of the push, twist, distribution of weights, and time it took to make.

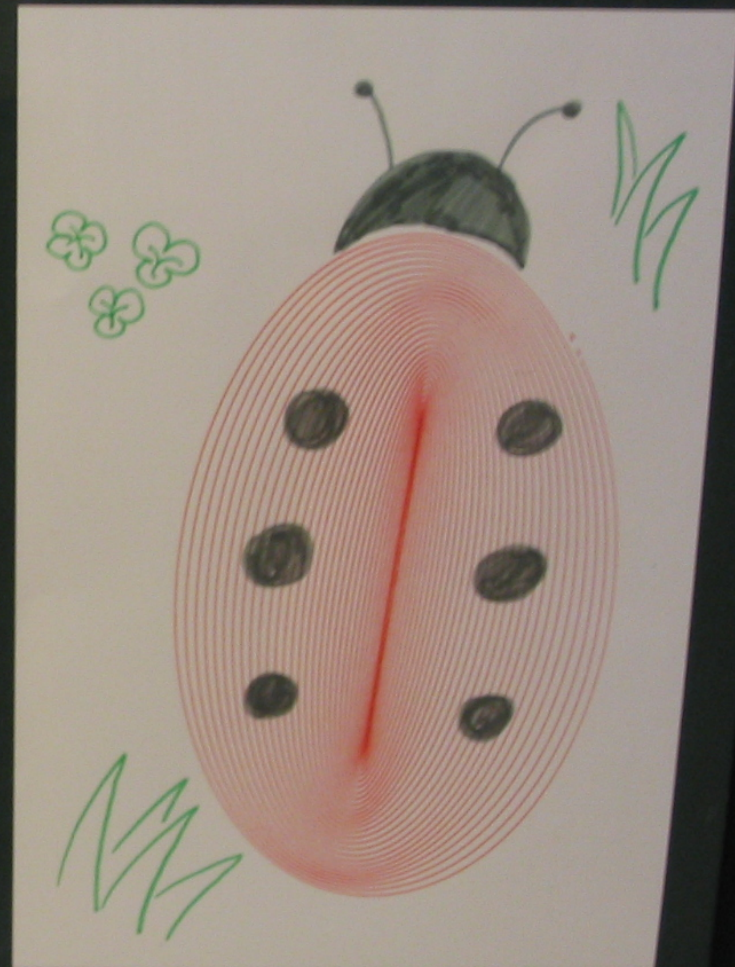
Each picture is art, math, science, and a timepiece!

Patterns occur throughout nature. Not only are they beautiful, but they contain information and clues that scientists and mathematicians use to learn how things work or how they were formed.

Look and listen for other patterns of sound and motion as you explore throughout the Museum.

Imagine...

- ◆ What else can you see in your drawing?
- ◆ What else could it be?



CROSSWORDS

- Concept before vocabulary
- Interactivity makes things 'sticky'
- Surprise and challenge = emotion and accomplishment
- Great for prototyping explanatory text with visitors: what do they remember?

[illegible]

WHAT KEYWORDS WOULD MAKE A GOOD CROSSWORD PAIR?



HOMAGE, PASTICHE, AND BORROWED VOICES

- Dr. Seuss
- Emily Dickinson
- Shakespeare
- Edgar Allen Poe
- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
- e.e. cummings
- Lin Manuel Miranda
- Langston Hughes
- Maya Angelou
- Gwendolyn Brooks



Stoneware bowl

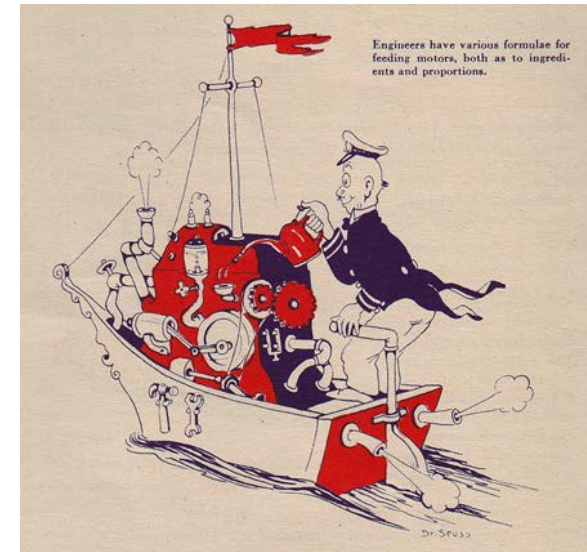
about 1796

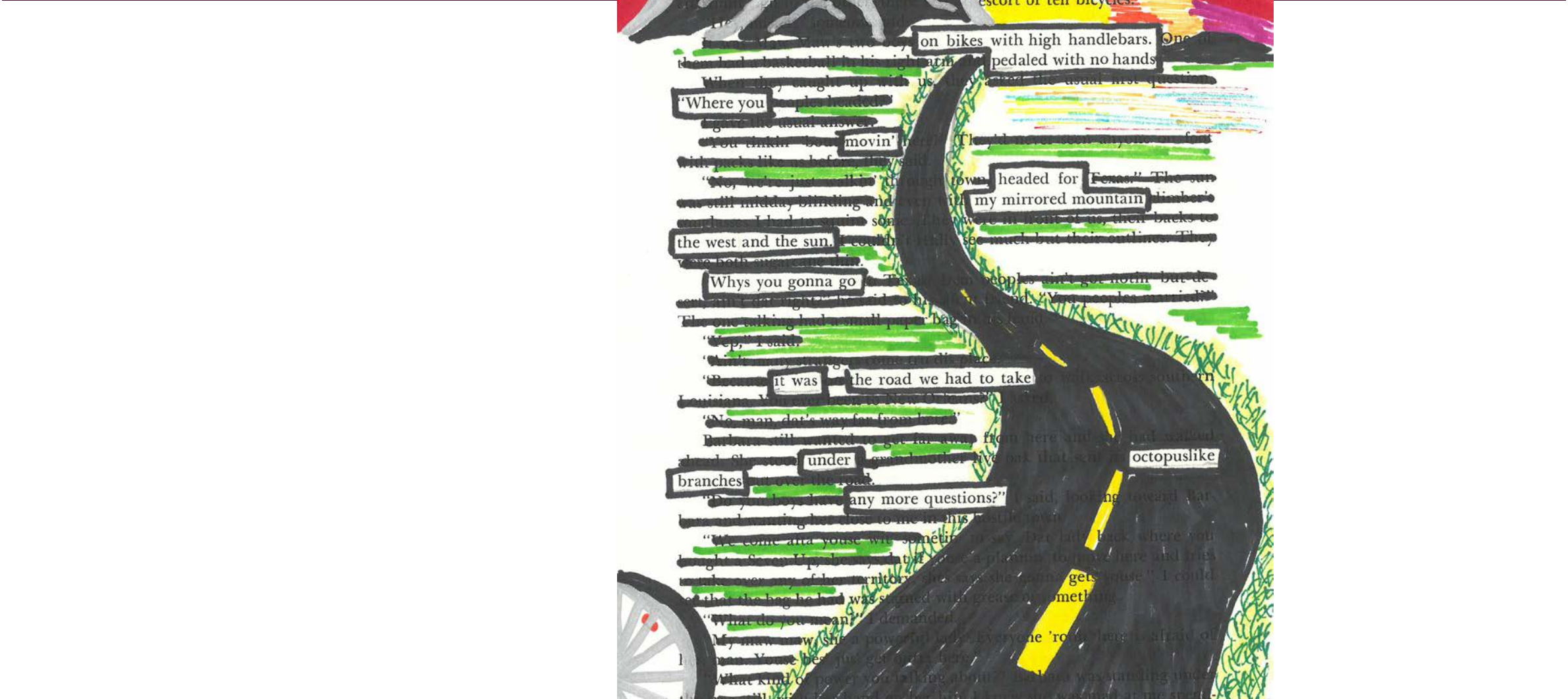
The inside of this bowl bears the words: 'May all British Admirals have the Eye of an HAWKE, the Heart of a WOLFE, and the Spirit of a RODNEY'. The phrase refers to Admiral Edward Hawke, victor at Quiberon Bay (1759), General James Wolfe who died at Quebec (1759), and Admiral George Rodney, victor of the Battle of the Saints (1782). The 'Spirit of a Rodney' may refer to a type of broad-based spirit decanter named after him.

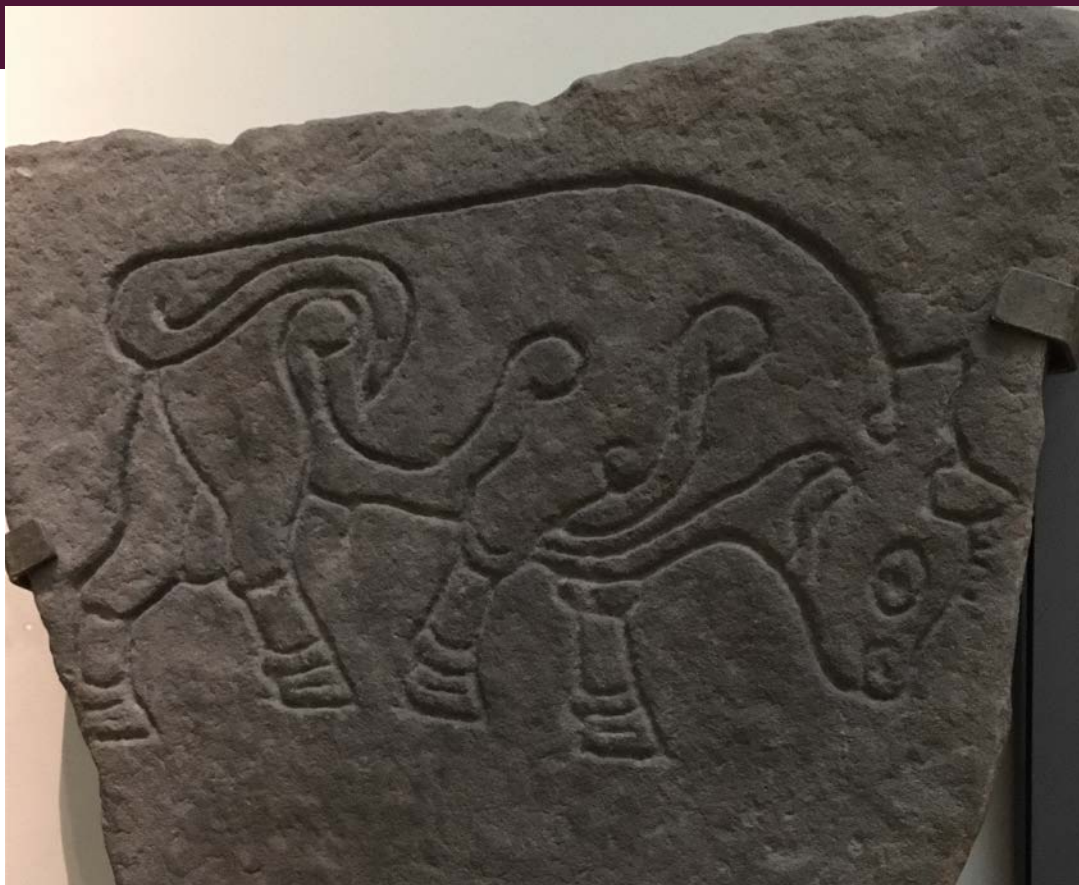
The soul of this bowl, beneath salad dressing
is a bit of a joke and a bit of a blessing—
containing the wishes of sailors at sea
not to be food for fishes, but winning and free.

“Oh, Admirals!” they say, “Be cunning and wise,
like three Admirals past whose traits we so prize—
If you spy a French vessel we want you to squawk
what you’ve spotted with eyes like a Hawke!”

“And no running away, have a heart like a Wolfe,
not a cowardly thumper like Grumpus McGroolf.
Plus, have Rodney’s spirit! (By which we mean drink,
but not ‘til you’re tipsy, or we’ll sink, which would stink!)”







Pictish carving: the 'Burghead bull'

This muscular bull is an example of the magnificent stone carvings of the Picts, the Celtic-speaking people who ruled north and east Scotland between around AD 400–850s. The distinctive symbols of Pictish art, including animals, artefacts and geometric motifs, are now enigmatic. In some cases they may represent a type of commemorative writing.

Carved into a sandstone boulder, this bull is one of up to thirty bull sculptures found at Burghead, a major Pictish fortress in northern Scotland. Its lifelike pose and contoured legs and belly are characteristically Pictish. Once probably brightly painted, the carved bulls would have held a powerful presence at Burghead. Perhaps they symbolised warrior-like qualities of strength or aggression, held ritual significance, or were the emblem of the local ruling family.

AD 600s–700s. Burghead, Morayshire, Scotland,
donated by James de Carle Sowerby, 1861, 1024.1

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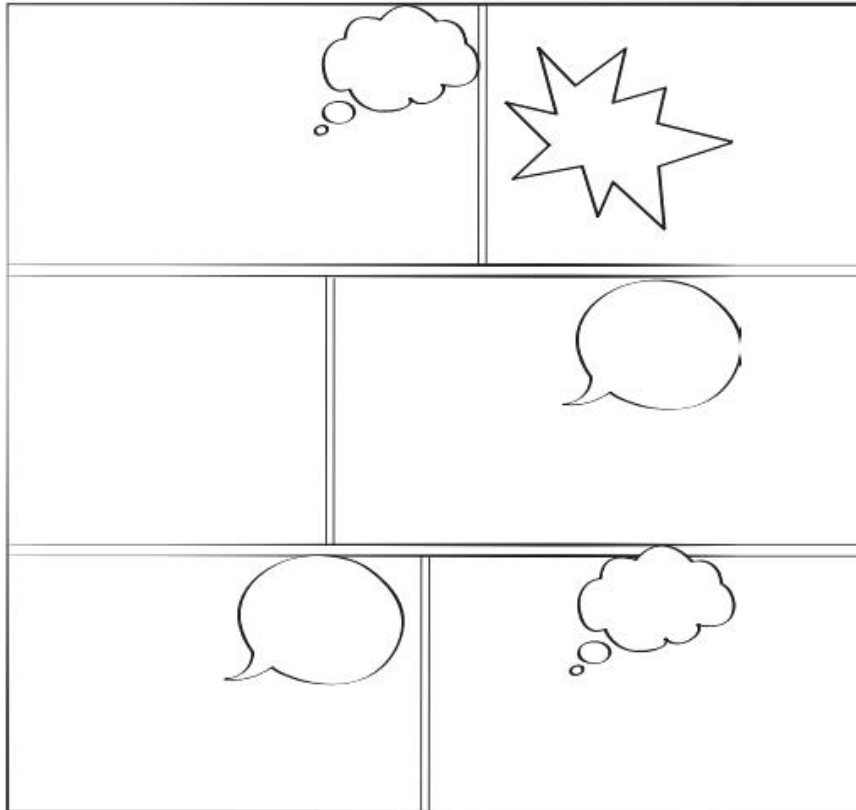
AD 600s–700s. Burghead, Morayshire, Scotland,
donated by the local authority.

COMIC STRIPS

- Ongoing popularity
- Graphic novels
- Web comics



BATH, ASSEMBLY ROOMS



THE STORY OF BLADUD

Bladud, the British King who learnt to fly, is one of the most remarkable characters connected with Bath's history. His story is a popular local myth and today images and allusions to him can be seen in many places in Bath, including his statue opposite this window.

The images here show some of the ways in which Bladud has been represented in architecture, art, literature and the daily life of Bath.

The earliest surviving account of Bladud tells us that he was the 9th king of the Britons, son of Ludhudibras and father of King Lear and came to the throne in 863BC. It was written in the 12th century by Geoffrey of Monmouth, a leading historian but also a fantasist who loved good stories and sometimes confused them with historical writing.

In his version of the story we are told that on his father's death Bladud returned from Athens where he was educated, accompanied by four philosophers. He founded a university at Stamford in Lincolnshire

and through the practice of magic created the hot springs at Bath where he dedicated a temple to Minerva and placed within it an eternal flame. He made feathered wings and learnt to fly, but fell on the temple of Apollo at New Troy and broke his neck, whereupon he was succeeded by King Lear.



MAGNETIC POETRY

- Therapy by destruction
- Great way to KonMari your old magazines
- Appropriate for ages 6-106
- Can be approximated with post-it notes also



Join the conversation

What does USS Constitution mean to you?

DON'T GIVE UP
THE SHIP



2D & 3D CONSTRUCTIONS



WHEN IN DOUBT...



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