

Warm-up Exercise (5 mins): Synaesthesia

In this exercise, we play.

I ask you to begin by acknowledging the contradiction of listening as an imaginative and associative process—try as we might to hear what someone else means by what they say, listening is deeply transformative.

- 1) Go to <https://www.dulux.co.uk/en/colour-details#tabId=item0> and select a colour.
- 2) Write a poem describing the soundscape of this colour. Could it be instrumental, or more abstract, i.e. sounds from the ocean, or the imagined sound of a comet? What textures can you imagine to add layers of richness to your soundscape—could it be grainy, or echoing?

Exercise (10 mins): Giving Voice

In this exercise, we write into silences.

- 1) Choose an object. It can be a sentimental item you know well, or you could reach out to a friend or loved one to send you an image.
- 2) As in the previous exercise, make notes as to the soundscape might surround this object.
- 3) Add another object, or add a creature. Now, write your poem imagining how the soundscapes of these two items might interact.

Exercise (10 mins): Hear Me

In this exercise we turn our auralities inwards. Listen to yourself.

- 1) Write down something you've never said aloud. What immediately comes to mind? It may be something you wish you said, a question, or something so much the fabric of your life it has become too commonplace to mention. Using this as your title, write a poem.

Final Exercise (15 mins): Hear My Silence

In this exercise we speak without speaking.

This exercise is based around the refrain: a burden or chorus recurring at regular intervals in the course of a song or ballad, usually at the end of each stanza. Refrain may also mean, *to hold back; to restrain; to keep within prescribed bounds; to curb...*

- 1) Take a sentence you wrote in the previous exercise, and italicise it to begin your poem.
- 2) Write your poem—but hold back from addressing your refrain directly. Does your speaker go about their day with something playing on their mind? Could you describe a landscape that changes, but one single thing stays the same? Repeat the refrain at least two more times within your poem.
- 3) See if, by the end, you can add a second layer of meaning and, in doing so, transform what it means for the reader to listen to your refrain.

If you post your poems on Facebook, twitter, or instagram, tag us using (@ist), or use the hashtag #IstHearMe so you can look at each other's poems.

Thank you, beautiful poets, for participating in our poetry special!