



Park Life

A Big Local Gateshead project for local people



Local Trust | Big Local

Big Local Gateshead, St Chad's Community Project, 21 Liddell Terrace, Bensham, Gateshead, NE8 1YN

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Park *Life*

A Big Local Gateshead project for local people

Park *Life* is an exciting new artwork funded by Big Local Gateshead and created by local children working with artist, Tommy Anderson, and writer, Paul Summers.

Sited at Charlton Walk Park in Teams, Gateshead, **Park *Life*** explores the people, places and history of the area. Inspired by the stories of local people, archive images of Teams and Bensham, and aspirations of the children themselves, the artwork is a poetic insight into the rich culture and heritage of Gateshead.

This booklet showcases the complete artwork and also documents the creative processes used to produce it.

Big Local Gateshead is a community project working to improve the local area and the lives of the people living in it. Following consultations with local residents a key theme to emerge was that people wanted green-spaces and park-sites to be improved. With this in mind Big Local Gateshead commissioned Baseline Shift to work with three local primary schools in the Teams and Bensham area to design a new artwork for Charlton Walk Park. Big Local Gateshead also worked with Network Rail who cleaned up the site in preparation for the work being installed.

We hope that this is just the first step in terms of brightening up the local area and helping to breathe life back into an unloved local park.

Tommy Anderson (Baseline Shift) is an experienced arts facilitator and graphic designer, managing and delivering progressive participatory and educational arts programmes inspired by his practice. He is passionate about providing creative opportunities for those who wouldn't usually have access to the arts, enabling communities to explore a wide range of artistic processes to gain understanding, enjoyment and reward from what they are doing.

Paul Summers is a poet and writer who has facilitated numerous socially engaged creative projects across the North of England in educational and community contexts. He has also written for TV, Radio, Film and Theatre and has collaborated many times with artists on mixed-media and public art projects.

Well done to all the children who have taken part...

Corpus Christi Deborah, Dylan, Hannah, Isobel, Judith, Katie-Leigh, Kenzi, Nancy and Naomi.

Kelvin Grove Abbie, Alese, Amelia, Casey, Ela, Grace, Kiera, Libby, Natalia and Ramandeep.

St. Aidan's Charlotte, Emily, Hannah, Jacob, Janice, Jasmine, Joseph, Layla and Tegan.

“I was so proud to have the opportunity to officially open the display of creative and artistic work by youngsters from St Aidan's, Kelvin Grove and Corpus Christi, and to play even a small part in this amazing, visionary project. On behalf of the borough, I thank Big Local, Network Rail, and all those who've worked so hard to make this vision become a reality, transforming this patch of land into an inviting space which we can all now enjoy.”

Councillor Allison Ilderton-Thompson
(Mayor of Gateshead)

“Taking part in the Charlton Walk Project has been an amazing opportunity for our children. They have been given the opportunity to work with a professional artist and writer, experiencing types of artwork and writing that are new and exciting to them.

The fact the project is on their doorstep is fantastic. They can see and touch the artwork whenever they wish to, show it off to their friends, families and other members of the community but most importantly take great pride in the fact that they played an important role in making their own community a better place.”

Cheryl Lain
(St. Aidans Primary School)

“The project has been extremely successful because the art work has given the children the opportunity to learn new skills. The children have expressed themselves using a variety of techniques, such as Photomontage and Typography, and have experienced the benefits of working together to achieve a common goal.

Having to attend every week over a prolonged period of time on a Friday evening and in their own time has taught them to appreciate commitment and seeing something through to completion.

The variety of topics covered in the workshops worked well and allowed the children to gradually build towards a single outcome through a series of interrelated activities.

Tommy Anderson and Paul Summers created a happy and safe environment which encouraged the children to relax, experiment and embrace the various techniques that were shown to them.”

Beverley Hann
(Kelvin Grove Primary School)

“Working with Tommy and Paul has been a hugely positive experience for the children. As well as learning new skills, the project has strengthened their sense of community pride.”

Deborah Blair
(Corpus Christi Primary School)

“Having lived and worked in Bensham for several years, the Park Life project has been a wonderful opportunity to create a major artwork for the area that has brought people together to celebrate their community.

The duration of the project has allowed me to explore a range of artforms with the children, resulting in a rich and detailed interpretation of the area and it’s people.

Hopefully the project will spark a continued interest in the arts for the children, and a sense of pride in their community.

I’d also like to thank the teachers who have supported and encouraged the children throughout the project.”

Tommy Anderson
(Lead Artist, Baseline Shift)

“Working with the young people was a lot of fun – they are a great bunch, creative and enthusiastic, and they produced lots of strong writing.

Judging by the childrens faces on a cold October day when the artwork was unveiled, they loved the end product and were incredibly proud to see their words and pictures go public. Hopefully their involvement in the process will have wetted their appetites for a bit more creativity, they certainly have the energy and imagination to move on to even bigger and better things.”

Paul Summers
(Creative Writer)

“As a local person I know how important it is to get people working together to improve things in the community. This art project shows that local young people want to improve the area, and this work, in a run down local park, really brightens up the place. We hope that this is just the first of many community projects that Big Local is involved with.”

Lawrence O'Halleron
(Chairperson, Big Local Gateshead)

“The Park Life project involved local children and really brightened up a local park (Charlton Walk) which had fallen into disrepair. The artwork is vibrant and interesting, and can hopefully encourage people back into the park again. The project represents something new and creative for both the participants and the local area. We hope to make further improvements to the park in the future which may include new seating, lighting, and a green project being based there.”

Andrew Tinkler
(Project Manager, Big Local Gateshead)

“Working with the Park Life Project has been a great opportunity for Network Rail to engage with a number of local organisations and young people. This project has demonstrated that by thinking positive and working collaboratively we can all make a difference. The artwork is fantastic and a real credit to all those involved in creating an area that will now be used by the local community, but also one that they can be proud of.”

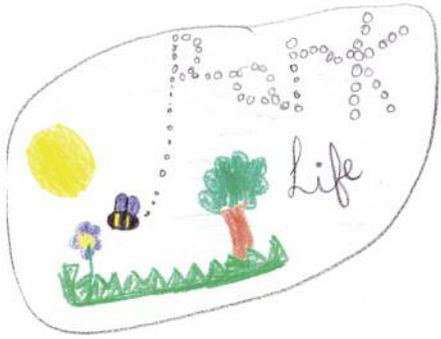
Vicki Beadle
(Community Safety Manager, Network Rail)



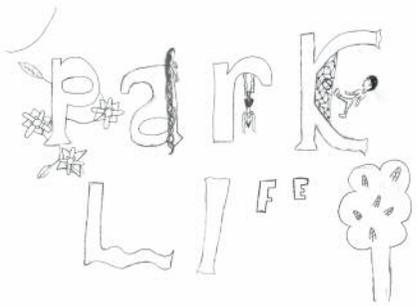
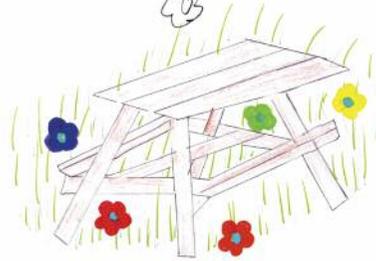
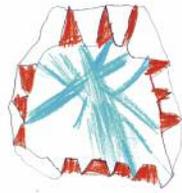
“I’m so proud of my art – I didn’t think I could be so creative”

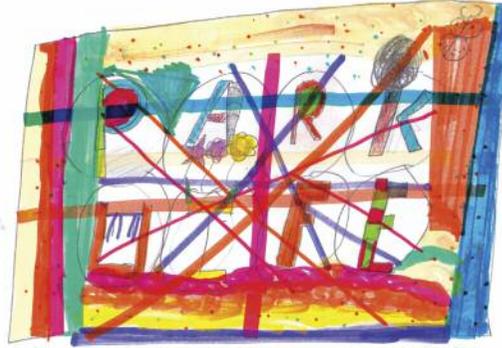




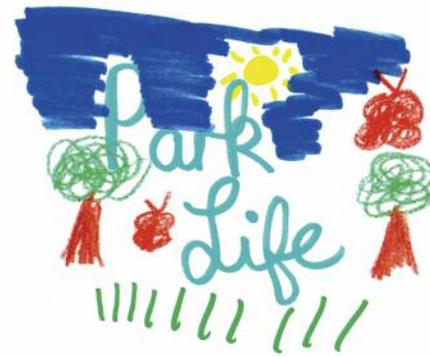
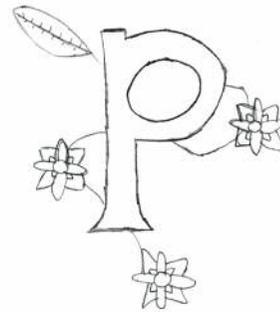
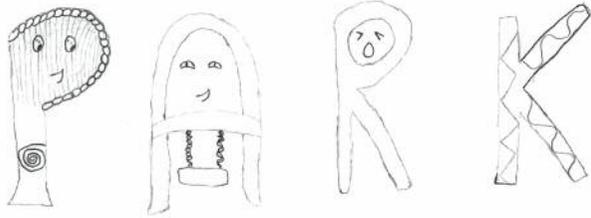


**PARK
Life!**

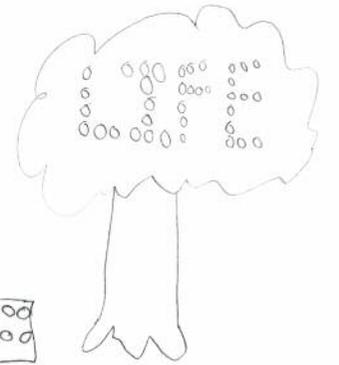
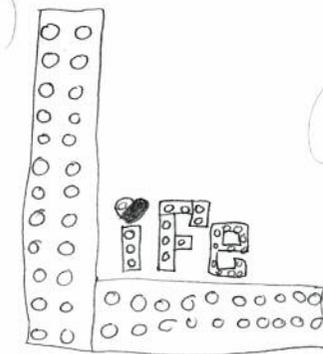




**“Art club
is amazing
– I look forward
to it every week
– I want to do
art for ever!”**



PARK

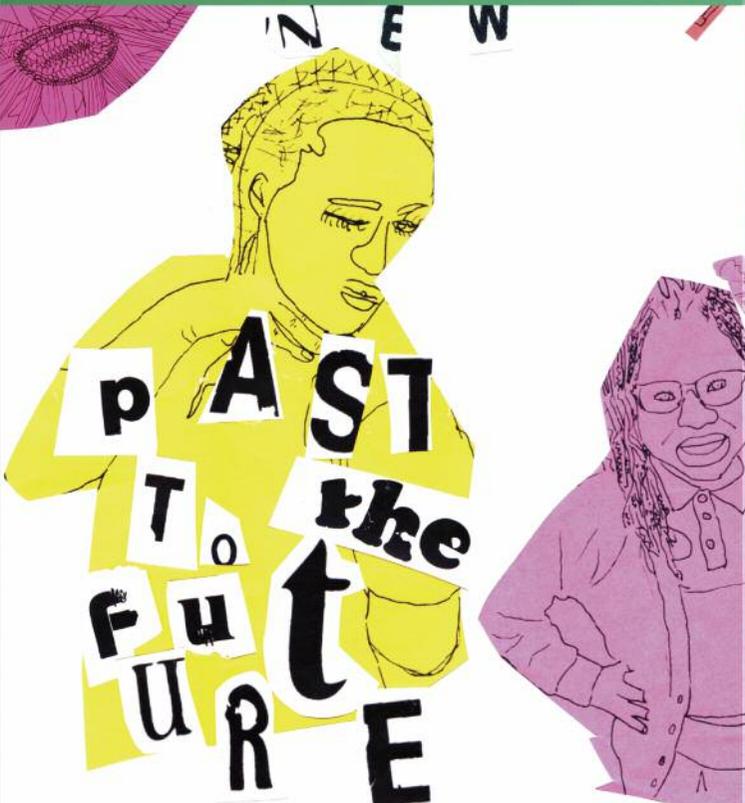


“I didn't think there were so many different kinds of art”





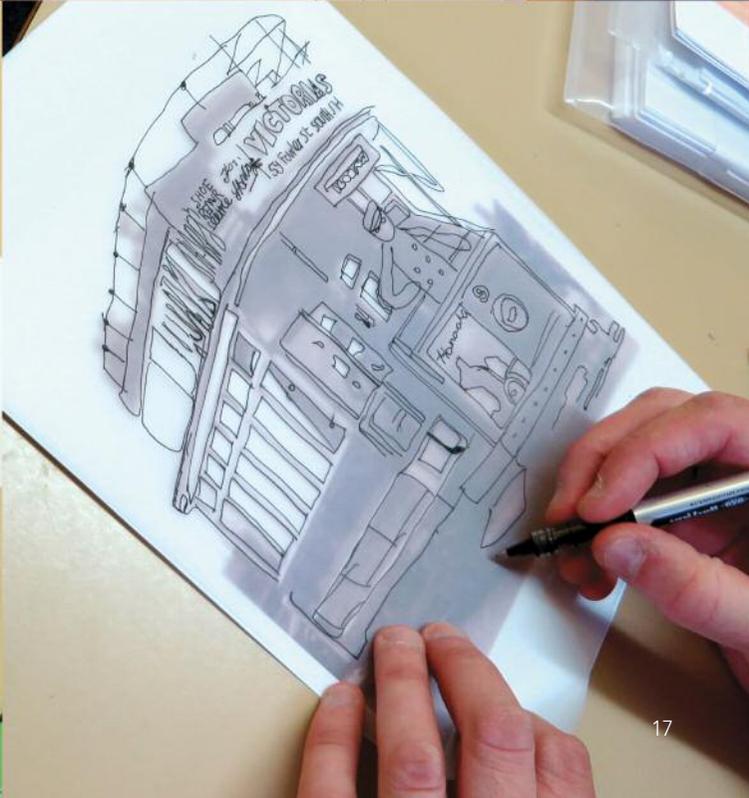




It's so exciting!
...I want to be an artist!"



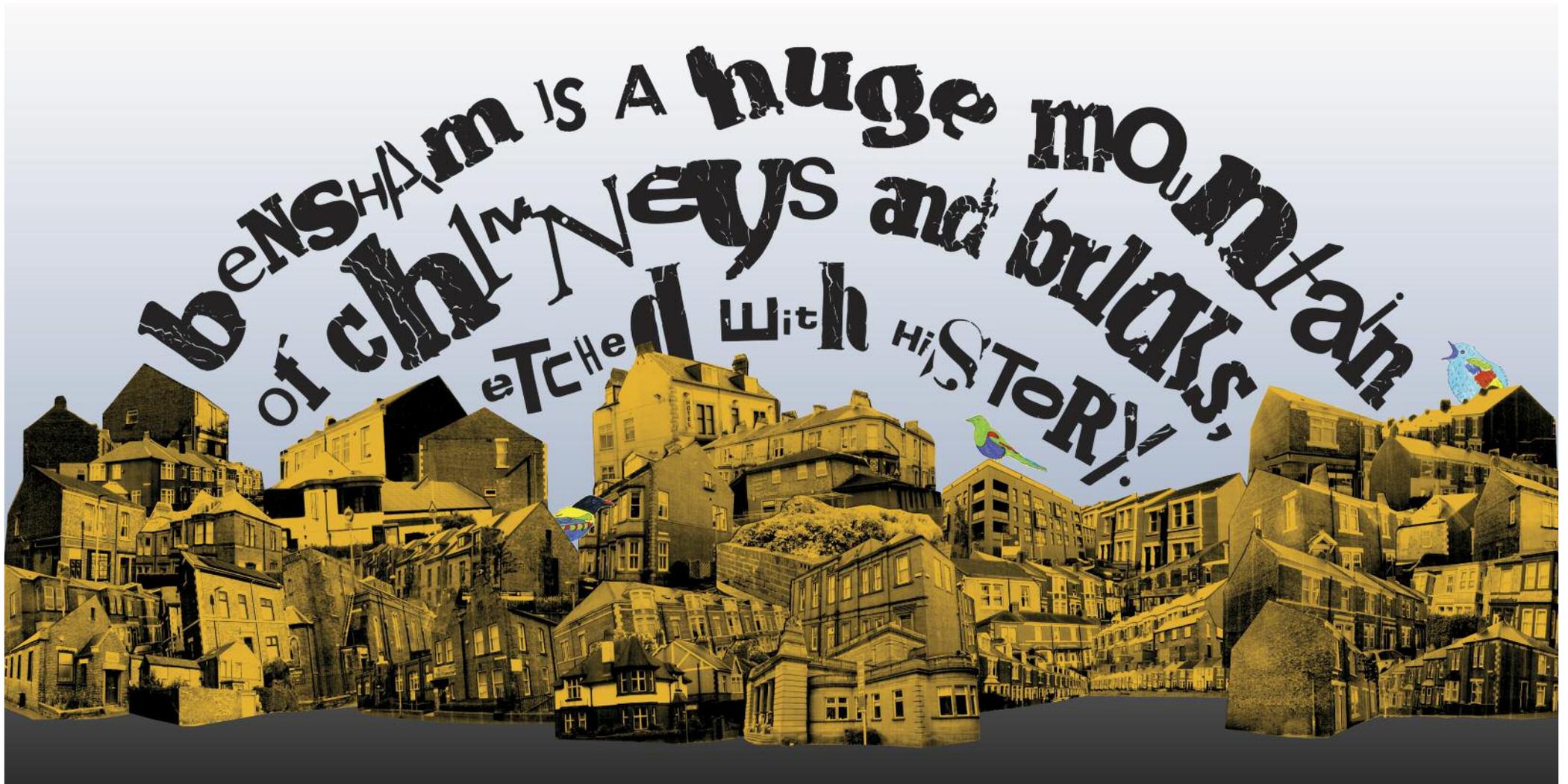
“You learn something new every week”



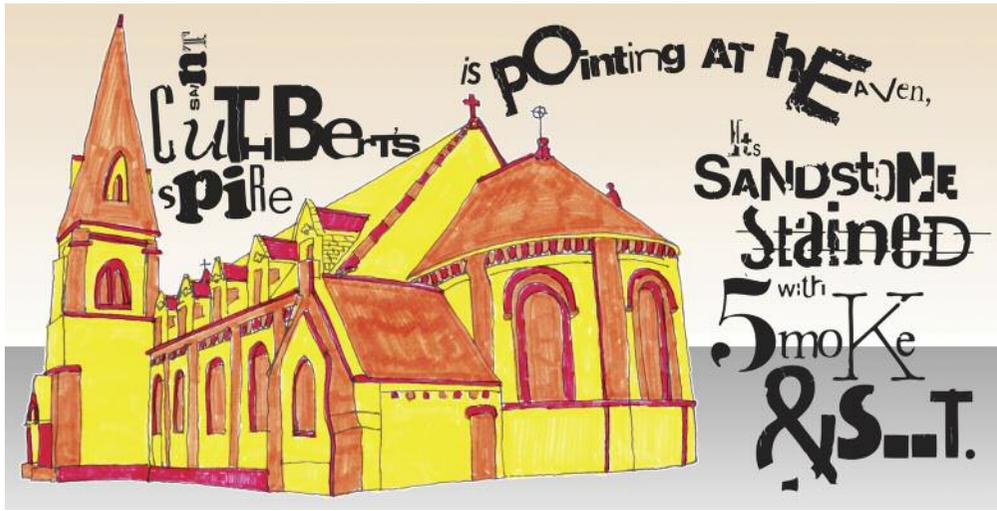




"This is the best thing I've done in my entire life"



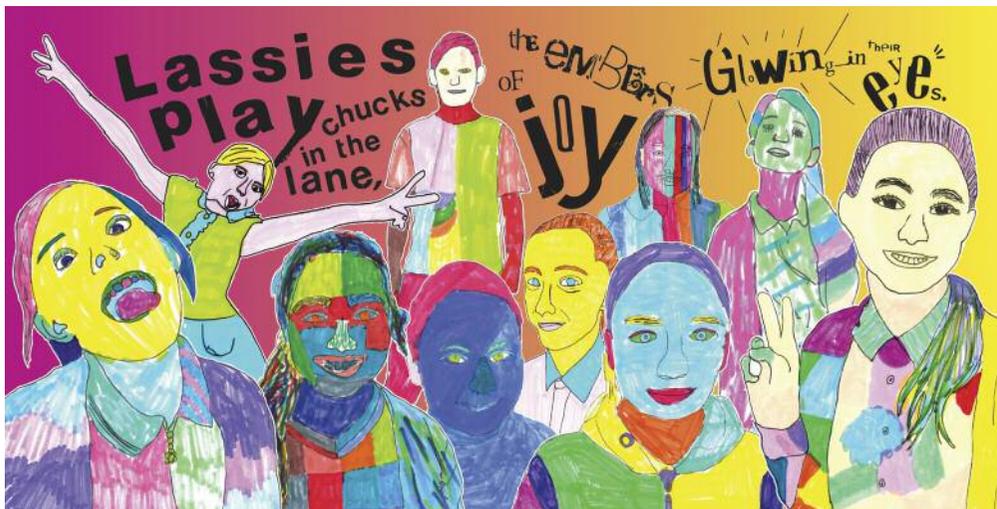
Bensham is a huge mountain of chimneys and bricks,
Etched with history.



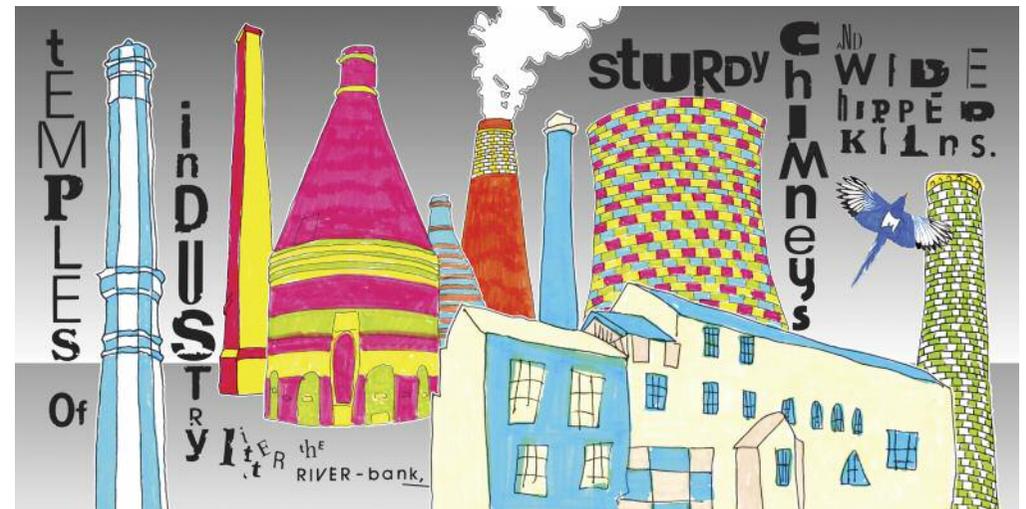
Saint Cuthbert's spire is pointing at Heaven,
Its sandstone stained with smoke and soot.



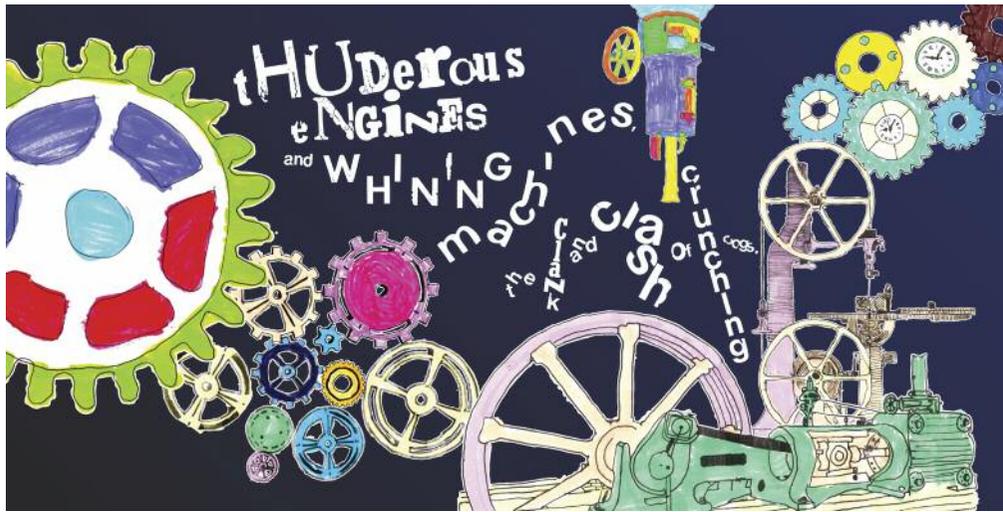
Plum faced housewives braying carpets and scrubbing steps,
Nebbing at the neighbours as they row about nowt.



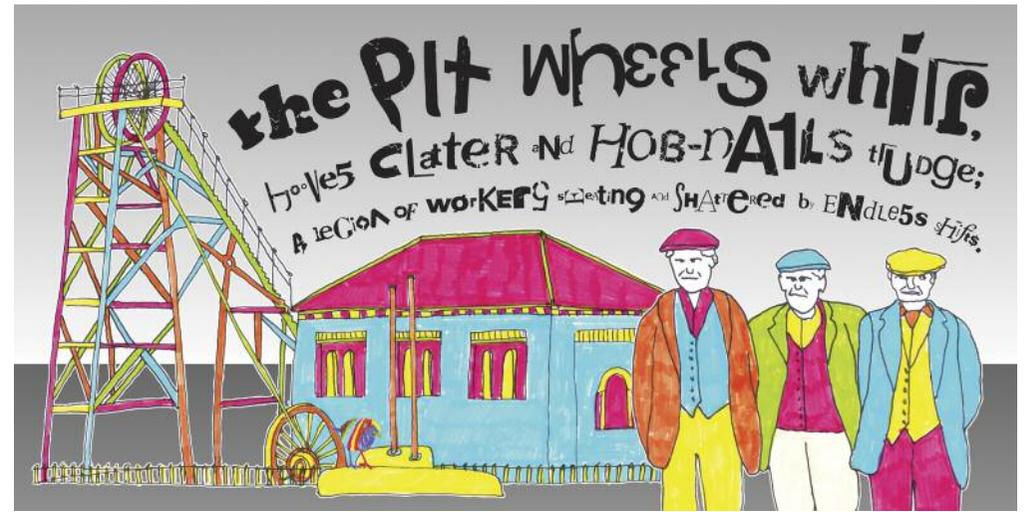
Lassies play chucks in the lane,
The embers of joy glowing in their eyes.



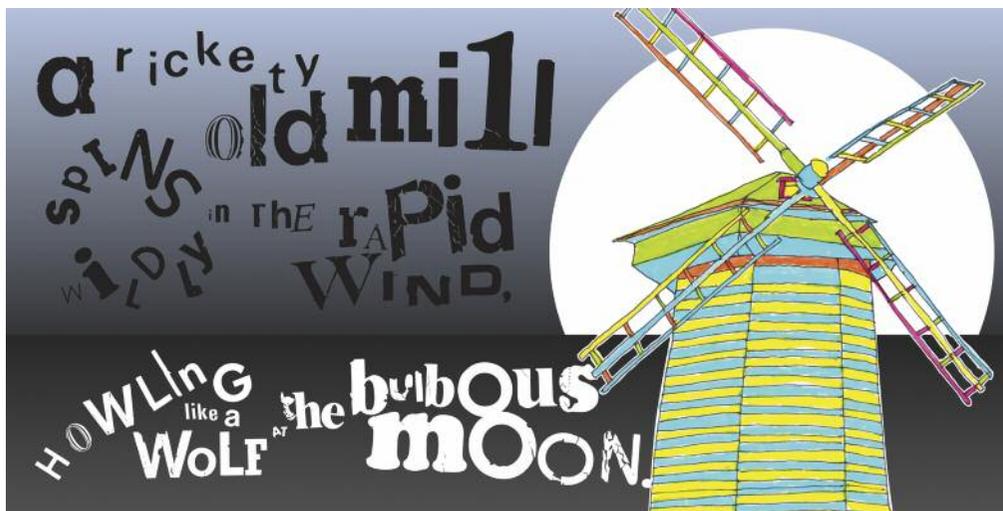
Temples of industry litter the river-bank,
Sturdy chimneys and wide hipped kilns.



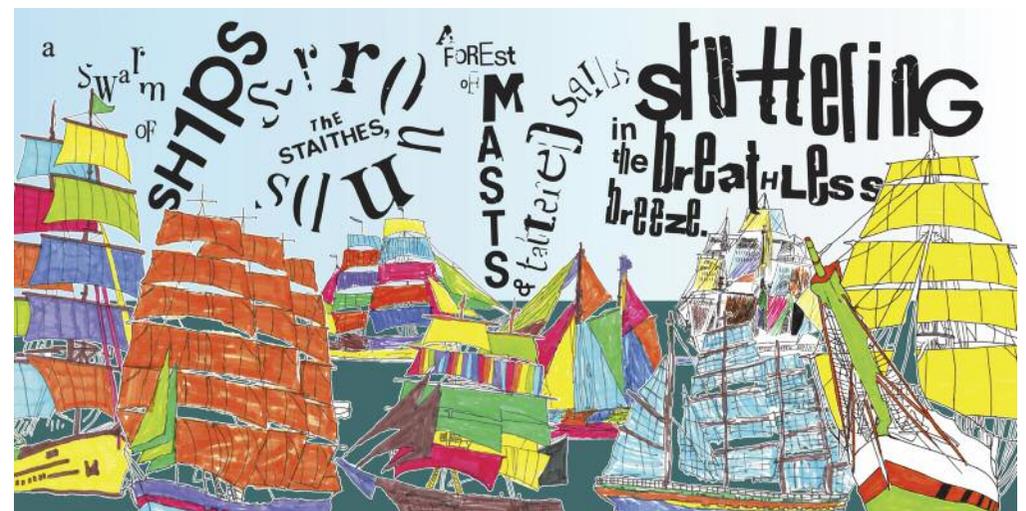
Thunderous engines and whining machines,
The clank and clash of crunching cogs.



The pit-wheels whirr, hooves clatter and hob-nails trudge;
A legion of workers sweating and shattered by endless shifts.



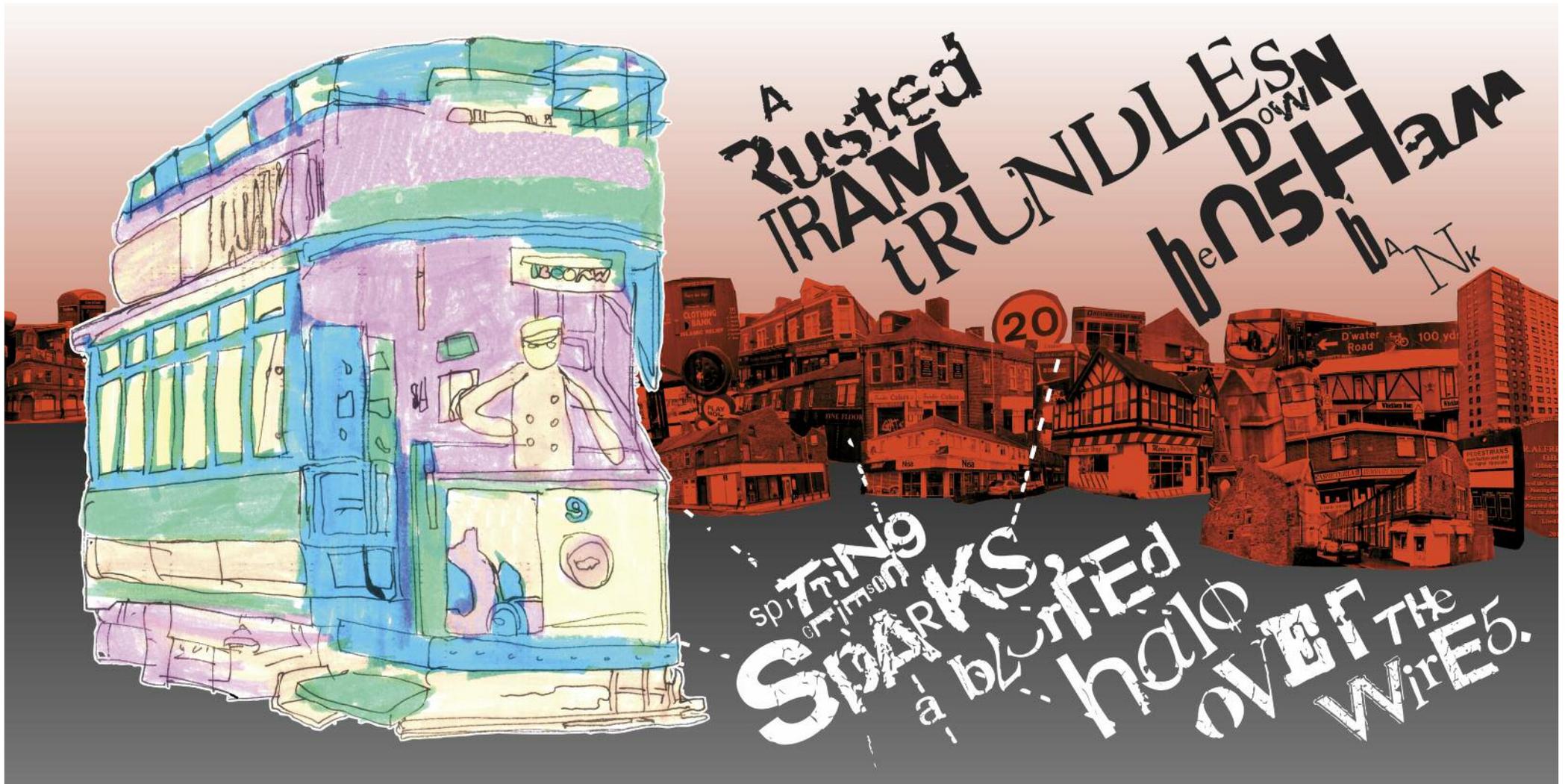
A rickety old mill spins wildly in the rapid wind,
Howling like a wolf at the bulbous moon.



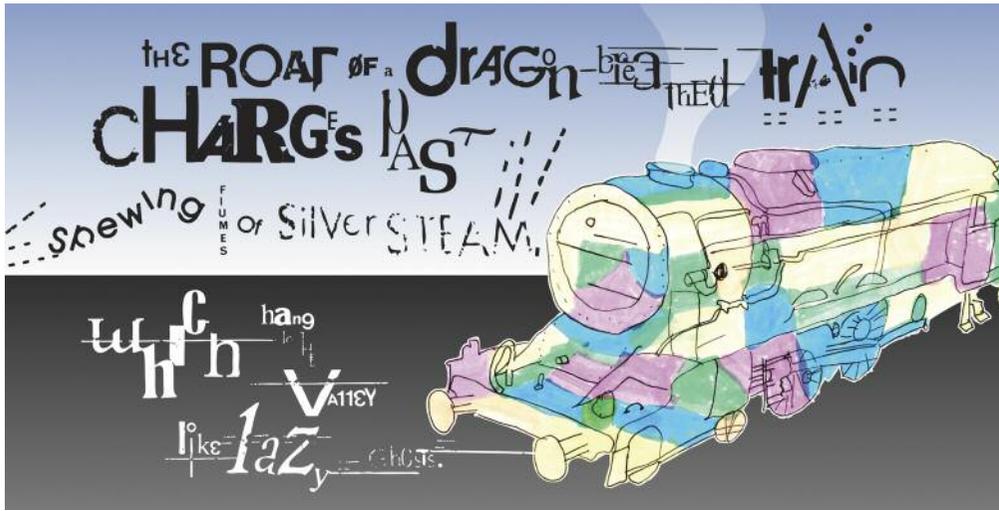
A swarm of ships surrounds the staithe,
A forest of masts and tattered sails
Stuttering in a breathless breeze.



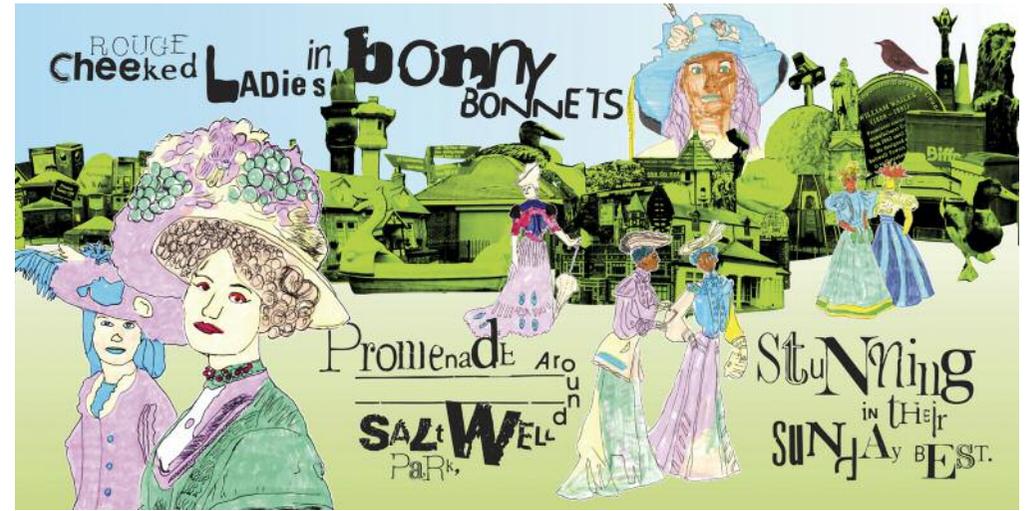
Slow carts click and clack on crooked cobbles.



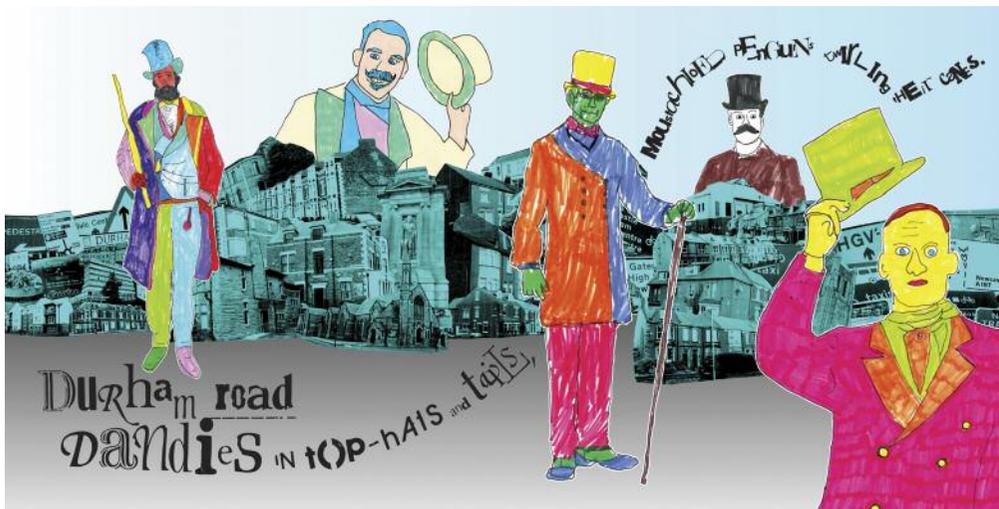
A rusted tram trundles down Bensham Bank
Spitting crimson sparks,
A blurred halo over the wires.



The roar of a dragon-breathed train charges past
Spewing flumes of silver steam,
Which hang in the valley like lazy ghosts.



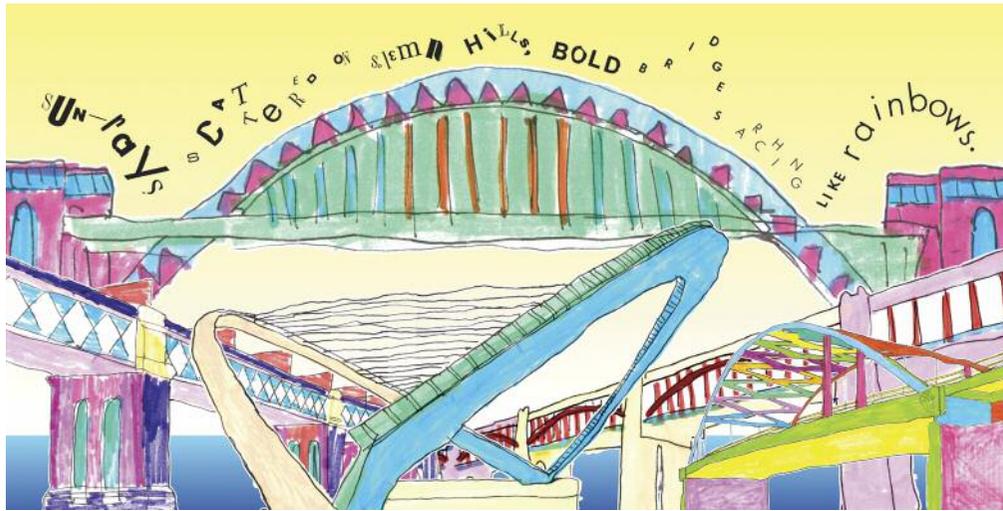
Rouge cheeked ladies in bonny bonnets
Promenade around Saltwell Park,
Stunning in their Sunday best.



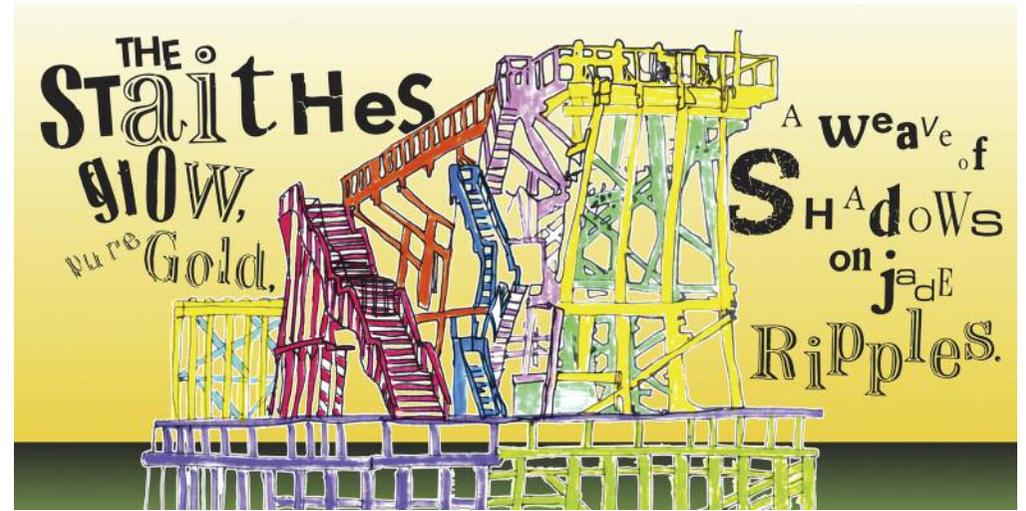
Durham Road dandies in top-hats and tails,
Moustachioed penguins twirling their canes.



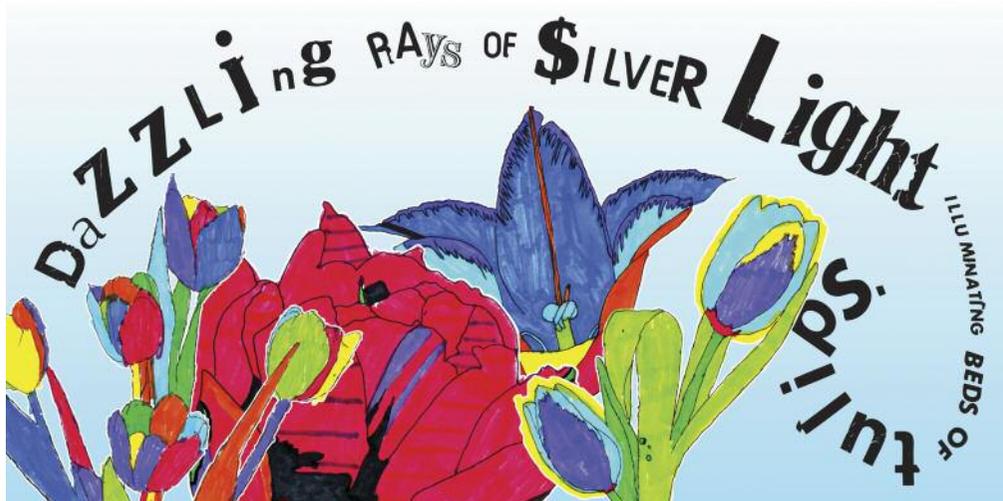
Today the sky is fractured ice,
A loose thatch of vapour trails
Dissolving like chalk lines in heavy drizzle.



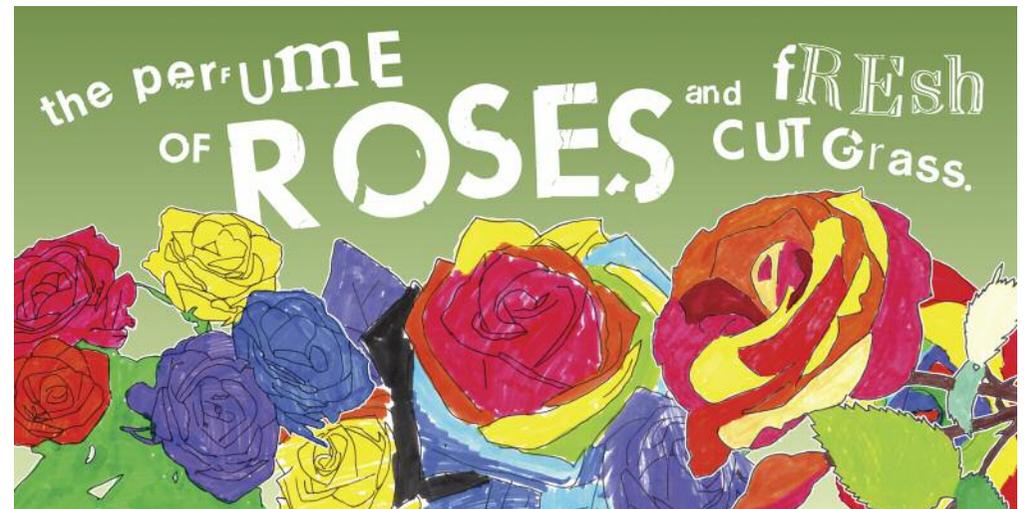
Sun-rays scattered on solemn hills,
Bold bridges arching like rainbows.



The staithes glow, pure gold,
A weave of shadows on jade ripples.



Dazzling rays of silver light
Illuminating beds of tulips.



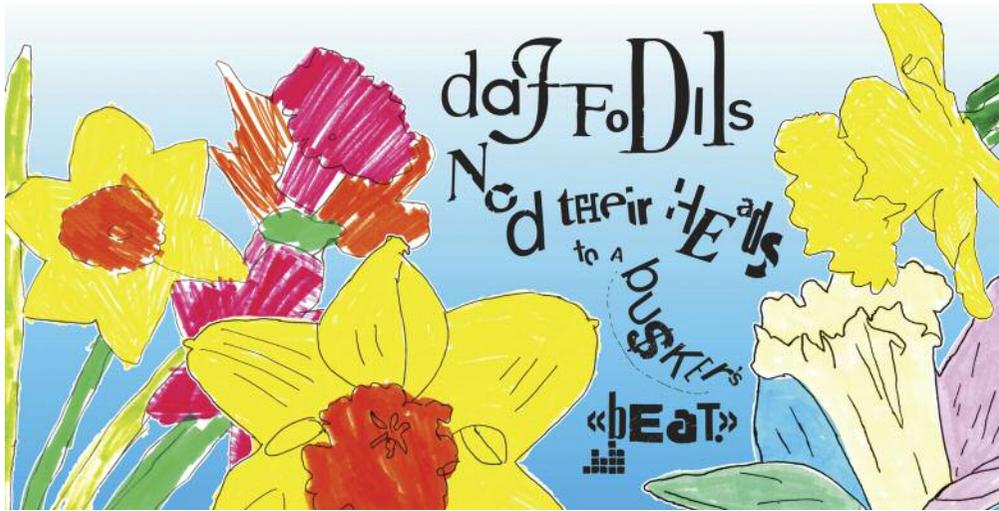
The perfume of roses and fresh cut grass.



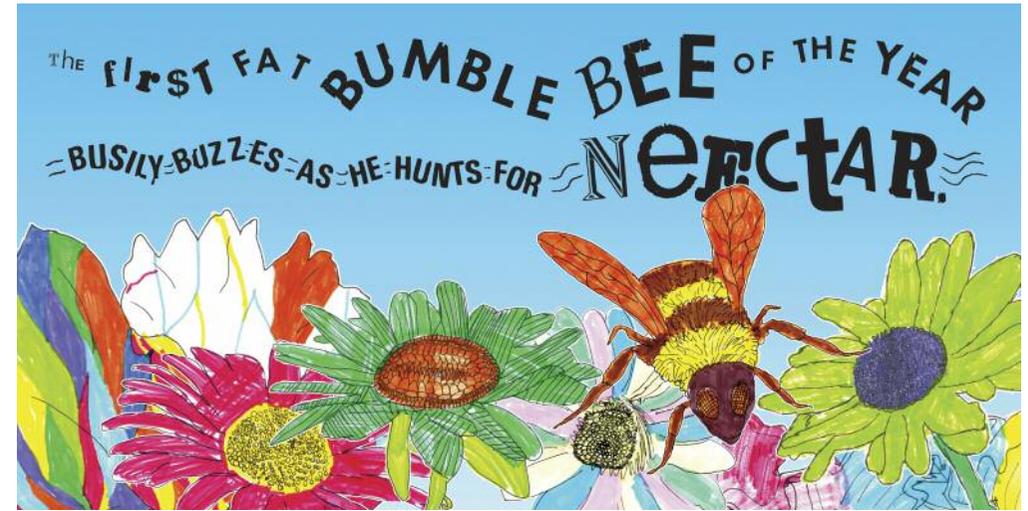
A patchwork of bluebells,
Dew glistens like new-born stars.



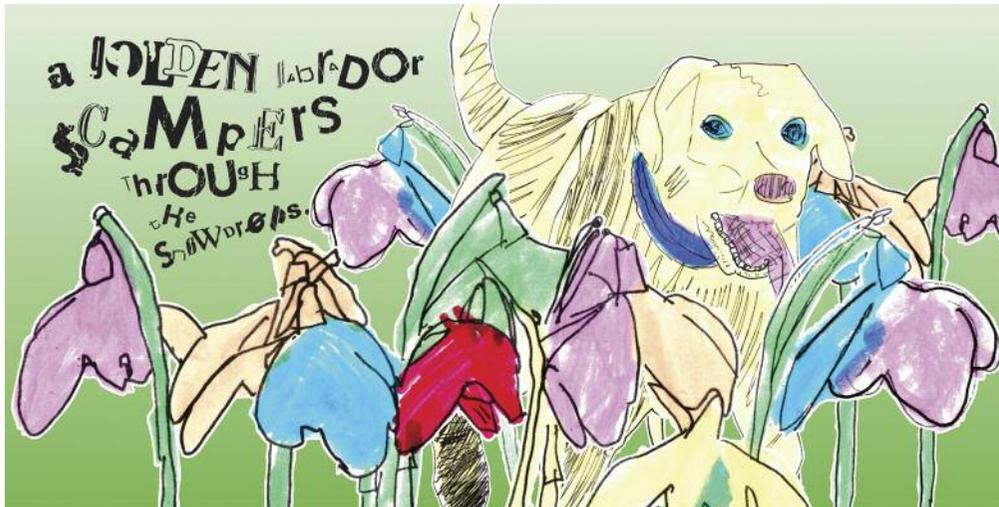
Emerald leaves flirt,
locked in a Springtime dance,
Caught in curving drifts.



Daffodils nod their heads
To a busker's beat.



The first fat bumble bee of the year
Busily buzzes as he hunts for nectar.



A golden Labrador scampers through the snowdrops.



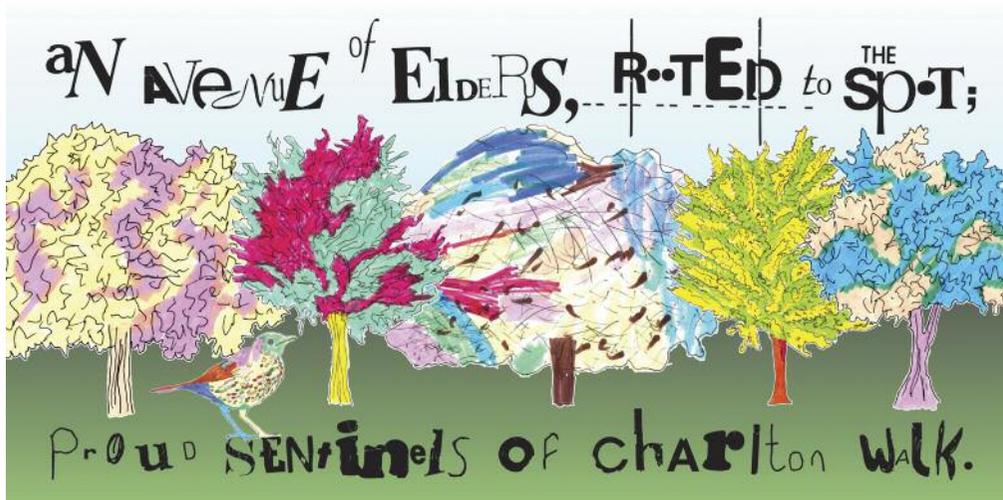
A blossom blizzard of two-tone confetti:
Purples and pinks.



An ivy serpent slaloms the fence,
Creeping like fire.



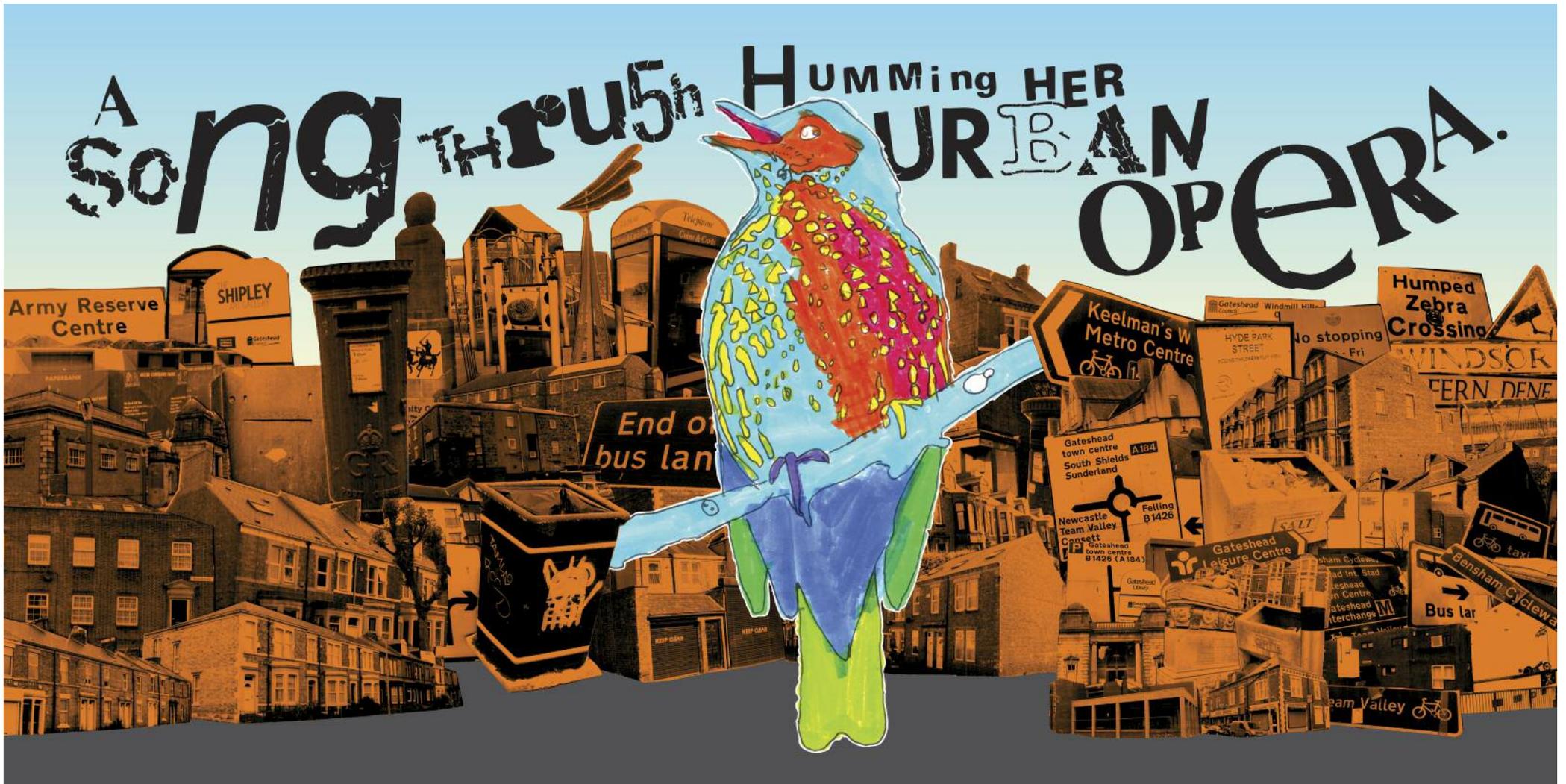
A bragging butterfly glides by,
Posing in the summer sun.



An avenue of elders, rooted to the spot;
Proud sentinels of Charlton Walk.



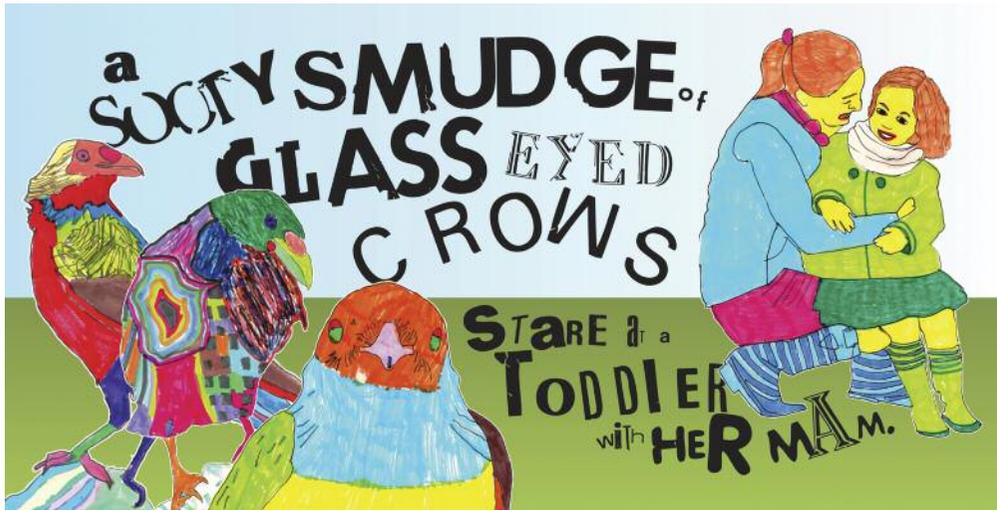
The weightless air is a potion of scents:
Knotted and tangled, wrestling like kittens,
The sweet smell of petrichor,



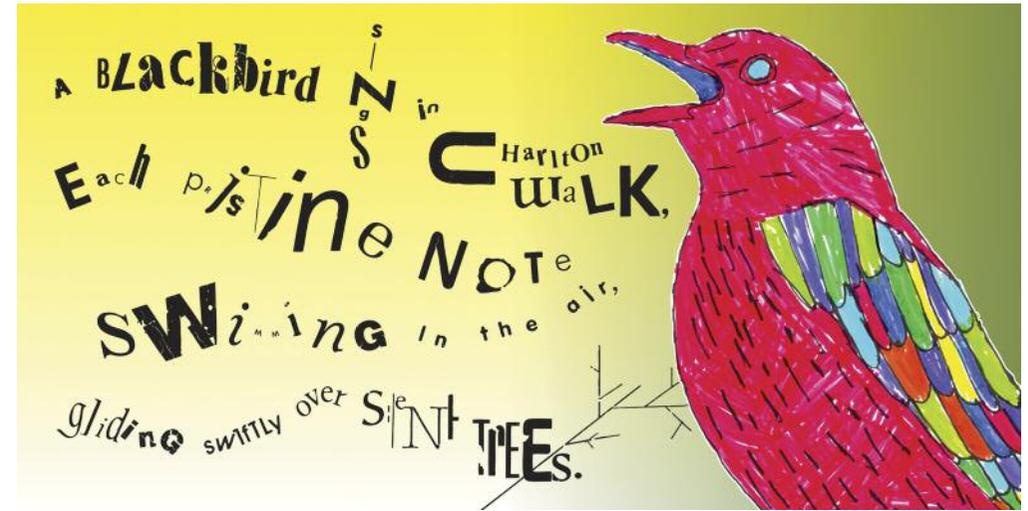
A song thrush humming her urban opera.



Show-off seagulls swoop and soar,
Silent somersaults over Saltwell Road.



A sooty smudge of glass eyed crows
Stare at a toddler with her mam.



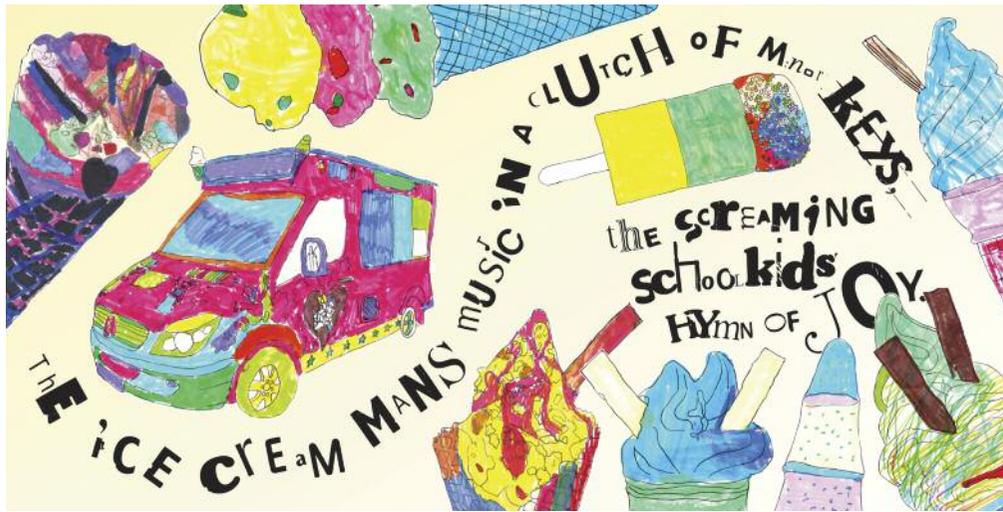
A blackbird sings in Charlton Walk,
Each pristine note swimming in the air,
Gliding swiftly over silent trees.



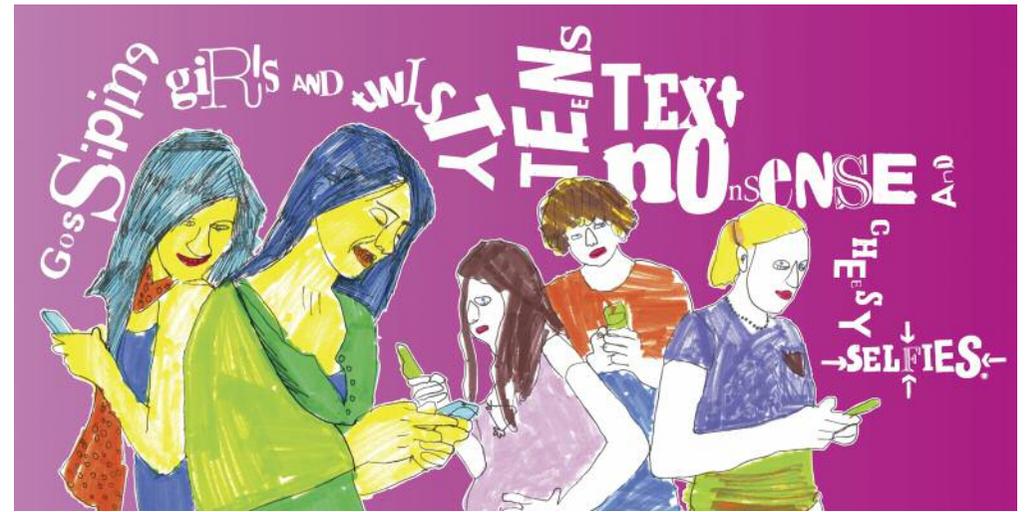
A pair of fledgling magpies
Perch in the branches of timid trees.
Two for joy.



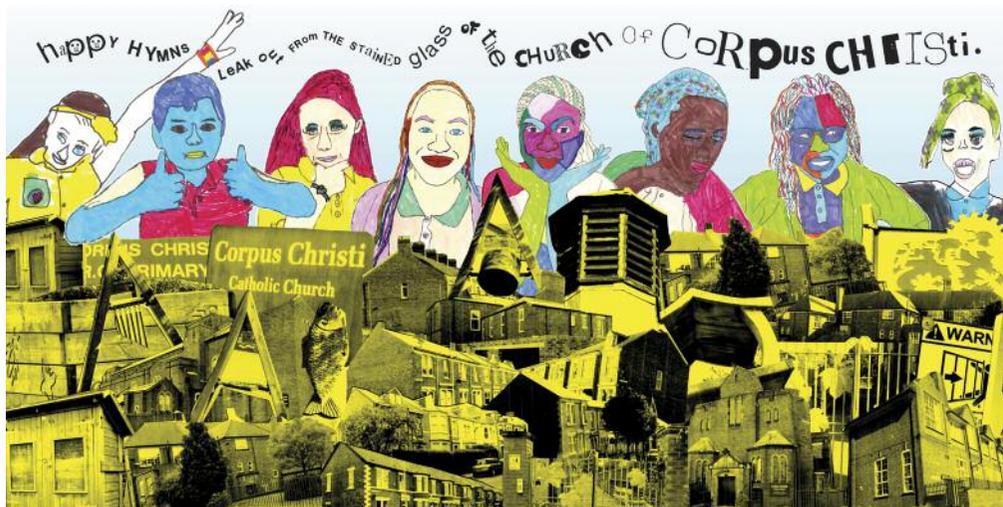
A gaggle of kids,
Red-faced and laughing,
Play chasey in the park.



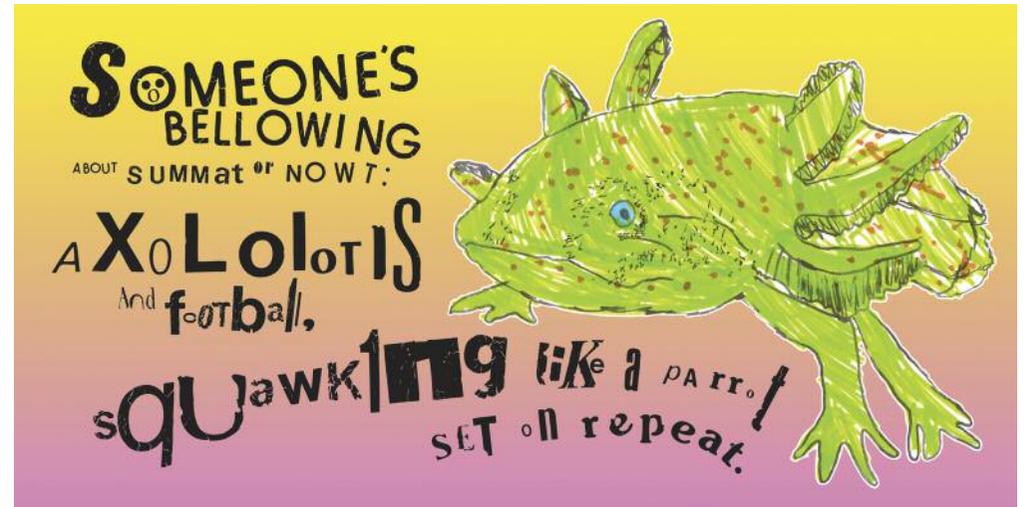
The ice-cream man's music
 In a clutch of minor keys,
 The screaming schoolkids' hymn of joy.



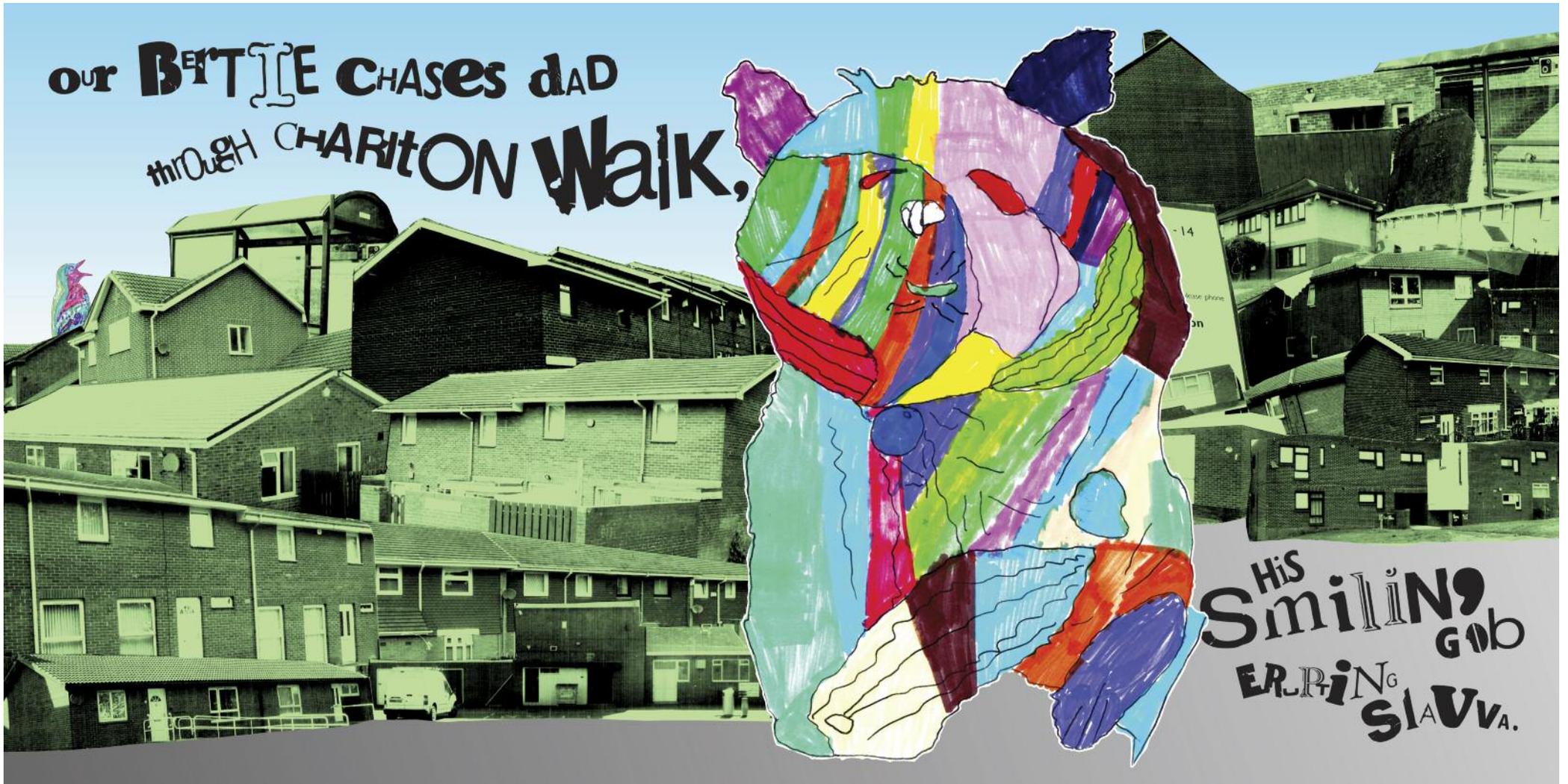
Gossiping girls and twisty teens
 Text nonsense and cheesy selfies.



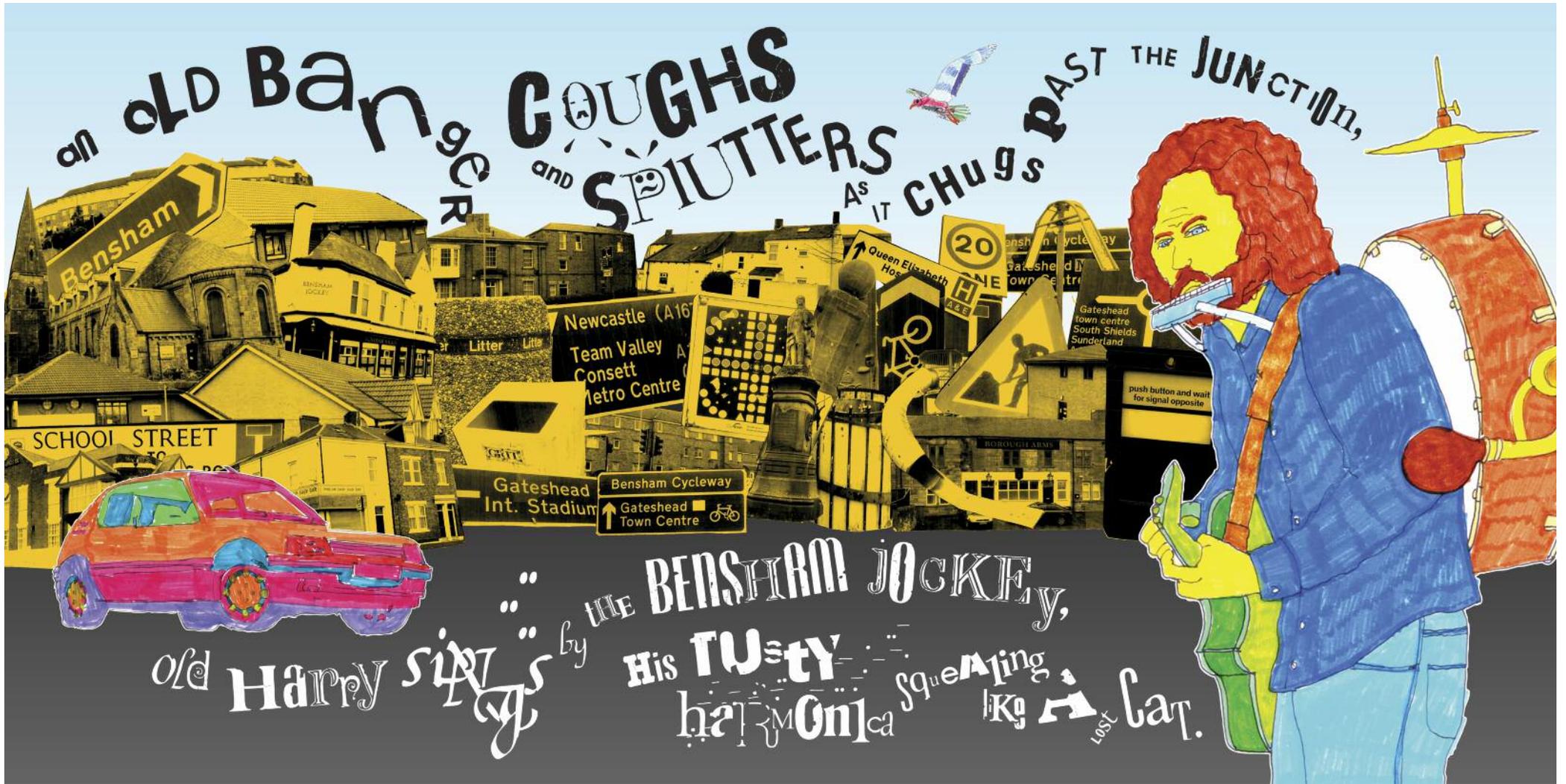
Happy hymns leak out from the stained glass
 Of the church of Corpus Christi.



Someone's bellowing about summat or nowt:
 Axolotls and football,
 Squawking like a parrot set on repeat.



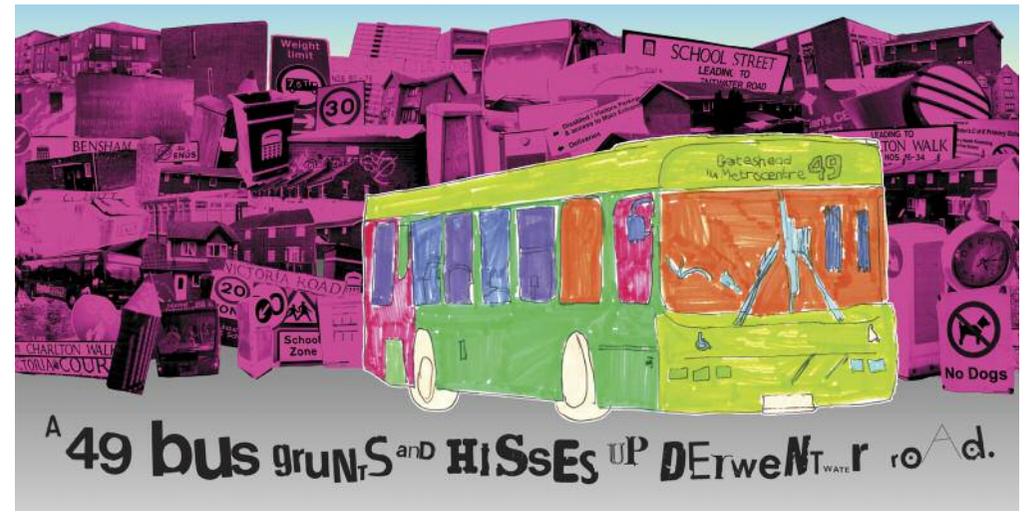
Our Bertie chases dad
Through Charlton Walk,
His smiling gob erupting slawva.



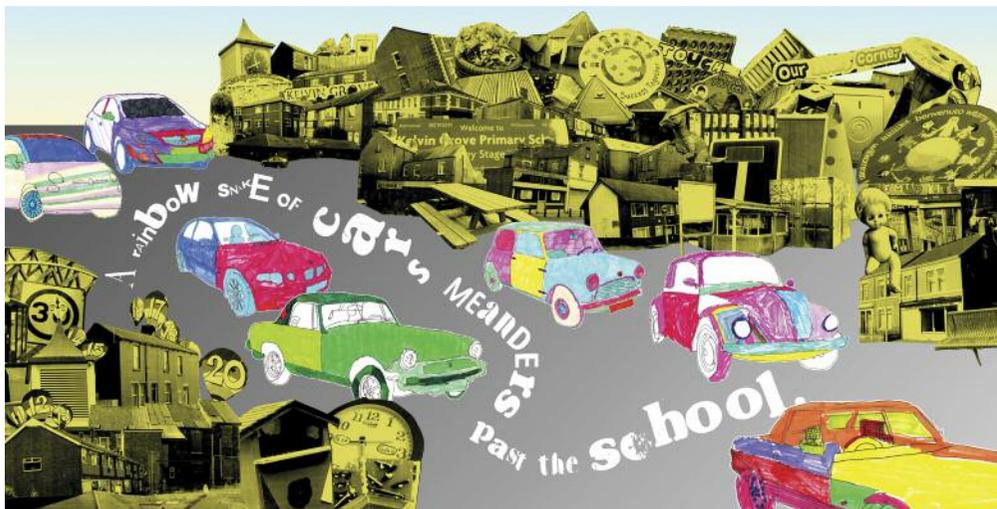
An old banger coughs and splutters as it chugs past the junction,
 Old Harry sings by the Bensham Jockey,
 His rusty harmonica squealing like a lost cat.



A huffy toddler trails the limbs of her tatty haired doll.
 A whirling tornado of a thousand thoughts
 Exploding like pop-corn.



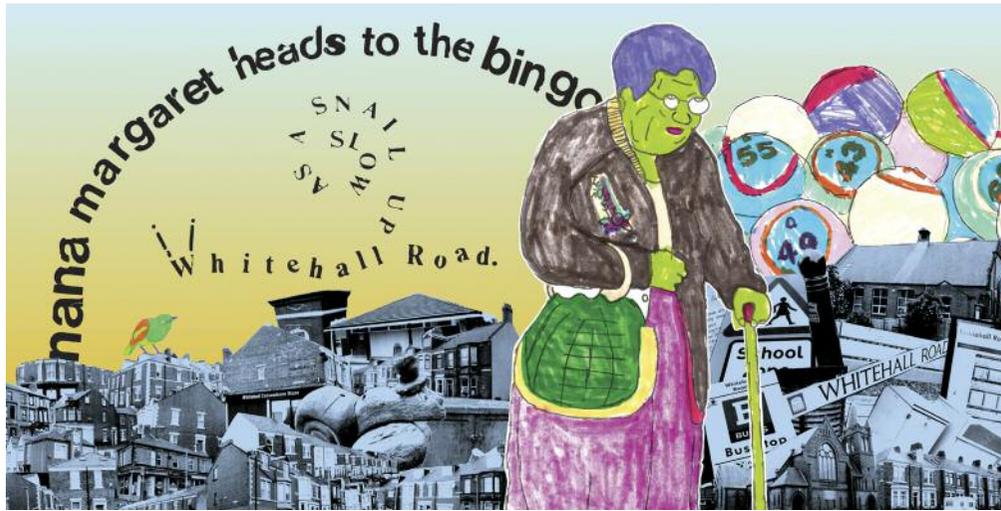
A 49 bus grunts and hisses up Derwentwater Road.



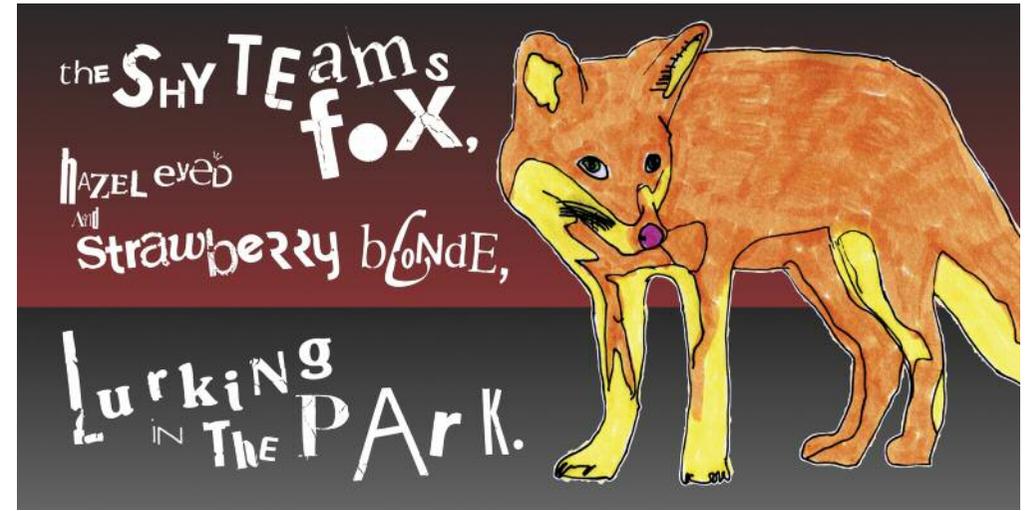
A rainbow snake of cars meanders past the school.



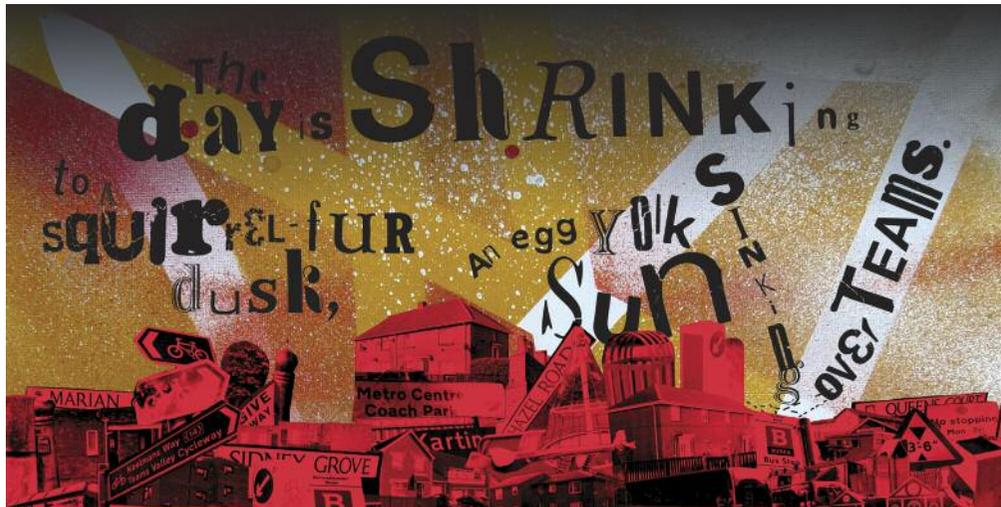
An old couple link arms walking to the bus-stop.



Nana Margaret heads to the bingo,
Slow as a snail up Whitehall Road.



The shy Team's fox,
Hazel eyed and strawberry blonde,
Lurking in the park.



The day is shrinking to a squirrel-fur dusk,
An egg-yolk sun sinking over Teams.



And then there is peace;
The sky a dome of bristling light,
Shimmering stars

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