



Starting the conversation:

Flick through of the poems and images in this pamphlet together with the children in your class or those you are at home with.

Which images, titles or poems catch your attention most? Why?

Read the poem on the inside front cover, **Just Supposing...** and discuss your own responses to the questions posed in the poem. Where would you go and what would you do if you could be anywhere right now? Note that some of the ideas in the poem are big fantasy ideas like flying up into space, but some are quite ordinary, like staying in your room – both ideas are valid.

What did you miss most when you were not able to go to school because of the lockdown? How did you feel then? How do you feel now? These questions could feed into a circle time session.

Making new rules:

There were lots of new rules and restrictions put in place during the lockdown due to Covid-19. Make a list of all the rules you remember having to follow or that you might still be having to follow. These might be rules that were set by the government, rules set by your school or rules decided by your neighbourhood or your parents at home.

You could use different colours when you are making your list. You could, for example, use RED to list the government rules, GREEN to list the school rules and YELLOW to list the home rules. Rules are generally there to make the world a happier and safer place. If you were in charge and making the rules, what would they be?

Look at the poem **J'Ziah's Manifesto for the New World** (p.28). Write your own manifesto in the form of a poem.

The words to say it:

These are words that came up a lot during conversations I had while writing the poems in this book.

Kindness
Wishes
Hope
Worry
Sad
Happy
Travel
Home
Family
Friends
School

You could cut up these words, and add more of your own. Put them into a feely bag, hat or envelope and draw out a different one each day to focus on .

Many ways to write a poem:

Poems come in all sorts of shapes, styles and sizes. In this collection there are some poems that rhyme and others that don't, there are short poems and long poems. Some of the poems follow specific rules or are written in a specific poetry form, for example:

'Cocoon' (inside back cover) is a haiku¹, 'Back to Pen and Paper' (p.20) is a sonnet², and 'Jamie teaches Dylan his ABC's' (p.9) is an example of a poem using the acrostic form³.

Write your own:

Here are a few specific approaches you might want to try —

- 1) Look at 'School Rules' (p.6) and write poem with three complaints (like Theo's). The fourth should be something positive, a silver lining.
- 2) Look at the poem 'A Wheelbarrow Full of Ice-Cream (p.11) and write your own version, beginning each 2-line verse with 'If I could...' with a surprise wish at the end, like Anna's.
- 3) Look at 'School Trip' (p.7). This poem is like having a conversation with yourself, alternating an optimistic voice with a pessimistic voice. Try it!
- 4) 'Have You Washed Your Hands?' (p.22) plays with the idea of repetition. What are the things that you have been thinking, saying or doing, or being asked to do, that have felt most repetitive for you during this pandemic and the lockdown period?
- 5) The final poem, 'Cocoon', uses the image of being inside a chrysalis to reflect on the lockdown experience. Gather together some old magazines and use them to look for pictures that represent how lockdown felt for you. Make a collage from the pictures and use the images to inspire new metaphors, eg 'Lockdown was like being a bear hibernating in a cave', or 'Lockdown was like being a flower trying to grow through rubble'.

Have your own conversations.

Write your own poems!

¹ Japanese poetry form with syllabic rules 5-7-5

² A poem of fourteen lines using any of number of rhyme schemes

³ Poem where the first letters of each line spell a name, word, or in this instance, the letters of the alphabet.