Playing with words

*Here are some pieces written by those attending a writing workshop (the Earthworks Conference). I’ve typed out all the ones that were handed in, including those that were unfinished. Apologies if I misread some parts. Aren’t they wonderful?*

The voice of the dark-coloured  
sea-rocks ripples and eddies,  
green and supple, meeting my breath.  
My trill wind-words dry on the air.

No! Whispers the wind,  
a dark coloured voice,  
dry silk-thread of breath.  
No! Echoes the vine and embraces…

The supple wag whispered on the wind rippling words that played full echoes through blood boughs of buzzed breath. Alone, beating the belched rising of sea-rock respiration the shade shone in silk-thread smoke of embraced lungs.

supple sun smoke me  
swift the noon air  
through silk-thread lungs.  
the wind whispers trill  
along the green hay,  
ripples fields of shade.

Ripples rising through the silk-thread breath of smoke whisper as the wind blood belched beating song buzzed dark coloured echoes from my lungs…

Beating blood  
boughs breathe  
through fields of dark coloured green,  
reaching, rising  
to the ripples of wind

A wag whispers on the dark-coloured wind. Ripples rush to play along the lungs and, passing, breath sea-rocks the shade from the vine. No noon of shine. The air alone embraces belched full green fields.

boughs buzzed  
as the green shore  
 of hay ripples…air whispers  
wind words  
and echoes rush

green eddies  
smoke shade  
whispers beating  
vine….

Fibonacci in English Summer  
*(I cannot reproduce the shape here – sorry)*

hay-  
fields  
green-full  
of silk thread  
and sea rocks, shade and  
shine, sun, breath, boughs, ripples rising.  
rush to noon, sound whispers and eddies and echoes. Voice.

I  
lift  
my face  
sniff the  
silk-thread of salt  
beating supple  
on the  
wind

The blood beating of health ripples around my arms my breath buzzed from my lungs, reaching along the sea-rocks, and embraces the dry, dark-coloured shore. The sun shine rising and the wind whispers of song; echoes of words. The green trees belched no delight, smoke eddies and boughs. The fields passing me, a rush of air on silk-thread streets. My own bed meeting alone through shade, feeling no noon.

Silk thread whispers and winds through trees sea rocks ripple rising and sun sound streets. Feeling embraces…  *(sorry can’t quite unravel the writing here!)*

*For those who might be reading this and wondering how these came about, conference attendees were given a collection of words (taken from a poem and rearranged in alphabetical order) to play with and make something they liked.*

*They had just a few minutes.*

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Memory Snapshots

Here are some nice snapshot poems using the Memory Lane technique from some Y7 and Y8 students I worked with at John Spendluffe College in Alford, a lovely school deep in East Lincolnshire.

I like the contrast between 'I won't' and the last line...

In the garden  
My big sister and my mum  
touching the handle bars  
Sitting  
A swing and lots of fields  
birds tweeting and my little sister crying  
the smell of my dad's cooking  
'Don't fall off your bike'  
And then I said 'I won't'  
Scared....  
The day I fell off my bike

I chopped some words off line 10 - hope the writer didn’t mind!  I like to see how few words can be used to achieve an effect. This one really succeeds in becoming as minimal as possible:

On a field  
My cousin  
A hoop  
standing  
caravans  
people playing games  
I was laughing  
bacon cooking  
I was happy and excited  
my cousin hula hooping (he's a boy)

To save that last line being long and a bit clumsy, why not give the cousin a name in the second line. Then you can just finish with 'my cousin hula hooping!'  Now here's another accident:

Near a bridge  
With one of my friends  
Holding onto my handlebars,  
Just about to touch the floor  
Almost lying in the water  
green fields a grey bridge with water in it  
Listening to tractors in the fields in the distance  
and the cars rushing by in the nearby streets  
the smell of the water underneath the bridge  
in pain, hurt  
it was the day I went over the bridge on my bike

Perhaps some rearranging of lines would be good - e.g. move lines 6 7 8 9 up so that they become lines 2 3 4 5?

Here are another two really short ones:

Go Karting track  
3 friends  
Steering wheel  
Sitting  
Tyres and grass  
Engines of others and my go kart  
Petrol  
Excited, competitive  
A birthday party

(I guess you could shorten it even more by making line 6 say just 'Engines')

School  
Everyone at school  
Trophy and prizes  
Standing  
People looking and clapping  
Loud clapping and shouting  
Congratulations!!!  
Happy and surprised  
Winning my trophy.

I think this says it all!  Maybe alter line 2 so that it doesn't repeat school...something like, 'all the pupils/students').  Here are some slightly longer ones.

On the patio at my old house in London  
I am on my own but my parents are in the kitchen  
A pile of plastic chairs and my head  
Lying on the floor  
My old garden, lots of blood, grass, trees, concrete  
Birdsong, me crying  
'Josh, what happned? Are you OK?'  
It hurt. What had happened? Sad...  
I tried to pick a couple of plastic chairs up and I fell and hit my head on a paving slab and cracked my head open.

(The last line tries to say too much. Perhaps we could even cut it?  How does this seem:)

On the patio at my old house in London  
On my own  
My parents in the kitchen  
A pile of plastic chairs  
                      and my head  
Lying on the floor  
My old garden, lots of blood, grass, trees, concrete  
Birdsong, me crying  
Josh, what happned? Are you OK?  
It hurt.  
What had happened?  
Sad...

I am in Worcestershire  
I'm with my Nan, granddad, mum, dad and my little sister  
I was holding my new hot water bottle that my grandparents had bought me for Christmas  
I was sitting on the sofa with my Nan  
My grandad's tele and my parents smiling at me with the cat Tommy on their lap  
Tommy the cat meowing because my Nan needed to feed him  
My mum said Merry Christmas Phoebe  
My Nan's perfume smelt like Parma violets  
I was happy to see my grand parents and it was Christmas Day  
My week at my grand parents

What a wonderful collection of images and detail - which gives us lots of material to work with. Imagine that any collection of words is like modelling clay, or building blocks - anything like that. We can rearrange them, take some out, even stand some up another way...  I quite like centring the lines on the page.  Heres one way of using the material. I hope the writer will have a go at some rearrangement of her own.

Worcestershire  
with my nan, granddad, mum, dad and my little sister  
holding my new hot water bottle that my grandparents had bought me  
sitting on the sofa with my nan  
my nan's perfume smelt like Parma violets  
grandad's tele, my parents smiling at me with the cat Tommy on their lap  
Tommy meowing for food  
my mum said Merry Christmas, Phoebe  
happy to see my grand parents  
and it was Christmas Day

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