

## Session with Kibble Scribblers 19/06/19

Led by Sheila Templeton

Writing theme: What is Silence? 2 Hour Session.

Plan for session:

1/ **Introduce the idea of Silence.** Is there such a thing as **Silence**? Does it mean the absence of sound? And is this even possible to achieve? Is it ever possible to achieve a situation where there is literally no sound? Even in a sound proof room there would be the sound of your own breathing, your own heartbeat. So if it's not possible to ever totally eliminate sound, then what might **Silence** be? Invite a brief discussion on this...an opening up to what **Silence** might mean for everyone. And that it may well have a different concept for each individual.

(Time allowed: 10 mins.)

2/ **Word association exercise.**

Ask the group to write **Silence** at the top of a page...and word associate, as many words as they can write...2 mins. Quickly share round group, asking everyone to share their 'silence words', explaining they can 'steal' each others' words at this stage. Repeat the exercise with **Sound**.

(Time allowed: 10 mins)

3/ **Free Writing Exercise**

using the prompt *I was falling in love with silence. Like most people with a new love, I became increasingly obsessed by it – wanting to know more, to go further, to understand more...* from *The Book of Silence* by Sara Maitland pub by World of Books. (I recommend reading this book...a lovely way to start thinking about silence.)

Give the prompt out...individual sheets, which also have the poems and quotations used later on.

Ask the group to incorporate as many of the **Silence** or **Sound** words from the previous exercise as they can, in their writing.

(Time allowed: 10 minutes)

4/ **Sharing Writing.** Ask the group to share their writing...if they wish.

(Time allowed: 20 mins...but will vary according to group size)

5/ **Poems on Silence.** Read aloud 2 poems *Morning Poem* by Mary Oliver. *Silence Itself* by Rukhiya Khatum, both on sheets already given out in 3/. Ask for responses/discussion on the poems...both very different pieces of writing on the concept of **Silence**.

(Time allowed: 10 mins)

6/ **Break time/ solitary space to do last piece of writing.**

Depending on venue, time for a comfort break and teas/coffees, which can be incorporated into finding a place to do the next piece of writing.

Before the break, suggest that everyone finds a space to reflect and write more on what **Silence** is bringing up for them. Perhaps find a noisy space and go into their own silence? Or find a very quiet space and see what that brings up.

This session was held in the Kibble Palace in Glasgow, in June!... so it lent itself to space in the grounds of the Botanic, for this exercise. But it could be adapted to any indoor venue. The important point is that everyone find somewhere on their own. They might want to add to the writing done already or write something completely different, paying attention to their current environment and how it relates to **Silence** and **Sound?** What it brings up for them. And/or use ideas or themes from the shared poems.

7/ **Final Session.** Regroup and ask people to share their writing. This sharing of writing will take up all the time remaining. I would also share any writing I've done in today's sessions. And read my own poem *Seelence*, which is on the hand-out sheet. This poem would also be good to read earlier, as a writing prompt, but as it is my own work, I decided to leave it to the end, as something the group could take away.

## Poems and Quotations Sheet for Kibble Scribblers June 2019

*I was falling in love with silence. Like most people with a new love, I became increasingly obsessed by it – wanting to know more, to go further, to understand more...*

from *The Book of Silence* by Sara Maitland pub by World of Books.

### Silence Itself

When I was at school, I wanted a friend.  
I feared being alone, not because  
I minded the being alone, just  
people pitying my loneliness.

When I was at school,  
I never bothered to say anything:  
secretly I think I was  
satisfied with the silence.

When I was at school, I preferred  
to watch the others playing.  
That was fun enough.  
And perhaps silence itself

was my friend, when I was at school.  
I know I always felt like a ghost:  
observing the world, and myself,  
as if we were worth observing.

### Rukiya Khatum

from *England Poems from A School*  
edited by Kate Clanchy

This poem was written by a teenager in a project Kate Clanchy did with school children. She then wrote the project up as a book , *Some Kids I Taught and What They Taught Me* pub by Picador.

<http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/232/childrens-books/reviews/england-poems-from-a-school>

## **Morning Poem**

Every morning  
the world  
is created.  
Under the orange

sticks of the sun  
the heaped  
ashes of the night  
turn into leaves again

and fasten themselves to the high branches –  
and the ponds appear  
like black cloth  
on which are painted islands

of summer lilies.  
If it is your nature  
to be happy  
you will swim away along the soft trails

for hours, your imagination  
alighting everywhere.  
And if your spirit  
carries within it

the thorn  
that is heavier than lead –  
if it's all you can do  
to keep on trudging –

there is still  
somewhere deep within you  
a beast shouting that the earth  
is exactly what it wanted –

each pond with its blazing lilies  
is a prayer heard and answered  
lavishly  
every morning,

whether or not  
you have ever dared to be happy,  
whether or not  
you have ever dared to pray.

**Mary Oliver**  
from **New and Selected Poems Volume One.**

[http://www.famouspoetsandpoems.com/poets/mary\\_oliver/poems/15805](http://www.famouspoetsandpoems.com/poets/mary_oliver/poems/15805)

## Seelence

taks its time

needs the quait  
o a bairn's han, slippit intae  
the calloused roch  
o Granda's waarm grip

the pair o us  
jinkin roon the back wye  
tae keep oot the road o the Saabath fowk  
makkin their sonsie steps hame

mangs for the skinklin o blaik an fite wings  
abeen the siller o an April sun  
as peesie-weepers daunce their spring

listens tae the lang sough and clack  
o beddie-steens shiften an shachlin  
unner thrang clair watter

disna murn the sair fack o daith  
bit mervels at the bleedy orrals  
flooerin a tod's den

says tak tent far ye plunt yer feet  
aye mynd tae waak doon  
the side o a park greenin wi early corn

has tae be hard-lairnt, lik aathing else.

**Sheila Templeton**

**from Clyack pub Red Squirrel Press 2021.**