

Murmurations:
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Waste not, want not

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Waste not, want not

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Awash with words

Wandering over page

Words that once wasted

Their last syllable

Citation Link

On my lips

As I refused them escape

Silenced by codes I begin

Now to see my part in writing

Whilst my heart is fighting

Back her tears of rage, my arms

Embrace invitations to share

With relational care

The stories I hold

That begin to unfold

Not for my solace

But for their own promise

Of truth

To be told

The creation of this poem, though it was spontaneous and raw in the writing, has been influenced by the themes of this special edition of *Murmurations: Journal of Transformative Systemic Practice*, the theme of writing ethically from and into systemic practice.

I was also motivated by conversations I have had with colleagues and friends, including some of the contributors of the journal.... Julia Evans and Lorna Edwards and my co-editors, Marilena Karamatsouki, Joanna Michopoulou and Gail Simon. I have also drawn from Welsh oral poetry, loosely. I say loosely as I am not a Welsh scholar. I am Welsh, and have “grown up” through, in and around modern Welsh culture and, to some extent, the Welsh language. But I did not grow up in a family or community that was fluently Welsh speaking or a family or community that was immersed in verse.

The tradition of poetry in Wales is broad and deep and is not my speciality, but I have a “felt in the bones of my body and the soil of my land” respect and love of the Welsh language and for storytelling. I am a visiting fellow at The George Ewart Evans Centre for Storytelling in Wales and I have learnt that there are many threads of connection between storytelling and narrative therapy practices. I also facilitate creative writing and storytelling groups with women in the community where I live, which offers another rich learning experience, encouraging me to keep writing.

I was animated in writing this poem by an appreciation, but limited knowledge of, the famous Welsh poet Dylan Thomas (amongst others) and the tradition of *cynganedd* – a complex form of poetry that emphasises syllables, repetition, patterning, sound and meter. It does not translate easily into the English language as the harmony is embedded into the Welsh words- words that roll and swirl like a salt water wave within your mouth. This poem is not an example of *cynganedd*, it is not written in the Welsh language (though the intonation is present) or written in the complex form of that tradition but it is loosely inspired by the emphasis on sound and the sensation of the words on the tongue - the feeling and material quality of the words as important as the meaning that the words may invoke.

It is part of the tradition of Welsh poetry to play a role in archiving the politics and culture of the time. The Bards of Wales have been an integral part of society, the gathering of the Bards continues as part of the National Eisteddfod in Wales (loosely translated as “session” or “sitting together”). This remains an important event in Wales that celebrates Welsh language and culture through the arts, especially music and poetry.

As in most cultures, there is also a tradition of resistance in the written and spoken word. In Wales speaking and writing in Welsh and reclaiming the language of Wales has its roots firmly in a resistance to subjugation and imposed rule. Having the *choice* to speak and write in English or Welsh is a fought-for right.

This poem offers a nod to these important contexts. It also seeks to speak to the sense of urgency I often feel to tell stories from practice, the worries this involves for me and the anxiety I feel about how to best “speak” those stories, to “do justice”.

I hope it also tells a story about love and care and maybe it could prompt conversations about the way certain discourses continue to silence us all in differing ways. We, and the people and communities we work with, will each have our own, unequal and unique, experiences of being held back, shut up, shut down.

Author

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