

# Species STORIES

*Birds, bees, bats and butterflies!*



HELP US TO #RENATURE  
SOUTH DOWNS  
NATIONAL PARK

WOL  
WRITING  
OUR  
LEGACY

Funded by  
UK Government  
ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND

FOYLE FOUNDATION

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Created by Gemma Weekes

In partnership with South Downs National Park Authority

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# ABOUT



Species Stories is a project by Writing Our Legacy and the South Downs National Park Authority. Eight BIPOC writers made new poems and stories about birds, bats, bees and butterflies in the South Downs.

The aim is to inspire care and imagination. By telling these stories, we can help nature recover and grow strong for the future.

01



The project is about helping nature. Many animals and plants are in danger, and we need fresh ways to care for them.

02



It builds on earlier projects. Writing Our Legacy has worked with the South Downs National Park Authority before, giving writers space to explore nature, history and culture.

03



Species Stories mixes art and science. Poems, stories and facts come together to help young people connect with wildlife.

05



How can telling stories help protect the natural environment?

06





## OUR PLAN FOR TODAY

- 01. Background:** About the Species Stories project
- 02. Reflection** What facts can you remember about birds, bees, butterflies and bats?
- 03. Species facts:** Learning about bird, bee, bat, and butterfly species of the South Downs
- 04. Reading:** Reading and discussing extracts from the Species Stories project
- 05. Creating:** your chance to create your own species stories!



take notes

TIME TO REFLECT...



What facts can I remember about bats, birds, bees and butterflies?



DISCUSS

SKETCH



*Extract from...*

## THE NIGHT NATTERER

### SENSE TURNER

Child of daylight,  
They call me Bat, Natterer.  
Myotis Nattereri, after Johann Natterer.

He stilled our wings,  
hung our shadows on museum walls.  
He watched us through glass;  
insects, birds and mammals.

Names can be cages,  
they can also be keys.  
I reclaimed mine,  
to carry the news of night  
to speak for my siblings  
to be the dark casting light



You know more than you think,  
and when you speak  
your knowing multiplies like spores in the dark  
Changes are coming and you will play a part.

### Reflect & Discuss

#### Writer's Intent

What is the main idea or theme the writer is trying to communicate in this extract?

In what ways can names be 'cages'? In what ways can names be 'keys'? Can you think of examples of both?

#### Form, Technique & Language

What *figurative language* can you spot in this extract?  
How does it get the writers point across?

Extract from... **LIFE, DEATH, SKIPPER: A EULOGY**

**TAMARA LOIS ANSAH**



I slipped inside carefully and saw it for myself. A mosaic of habitats, unexpected in the heart of London, stretched before me: cracks filled with grasses and wildflowers, tiny shrubs and humming insects, little mammals scurrying out of sight. And there, among the Birds-foot trefoil I knew the Skipper loved, life persisted. I visited the ruins every day while Mum lay in that coma.

So there I was, lying on the floor, watching this cocoon, listening to my breath. At times I thought I heard my mother's breath too, faint, but steady, as if the cocoon and her lungs were tuned to the same hidden metronome. I lay there, thoughts spinning, grieving, trying to make sense of the inevitability of death and the certainty of life.

I can still picture that morning, twenty-one days in, when the cocoon began to crack like a dropped bead of glass. Out came the Dingy Skipper, its crumpled wings confidently unfurling in the May sun. I watched until the brown blur darted into the air, and I swear, in that exact moment, my phone buzzed in my pocket.

It was Grandma, her voice breaking: "She's opening her eyes. She's waking up."

## Reflect & Discuss

### Writer's Intent

What is the main idea or theme the writer is trying to communicate in this extract?

What do butterflies and cocoons *symbolise* here?

### Form, Technique & Language

What *figurative language* can you spot in this extract? How does it get the writers point across?

*Extract from...*



**BARN OWL  
BREAKING, RE-MAKING**

**JESS MURRAIN**

banshee we

don't inherit the language of us      how to land safely in self when robbed  
of nourishment-knowledge      we lineage made 'magical'      interludes trimmed  
into folkloric margin      by those who claim you as deathly      to those whose grassland is grazed  
shorn down to *tradition*      where no shrew can gather      no rodent can hide

dear banshee      you don't need me to speak for your roots      once Cuban giant & Caribbean  
likely 1.1 metres in height      the diasporic as duppy      angel to an old weathered evening  
we      a new species recently      added to the roster of birds that once lived in the West Indies  
passed down as mystical text



**Reflect & Discuss**

**Writer's Intent**

What is the main idea or theme the writer is trying to communicate in this extract?

What might it mean to 'land safely in self'?

**Form, Technique & Language**

Have you seen this kind of format in a poem before?

How does the style affect the message?

*Extract from...*

## DIARY OF A POTTER FLOWER BEE

BY RONA LUO

Day 153

I wake hot and thirsty but there's not a drop to drink. This cocoon is feeling cramped – I can't be here a minute longer! Its tight weave splits under my teeth. The cave walls crumble easily against my jaw as well. As I chew my way out, I see other empty cells like mine. My neighbours must have left too.

There's a light ahead, and the familiar rolling liquid sounds clearer. Salty air rushing into the cave cools my head. Suddenly my body is not wriggling, but crawling with legs. I have legs! One, two in the front, one, two behind, and one, two in the back. I can move so much faster now.

All the hairs on my body are standing up as I approach the mouth of the cave and see a huge expanse of the water, with bands of dark blue, light blue and aqua-green waves lapping towards me. So this is the liquid I'd been hearing. I jump towards the water, flapping my wings. I have wings!

### Reflect & Discuss

#### Writer's Intent

What is the writer trying to communicate in this extract? How do you feel about the bee?

What emotions does the creature go through?

#### Form, Technique & Language

The piece is told in the form of a diary. Do you know what that form of writing is called?

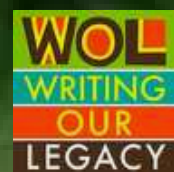
How does this help us to identify with the bee?



# TIME TO CREATE

*Make your own species story!*

What story can **you** tell about birds, bees, bats or butterflies? The prompt sheet will give you all the inspiration you need to make a species story of your own!



Diary entry?

Rap lyrics?

Spoken word

Short story

Monologue?

Song?

# THANK YOU

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