

# castle writers goes digital



NORWICH CASTLE MUSEUM  
AND ART GALLERY



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Welcome to Castle Writers - online! Our monthly creative writing workshop, inspired by items in the museum's collection, has gone digital. The following pages have been designed in partnership with author and tutor Amanda Addison, and are for you to use at home. There are several writing prompts for you to choose from - you can do as many as you like.

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**Happy writing!**

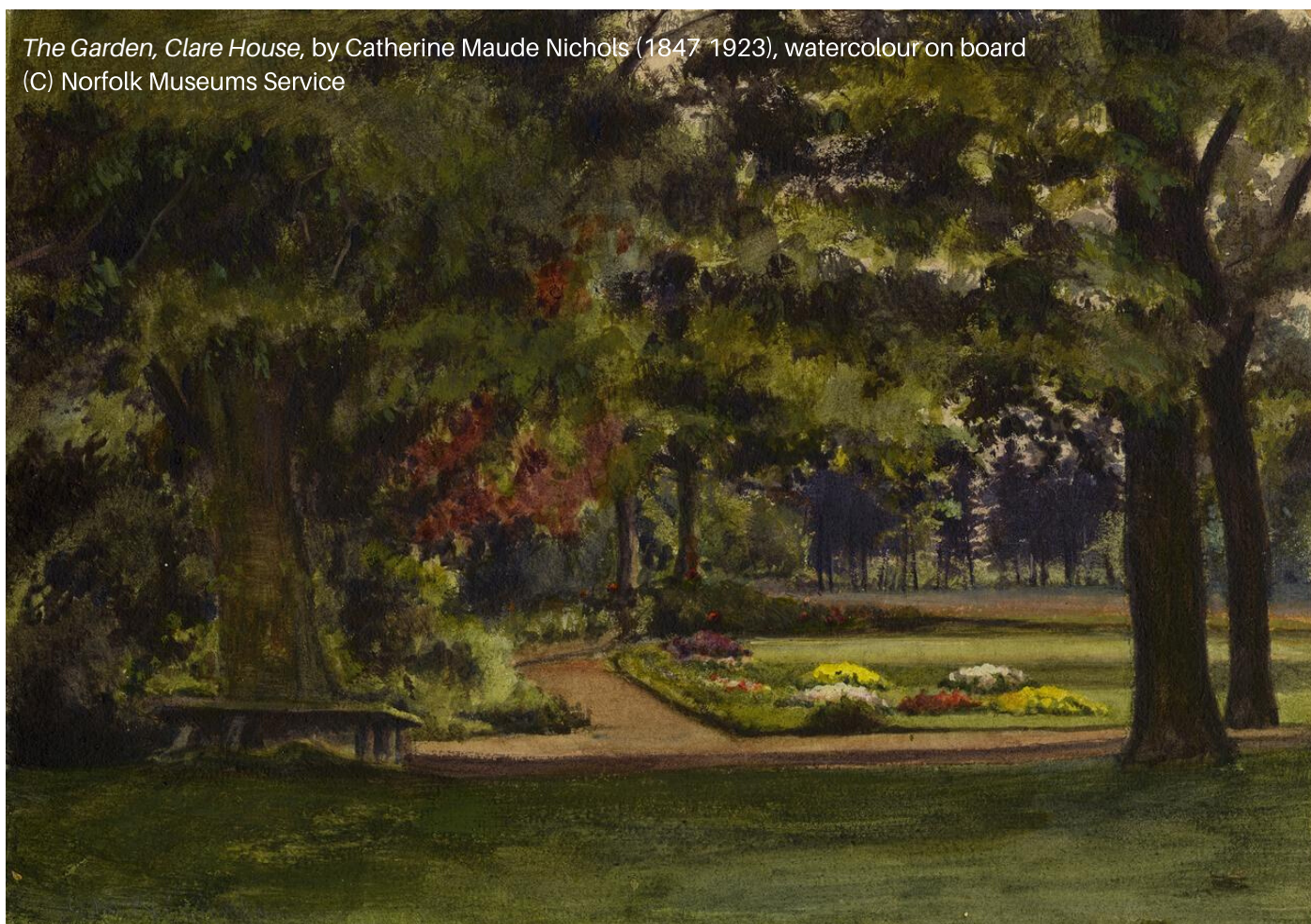


May 2020

## Setting the Scene

This month's Castle Writers will focus on creative writing exercises around **setting the scene** for a poem and/or prose by exploring a selection of immersive landscapes in the museum's collection - some of which are not on display!

*The Garden, Clare House*, by Catherine Maude Nichols (1847-1923), watercolour on board  
(C) Norfolk Museums Service



An authentic location is vital when writing creatively, particularly in forms such as nature writing and crime fiction. There are so many great examples - think [Mark Cocker's Crow Country](#) and [Ann Cleeves's Shetland series](#). In both cases, the settings are almost characters in themselves.

## **Writing Exercises**

In this series of mindful exercises, we're going to 'write a walk' into one of the three landscape images provided here. Some of us may already be practising ecotherapy - refreshment and healing by being in nature. Others may not have the luxury of nearby beauty spots, parks, woodland or beaches. These exercises are ecotherapy for the mind!

**1** Select one of the three images in this resource pack. Before you begin writing, jot down the following headers in a notebook:

SEE	HEAR	TOUCH	TASTE	SMELL
e.g. blue sky	birdsong	cool / wet	metallic	earth(y)

Spend some time looking at the image. Approach your 'walk' into the painting with an open mind. Imagine yourself looking up, down and around. Write down the things you might see, hear, touch, taste and smell under your headings. Write down as many words as possible.

**2** Using the words from your word bank above, compose a haiku.

A haiku is a short, poetic form - a traditional kind of Japanese poetry that often takes nature as its theme or inspiration. The most common kind of haiku uses only three lines, with the first and last lines having only five syllables and the middle having seven syllables. The lines rarely rhyme.

These are examples of haikus from local writer [Sarah Passingham](#):

### Bracken

Leaves against the sky (5)

Soft green fronds curl against cracked sticks (7)

Embrace the oak shade (5)

### Belted Galloways

Cows through a hedge frame (5)

Grass hock high, bright with light (7)\*

Like cut and shut cars (5)

\* Technically six syllables, unless you bend one of the words a little!

- 3** Using an observation or theme from your word bank or haiku, write a short prose piece to complement your chosen image. Consider how you can bring out elements of nature.

## About the Artists

### Catherine Maude Nichols

Surrey Street-born Catherine Maude Nichols was a painter and print-maker who also became the first woman fellow of the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers. She was influenced by the Norwich Society of Artists (a founding member of which, John Crome, taught her aunts).



### Richard Billingham



Richard Billingham is a contemporary artist of international importance, shortlisted for the Turner Prize in 2001. Inspired by PH Emerson's photographs and the flat landscapes of Norfolk, Billingham produced the work below in response to historic photographs as part of the exhibition *A Period Eye* at the Castle in 2003/4.

### J J Cotman

Joseph John Cotman was the son of John Sell Cotman - a prominent figure in the Norwich Society of Artists. The watercolour on the following page was originally - and incorrectly - attributed to John Crome.



Want to share your work? Join the conversation online using the hashtag #NorwichCastleWriters



*Untitled (Cows), Norfolk 2003* by Richard Billingham, lightjet colour print  
(C) Courtesy the artist



*Thorpe Gardens* by J J Cotman, watercolour and pencil on paper  
(C) Norfolk Museums Service