
the Creative
BIRDS ON A WIRE

About Us

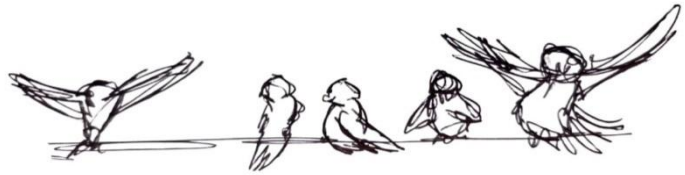
"The Creative" is the magazine from Centrepieces' Creative Writing group, bringing together a diverse range of contributions and styles. From fictional stories and poems to non-fictional articles and reflective accounts, there's always bound to be something to capture your imagination. Each issue explores a different theme explored from the unique perceptive of our writers' wellness and recovery journeys.

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Special Mention

With great thanks to Centrepieces artist, Sally Thompson, for allowing The Creative to use her painting, "**Flying Robin**", for our cover.



Feature Article

"Introducing the 'Birds on a Wire' Project"

Karen Larkin

By promoting mental health awareness, Centrepieces aims to help others recognise it within themselves. By tuning into changes in our feelings or our bodies when we become stressed, tired, or simply struggle with day-to-day life, we can recognise the warning signs that we may need some self-care.

Introducing art and creativity as ways to support ourselves gives us an opportunity to express and release our feelings, or simply to free our minds from the pressures of everyday life.

Creativity can provide a safe space to explore how we feel and to reconnect with ourselves.

The BOAW project has been about creativity, nature, and wellbeing and about supporting those in your friends and family circles, or within your local community who may need some support. From encouraging local Year 9 students to work with wire and paint random panels to create a jigsaw style street scene, to working with a whole primary school and being amazed by their enthusiasm and joy in creating their amazing colourful and unique birds.

Our logo is an image of a flock of birds sitting in a row on an overhead cable. Imagine that each bird in this flock is unique, with its own personality, plumage, shape, and colours. Yet each bird recognises its connection to the others and breaks into song!

Some squawk, some trill, while others coo, whistle, or tweet. They express their feelings through song, in much the same way that we can express ourselves through creativity. Creative writing, painting, singing and dancing, playing music, sculpting, and colouring are just a few examples of the many ways we can express ourselves.

The Centrepieces Creative Writing Group has thoroughly enjoyed exploring the BOAW project and has produced an amazing array of work. I hope you enjoy this special edition of The Creative and are inspired to have a go at some creative writing yourself!

FEATURE: Of Signs & Portents

Over the course of human history, various birds have often become symbols of certain emotions or events.



Robins

Though strongly associated with Christmas, Robins are often thought of as a spiritual symbol, with people believing that certain encounters with robins is a favourable sign, or visit, from a departed loved one.

Magpies

Probably one of the most widely-known bird-related symbols, especially in British culture where the rhyme depicts various outcomes depending on how many magpies you see throughout the day. A misunderstood bird, the magpie is known to like shiny objects and collects them for its nest.





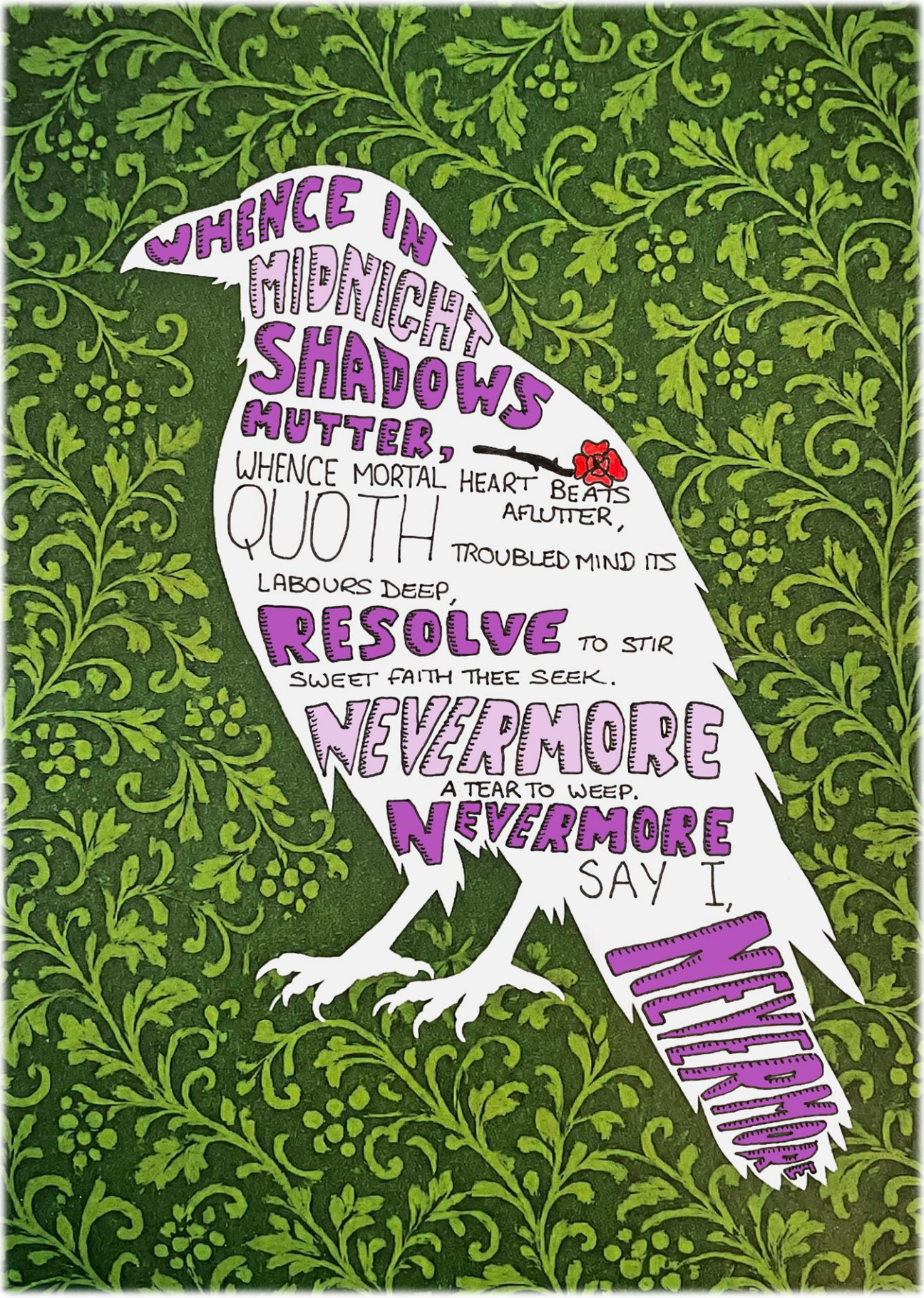
Crows

Crows have a bad reputation with humankind. For centuries, crows have been seen as portents of doom or danger. Frequently associated with witches and spooky things, even their collective noun, "a murder [of crows]" reflects the negative image they endure with humans.

Ravens

Larger than its close cousin, the crow, the raven has also endured a very superstitious legacy with humans. Edgar Allan Poe wrote an iconic raven who judged a man simply by repeating a single word – "nevermore". In the UK, ravens have enjoyed superstitious employment as guardians of the crown jewels at the Tower of London. The legend holds that "if the ravens are lost or fly away, the Crown will fall and Britain with it."





ABOVE: "Quoth the Raven…" *by Matthew Delaney*

A Birdseye View

Lesley Cody

A gentle breeze rustles the leaves
A curious magpie sits on a branch
A dazzling creature of midnight-blues
And snowy white – with feathers bright

He preens upon a sheltered bough
As below two people raise their voices
The magpie pauses, his head cocked
He hops along the branch to get a better view

Until he reaches the edge of the canopy
And, peering down, eyes wide with surprise
He spies the angry humans
Fearless, the bird hops closer still

With keen insight, he realises help is needed,
No time to compromise.
He flutters to the ground
And with a cheery chirp

Observing the commotion
He dances playfully, lifting the gloom
Bringing smiles to their faces
He chases storm-clouds from a human day.

Birds Fly

Michael Armstrong

One of the few subjects anyone could like at school was English. A major reason for this affinity was that our classes always had a good teacher, increasingly so as the years passed by.

Our final year and last teacher before 'O' Levels firmly believed English to be a living language and, therefore, should be spoken.

Reading aloud was usual, wonderful books in that and other years. The classic words frequently chalked on the blackboard were; -



This, as our teacher often explained, was a complete sentence, for it made complete sense. Furthermore, he took great pains to confirm, subject, predicate and vowels with a verb and noun were all there. He probably elaborated further, in the midst of time the years and words have lost a place here.

By now no doubt, Developmental psychology, statistics and computer learning, as well as Language laboratories have superseded, 'Birds Fly,' The bird has flown in the vocabulary of many. An endangered species no less.

Those remaining remember and prefer this simple concept as a plain aid to learning. It all boils down, not to Boyle's Law but to, 'Birds Fly'…

A Random Thought

Karen Larkin

If the Crow flies, as the Crow flies,
And the Swift, then swiftly flies South.
Should you count your Chickens before they hatch,
or after the Fox was in their house?

If one Magpie will make you sad,
But two will make you smile,
Should you listen to the Dawn Chorus,
Embrace the Birdsong for a while.

When Fledglings discover the freedom of flight,
their parents watch, perched on a gate.
And if it's the early bird that catches the worm,
What time is considered too late?

If the Stork is delivering the baby,

And the Seagull is pinching your chips,

Will the Woodpecker keep on pecking,

As the Goldcrest hops and skips.

When Birds of a feather flock together, and Night Owls, at night, have no fear.

Then a Bird in the hand is worth two in the bush,

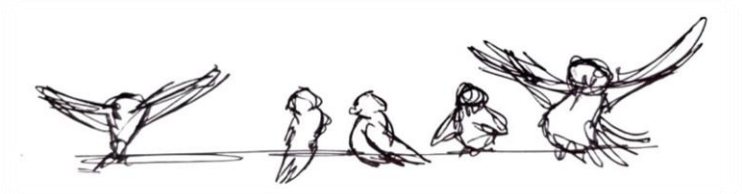
whispers the little Sparrow in your ear.

As I didn't Chicken out of this rhyme,

Can you tell I'm as happy as a Lark,

I'm as proud as a Peacock with a feather,

As a poet, I hope I've made my mark!!



Birds on a Telegraph Wire

Michael A.

Dawn breaking after Moonlight as the Sun begins to rise.

'Eyes of blue,
How I envy you,
Up above the world so high.
You alone, but you we spy,
Like a tea-tray in the sky
Perhaps only you know why!

No need now to sigh.

The Four and Twenty

Matthew Delaney

The four and twenty by the stream,
Obsidian in the sunlight gleam,
Blackbirds gathered - perchance to dream,
Or wise words from some gossip glean.
Wings that glimmer, eyes that shimmer,
A silky-smooth dawn chorus deliver,
Sweet melody sung to bewitch,
All mortal ears the sound doth itch.
And if by stream or perched on branch,
Those four and twenty sweet entrance.
With hope that echoes from their song,
For lonely souls to free belong.

The four and twenty by the stream,
Inviting all to freely dream.

The Mysterious Case of the Canary and the Carnation

Lesley Cody

The wind through the open window set the flimsy net curtain dancing. Outside a full moon could be seen against the cloudy sky. But inside the room, the only light came from the reading lamp on the mahogany desk.

Detective Philip Marlowe had been burning the midnight oil, pulling together the final threads of a case that had plagued him for weeks. This report, he had hoped, would prove beyond a shadow of a doubt the true identity of the city's most elusive underworld mastermind—a phantom only known as 'The Florist.'

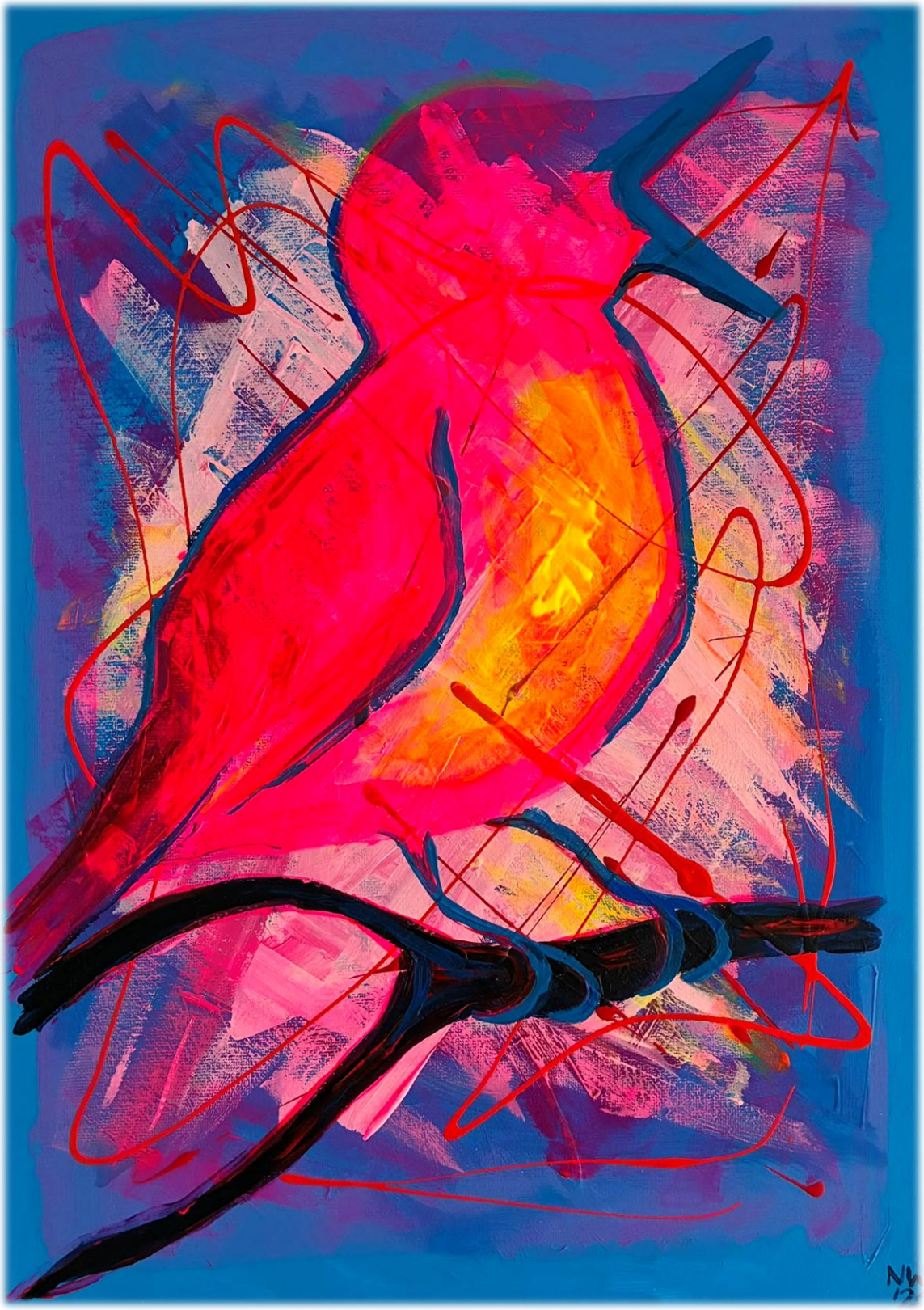
He never got to write the criminal's name.

There had been a struggle. Now, Marlowe lay slumped on the floor, a dark stain spreading across his trench coat, his beloved fedora on the floor next to him.

Only one witness remained in the room. Perched on the edge of the mahogany desk, Marlowe's pet canary sang its frantic little heart out, hurling notes into the empty room. But the bird was singing to a corpse.

Next to the tiny bird, drinking from a crystal vase of water, was the killer's final signature: a single, fresh pink carnation.





ABOVE: "Untitled" *by Nicola Wills*

Flying High – Little Robin

Andrea Montague

Flying high to reach the sky,
My wings spread out as up I fly.
Higher and higher, off I go,
I can do it! Watch me go!

Keep on flapping, flap, flap, flap,
Look at me — no time for a nap!
Flying freely through the air,
Up above the world without a care.

A telephone pole is just ahead,
"I think I'll stop and rest," I said.
I perch up high and look below,
There's so much happening down there, you know!

Look at that — what can I see?
A lady hanging washing happily.
Sheets and clothes dance in the breeze,
Fluttering softly beneath the trees.

Down I swoop, down I go,
Landing gently, nice and slow.
I puff right out my bright red chest,
And stand up proudly looking my best.

"Hello, little Robin, look at you,
With your lovely red chest shining through!
Oh look — a bird table over there,
With tasty treats for you to share."

"Help yourself, my sweet little one,
There are lots of treats — go have some fun!"

"Well, don't mind if I do!" says he,
Hopping across so happily.

A little peck and a little treat,
What a lovely feast to eat!

Then off I fly into the blue…

**Tweet, tweet!
Tweet, tweet!**

The Magpie and the Crow

Karen Larkin

The Crow pulled out his dagger, with murder on his mind.
The Ravens conspired around him, their thoughts were so unkind,
Which way did he go, he asked, and the Lapwings deceitfully said,
He flew off towards the South, and headed along the river bed.
The Crow set off at once, swiftly launching into the air,
And the Parliament of Owls, gave him one almighty stare.
He flew towards the river bed, with dagger still in hand,
Below he saw a Gaggle of Geese and he swooped down low to land.

The Flamingoes shook out their feathers, as flamboyant as could be.
I'm looking for the Magpie thief, "oh, he's in Parliament, you will see"
As pink feathers pointed the way, towards the far end of the marsh.
The Crow set off to find him, although the way was muddy and harsh.
"What has that Magpie done now?" whispered a Snipe as it waded past.
And a murmuration of Starlings, flew South incredibly fast.
"We don't want to miss the next scene," they murmured into the breeze,
"It's been a while since we've had a good laugh, We hope it is a wheeze!"

The Crow saw a Mischievous flock of birds, flashes of blue as they flew around,
He found the one he was looking for, and pulled him to the ground!
"What have you done with my Treasure Trove You Gossip, you Trickster, you Thief,
My silver twig for digging out bugs, was under the Great Oak leaf!"
The Crow raised his dagger, as a dread set in,
While the birds gasped, and took in the scene.
"No wait," called a finch, with a charming rapport,

This really is too obscene,

"A Committee of Vultures, should take up court,

And let us all see that justice is done,

So the birds all flocked together, with a flurry of wings,

As the trial in session had begun.

"It wasn't me", the Magpie rasped loudly, as he rattled off his alibi.

"Are you sure you left it under the Oak, And not another leaf nearby?"

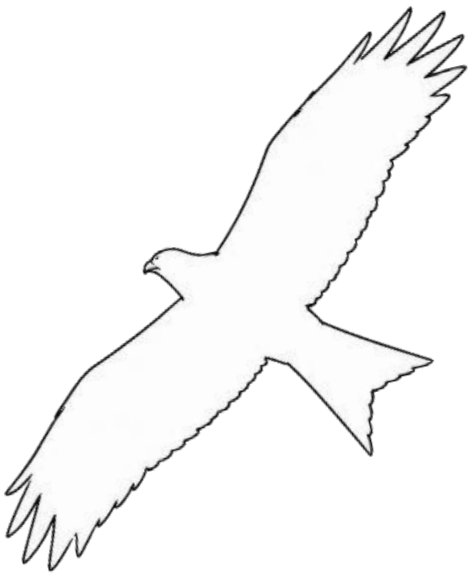
The Crow was then questioned at length, until he had a memory flash,

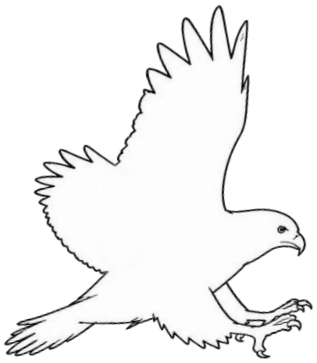
"I do remember now" he gasped, "Where I moved my treasury stash!

As Pandemonium took over the Court, and a parrot cut the Magpie's tethers,

The Crow awkwardly hung his head and said, "I'm so sorry I ruffled all of your feathers!"

The End.

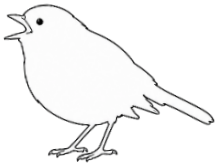




Why don't penguins like talking to strangers at parties?

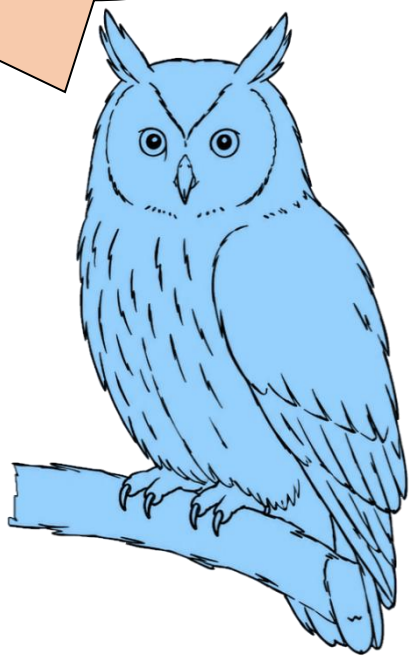
It's hard for them to break the ice.

What A Hoot!



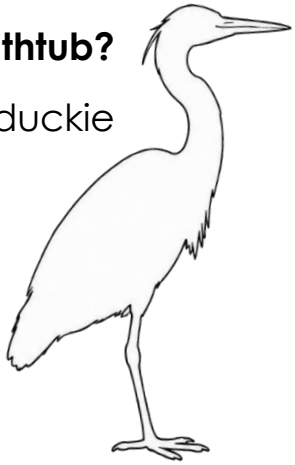
What kind of birds heckle comedians?

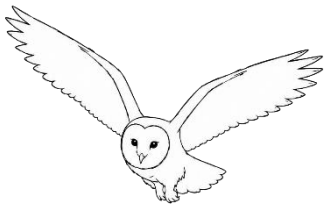
Mockingbirds



Which bird stole the soap from the bathtub?

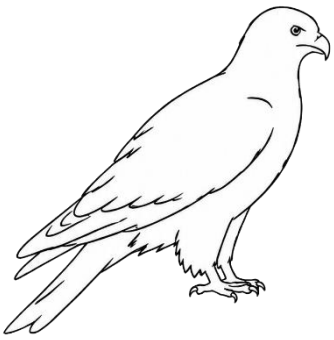
The robber duckie





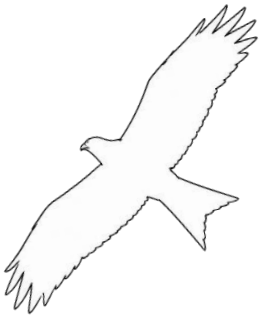
What type of maths are birds best at?

Owl-gebra



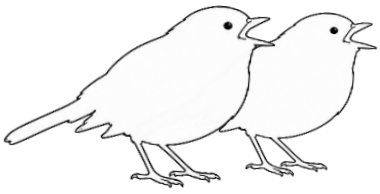
What kind of bird never goes to the barbers?

Bald Eagle.



Why don't flamingos ever win at poker?

They always fold.



Why do hummingbirds hum?

Because they don't know the words.

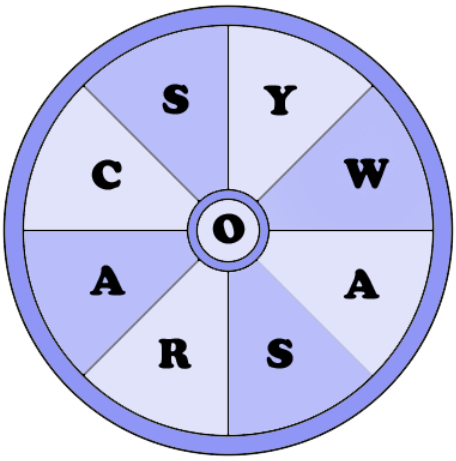


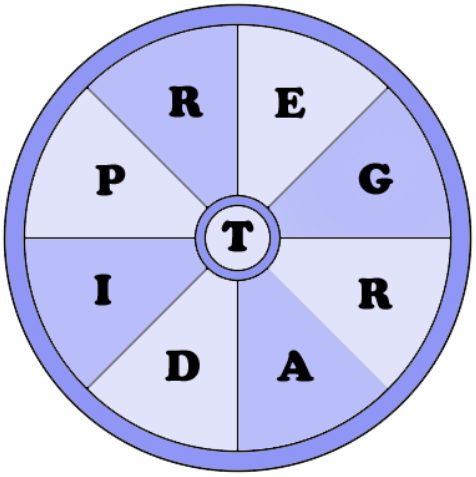
Parrots make terrible secret agents. They just repeat everything you tell them.

Puzzle Corner

D	U	C	K	T	N	A	S	A	E	H	P
J	S	Q	O	O	R	N	I	F	F	U	P
P	K	Z	S	S	O	D	R	A	B	H	A
H	A	F	T	P	O	U	O	D	C	A	R
N	W	U	R	R	K	M	B	N	K	W	R
E	R	M	I	E	F	E	I	B	I	K	O
H	E	E	C	Y	O	F	N	X	T	I	T
R	N	C	H	G	F	U	L	M	E	R	H
O	L	S	E	A	G	U	L	L	M	A	Z
O	W	I	H	J	B	L	U	E	T	I	T
M	O	C	H	O	U	G	H	K	L	K	O
B	C	F	P	T	A	R	M	I	G	A	N

CHAFFINCH
FULMER
PARROT
SEAGULL
EMU
OSTRICH
BLUETIT
ROBIN
KITE
ROOK
WREN
DUCK
OWL
PUFFIN
PTARMIGAN
MOORHEN
PHEASANT
CHOUGH
OSPREY





Word Wheels

How many words can YOU find within the word wheels? Can you discover the special nine-letter word in each one?

EXTRA CHALLENGE

Try giving yourself a time limit to really test your mind.

Riddle Me This…

1. I'm a coastal North Atlantic seabird with a distinctive colourful beak. Who am I?
2. I'm known for my singing, and for helping humans in mines. Who am I?
3. I prefer the nighttime and am known for my wisdom. Who am I?

Quick Quiz

1. Which type of bird has famously been used to race and send messages?
2. Reaching a maximum height of 2.7 metres, what bird is currently the largest living bird on Earth?
3. What bird was made infamous by gothic poet, Edgar Allen Poe?
4. According to the Prince & The Revolution song, which type of bird cries?
5. A collective noun for which superstitious bird is often referred to as "a mischief"?

CENTREPIECES
Mental Health Arts Project
Registered Charity 1160300
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The King's Award for Voluntary Service
The MBE for volunteer groups

Special Issue – "Birds on a Wire"

(Nov. 2026)



Puzzle Solutions

Word Wheels: Cassowary; Partridge. **Riddles:** 1. Puffin 2. Canary 3. Owl

Quiz: 1. Pigeon; 2. Ostrich; 3. Raven; 4. Doves 5. Magpie.