

BECOME A POEM WRITER

You will need – paper, pen, scissors, a spot of imagination but don't worry if it's gone out for the day.

This is a process to help you get started writing if you've never done it before, don't feel confident or just plain don't know where to start. You can step away from this framework any time and add your imagination into it.

Poetry helps us make sense of the world around us and express what we see or feel, plus, it can be fun.

First of all, choose a topic or set the scene. It can be a coastal walk, life in the hedgerow, or at the bottom of the garden. Remember the sights, sounds, smells, what you did, time of day or feelings that you got from this place. Make separate piles of words on the table, start like this.

- 1. A pile of nouns** – Write down 10 naming words on a piece of paper and cut them out individually. Eg - **seabirds, Herring Gull, Gannet, Puffin, Guillemot, sea, sky, storm, clouds, wind.**
- 2. A pile of adjectives** – (a word that describes a noun) Eg - **Big** puffin, **loud** seabirds, **vast** sky, **turquoise** sea, **angry** gannet, **friendly** clouds, **pink** sky, **quiet** guillemot, **windy** wind,
- 3. A pile of verbs ending in -ing** – Doing words, (these are called the gerund) Eg – **Wheeling, soaring, calling, fishing, stepping, watching, waiting, racing, gusting, listening.**
- 4. A pile of adverbs** - (a word that describes a verb) Eg - soaring **beautifully**, calling **loudly**, wheeling **serenely**, stepping **slowly**, watching **beadily, musically, patiently, gracefully, intently, incessantly.**

Make your first line – Take one word from each pile.

Herring Gull Watching musically windy

Have a giggle. Don't worry, they won't all work. Put back any words that you don't want, arrange what you've kept and use your own words to flesh out the bare bones.

The Herring Gull was watching

Try it again

Guillemot Soaring patiently friendly

the guillemot was soaring patiently

And again

sky calling beautifully loud

'The sky was calling beautifully' – **Loud** came out of the adjective pile, it looked like 'Land' (my handwriting) I thought – great! So I used my accidental inspiration and changed the word to **Land**

the sky was calling beautifully to the land

You can try changing the rules - take two words from the noun pile, and one word from each of the other piles, or take four from just the adverb pile for instance. My next words came out as

wind

fishing

beadily

pink

A pink wind was fishing for the gulls

a spot of inspiration

You can change tempo by picking fewer or more words

clouds

stepping

clouds high-stepping

You can change the order of the lines once you've got them – it's your poem – You can alter the words too. They are your starting blocks, not your stumbling blocks.

The Herring Gull was watching
the guillemot was soaring patiently
the sky was calling beautifully to the land
Clouds high-stepping
while the pink wind fished for the gulls

Just have fun, don't worry when it goes wrong. Throw some wild cards in there too – try writing nonsense bird poems, epic story poems, or journeys.

You can add in your own special word piles – for instance make a pile of short phrases – **a regal prince with no-where to go, a sentinel on watch... ballerinas fighting over a tutu.** Get creative! Match these up with the noun pile and you can make 'Like a....' sentences.

The Puffin was like a regal prince with no-where to go

These are called similies. Comparison phrases, to help describe the scene better - paint the picture with colour.

The seagulls were at that pasty like ballerinas fighting over a tutu

Go for it and see what you can do. I think you'll be pleasantly surprised.

Finally, a word from Maya Angelou on writing poetry,

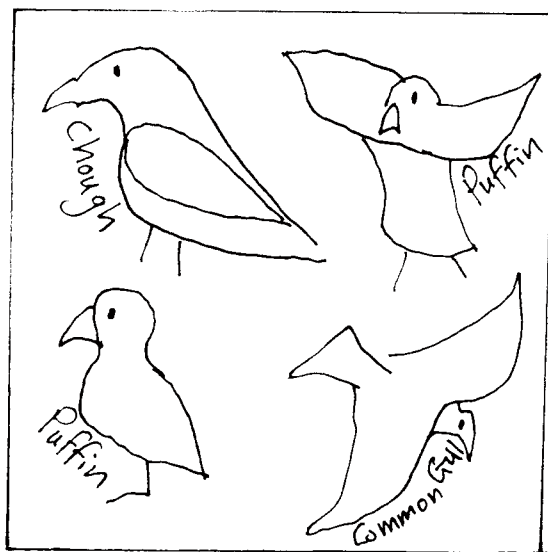
'Poetry is music written for the human voice
...at it's best it becomes a drop of water, and in that drop of water, is everything in the sea'

GET CREATIVE, MAKE YOUR OWN REPEAT PATTERN

You can use this as a gift wrap, to cover your books, transfer it on to fabric to give to friends, possibilities are multiple! – have a go.

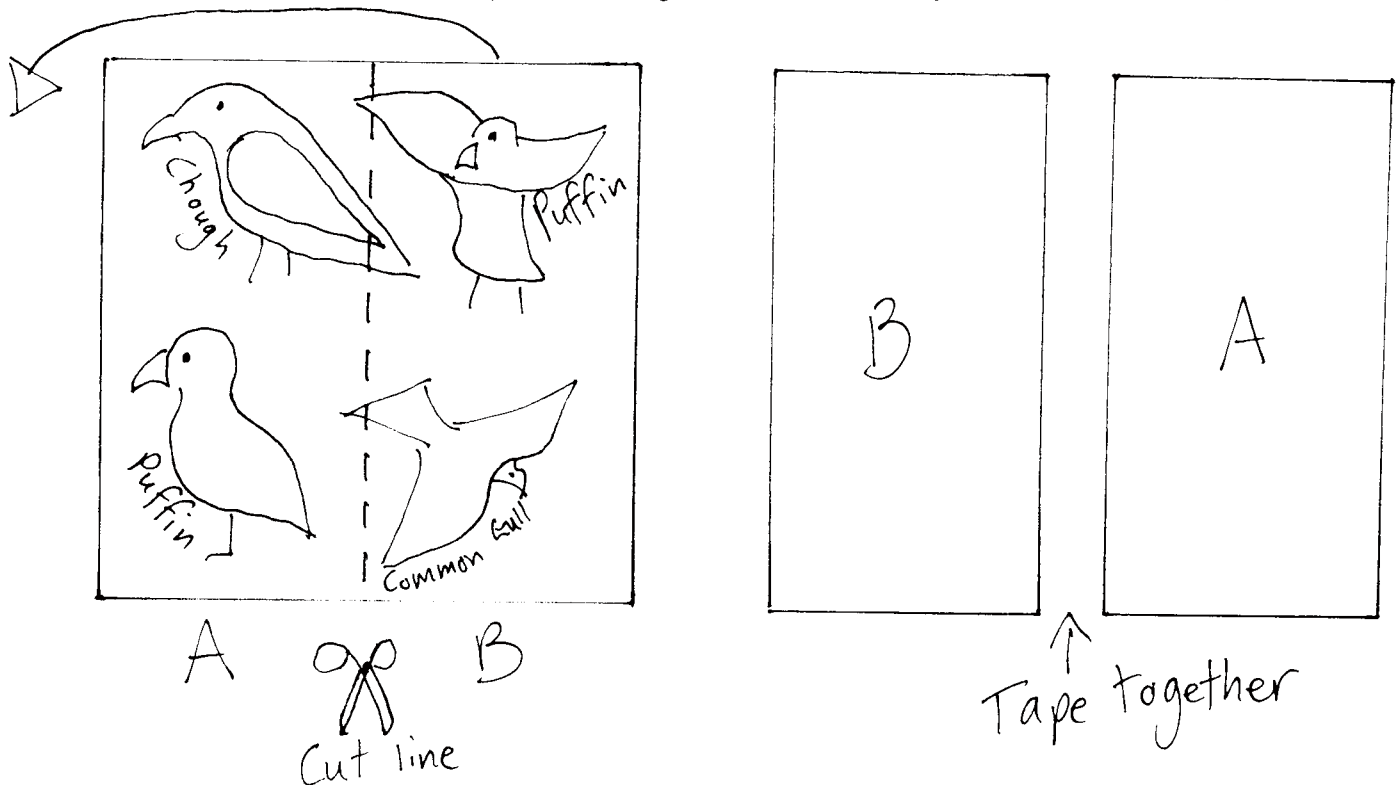
You will need – paper, pen, scissors, tape, scanner/printer/photocopier. Or old fashioned tracing.

Step 1 – Draw a design, it's very important that no part of that design touches the edges of the paper. You can start in pencil then go over it in pen, which will print better. You can trace a selection of things if you don't feel confident. Normal printer paper is generally thin enough to do that. I started with a Chough top left, a puffin in flight top right, a standing puffin bottom left, a common gull bottom right – you will see where they end up when I'm finished.

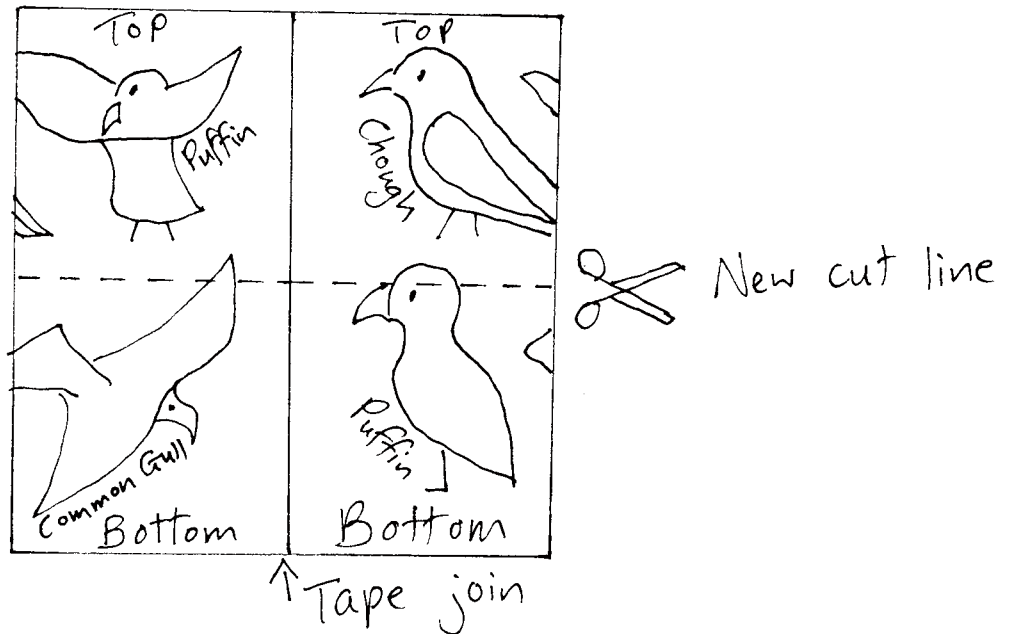


I cut my A4 paper into a square shape, but it's not essential.

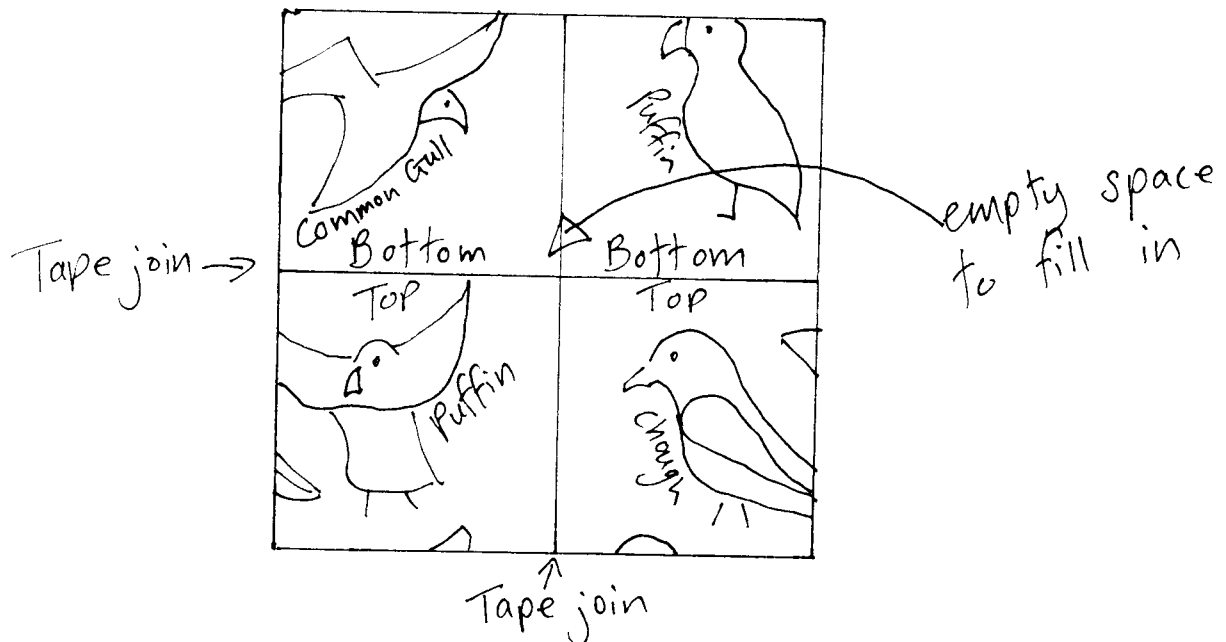
Step 2 – Cut the drawing lengthwise in the centre from top to bottom, try to be as exact as possible. Yes, cut it – you can do it. Let's call them A and B. Then swap the two pieces around, so now B is to the left side of A. Tape the two together on the back, try to fit them seamlessly.



Step 3 – Now cut the drawing in half width wise, from left to right. Swap the two pieces around again. This time, the top of B and A will go to the bottom of B and A. Tape on the reverse side - your cut marks will now form a cross.



Step 4 – Because of the cuts, and swapping sides of the original drawing, I now have the gull at the top left (which was originally bottom right) and the standing puffin top right (which was originally bottom left) You will now have some blank space in the middle of your paper, with the original design on the outer edges. Fill in this blank space in the middle with more drawing – remember – it's very important not to let this new drawing touch the edges of the paper. I filled mine in with a Gannet and some distant bird outlines. If you are shading areas in, try to get a uniform spread over the whole final design, so that when it's replicated, the whole wallpaper will have an even spread of light and dark.



Now you can scan or photocopy your work into a printer if you have one - you may need to tidy up any stray join lines in photoshop. If, like me you are a bit more analogue, you can trace your design after **step 3** onto a new piece of A4 paper, fill in the blank space in the middle with your new drawing, then take it to a printing shop, or local shop with a photocopier and print multiples there.

DOODLE BIRDS

This little exercise is something to get you drawing.

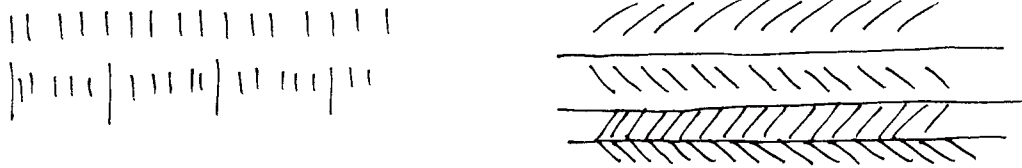
“But I can't draw...”

Remember when you used to draw as a child and it was just fun? There were no expectations, you just enjoyed it – but now you find you're a “can't draw, won't draw, so don't draw” person.

Well, there's no need to make a Da Vinci type representation of a bird here.

We'll just put pen to paper and keep going – be creative. On a clean piece of paper – this is not your final design, it's not a keeper – start warming up with some exercises, then put some of the moves together.

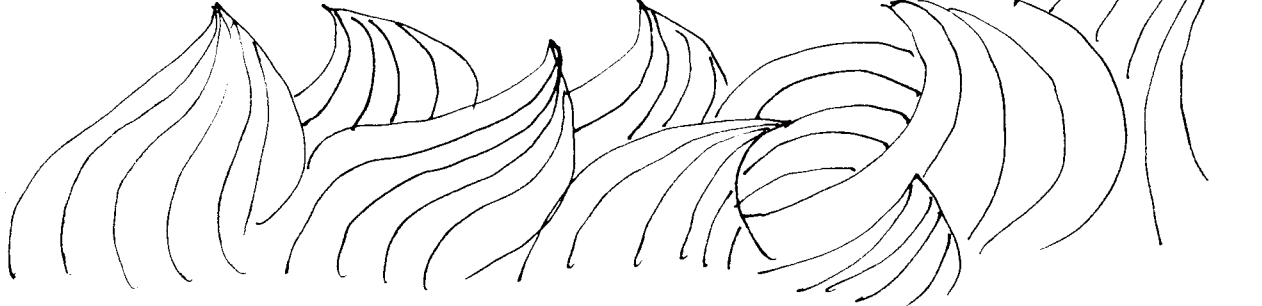
Try out some lines and mark making



Now some waves, then fill them in with more line



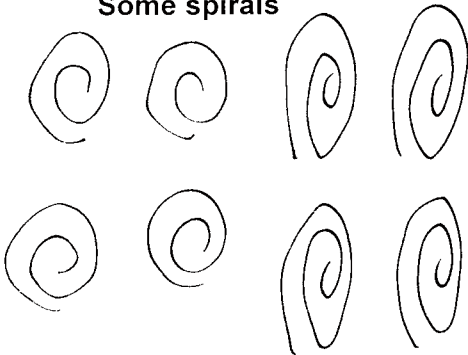
More waves, less regimented, stretch yourself a bit – have a go



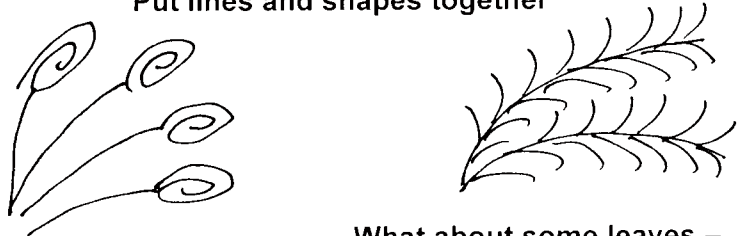
Feathers. Start with the bare bones then add to them



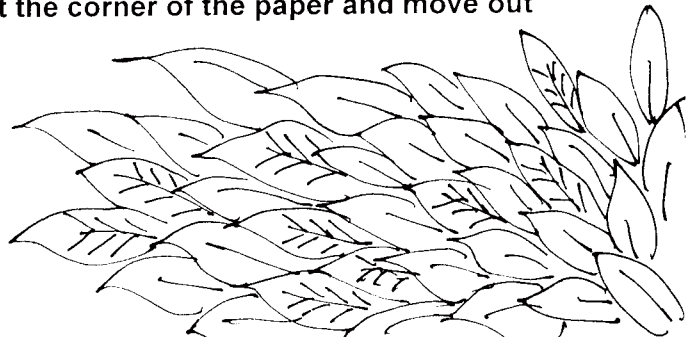
Some spirals



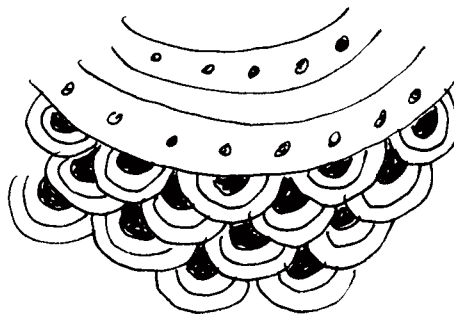
Put lines and shapes together



What about some leaves – start at the corner of the paper and move out



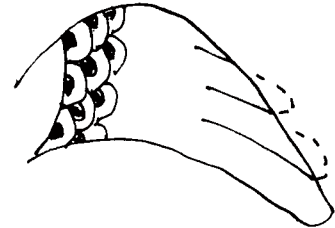
Rainbows and curves



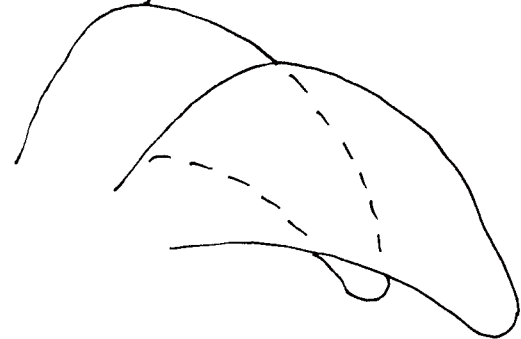
An L shape and an Arc



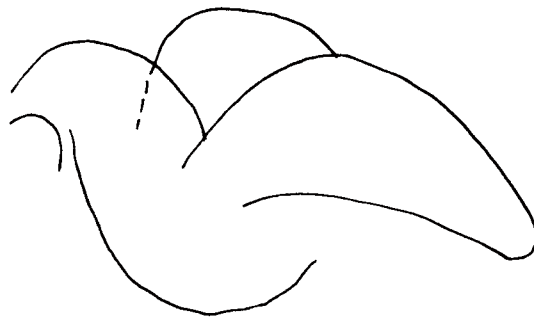
Now fill it in



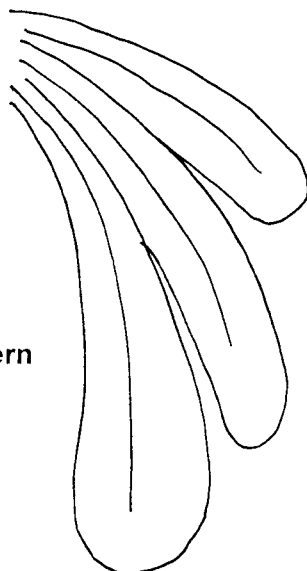
Overlap those shapes now, then rub out any pencil lines that you don't need



Start to add some curves



Your feathers from the warm up



...and fill in with some pattern



Now you can try your own designs





