

## Sample Creative Writing scaffold + exemplar response – Discovery

### **THIS SCAFFOLD PROVIDES ONE APPROACH TO COMPOSING AN EFFECTIVE IMAGINATIVE RESPONSE FOR AREA OF STUDY: DISCOVERY**

**REMEMBER – There are many different approaches and ideas, so do not feel limited by these ideas, use them as a guide to help you to develop the depth and complexity of your creative responses.**

Compose a creative piece that portrays an individual's discovery of an object of significance that has been lost, forgotten or concealed – an object could be a letter, a photograph, a necklace, a stone, a personal item from a hobby or key memory, etc.

You must use the discovery of this object as a stimulus for the persona's reflection onto the past that facilitates shifts in their perceptions of a key relationship with another person and themselves. E.g. book, journal, letter, photograph, piece of jewelry, guitar pick, musical instrument, fishing rod, etc.

Choose a shared interest that connects and / or separates the two individuals – art, music, writing, fishing, etc. and create memories that involve this interest. This will add depth / dimension to the relationship between the individuals.

*E.g. Mother / daughter relationship → daughter initially lacks understanding of the mother (lack of emotional understanding, insight into the mother's decisions, daughter perceives mother in a limited way, different values and is only seeing the surface of who her mother really is/ was.*

Choose a place of significance that the individual will return to for the first time in a long time. This place / setting will serve as a stimulus for discoveries through memory.

### **Sample Narrative Structure**

Three sections in the present + two flashbacks

Create snippets of imagery into your narrative to inject it with moments of 'showing' rather than 'telling.'

Use page breaks in the form of hash tags, lines or dashes to signify a shift in time, place or perspective.

#### **Scene 1 → Orientation – Present**

Individual returns to a place they haven't visited in a long time. They observe differences in the place - how it has been developed or decayed through the passage of time. Use imagery to clearly establish the setting (appeal to a variety of senses).

E.g. childhood home, park, beach, river, school (a place that holds significance

for the individual and their memories of a relationship with another person - sibling, parent, friend, mentor? It can be effective to choose a formative relationship that has since been degraded).

Briefly establish why they are back there (e.g. to pack up their childhood home so that parents can move to retirement home? Have the parents died? do they need to retrieve something particular? Are they looking for one of their belongings? Are they meeting the person of significance there?

Individual finds the first object OR specific location and it triggers a memory involving the other person (a letter, book, photograph, typewriter, necklace, album, box, etc / living room, kitchen sink, tree, flamethrower study, book shelf).

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### **Scene 2 → Flashback -- Past**

Flashback to a time when the individual felt segregated from their loved one - perhaps familial conflict, differences in perspective, values, interests.

Bring the reader into the moment using imagery to draw them into the past. Create a clear sense of the dynamic between the characters. How does the central character feel about the situation? Isolated? Misunderstood? Restricted? How can you SHOW this?

This scene can reveal the central character's initial perceptions of their loved one that reflects that there is misunderstanding of that person's intentions / personality / level of love and care, etc.

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### **Scene 3 → Present**

This scene draws the reader back to the place of significance where the central character is still on their initial quest (to pack away, find, unpack, clean, observe, etc).

In this scene they discover a second object or specific location that triggers a memory that has long since been concealed. This memory reveals a more positive aspect of the relationship with the significant person / loved one.

Perhaps it reveals a side of the individual that the central character had not previously seen or understood. This might be because when they return and see this place / object through the lens of a mature adult, they bring a new perspective to the relationship, or it might be new information about this person entirely. E.g. the discovery of a musical instrument, sheet music, an artwork, a piece of writing, a journal, a letter, picture book, etc. (Something different to the first object / location!)

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### **Scene 4 → Flashback -- Past**

This second flashback brings a more positive memory to light that reveals something interesting about the significant person. Perhaps a time when they were more connected, when the central character learns something from the other person, or feels valued and connected.

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### **Scene 5 → Present -- Resolution**

This final scene brings the story together to offer insight into the outcomes of the central character's discovery through memories. Perhaps they learn that they had misjudged or misunderstood the other person and they can find some acceptance or forgiveness? Perhaps they can now understand the actions / decisions of that person and it allows them to renew their relationship.

This realisation / growth / transformation can be symbolised in the way that the central character handles the object of significance that allowed them to shift their perceptions.

*E.g. Perhaps in the early stages of the story (scene 1 and 2) a typewriter triggered feelings of resentment as the character connected the object to memories of being neglected by a work-focused parent. After they find a manuscript in scene 3 with a dedication to them in the opening pages, they understand that the parent had been working in honour of them the whole time. This shifts the way they perceived their parent's absence. Thus, in the final stages of the story (scene 5), perhaps the central character wipes away the dust from the typewriter keys and carefully takes the manuscript so that they can read it and find out the nuances of who their mother or father actually was in all of their depth and complexity through their writing. This can symbolise that they now view the parent's writing as direct access to their loved one's mind, an opportunity for deep understanding, rather than viewing it as a reminder of the neglect they once experienced.*

### **Exemplar response using this scaffold:**

**Food for thought** – This creative response is the product of at least six or seven drafts so please do not feel that it is unattainable for you to write a strong piece. Planning, drafting, seeking feedback, applying feedback and repeating these steps is what most students need to do to continually strengthen the quality of their writing.

#### **A New Song – 15/15 Discovery**

The pigeons outnumbered the dark grey paving slabs. Matilda sat near a circular pool in the inner section of the plaza, enjoying the spray of recycled water that emerged from the lips of a busty stone mermaid. It seemed so out of place, compared to the buzz and noise of city traffic.

Matilda knew her mother detested her leaving home. Her fingers fumbled over a crinkled letter she'd been composing for the last couple of days. Countless folds and creases decorated the pale cream sheet. Her sprawled scribbles reflected her frustrated deliberation.

*You don't understand.  
Music was a part of my life, my old life.*

*You need to accept that it isn't me anymore.*

*I want to explore other pathways.  
I have to.*

When she had first arrived, her matching orange knit and mitts, hand made by her mother, had set her apart from the stark monochromatic backdrop. Her unique attire hadn't been rewarded with employment. Checking her watch, she folded up the letter into her pocket, and moved towards the traffic lights on the corner, the click of her black-heeled shoes drowned by a discordant symphony of car horns. Matilda felt pulled along by the dark grey current of black suits and office skirts, until she was forced to an abrupt stop.

Like a pillar of sunlight in a dark attic, a haunting strain cut through the dirge of the urban soundscape. Familiar chords and scales lifted from the delicate picking of steel strings, carried on the smog filled air.

There he stood. Still, amongst the swarm of bees and the buzzing of cars. The old worn guitar case sat in front of his feet, with a mere couple of dollars resting inside. His fingers flowed over the strings, articulately plucking each to create the most melodious sound, like picking budding flowers to create a delicate scent. His fingers were those of a true guitarist- worn, dirty, and a permanent indentation from the steel strings.

Just like Matilda's.

The gentle refrain of the guitar spoke a musical language that she understood fluently. She leant in to every accent and perfect fifth. Instinctively, the music began tracing itself in her mind. *The decrescendo transitioning the harmonic arpeggio.* Her pale skin was the sheet music, with each black crochet and quaver imprinting itself. For so long, she realized she had craved that strumming tone with its hypnotic, soothing qualities. The hands skillfully descended from each fret of the neck, like a journey into a new world.

It was just her, and the busker, whose music soared, taking with it her and only her. The city was consumed. It devoured the monotony that had stifled her, pulsing through her arteries like water flooding into dry rivulets.

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Their laughter filled the warm night air. Between spontaneous giggles and harmonious duets, they grabbed their picks and started again. "Come on we have to get this right," Matilda playfully reprimanded her mother.

Sharps complimented flats and a harmony lifted from the instruments. Her lack of experience was evident as her fingers fumbled the arpeggios of sound, yet did not detract from the ambience as her mother dominated the song with every graceful strum and flawless tune.

She paused, eager to learn from her mother's masterful control of her Grandfather's beloved guitar. The mahogany frame, rich with varying tones of chestnut and deep maroon, was a result of decades of his loving caress. Dents decorated the guitar body, echoes of rugged journeys made from town to town, pub to pub.

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In haste to escape the simple life she had lived, Matilda had instinctually grabbed the essentials. There were some other things that she knew weren't necessities, but she couldn't bring herself to leave them behind. Packed securely in the box, she coated it in layers of thick tape, so sure that this part of her life held no value in the bustling city that had awaited her.

The room was empty, all but for the sheet music that littered across the sparse carpet, like white, bodiless wings with the emptied cardboard box that had contained them. She could easily picture her mother there, sitting amongst the paper, cross legged, guitar nestled in her lap and her concentration painted face, as she always had.

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Matilda relished in the way her mother would completely immerse herself in the emotion of the moment. The deep furrow between her eyebrows would appear like a ravine eroded from running water. A dark curl of hair would wave over her tense face, as she shook in rhythm to the song.

“Do you think I’ll be able to play like you one day?” Matilda asked as they tucked sheets of music into folders.

“Of course, Tilly. It’s in your blood.”

Without another word, she pressed a chipped green pick into Matilda’s palm and gestured with a nodding head. *It’s yours.*

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The night fog pressed its curious face against the single, tiny window in her cold apartment. She grabbed a note pad and drew four lines parallel above each other. Slowly the crochets and quavers appeared like the filtered rays of dawn sunlight. A song began to take shape. Her worn hands rested on her pocket, feeling the letter that was once heavy with her frustration. She crumpled it up, aiming it in the bin and with it her previous certainty that music and her mother were in the past.

Her hands grappled with the bottom of her sticky-taped box, searching for the familiar plastic teardrop. She had forgotten how comfortably it sat between her fingertips, like a natural extension of her body - a part of herself that she could no longer conceal.

***For one-on-one online assistance with developing your creative responses, or for personalised email feedback, contact me at the details below.***

Happy writing,

Ange ☺

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