

# Giving the Voiceless a Voice



**Sarah Cobham and John Irving Clarke**



## **Giving the Voiceless a Voice**

When we started our work with Creative Partners, John and I had the intention of exploring the power of written and artistic expression. With the women of New Hall Prison and the Asylum Seekers receiving support from the City of Sanctuary based at the Quaker House, Wakefield, we were going to give the Voiceless a Voice.

We knew that involvement in the creative arts has the power to enhance self-esteem, boost confidence and help mediate a passage through difficult times. Nowhere has that been more obvious than at the subsequent drama presentation given by the women prisoners or the drawing and writing sessions at the Quaker House which drew the involvement of the Asylum Seekers and volunteer helpers.

This book is a small record of what took place: the shared enjoyment, the sense of achievement and the empowering awareness of the value of giving the voiceless a voice.

**Sarah Cobham**



Explore your own Spirit of Life through a series of workshops

Using  
**Art**  
 Drama  
 the Written and Spoken Word

**EXPRESS YOURSELF**

Monday 21<sup>st</sup> July 9-11am      Creating Character through narrative, poetry, Drama and Art.

Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> July 9-11am      I am my own Person and I will explore that through pictures and poems of butterflies and sunshine to create poetry and art work.

Friday 25<sup>th</sup> July 9 – 10am  
 10.30 – 11am      Preparing for Presentation Good Morning New Hall Using Drama to present our work.

If you are happy to let us, we would like to publish your work in a book due to be published Feb 2015 .

At New Hall Women's prison we had to work quickly. Constraints of time meant that we were limited to three morning visits over the course of a week during July.

We knew we would encounter hesitancy and some suspicion. We also knew that the prospect of working with writers might be intimidating for the women; particularly if they lacked confidence in their literacy skills.

This proved to be the case but we were able to work with some real positives. The library in which we were situated is an ideal working environment, surrounded by books of course, but with an evident ethos of purposeful support. Here we could launch the strategies which we had honed over more years in the classroom than we cared to count: drama games and story swapping to build self-esteem and a group identity. And then the business of words on the page, complementary art work and public presentation.


And it worked. By the final morning, the women successfully battled against their nerves and made a drama presentation to invited guests. Those present were moved by the performance and the palpable sense of achievement. For our part? We felt privileged to have had the opportunity to take part in this whole event.

The following pages offer only snapshots of what took place. We weren't allowed to photograph the women and names have been changed.

# Butterflies

 We left our names & numbers in the library with Anne,  
three mornings with John & Sarah she said was the plan.

So we took the chance to do something different and new  
Art, poetry, drama  
Even creative writing, your own point of view.

The dark silhouette of a man way up high,   
Way up high as though touching the sky.  
Life is an emotional rollercoaster  
But can be fun if made the most of.

 Then came the hand that washes my face  
The same hand that waves yet going no place.  
The hand that then combed my hair  
The same hand that comforts friends there, there!

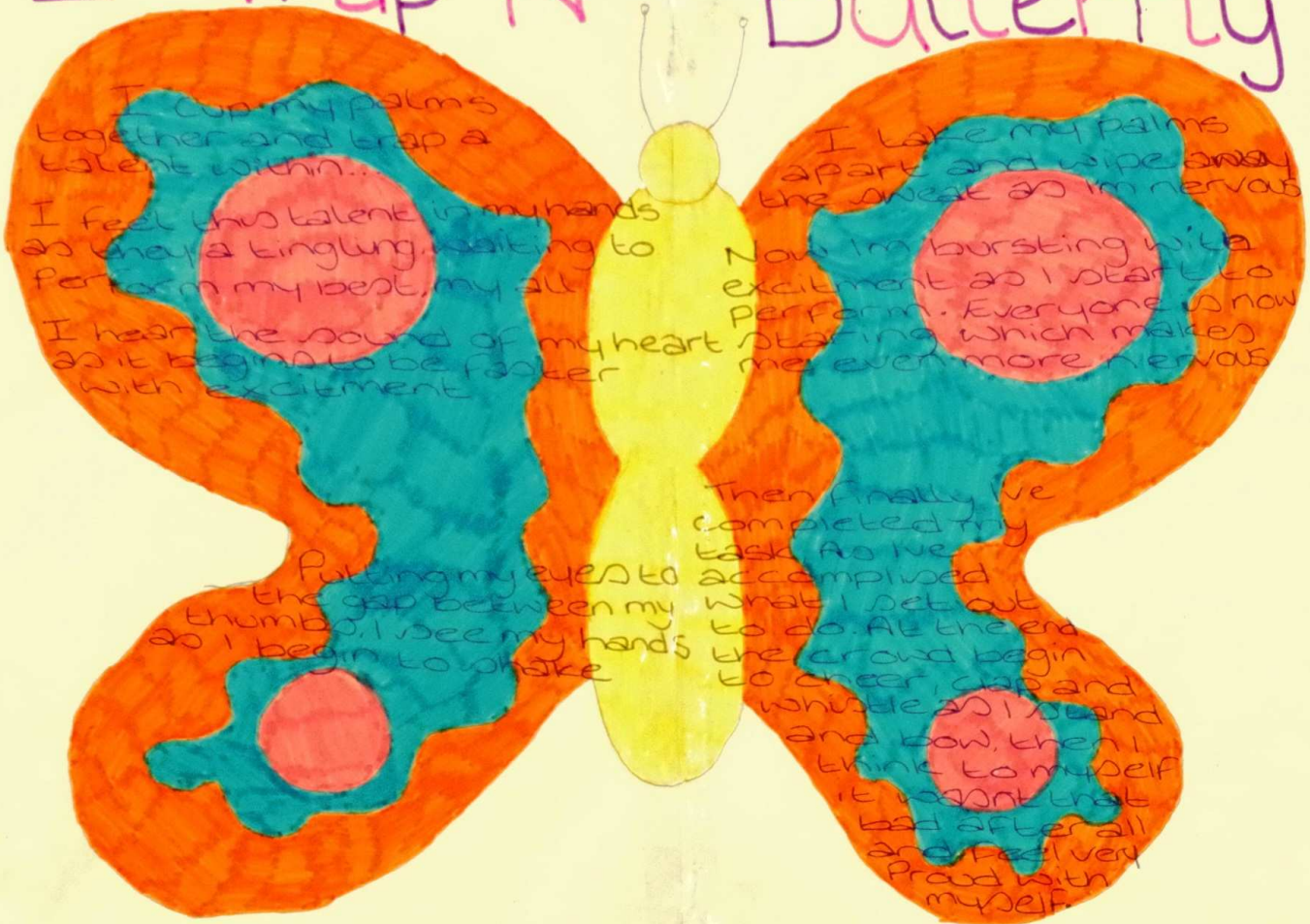
The butterflies that can represent so many things  
The problems of the world that fall away from their wings.

I like to fill peoples hearts with glee & the fact that one day  
We will all be free!

By Amanda Dewhirst



# I Trap A Butterfly



I cup my palms together and trap a talent within..

I feel this talent in my hands as they tingle, waiting to perform my best, my all.

I hear the sound of my heart as it begins to be faster with excitement.

I take my palms apart and wipe away the sweat as I'm nervous.

Now I'm bursting with excitement as I start to perform. Everyone is now staring which makes me even more nervous.

Putting my eyes to the gap between my thumbs, I see my hands so I begin to shake.

Then finally I've completed my task. As I've accomplished what I set out to do. At the end the crowd begin to cheer, clap and whistle as I stand and bow, then I think to myself it wasn't that bad after all and feel very proud with myself.

By Zoe Allen

## Zoe's Poem

I cup my palms together and trap  
A talent within.

I feel this talent in my hands as they are  
Tingling.  
Waiting to perform my best  
My all.

I hear the sound of my heart as  
It begins to beat faster with  
Excitement

Putting my eyes to the gap with my thumbs  
I see the gap as I begin to  
Shake.

I take the palms apart, the damp of nerves  
Remain.

I am bursting with excitement  
The performance is starting  
They are all staring, oh my  
Nerves.

Finally, the task complete, I take a bow and  
Smile, as they  
Clap and cheer.

I think to myself,  
it wasn't that bad and I am  
Proud.

## Station Platform

Old lady  
sitting on the station platform  
thinking about curry for tea,  
her flat  
and overwhelming loneliness.

## Reminiscing

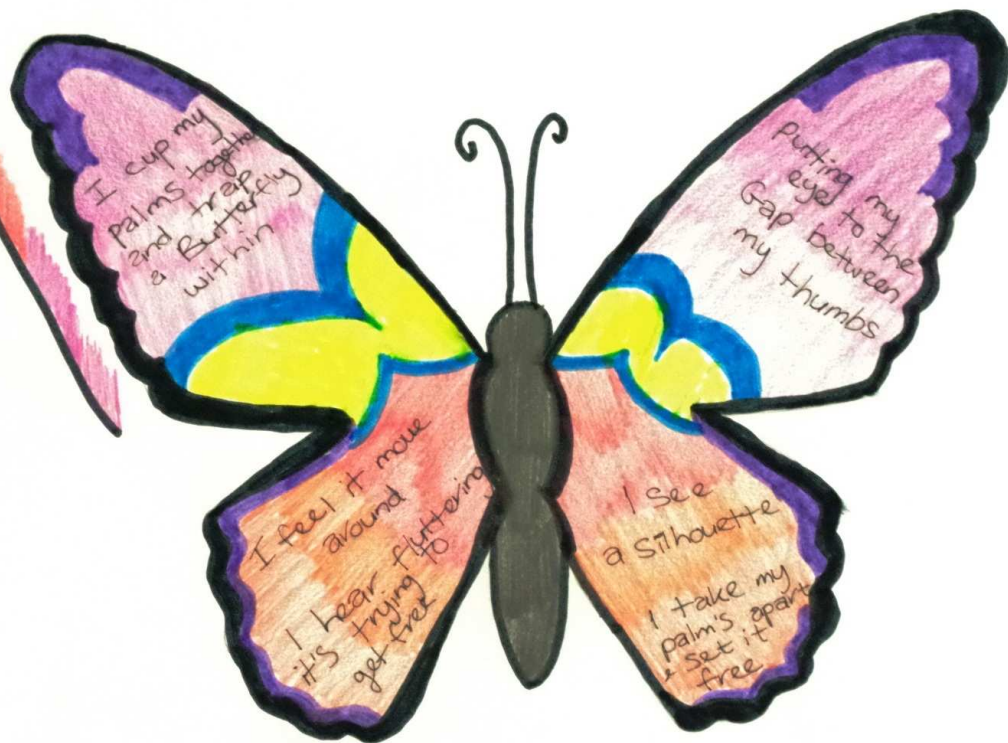
Old man walking his dog  
in the countryside.  
He sits on a bench then walks again,  
reminiscing about his wife  
and when they first met.

## New Outfit

The clown thinking  
if he had enough money  
he could have a new outfit  
of rainbow colours  
to attract a crowd.



# I TRAP A BUTTERFLY



## Dark Tunnel

Old lady walking

boys

drugs

alcohol

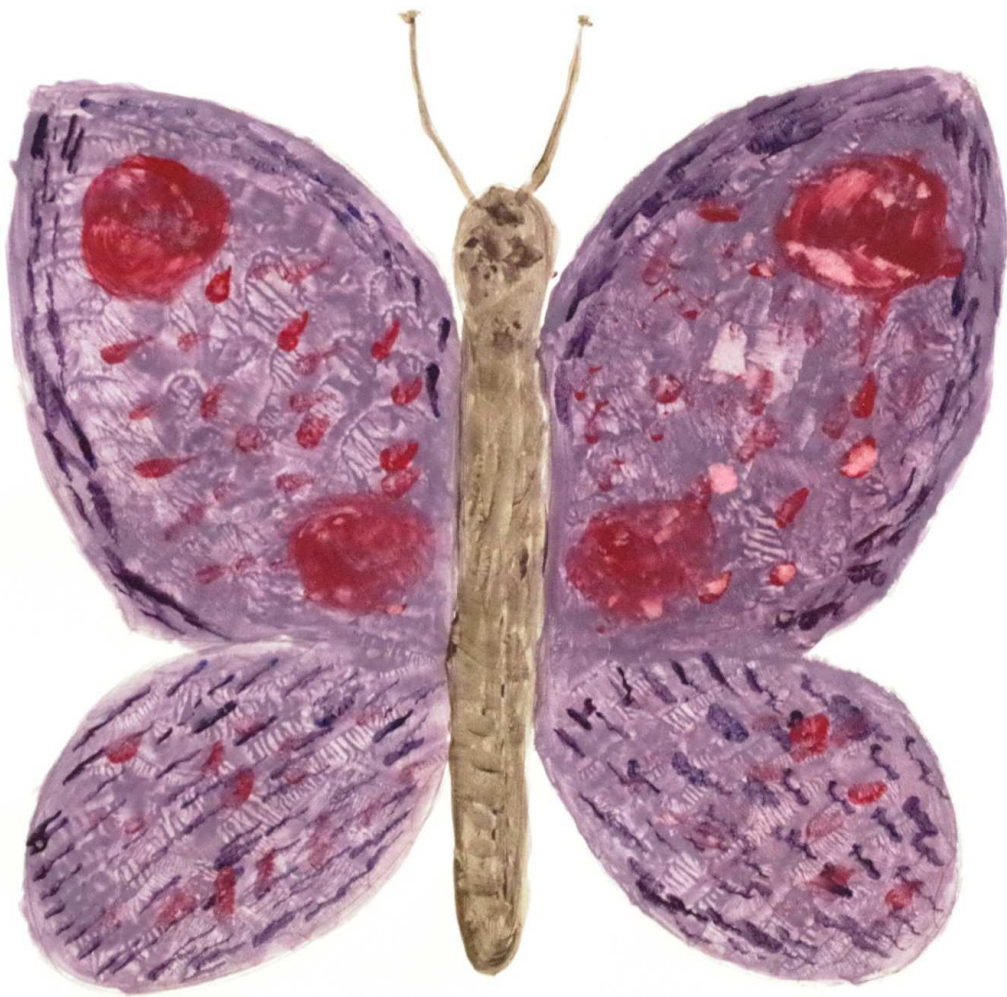
She wishes she'd walked through town  
instead.

## His Dad and His Dog

He is cold.

He can hear the busy city  
ready to start the early shift.

He can see the sunrise  
and he remembers  
the lengthy walks he had as a child  
with his Dad and his dog.



Feel  
the Joy  
in my  
heart.



& the butterfly is  
FREE!

## I Trap A Butterfly

I cup my palms together & trap a  
butterfly within  
I feel the soft butterfly wings  
I hear the gentle butterfly sings  
Putting my eye to the gap  
between my thumbs  
I see the butterfly looking at me  
I take my palms apart

A feeling of Playing  
GOD.

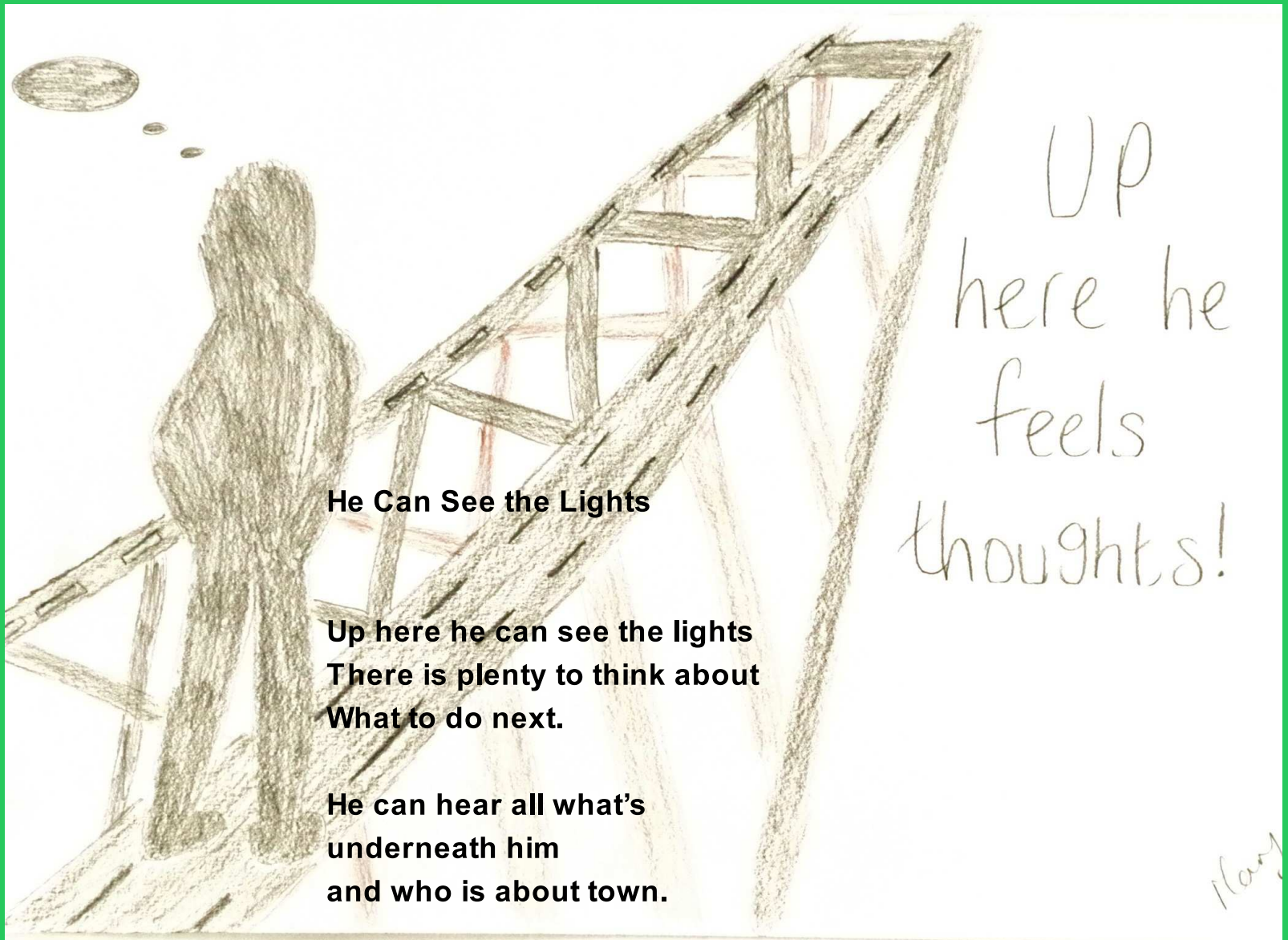


**Standing Up Here**

**This gives him time to think  
Up here he feels thoughts  
a feeling of playing God.**

**I am at the top of the world  
Up here I am closer to God**

**Closer to God  
Closer to God.**



**He Can See the Lights**

**Up here he can see the lights  
There is plenty to think about  
What to do next.**

**He can hear all what's  
underneath him  
and who is about town.**

**He remembers what happened  
and thinks about  
how to put things right.**

UP  
here he  
feels  
thoughts!

*Mary*

## Up Here

Up here he can see  
the lights of the city.

There is no one to disturb his thoughts  
he can hear the early birds  
and watch the sun come up.

He remembers being a little boy  
and fishing in the lake below.

Up here he feels free  
nothing can hurt him  
up here.



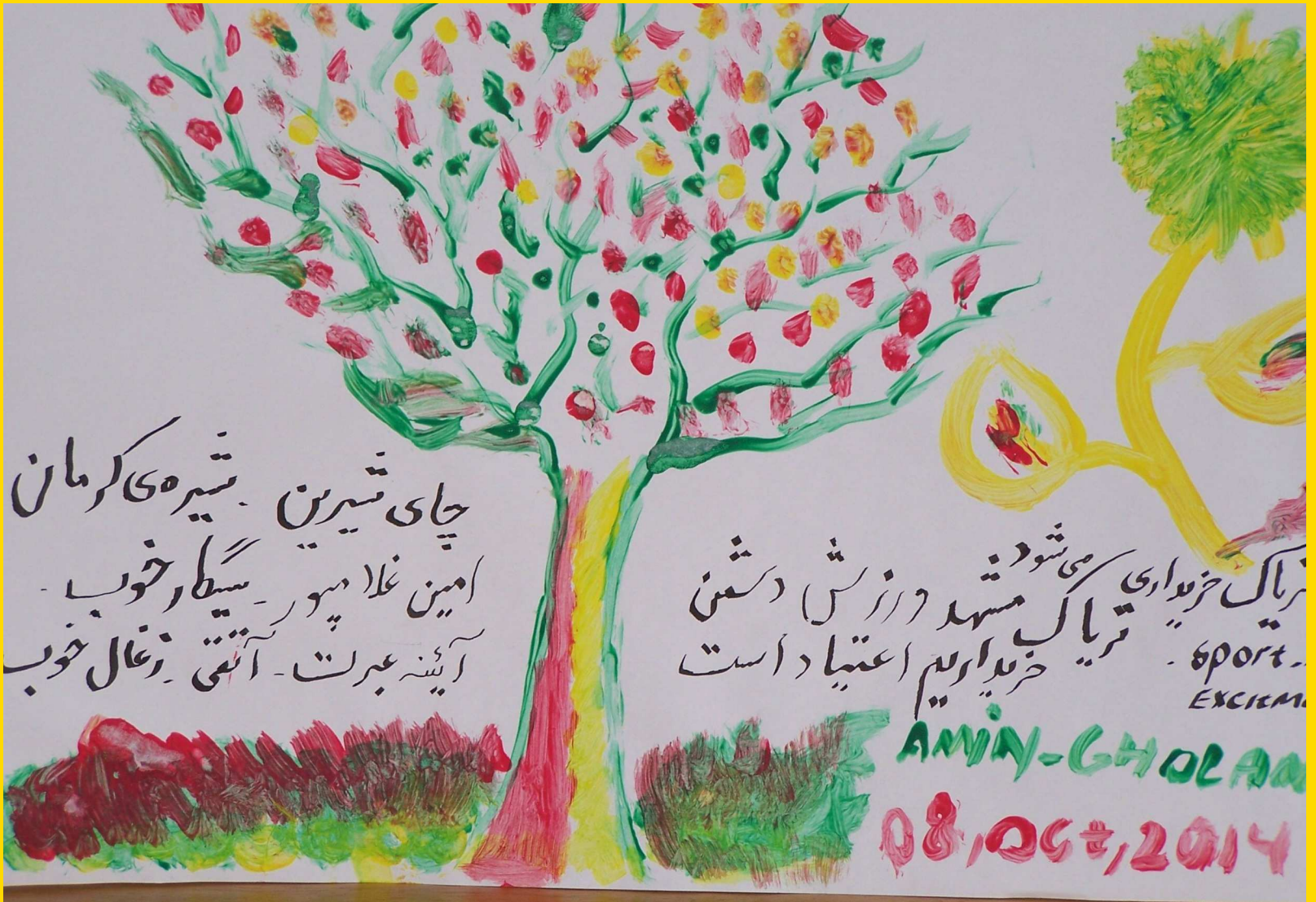
On Wednesday mornings throughout 2013 and 2014, we began attending the Welcome Cafe drop-in sessions for Asylum Seekers at the Quaker Meeting House.

Initially, we wanted to become familiar faces and build up a sense of trust and it was only when this was achieved that we started turning up with a bag full of art materials.



Butterflies, trees, fruit and, most successfully of all, buns became our starting points for artistic expression. And in an environment where social, legal and health support was offered, we provided the opportunity to escape for a while into the therapeutic world of drawing and illustration. An opportunity which was seized by adults, children, Asylum Seekers and volunteers alike.





چای شیرین - شیرهی کرمان  
 امین غلامپور - سیکار خوب  
 آینه عبرت - آنتی زغال خوب

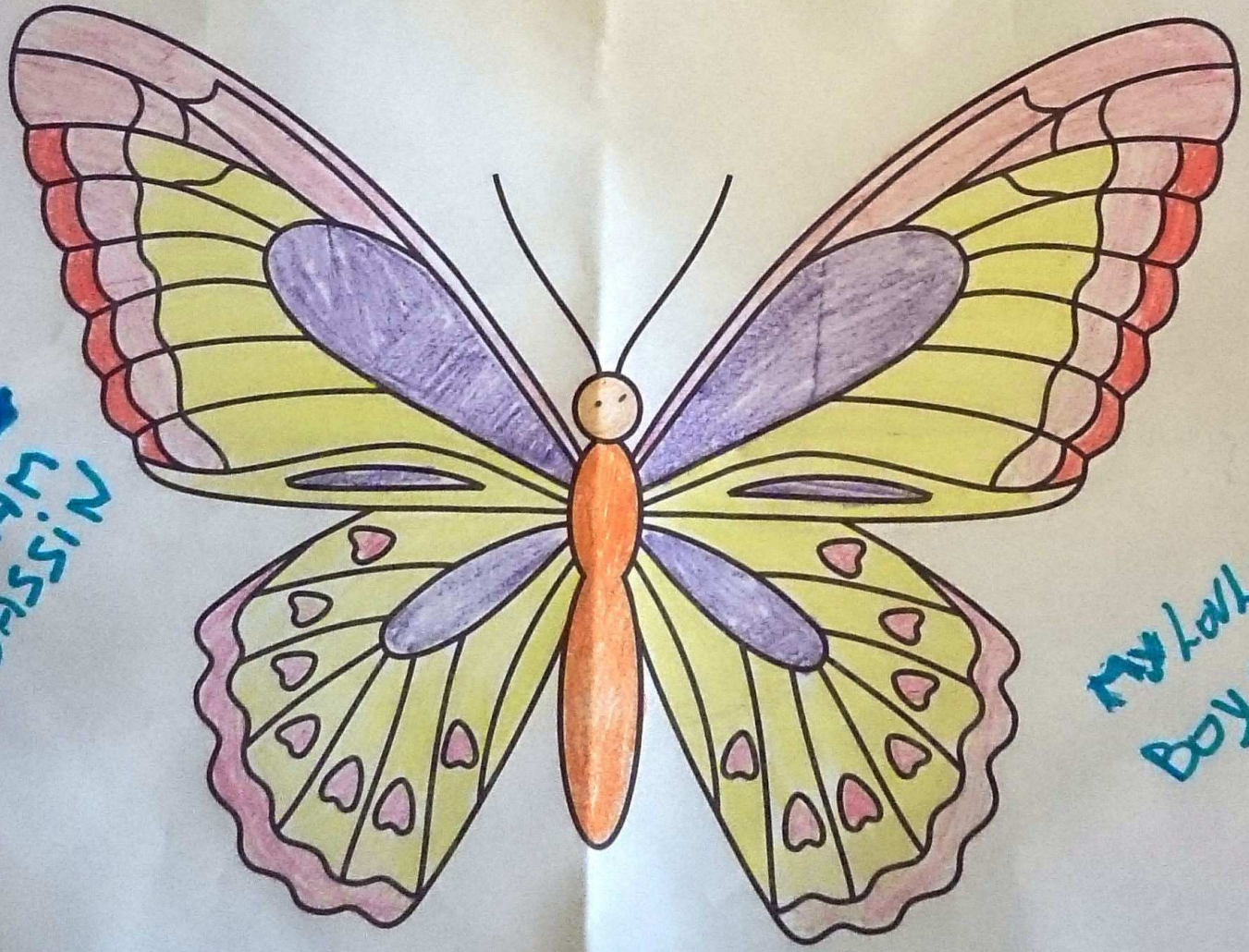
تراک خریداری می شود  
 تراک مسهد در زرش دشمن  
 خریداریم اعتیاد است  
 sport - EXCITEM

AMIN-GHOLAN

08,06,2014



ZOHRA



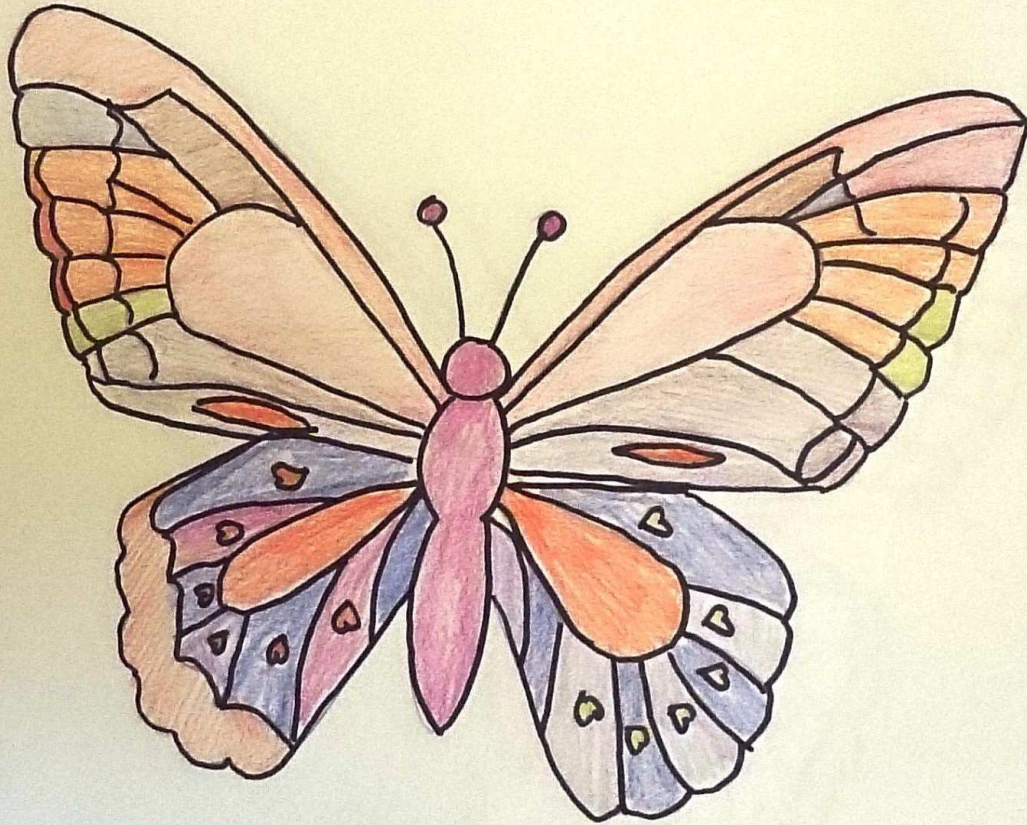
ADAM  
JASSIN

McLewley  
BOYS



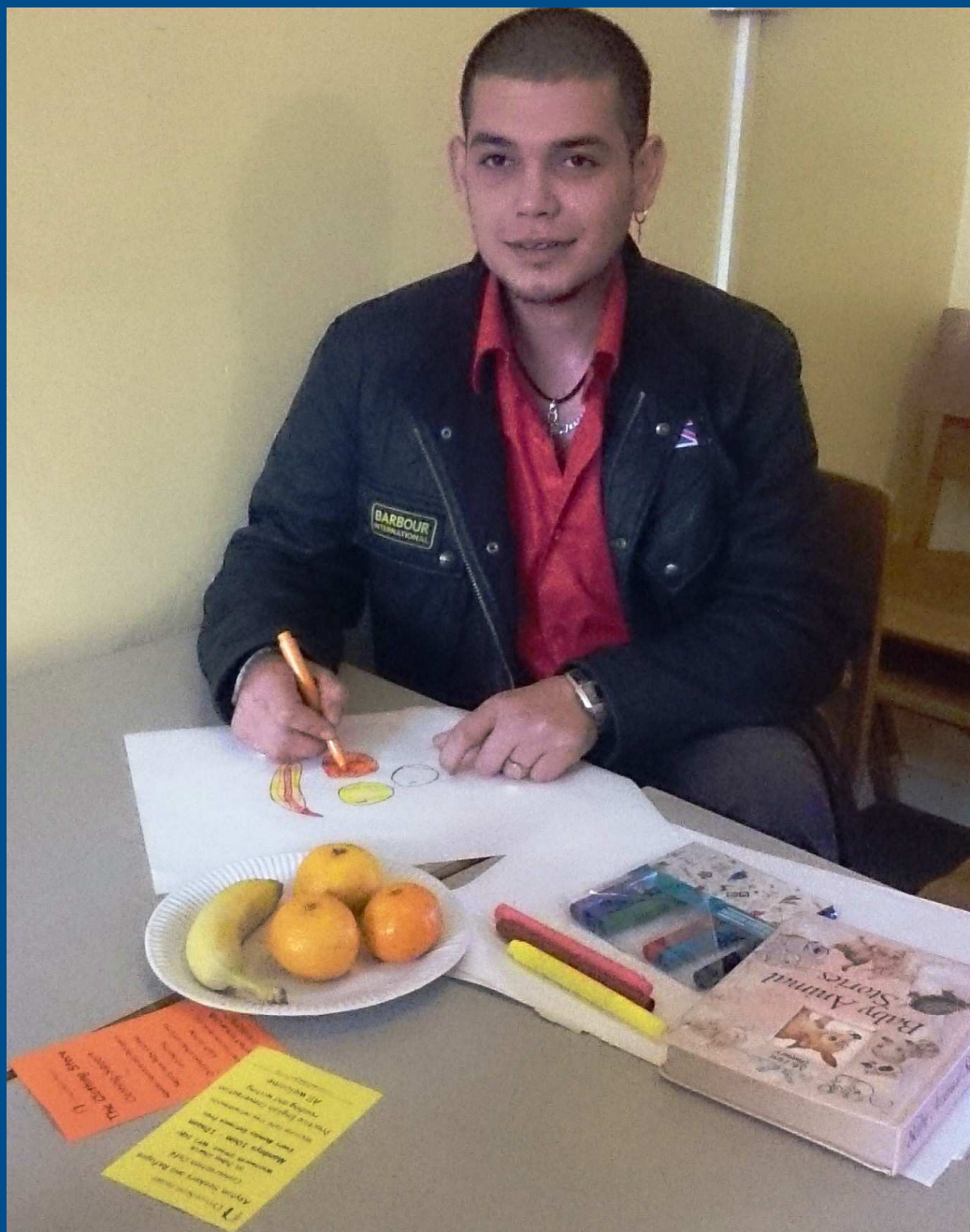
Buns and biscuits had to be drawn quickly before they disappeared.

# AMAZON PAPILLION



SADIK



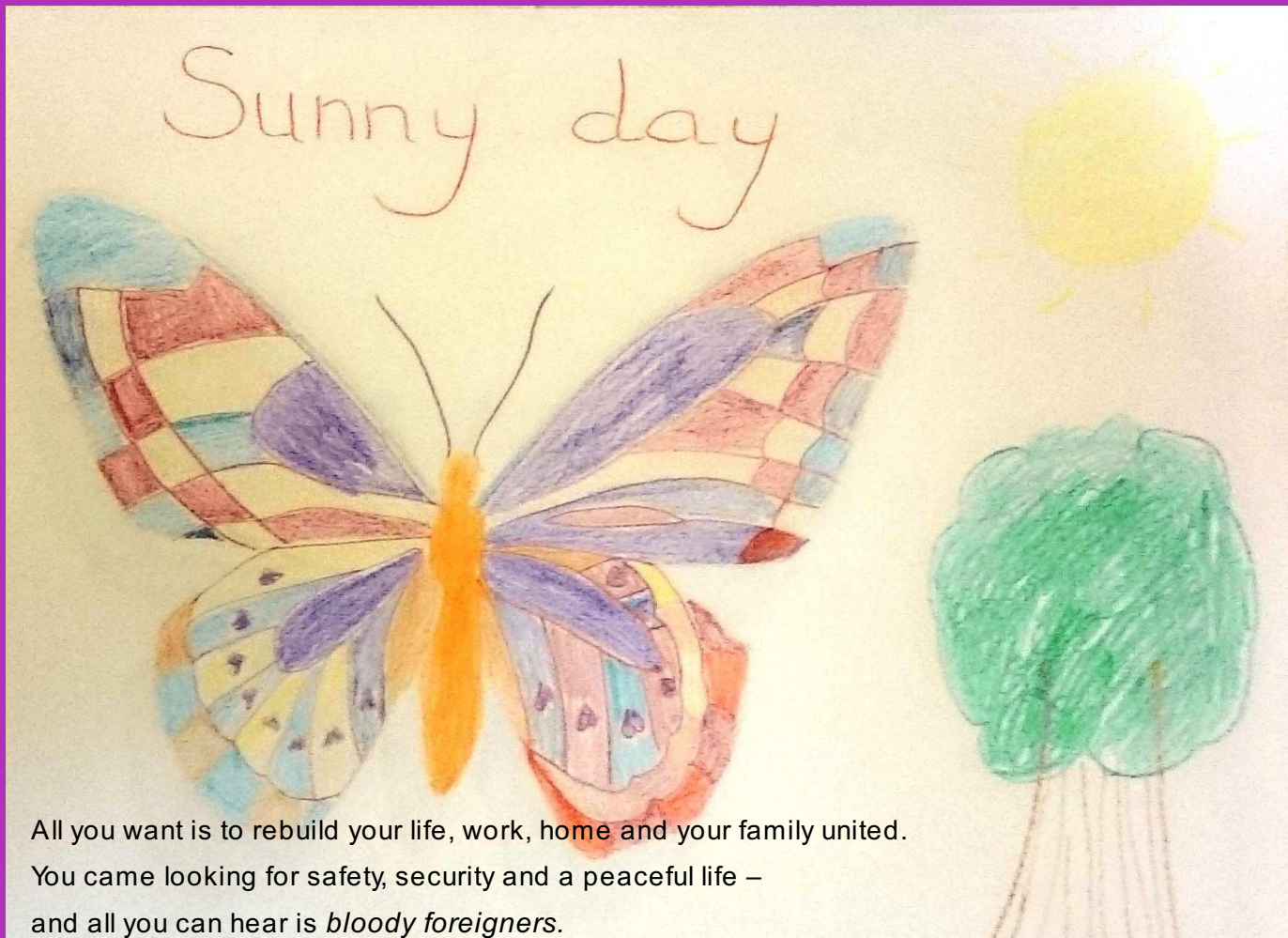




## City of Sanctuary

Asylum seekers, refugees, foreigners in a strange land  
Different faces, different races – thrown together by life's circumstances  
What brought you here? War, persecution, religion, starvation?  
Once a somebody, surrounded by family, friends and community  
Now a nobody – reduced to a number, another statistic.  
Moved from pillar to post: today Angel Lodge, tomorrow Stockton...  
Struggling to deal with bureaucracy – endless forms and  
phone calls in an unfamiliar language,  
with a system that sees you as a problem they'd prefer not to deal with.  
No wonder you sometimes feel lonely, frustrated, discouraged...depressed.  
You came looking for a better life – not a run-down house  
in a backwoods town.





All you want is to rebuild your life, work, home and your family united.  
You came looking for safety, security and a peaceful life –  
and all you can hear is *bloody foreigners*.

What can we offer you? A place of sanctuary and a warm welcome,  
a friendly face; an advocate to speak on your behalf,  
a foundation on which to build trust, hope and faith in mankind,  
an outstretched hand that says, *You are one of us, the human race*.

**Flora Davies**

## **Another Kind of Smile**

I ask you your story  
and you tell me of  
the proud symmetry of butterflies;  
their delicate beauty.

I ask you your story  
and you speak of  
the glorious pass  
of autumn leaves.

I ask you your story  
and you touch upon  
the sun rising each morning  
and the Spanish: sonrisa.

John Irving Clarke



