THE Alzheimer
SOCIETY OF IRELAND



Activity Pack Two

Relaxed Engagement

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Relaxed Engagement



Hello Friends,

As November arrives, we hope this month's Relaxed Engagement Pack offers opportunities for creativity, conversation, reminiscence and connection. This month's pack includes Nature's Treasures: Sensory Art Experience, with creative activities using natural materials, alongside word searches, everyday number activities, colouring pages and A Little Moment of Calm, a gentle meditation inspired by November in Ireland.

You'll also find a comforting Chicken Pot Pie recipe, poems by Seamus Heaney, Medbh and John Hewitt, and familiar songs to spark memories and encourage singing together. We've included useful resources to support music, relaxation, exercise and reminiscence too.

As always, every contribution is valued, whether someone chooses to create, chat, sing, explore or simply enjoy a quiet moment together.

Send us images of your creations to: communityengagement@alzheimer.ie for a chance to be featured on our social media or in the next issue.

And as always, our Free Helpline is here for you.

You can reach us at Phone: 1800 341 341 or Email: helpline@alzheimer.ie.

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Nature's Treasures: Sensory Art Experience

OVERVIEW

This nature-based sensory art activity invites participants to explore leaves, pinecones, bark, seed heads, twigs, and other natural materials through touch, sight, smell, and creativity. Participants can create a seasonal tree picture, a leaf person, or a textured woodland animal.

BENEFITS

Encourages sensory exploration

Stimulates memories and conversation about nature

Supports self-expression and creativity

Provides opportunities for choice and achievement

Promotes hand movement and fine motor skills where appropriate

Creates a calming and engaging experience







Nature's Treasures: Sensory Art Experience

MATERIALS

- Large sheets of card or paper
- Non-toxic glue sticks or glue spreaders

Pre-collected natural materials:

- Leaves of different colours and textures
- Pinecones
- Acorns
- Bark pieces
- Seed heads
- Small twigs
- Dried grasses



Pre-drawn templates (tree, hedgehog, simple figure outline)

- Trays or baskets for displaying materials
- Hand wipes

CREATING THE ENVIRONMENT

Arrange materials in small baskets or trays.

Encourage participants to touch and explore before creating.

Play gentle nature sounds or seasonal music.

Consider introducing a scented item such as lavender, rosemary, pine, or fresh herbs.



Nature's Treasures: Sensory Art Experience

ACTIVITY 1: AUTUMN TREE COLLAGE

Introduction

- Invite participants to explore a basket of colourful autumn leaves.
- Conversation prompts:
- "Have you a favourite season?"
- "Did you collect leaves as a child?"
- "What colours can you see?"



Instructions

Provide a tree template with branches already printed or drawn.

Invite participants to handle and crumble leaves if they wish.

Apply glue to the branches.

Sprinkle leaf pieces onto the tree.

Press gently with hands to feel the different textures.

Continue until the tree is as full or sparse as the participant chooses.

Sensory Focus

Crunching leaves

Feeling textures

Observing colours

Smelling natural materials

There is no right or wrong way to create the tree.



ACTIVITY 2: LEAF PEOPLE

Introduction

Display a selection of large colourful leaves.

Conversation prompts:

"What might this person's name be?"

"What season are they dressed for?"

"What adventures could they be having?"

Instructions

Provide a simple pre-drawn face and body outline.

Invite participants to choose leaves for clothing and hair.

Apply glue to the body area.

Place leaves wherever the participant wishes.

Add small flowers, seeds, or grasses as decoration if desired.

Adaptation

For those with limited dexterity:

Offer just two or three leaf choices.

Support hand-over-hand placement where appropriate.

Focus on exploring the leaves rather than completing the picture.

Sensory Focus

Soft and crisp leaf textures

Bright autumn colours

Personal choice and storytelling



ACTIVITY 3: WOODLAND HEDGEHOG

Introduction

- Present a tray of natural treasures.
- Conversation prompts:
- "What might a hedgehog find in the forest?"
- "Have you ever seen a hedgehog?"
- "Which natural items feel interesting to touch?"

Instructions

- Provide a large hedgehog outline cut from sturdy card.
- Apply glue to the back area of the hedgehog.
- Invite participants to attach acorns, bark, seed heads, grasses, pinecones, and leaves.
- Build layers of texture to create the hedgehog's "spines."
- Encourage participants to explore materials throughout the activity.

Sensory Focus

- Rough bark
- Smooth acorns
- Soft grasses
- Bumpy pinecones
- Natural woodland scents



FACILITATOR TIPS

Do

✓ Focus on enjoyment rather than accuracy.

✓ Offer one choice at a time if someone becomes overwhelmed.

✓ Encourage touching, sorting, smelling, and exploring materials.

✓ Celebrate every contribution.

✓ Use supportive language such as:

"That's a lovely choice."

"Tell me about this leaf."

"I like how you've arranged these colours."



Avoid

✗ Correcting placement.

✗ Rushing participants.

✗ Comparing artwork.

✗ Taking over the creative process.

CLOSING THE SESSION

Invite everyone to look at the artwork together and celebrate each piece.

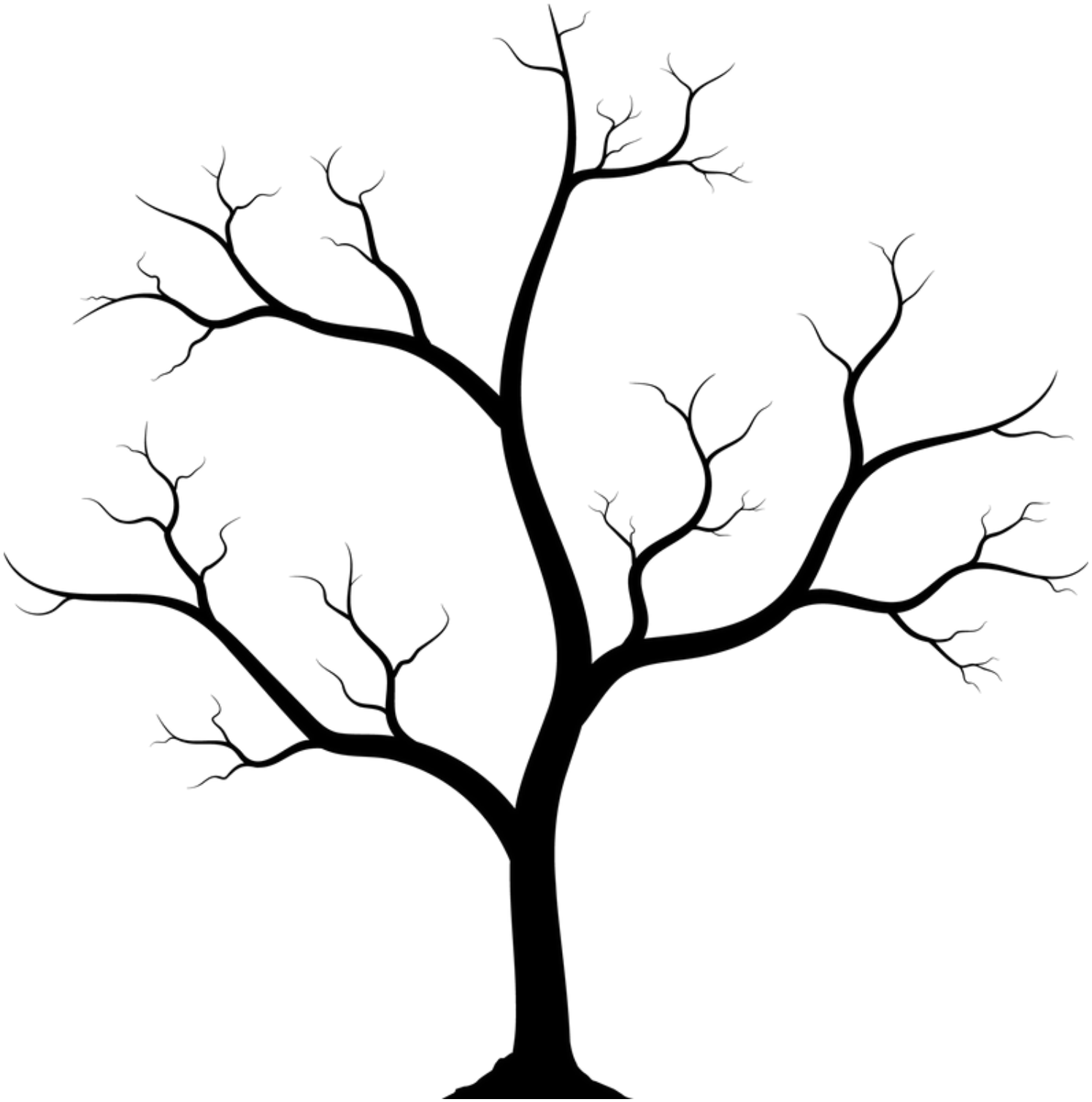
Possible closing comments:

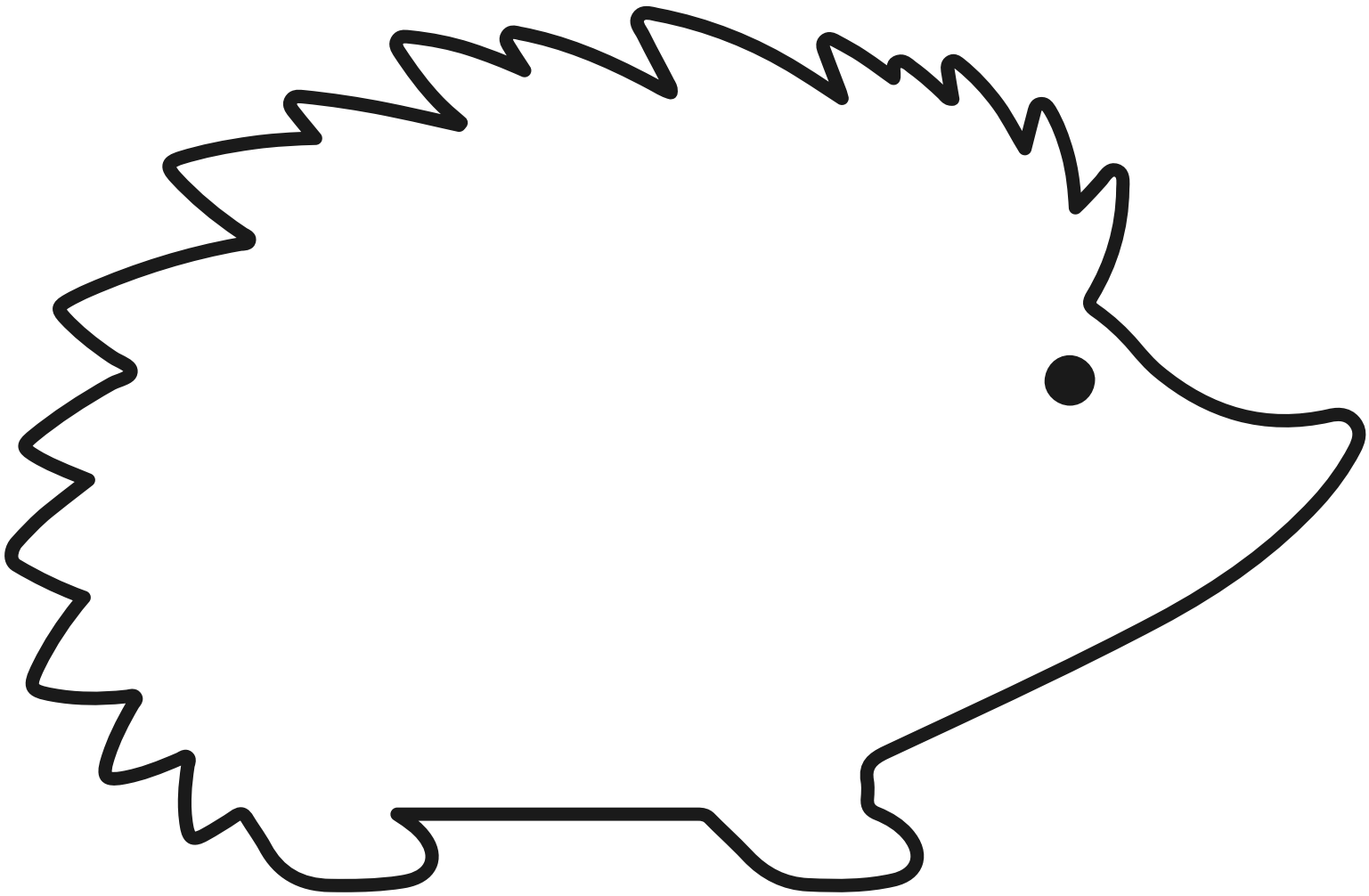
"Every tree is different, just like every season."

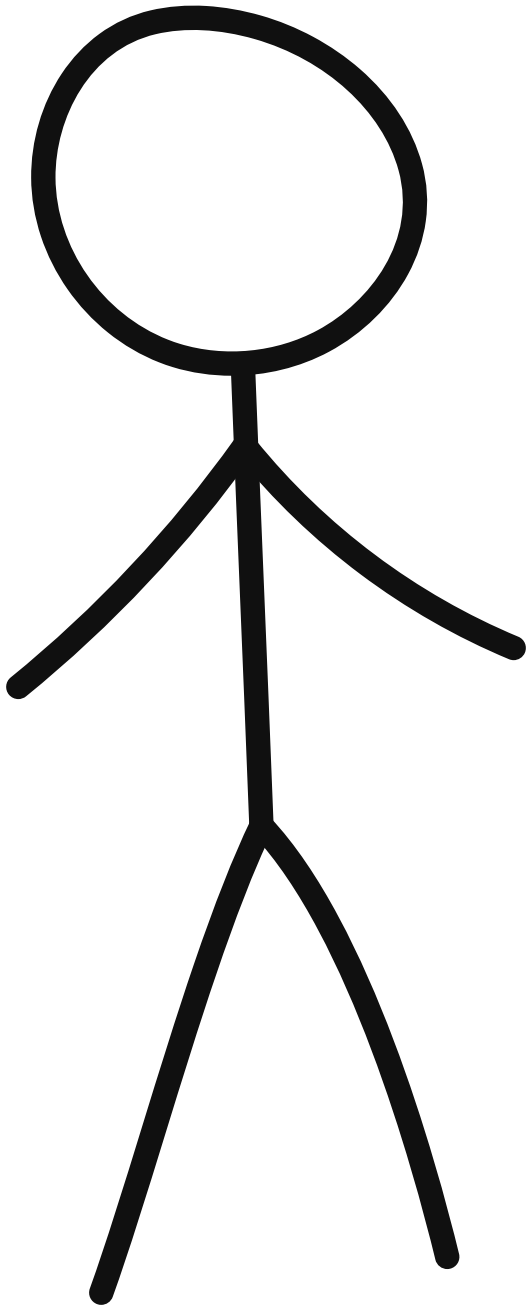
"Nature gives us so many beautiful colours and textures."

"Thank you for sharing your creativity today."

Consider displaying the finished artworks in a communal area as a seasonal gallery, helping participants enjoy a sense of pride, achievement, and contribution to their community.











Wordsearch

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



STILLNESS

STORMS

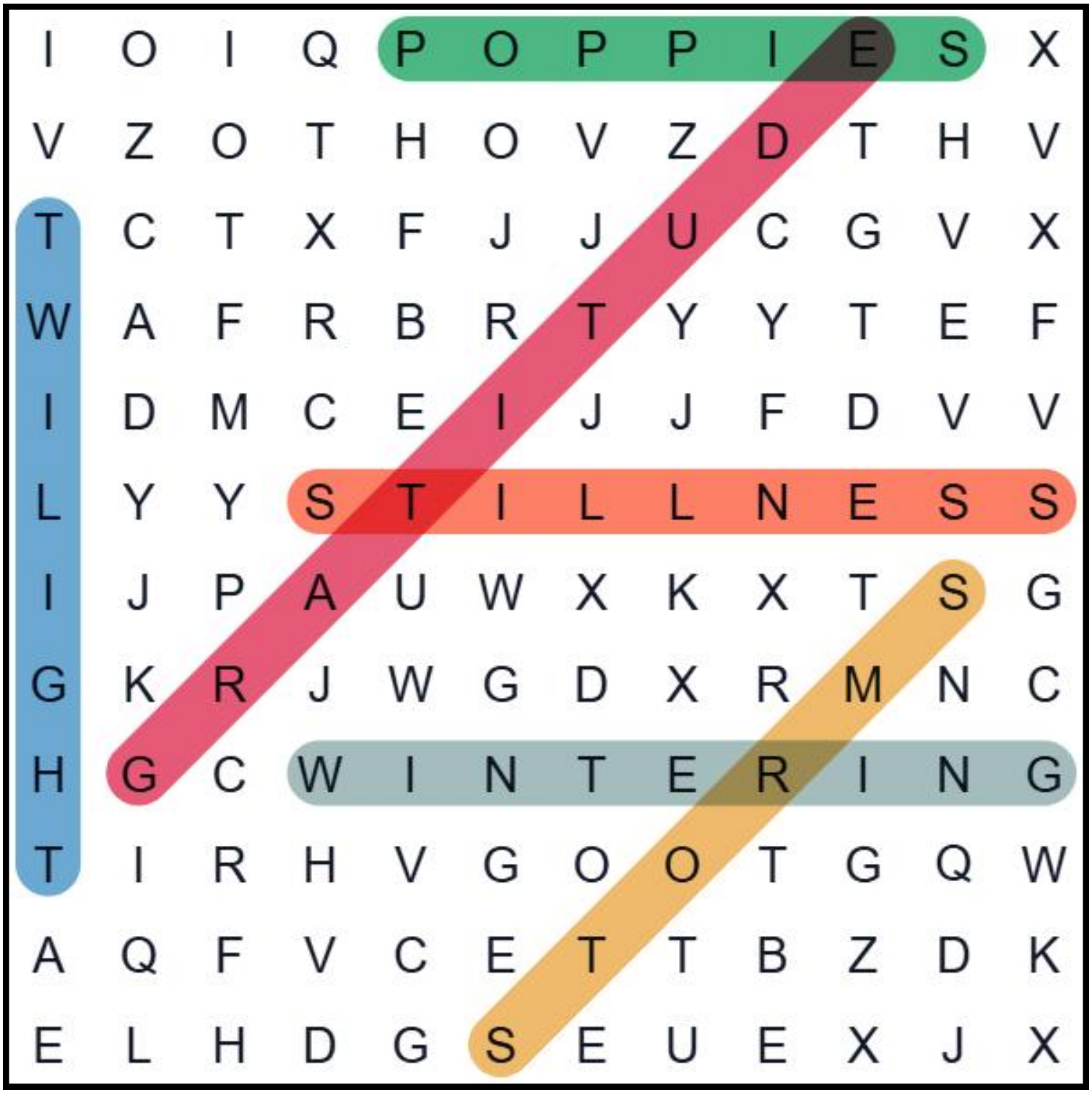
GRATITUDE

TWILIGHT

POPPIES

WINTERING

Wordsearch



STILLNESS

TWILIGHT

STORMS

POPPIES

GRATITUDE

WINTERING

Wordsearch

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



REMEMBRANCE COSINESS

HEARTH RAINFALL

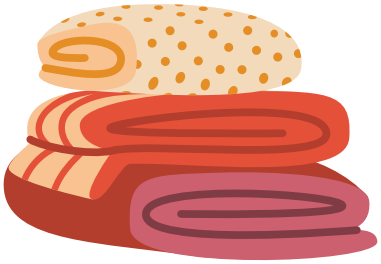
MIST FROST



Wordsearch

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

REMEMBRANCE
COSINESS
HEARTH
RAINFALL
MIST
FROST



Everyday Numbers

Focuses on familiar situations, simple calculations, and opportunities for conversation.

A Day Out Shopping

Part 1: Prices

Look at the items below.



- Loaf of bread €2
- Milk €1
- Apples €3
- Tea €4
- Biscuits €2

Questions

1. How much does the loaf of bread cost?
2. Which costs more, milk or tea?
3. How much do the apples cost?
4. What costs €2?



Everyday Numbers

Part 2: Adding Up

1. Bread (€2) + Milk (€1) = _____
2. Apples (€3) + Biscuits (€2) = _____
3. Tea (€4) + Bread (€2) = _____
4. Milk (€1) + Apples (€3) = _____



Part 3: Money Matters

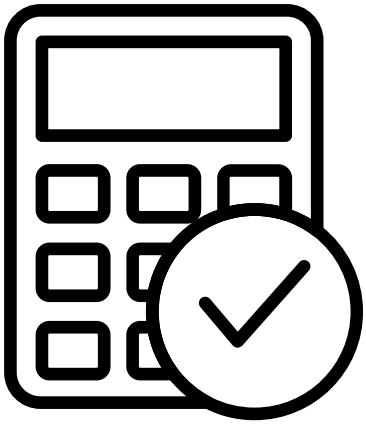
You have €10.

1. If you buy Tea (€4), how much money is left?
2. If you buy Bread (€2) and Biscuits (€2), how much have you spent?
3. If you spend €5 from €10, how much remains?



Everyday Numbers

Part 4: Number Sequence



Fill in the missing numbers.

1. 2, 4, ___, 8, 10
2. 5, 10, ___, 20, 25
3. 1, 2, 3, ___, 5
4. 20, 18, ___, 14, 12



Let's Chat

- What was your favourite shop when you were younger?
- Do you remember the price of a loaf of bread when you were a child?
- What was always on your shopping list?
- Did you enjoy going to the market or local shops?



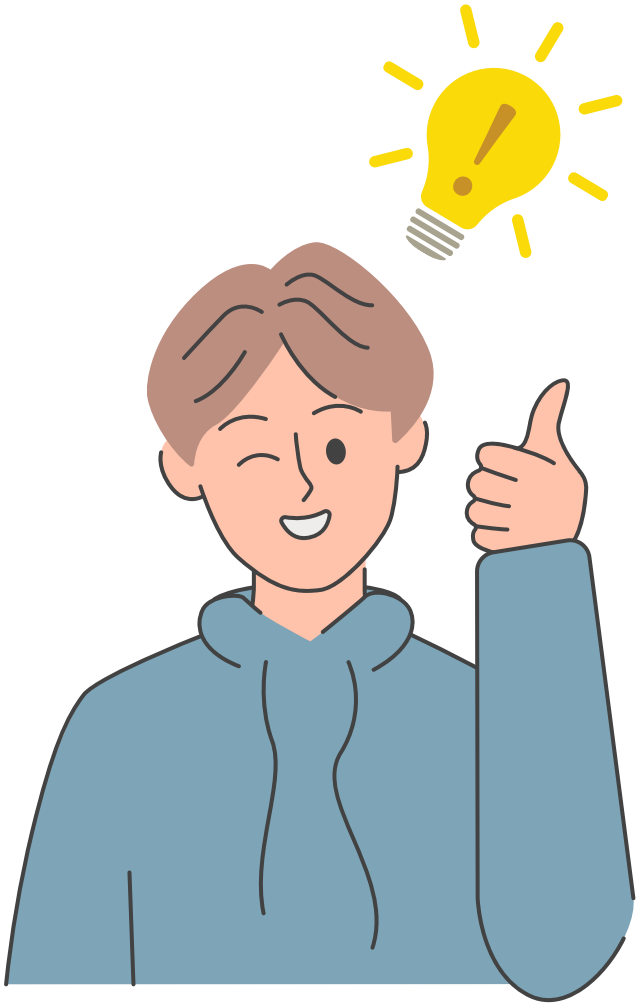
Everyday Numbers

Facilitator Tip:

The goal is engagement, confidence, and enjoyment rather than getting every answer right.

Answer Sheet

- Part 2: 3, 5, 6, 4
- Part 3: 6, 4, 5
- Part 4: 6, 15, 4, 16



A Little Moment of Calm

(5 Minutes)

A gentle sensory meditation.

This version uses short sentences, repetition and familiar sensory experiences inspired by November in Ireland. It can be read slowly, with plenty of quiet pauses. There is no need for participants to remember, respond or follow every instruction.

GUIDED MEDITATION SCRIPT

GETTING COMFORTABLE

Hello. It's lovely to be here with you.
Let's sit comfortably.
Feel the chair beneath you.
Feel your feet resting.
You are safe here.
There is nothing you need to do.
We can take a little moment of calm together.
Pause.



FEELING WARMTH

Imagine holding a lovely warm cup of tea.
Feel the warmth in your hands.
Perhaps you can smell the tea.
Warm and comforting.
Like a cosy afternoon at home.
Let your hands rest.
Pause.

A Little Moment of Calm

(5 Minutes)

LISTENING TO THE RAIN



It is November in Ireland.
Perhaps it is raining outside.
Drip, drop… drip, drop.
The rain falls gently on the window.
There is no need to go anywhere.
We can stay warm and cosy inside.
Listen to the quiet sounds around you.
Pause.

FEELING THE AUTUMN LEAVES



Imagine a golden leaf falling gently from a tree.
Floating down…
Slowly…
Gently…
Resting on the ground.
The trees can rest.
And we can rest too.
Let your shoulders relax, if they wish.
Let your hands be still, if that feels comfortable.
Pause.

A Little Moment of Calm

(5 Minutes)

A GENTLE MOMENT

Feel the chair supporting you.
Feel the warmth around you.
Perhaps notice a familiar voice, a friendly face or a soft blanket.
You are here.
We are here together.
There is nothing to remember.
Nothing to get right.
Just this moment.
Pause.



SAYING GOODBYE

Let's gently notice the room around us.
Feel your feet.
Feel your hands.
Take a soft, easy breath, if you wish.
Thank you for sharing this quiet time.
May the rest of your day be gentle and peaceful.
We can take our time.
There is no rush.

Simple sensory touches to accompany the meditation

SOMETHING SOFT

Offer a familiar, soft blanket or piece of wool for someone to touch, if they enjoy this.



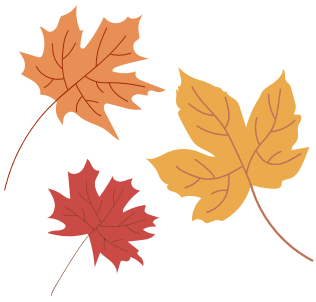
SOMETHING WARM

A warm mug to hold, or simply the familiar sight and aroma of tea. Check that the mug is a safe temperature.



SOMETHING FROM NATURE

Show a large, clean autumn leaf or a photograph of one. Let the person look or touch without needing to name it.



A gentle reminder for facilitators: Your voice, pace and presence are often the most important sensory elements. Allow time for responses, follow the person's cues, and stop or adapt if they seem uncomfortable. Participation can simply mean being together quietly.



Autumn Rhyme for Autumn Time



The trees are tall and the leaves are golden, and falling
on the green, green grass.

The children are happy about Halloween holidays,
looking forward to treats and sweets.

Shops are full of Halloween Bracks, people hoping to
find rings for the craic.
Crisp mornings, acorns, nuts and grapes, pumpkin and
costumes all up to date.
The weather is colder the fires are lit, people need their
cosy knits.

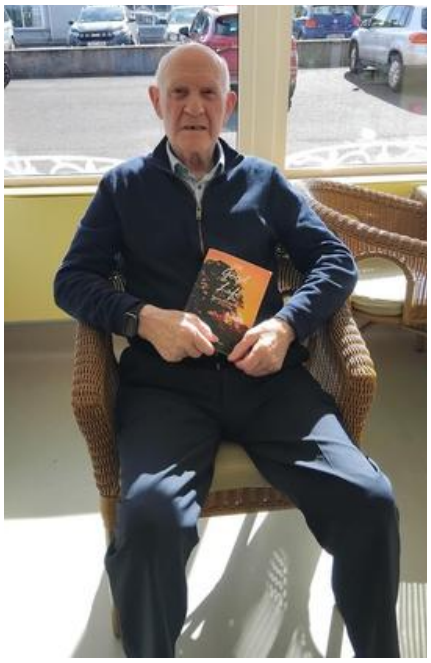
Clocks rewind, keep in mind mornings are brighter,
evenings are darker,
Oh how we enjoy the autumn time.

Colours and Poem

From the 'Ocean View Club' Easkey, Co. Sligo







Quick Thinking

by Michael Dunne

As I fall from the cliff
The milliseconds filled with thoughts,
Maybe I'll die?
How will my family know?

My wife, children, friends,
Will I meet my dead parents?
No, I won't die.
My legs will be broken.

I'll never walk again,
I don't deserve this,
Maybe I do deserve this,
I'll try to fly.

My arms won't work,
I'll try gliding,
And a soft landing,
The sand will be soft.

No sand,
It's the sea,
So I'll drown,
But I'll swim.

Oh, the cold water,
Then I open my eyes,
I'm lying on the room floor,
I had fallen out of bed.

About the Author

Michael Dunne was born in 1934 into a farming fami in Downing, Kilworth. Michael was actively involved the family farm from his early teens. His love of nature as encountered through his work, contributed to the interest and great love he has for the countryside and the natural world. He has been drawn to write, since he developed an interest in books and reading as a child. This was encouraged by his mother who ensured access to reading materials through her membership of Fermoy Library. Michael's practice of letter writing, and storytelling has fuelled his motivation for poetry. The opportunity for exercising this skill came about when Michael was invited to join the Fermoy Market Place Poetry Group in 2012.

CHICKEN POT PIE

Ingredients

- 350g cooked chicken, diced (rotisserie chicken or other cooked chicken)
- 1 packet béchamel sauce
- 300g frozen mixed vegetables
- 1 sheet puff pastry, thawed (typically about 320g if using a ready-rolled sheet)



Prep Time: 10 minutes.
Cooking Time: 30 minutes.
Serves: 4 to 6

Method

1. **Preheat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan)/Gas Mark 6.**
2. **Make the filling:**

In a 25cm ovenproof frying pan or skillet, combine:

- 350g cooked chicken, diced
- 1 packet béchamel sauce
- 300g frozen mixed vegetables

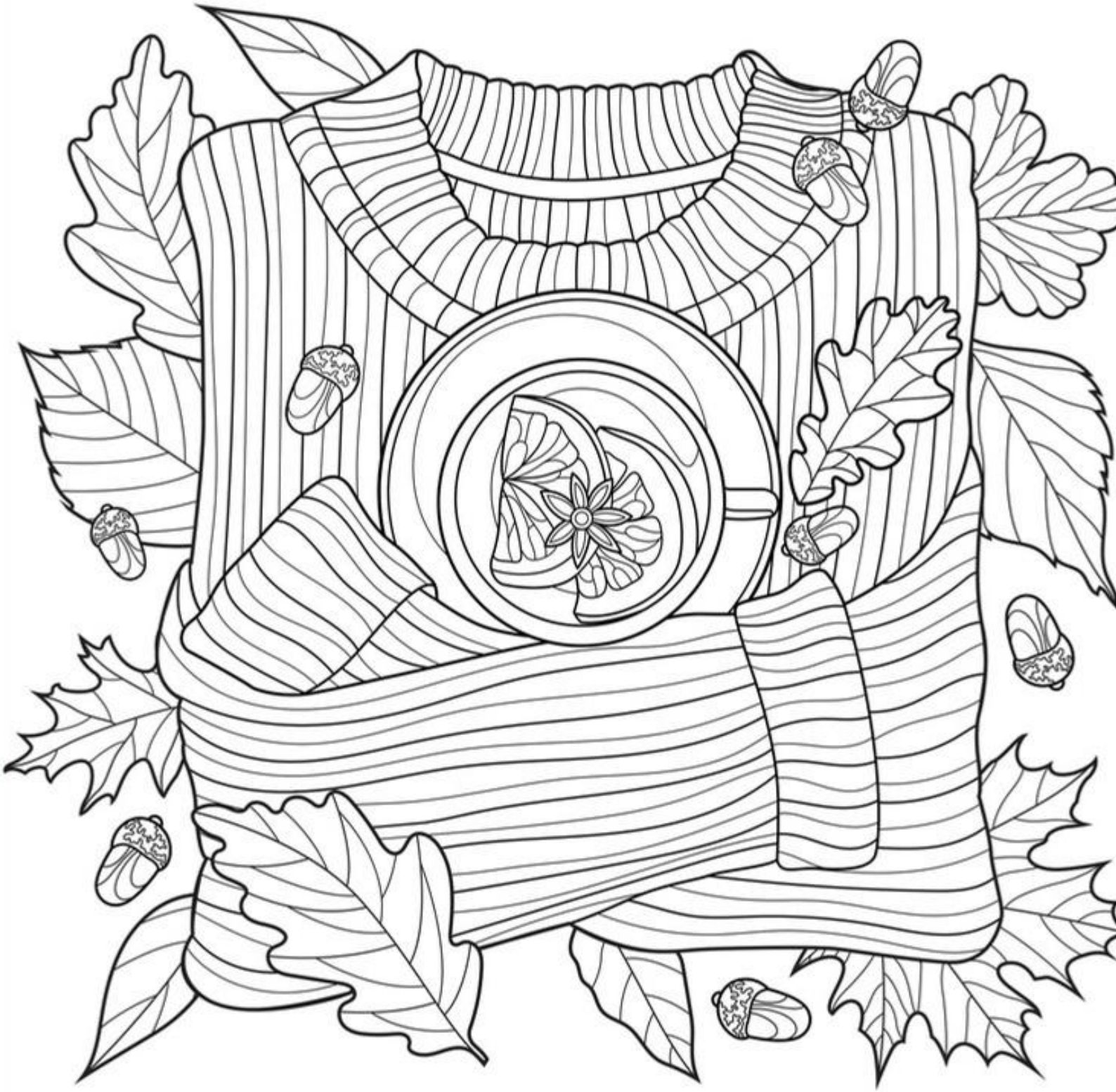
Add 60ml water to the empty béchamel sauce carton or jar, shake well, and stir it into the chicken mixture. Bring to a gentle simmer over a medium heat and cook for about 3 minutes, until heated through.

3. **Cover with pastry:**

On a lightly floured worktop, gently roll out the puff pastry sheet until it is just large enough to cover the pan with a little overhang. Drape the pastry over the filling and cut 4 small slits in the top to allow steam to escape.

4. **Bake:**

Bake for 25-30 minutes, or until the pastry is golden brown and the filling is bubbling. Allow to cool for a few minutes before serving.




NOVEMBER









Digging

By Seamus Heaney

Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests; snug as a gun.

Under my window, a clean rasping sound
When the spade sinks into gravelly ground:
My father, digging. I look down

Till his straining rump among the flowerbeds
Bends low, comes up twenty years away
Stooping in rhythm through potato drills
Where he was digging.

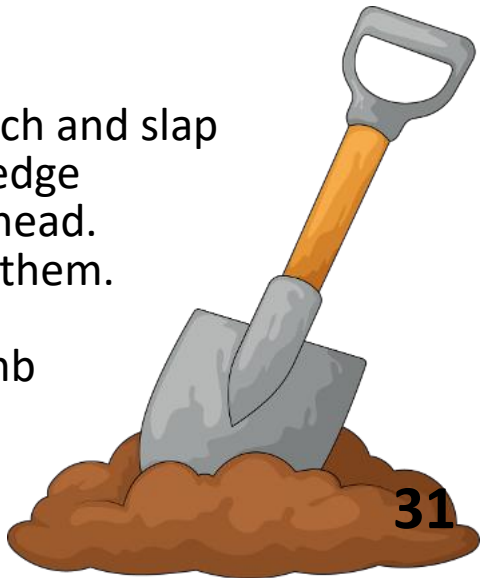
The coarse boot nestled on the lug, the shaft
Against the inside knee was levered firmly.
He rooted out tall tops, buried the bright edge deep
To scatter new potatoes that we picked,
Loving their cool hardness in our hands.

By God, the old man could handle a spade.
Just like his old man.

My grandfather cut more turf in a day
Than any other man on Toner's bog.
Once I carried him milk in a bottle
Corked sloppily with paper. He straightened up
To drink it, then fell to right away
Nicking and slicing neatly, heaving sods
Over his shoulder, going down and down
For the good turf. Digging.

The cold smell of potato mould, the squelch and slap
Of soggy peat, the curt cuts of an edge
Through living roots awaken in my head.
But I've no spade to follow men like them.

Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests.
I'll dig with it.



The Flower Master

by Medbh

Like foxgloves in the school of the grass moon,
we come to terms with shade,
with the principle of enfolding space,
our scissors in brocade.

We learn the coolness of straight edges,
how to stroke gently the necks of daffodils
and make them throw their heads back to the sun.

We slip the thready stems of violets,
delay the loveliness of the hibiscus dawn
with quiet ovals, spirals of feverfew.

Like water splashing the papery legacies
of bluebells, we do sea-fans with sea-lavender,
moon arrangements for the festivals of moon-viewing.

This black container calls for slow sweet sultan,
dainty nipplewort, in honour of a special guest
who, summoned to the tea ceremony,
must stoop to our low doorway,
our fontanelle,
the trout's dimpled feet.



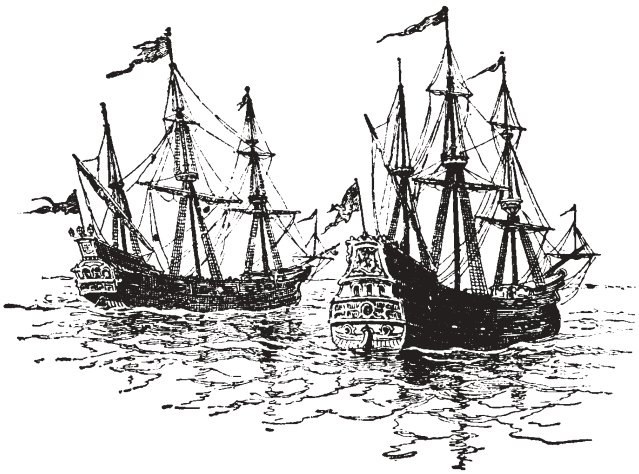
Little Ships
by John Hewitt

Oh, little ships that come and go
Across the gleaming water's breast,
And reach Japan and Mexico,
Will you not let me join your quest?

For I could pull harsh ropes, or hold
The tugging wheel when seas run high;
And when sleet whistles sharp and cold,
I'd reef stiff sails against the sky.

And I'd be quite content to eat
The tinned salt beef, the thick grey bread,
And lie awake in tropic heat,
And have a hammock for my head.

Oh, little ships that come and go,
Can I not slip away with you,
And see Japan and Borneo,
And Madagascar and Peru?





Get Off My Cloud

The Rolling Stones

I live on an apartment on the ninety-ninth floor of my block
And I sit at home looking out the window
Imagining the world has stopped
Then in flies a guy who's all dressed up just like a Union Jack
And says, "I've won five pounds if I have his kind of detergent pack"

I said, "Hey, you, get off of my cloud
Hey, you, get off of my cloud
Hey, you, get off of my cloud
Don't hang around 'cause two's a crowd
On my cloud, baby"

The telephone is ringing
I say, "Hi, it's me, who is it there on the line?"
A voice says, "Hi, hello, how are you?"
"Well, I guess I'm doin' fine"
He says, "It's three A.M., there's too much noise
Don't you people ever wanna go to bed?
Because you feel so good
Do you have to drive me out of my head?"

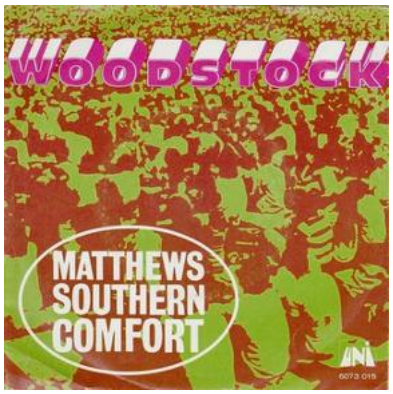
I said, "Hey, you, get off of my cloud
Hey, you, get off of my cloud
Hey, you, get off of my cloud
Don't hang around 'cause two's a crowd
On my cloud, baby"

I was sick and tired, fed up with this
And decided to take a drive downtown
It was so very quiet and peaceful
There was nobody, not a soul around
I laid myself out, I was so tired
And I started to dream
In the morning the parking tickets were just like flags
Stuck on my windscreen

I said, "Hey, you, get off of my cloud
Hey, you, get off of my cloud
Hey, you, get off of my cloud
Don't hang around 'cause two's a crowd
On my cloud"

Hey, you, get off of my cloud
Hey, you, get off of my cloud
Hey, you, get off of my cloud
Don't hang around baby two's a crowd
On my cloud

Hey, you



Woodstock

Matthews' Southern Comfort

I came upon a child of God
He was walking along the road
When I asked him, where are you going?
This, he told me:
"I'm going down to Yasgur's farm
Think I'll join a rock and roll band
I'll camp out on the land
I'll try and set my soul free"

We are stardust
We are golden
And we've got to get ourselves back to the garden

Then, can I walk beside you?
I have come here to lose the smog
And I feel just like a cog
In something turning
Well, maybe it's the time of year
Or maybe it's the time of man
And I don't know who I am
But life's for learning

We are stardust
We are golden
And we've got to get ourselves back to the garden

By the time I got to Woodstock
They were half a million strong
Everywhere there were songs and celebration
And I dreamed I saw the bombers
Riding shotgun in the sky
Turning into butterflies
Above our nation

We are stardust
We are golden
And we've got to get ourselves back to the garden





Ruby Tuesday

Melanie

She would never say where she came from
Yesterday don't matter 'cause it's gone
While the sun is bright
Or in the darkest night
No one knows
She comes and then she goes

Goodbye, Ruby Tuesday
Who is gonna hang a name on you?
And when you change with every new day
Still I'm gonna miss you

Don't ask her why she needs to be so free
She 's gonna tell you it's the only way to be
She just can't be chained
To a life where nothing's gained
And nothing's lost
But such a cost

Oh, goodbye, Ruby Tuesday
Who is gonna hang a name on you?
And when you change with every new day
Still I'm gonna miss you

There's no time to lose, I heard her say
You gotta catch your dreams before they run away
Dying all the time
Lose your dreams and you
Might will lose your mind
Is life unkind?

Oh, goodbye, Ruby Tuesday
Who is gonna hang a name on you?
And when you change with every new day
Still I'm gonna miss you

Oh, goodbye, Ruby Tuesday
Who is gonna hang a name on you?
And when you change with every new day
Still I'm gonna miss you

Goodbye, Ruby Tuesday
Goodbye, Ruby Tuesday
Goodbye, Ruby Tuesday





Useful Resources

HELPFUL LINKS

- The ASI also have a huge library of factsheets and resources available on: https://alzheimer.ie/get-support/resources-and-factsheets/.
- Virtual Dementia Hub: https://virtualdementiahub.ie/

CAFÉS

- We are hosting several Alzheimer Cafés this month. They are a place to come together, share a cuppa and listen to our amazing guest speakers. For information on how to attend visit: www.alzheimer.ie/service/alzheimer-cafe/.

SOCIAL CLUBS

- These are a social gathering where people can drop in to chat, access information and support, and meet other people. Click the link below to find your nearest Social Club https://alzheimer.ie/service/socialclub/.
- Engaging Dementia Rainbow Virtual Café is held online via Zoom on the last Friday of each month (excluding bank holidays). This is a welcoming space for older persons within the LGBT+ community, as well as family supporters, healthcare workers and proactive allies. virtualcafe@engagingdementia.ie



MUSIC

- **The Virtual Dementia Hub**

  https://virtualdementiahub.ie/category/music/
- The Virtual National Choir Contact: Catherine Bartels Phone: 086 0490548 Email: cbartels@alzheimer.ie
- Let's Sing Together: https://youtu.be/KEFAxePeZ18
- Playlist for Life: https://www.playlistforlife.org.uk/
- The Story of Playlist for Life: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eWgBlmVQXoM

MEDITATION

- The Virtual Dementia Hub

  https://virtualdementiahub.ie/category/lifestyle/relaxation/
- Love Meditation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IViX4VrPU2s

EXCERSICE

- 10 Today - https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p087wddm
- Five in Five - https://weareundefeatable.co.uk/media/exuhwosv/five-in-five-booklet.pdf
- Love to Move - https://britishgymnasticsfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Love-to-Move-booklet.pdf



OTHER

- The Virtual Dementia Hub: Museum https://virtualdementiahub.ie/category/art/imma/
- Beautiful Relaxing Music: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lFcSrYw-ARY
- Calm Classical: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9E6b3swbnWg&list=RDQMgYS1R4vOwcM&start_radio=1
- Tactile Activities for People with Dementia: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p5SvKDsFHVg
- Spring Crafts: https://loaids.com/spring-crafts-for-seniors/
- Online Colouring: https://coloring-for-adults.com/all-coloring-pages
- Irish Museum of Modern Art https://imma.ie/learn-engage/imma-horizons/

REMINISCENCE

- www.thereplay.ie

COLOURING FROM

- https://www.vecteezy.com/vector-art/28633002-autumn-coloring-pages-cute-fall-coloring-pages-autumn-coloring-pages-for-adults-kindergarten-fall-coloring-pages-fall-coloring-pages-for-adults-pumpkin-coloring-pages
- https://momlovesbest.com/fall-coloring-pages
- https://artprojectsforkids.org/category/view-by-media/coloring-page/fine-art-coloring-pages/