

**Twisted Branches**

We're all in a deep dark forest:

The atmosphere here is modest.

All the trees are people –

Different shapes and sizes – yet

I see them as equal.

As trees grow up ego roots show up;

Branches sway in a downward way,

Others get twisted like words:

Wholesome seeds and fungi stirred.

Not the roots I've grown with

Or the life I'm known to live.

A toplofty treetop

I do not wear, but still you chop –

As if it is there.

Watching as my veins bleed,

With my blood, you forge misdeed.

Though I don't care whose:

Trunk is biggest and baddest;

Branches are strongest and longest;

Leaves are greenest;

Trunk is leanest and meanest.

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Short and stout,

Leaves sprout out

Lumps, bumps or stumps –

Branches have snapped and can't reach out.

Straight or crooked

Trunk is full of knowledge;

Veins lead to ancestry (or relations)

All that matters –

The tree is good natured.

If I was golden oak it

Would not stroke my ego.

I do not brag,

My branches do not drag on

For people to trip over.

Whispers in the wind,

An ear wigged

My branches twigged,

You carved me out as something I'm not,

Pulled the fruit off my branches, left me to rot.

Through the apples of my eyes, I never saw you as

Trunk-stabber in disguise.

Exemplar 5 - A

Your words really cut me down.

**No words. No feelings.**

Words. No words.

Feelings. No Feelings.

Express the world we live in and messages humans are giving.

Are they ashamed?

If I named those to be blamed I shall be framed: the bull's-eye on the dartboard.

Fear is creeping near, now I think of them, injecting little ones with venom, infecting innocence with poisoned stem.

Killing mankind to save their own beliefs, no inner peace, hope or happy reliefs knowing hate and blood thirst are growing. Open wounds rapidly showing.

Painting this canvas of moral blankness red, ill feeling devours us, demons disturbingly tear walls between conscious and unconscious mind, wreak valuable inner peace, let the past, thoroughly repressed, nurture the world's bad ways, reliving terrorized old days, when certain individuals never got fair turns.

All this we want to hide and conceal, guide loved ones off the warpath.  
Oh, how we've tried to heal fractured hearts with love!

Child, we hold our shield over your face, not to suffocate or isolate you, but to protect. You shall know when you grow to reach a certain age, perhaps late teens, when a bombshell smashes our shield to smithereens.

Although our shield will be gone, the warpath you'll be forbidden to step on, an invisible force field shall stretch over you. Then you can open your eyes to the ugly truth of a world that was meant to be so beautiful.

We've always had this trouble; don't let it burst your bubble. For you'll be safe, those people won't, we have our rights: Some people don't.

Can't make hate mean love.  
Can't make war mean peace.

Fiery spirits burning hope to ashes, icy souls freezing justice to death. Demons they unleash when wounds nearly cease. They stab. Feeling rushes, creating deeper gruesome gushes. A bloody mess they'll never clear or confess.

Explosions happen outside your bubble, but you're in here, not out there, so don't live in shame, regret, sorrow or fear. Make the world a better place by always being a friendly face, the warm amber that gels with any race, religion, culture, class. Smiles you spread are

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rainbows spreading wide across the sky. If they're blind to natural beauty in you that shines through, they're wasted. Your heart of gold beats at the end.

Exemplar 5 - A

**Little Twinkle**

A star lost her shine when she shook off her glitter,  
Which flew afar, fell to the ground, sprinkling ornate litter.  
Set alight the golden paths to guide along the way,  
In the darkness of the night sky where she was led astray,  
There emerged a beam of light;  
An opal smile glistening white—  
The moon shone like a bright pearl and called out to her little girl,  
Little twinkle found her spark and shot across the sky:  
She'd spent too long in the dark and had forgotten how to fly.

**Golden bond**

My smile is a rainbow spreading wide across the sky;  
Your heart is sunset's warm glow.  
Messy raindrops are the tears we cry:  
They slide off the end of my rainbow.  
Enhance my colours, take a second; now they shine out bright,  
Golden rays soak them up. Hug me tight,  
The tears are out of sight  
Underground –  
In the pot of gold waiting to be found.  
Deep down these things make us stronger:  
That's worth every pound.

**Emerge from the heavens**

He is the sun and he is the moon.

Which one shines brighter?

His beautiful golden rays beam at me whilst glistening against the bright blue sky,

He is a precious pearl hanging from a silver thread whilst he sparkles with stars in the black velvet sky.

Which one would I rather gaze at?

Whose eyes do I long to stare into?

I look into your eyes. Golden spheres swimming in pools of blue.

I look into your eyes. Dazzling pearls cushioned between black velvet.

Can I not take one eye from each of you and combine them to make a new pair?

You. You are not only my lover, you are my sun.

There is so much warmth to you, you make my heart melt.

Your tender words make me feel feelings I've never felt.

Your golden rays soak up my tears,

You are my inspirational ball of fire:

Burning all my worries to ash,

Brightening up miserable days and calming the treacherous winds.

The sky is a mystery of colours now this evening is drawing to a close;

Your golden rays kiss me goodnight as you sink further down into the sky.

You. You are not only my lover, you are my moon.

I fear the darkness until you emerge from the night sky:

Casting away the shadows,

Your blinding light terrifies the trees so much their crooked, claw-like branches snap so they can no longer grab me.

You tell the wind: You're not a snake, stop twisting through the trees like that or you will be very sore.

And just like that, it blows gently.

One frosty glare from you makes the winds' hisses turn to a sweet serenade,

The caring soul you are, you whisper to me softly in the wind, as though not to wake anyone.

When I sleep you have the power to enter my mind, access my wildest dreams and make them come true.

When I look at you, I see so much more than that beautiful glow: your face is the map of the world where your emotions run deep.

It is a fine night and you are its shining armour;

As a star shoots across the sky I close my eyes and make a wish.

Do you know what I wish for? I wish I could have you... you as well as him.

They both light up my world.

But I am blinded by their light and I cannot see who is really meant for me;

I am blinded, blinded with tears, like a lover, as I am forced to face my fears, to choose just one and abandon the other.

Please, don't make me do this. They emerged from the heavens and shone a light to help me see the good in this cruel, cold world.

How can I possibly be expected to put out one's spark and leave one in the dark after all they've done for me?

I look into his eyes. I pray that those golden spheres don't drown in those pools of blue.

I look into his eyes. I pray that those precious pearls won't get lost in the blackness of the velvet.

**George 'P' Lakoff from the viewpoint of Paul 'Herbert' Grice**

We fight in the name of George 'P' Lakoff:

The great cognitive linguist!

Ready for those who desire to scoff;

I warn you:

Resist now mystery critic, cough cough--

You'll sense the need to run,

Now that the deed is done --

In blessing of the birth of George 'P' Lakoff, 1941.

Our words weigh a ton:

Bricks crashing down on harsh criticisms.

In this vacuous battlefield--

Pointing fingers become claw-like,

Nails are cranes reaching down

With their sharp points to lift bricks (our defensive arguments)

Off the ground and place them on top of one another,

Building conceptual constructions around underlying metaphors

To protect them from attackers.

Soapy saliva foams at mouths, for tongues are washing machines,

Whirling words round and out into the treacherous winds.

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Sunlight rays reflect our viewpoints; you attempt to twist fate

In hope of turning the tables of this debate.

We are still winning, our words spinning

Through the air of triumph in spirals!

Soaring ahead by miles, all laughs and smiles

But wait--

We've pushed our luck: Our words appear stuck--

Hanging from hooks of their spirals

Like out of fashion clothing in a mad jumble sale,

Careful: they'll even out creases with materialistic views.

***Snatch*** –

They've grabbed the conclusion right off the rail.

Now planted in soil are seeds of doubt--

But such dead metaphors are no use in these wars.

Our thoughts must provide root and stem of central development:

Such doubtful seeds are ones of magic producing a jade spring onion

Which grows tall enough to resemble the stalk of a tree.

Its layers are tender branches peeled halfway down--

On them grow red onions that glow with fiery passion:

The apples of our eyes.

And theirs: stinging with emotion at this moving image.

Exemplar 5 - A

Next time a critic writes harshly of Lakoff's theory

The pages of the book will crumple like a screwed up face,

Mould themselves into the shape of an onion tree –

The ink will run down it

As freely as their tears.

I declare, we have won:

We have proved centrality of metaphor

Relates to human thinking, behaviour and society--

Us metaphorical freaks of nature.

**Paul 'Herbert' Grice from the viewpoint of George 'P' Lakoff**

My brain is growing in knowledge,  
From tiny grains of rice  
To masses of bamboo shoots  
On the subject of Paul Grice:

He was educated at college,  
Born March 1913, when  
The philosopher of language  
Stepped out onto the scene.

His theories blossoming on the nature of meaning  
Planted the philosophical study of semantics.

A small red chested robin hatches out of its egg  
Whilst a rhythmic bluebird sings Grice's theories;

The tune springs to the robin's mind like revision—

An implicature that if it doesn't flap its wings to the songs melody

It will never learn to fly,  
Thus hit the ugly branches on the way down,

Addressing pragmatics fanatics!

Note how the robin fleets when the bluebird tweets:

“Revise Grice's theory now, you really shouldn't stop. When you fly off that branch you don't want to drop – in mid-air – perform a belly flop, then on the ground, plop!”

The red chested robin has violated the maxim of manner.

Rhythmic bluebird:

“I see you lurking in the shadows there, hiding beneath the leaves, but you will have no need to fear if your mind retrieves my songs and relieves you of your wrongs.”

Red chested robin:

“Squawk! Squawk! Squawk! Squawk!”

The red chested robin has violated multiple maxims—

Quantity, manner, relevance, quality.

Rhythmic bluebird:

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“Come now, ruby red-chest, you can't stay perched on that branch forever. Tap your feet to my beat, flap your wings together. We're touching wood but it should turn out good as the ever-changing weather. Tomorrow it's now or never.”

The red chested robin playfully flutters its wings.

Here the red chested robin flouts the maxim of quality.

The rhythmic bluebird rests its vocals,  
For its mind detects a cocoon progressing to a caterpillar –  
To a butterfly ready to soar.

### Excerpt from Circle in the Sand

Azure of the sea, squawks of gulls which now fleet and dive in salty waters, repeatedly emerge to the surface each time with the same purpose of seizing some slimy, gasping, floppy fish in their crooked dusty-yellow beaks, the scattering of intricate shells, pastel shaded stones, rocks and boulders patterned with grain, clear shallow pools, relaxation of boundaries and rules, here on Walcott beach, which is our petanque terrain. Fresh airy breezes slap our faces as players take their places. The crash of the waves, foaming whiteness at the shore. What shall the result be: lose, win or draw? In the heat of the amber sun, this competition can be won.

We hear the whistle blow, instructing us to go, shake each other's hand then draw our circles in the sand. Scenery is Earth until players draw rings round themselves, now standing on Saturn. Scenery transforms to space -sky, sand and sea merges together to form endless blue-black. Intricate shells are shimmering stars; pastel coloured stones are glistening galaxies; gulls' bodies are shooting stars aiming downwards, their open dusty-yellow beaks black holes attempting to suck up fish transformed into comets. The density of the fresh airy breeze decreases as the power of the waves ceases. Players become astronauts, floating around everywhere. Azure sea moulds Neptune, clear shallow pools shape Uranus, boulders construct Jupiter, crystals concoct Mercury, fossils create Mars, rocks build Venus.

Beware: on Venus boule will rust into particles of dust under lava heat; boule cannot roll back and retreat. The cochonet balloons into an ornate moon when it is thrown and has grown six to ten metres away from Saturn. Working as a team, astronauts follow a moon beam. They guide each other, making their boule glide. Air density is thicker; boule will land quicker.

Copious boules leave hands, convert to manifold spaceships operated by force of hurl.

Drifting from Saturn, shifting to the moon. One spaceship lands on its silver birch surface, the others disband, floating through space. Astronauts shout, "I did not aim there on purpose. How did it land there?" Next they edge near Saturn's ring, careful not to knock it –myriad boules fly from hands, transmogrify into divers rockets controlled by zip of grip, streak through space at the tempo of light, blasting the spaceship off the moon out of sight. They are on for one but damage will be done as they aim, adding tension to the game. Hands turn to alien slime, bountiful boules slip out, transforming to sundry UFOs steered by strength of throws, twist through the air, nudge the rocket off the moon and into a black hole, sucked into it by the vacuum.

Word count: 2400

**Excerpt from One that you hold in your hand.**

I sit daintily on the edge of the waiting room seat, absent-mindedly flicking through a *Heat* magazine, the glossy pages smooth at my fingertips. Innumerable thoughts enter my head. The harsh texture of the rough, crunchy, crispy leaves on the large golden oak trees at Thetford Forest. What if the very pages of the magazine I am reading were made from those exact leaves? I'd have a handful of paper cuts by now. The trees wouldn't give a fig. What if the leaves' varicose veins were the writing on the pages? Come to think of it, their varicose veins twist in all different directions like western corals.

Speaking of snakes, I'm brought back to these twisted stories about celebrities I'm reading about in this magazine. Who am I kidding? These thoughts aren't relevant. I'm sitting with my Mum at the dentist's waiting to have my teeth checked. Hmm...what if my teeth were venomous, like a western corals? Yes, these innocent little pearly whites could possibly contain deadly poison. I fear for the spoon the dentist sticks in my mouth. Oh, and they had better keep their gloves on - permanently.

There is a loud shrill sound. "Chloe Urquhart!" a female voice says in a harsh piercing tone. My mum and I hastily get to our feet and begin to make our way towards the corridor.

"Room number three", the receptionist murmurs as we pass her desk.

We quickly stride through the plain, dark corridor, glancing at shiny brass numbers on wooden doors. One...two... "This one", I say to Mum as we come to a large, intimidating door with a number three on. I timidly open it and walk in, followed by Mum.

The dental nurse spins round in her chair.

"Hello!" the dental nurse says, revealing her gleaming white teeth as she smiles at us.

"Would you like to sit down, Chloe?" she says, noticing me eyeing the long white dental chair. I take a seat, grimacing as it flattens out like a sun bed.

"Now", the dental nurse says, turning to face me, "have you had any problems with your teeth, Chloe?"

"No," I respond, shaking my head.

"Good. How many times do you brush your teeth a day and how long do you brush them for?" the oral hygienist enquires.

"Twice a day and I brush them for two minutes", I reply.

"Do you have many sugary foods or drinks?" the dental nurse asks, raising her darkly arched eyebrows.

"No," I respond.

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“Do you use a manual toothbrush or an electric toothbrush?” the oral hygienist asks.

My head spins in confusion and my eyes blink rapidly. What is the difference between an electric toothbrush and a manual toothbrush? I’m searching deep inside my blank mind for some colourful meanings which might possibly stand out to me in this situation. I look at her whilst mimicking a hand movement and begin to say, “One that you hold in your ha-”, when Mum quickly says “Manual!”

I glance at the dental nurse, taking in her nonchalant expression, and then catch sight of Mum, who has her hand clasped over her mouth giggling, her face bright red.

It’s now clicked. Tears of laughter well up in my eyes and, like a courageous lion, I roar with laughter.

The oral hygienist smiles and checks my teeth. She reassures me that they are in fine condition and dismisses us. We thank her and exit the room.

Mum and I trudge our way along the corridor sniggering. As soon as we are out of the dentist’s we burst into a fit of uncontrollable giggles.

“You hold both in your hands, you doughnut!” Mum exclaims, rolling her eyes.

Word count: 600

Reflective commentary

By Exemplar 5

Inspiration for 'Twisted Branches' came from people who give their opinions based on snippets of conversation they've heard which are not their business, then spread their interpretation of the person and what was said. These events replayed in my mind whilst I studied trees outside, wondering how I could voice innocence, and use language to override slander. This was how I got the extended tree metaphor; trees have a range of positive and negative physical characteristics which I could anthropomorphise.

The first draft of 'Twisted Branches' had repetition of 'I don't care,' which the Creative Writing class and I concluded I remove, so that sentence structures appeared more fluent. The poem was titled 'Little Miss Snobby Branch', which the students and teachers thought appeared cliché as the phrase 'Little Miss' can be considered overused, so I retitled the poem 'Twisted Branches', in keeping with the theme of slander and the anthropomorphism of the trees. The group and I felt that due to the poem's length, the meaning required punchiness and consequently I kept effective lines which conveyed important meanings of never looking down on anyone, and removed lines with similar meanings which had less impact. 'My branches are twisted like my words but they're not stuck up' was removed because it had a similar meaning to 'My branches do not drag on for people to trip over', which was personification of a tree, stating that they do not make people feel below them.

In my second draft, I removed 'Let's say' from the line 'we're all in a deep dark forest' and from 'all the trees are people' following a discussion with the students and teachers about declaratives sounding more powerful and definite. To keep with the tree metaphor, as my peers and teachers suggested, I wrote 'Your words really cut me down' as the closing line in place of 'Your words really cut me up.' This linked to the theme of trees being chopped down to represent how some people are unfairly downgraded, and consequently leaving them afraid to speak. I attempted to symbolize this by implying loss of oxygen due to the cutting down of trees.

For the final draft, I replaced 'You bigged me up to be something I'm not' with 'You carved me out as something I'm not' after the group and I decided that this line linked organically to the tree metaphor. My teacher advised that my main focus be imagery, to improve imagery I used:

A toplofty treetop,  
I do not wear  
But still you chop—  
As if it is there.

This was to supersede:

You claim I'm a snob?  
Choose to rob  
Me

### Of my true identity?

I am blessed with articulatory dyspraxia, which causes me to see the world in metaphor. William Blake, I feel, had a similar condition. In 'Twisted Branches', I used 'All the trees are people', and images similar to this, to express the idea that nature controls everything. Similarly, Blake reflects upon the connection between trees and people in many of his poems. In particular, 'A Poison Tree':

My wrath did grow  
Till it bore an apple bright  
He knew that it was mine  
My foe outstretched beneath the tree<sup>1</sup>

Here, William Blake displays a semantic connection between wrath and personified growth of "tree". These lines compare poison apples, a negative tree feature, to wrath, in attempt to accentuate the nature of human corruption. This influenced me to write the personification:

As trees grow up ego roots show up;  
Branches sway in a downward way,  
Others get twisted like words:  
Wholesome seeds and fungi stirred.

Like Blake, the regular rhythm throughout the lines is ironic as the speaker is talking negatively, so an irregular rhythm would be expected. The personification exemplified the link between people's personal growth and personified growth of trees. It also emphasised the nature of human corruption by comparing this to 'fungi', which can be seen as an unpleasant tree parasite.

Regarding the inspiration behind 'Twisted Branches', in 'A Poison Tree', Blake cites corruption of nature and humanity with further imagery:

Glad I see  
My foe outstretched beneath the tree

This shows what damage keeping anger to yourself can cause. The consequent combination of corrupt growth of humanity and nature is symbolised by the dual imagery wrath and poison. This inspired me to use:

You carved me out as something I'm not.  
Pulled the fruit off my branches, left me to rot.

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<sup>1</sup> William Blake 'A Poison Tree' *The Collected Poems* (London: Penguin, 1976), p.20-21.

This epitomized how any person's identity could 'rot' in the eyes of people who believe slander and fail to see the healthy nature of that person — symbolically 'fruit', which is pulled off tree branches.

In this poem, I used a mixture of pentameter and tetrameter – mostly irregular – along with an irregular system of internal and external rhyme to reflect my inner turmoil.

In 'The Tyger', Blake uses the following star motifs:

When the stars threw down their spears,  
And watered heaven which their tears,<sup>2</sup>

These star motifs create a tone of ambiguity and may refer to the casting down of the angels after Satan rebelled against God. Blake's use of star motifs spurred me to create my own in my poem, 'Little Twinkle', in which I used:

A star lost her shine when she shook off her glitter,  
Which flew afar, fell to the ground, sprinkling ornate litter.

This imagery elucidated somebody attempting to rid themselves of the qualities which make them unique. The reason being that the individual feels insecure about what others may think about these characteristics. The phrase 'ornate litter' is symbolic of the individual's unique qualities as litter would not usually be described as ornate because it commonly has unpleasant connotations. 'Litter' in this phrase also implies that the individual's uniqueness goes to waste because they attempt to disguise it. A 'star' which has a 'lost shine' displays how the star is stripped of its beauty. This is representative of how an individual strips themselves of their unique qualities. 'Fell to the ground' expresses the process of self-downgrading, similar to how the stars throw down their spears in 'The Tyger'.

Influence for my prose piece *Excerpt from One that you hold in your hand*, the beginning of a much longer narration which came from a time when I attended a dental appointment with my mum, and the oral hygienist asked me whether I used an electric toothbrush or a manual toothbrush. I couldn't think of a difference between the two toothbrushes so I began to answer "One that you hold in your-" and before I could say "hand", Mum quickly interrupted and said "Manual!". Therefore, I used a first person narrator, a reliable one since there is little distance between the narrator and myself – a genuine auto diegetic one. Therefore, the plot was easier to follow as there was only one protagonist, and this created a closer tenor with the reader as they are following the character throughout the prose. The prose was written in present tense, thereby making the reader feel as if they were experiencing the events with the character.

Following feedback from the students and teachers, I became, as draft succeeded draft, more economical with my words and excised all tautology such as 'quietly murmurs' because we decided that 'murmurs' had a greater effect. I also replaced 'I obediently sit in the chair. I

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<sup>2</sup> William Blake, 'The Tyger' *The Collected Poems* (London: Penguin, 1976), 125-26.

grimace nervously as the chair flattens out like a sunbed' with 'I take a seat, grimacing as it flattens out like a sunbed', as this appeared more fluent and efficacious.

In his novel, *Kleinzeit*, Russell Hoban uses metaphors and similes such as 'Trailing clouds of mercy and libido' and 'Sister rose like the dawn'.<sup>3</sup> The metaphor is anthropomorphised and the simile is in anthropomorphical form. This creates diversity thus contrast which enhances the reader's perception and artistry of the novel. With the personification 'Ha ha, laughed the hospital bed' Hoban generates a tone of humour and thus inventiveness which intrigues the reader and patently outlines the thoughts and actions of the characters.

This and my natural affinity with figurative language, spurred me to make metaphor my intrinsic style. I used metaphors, similes and personification, such as 'A courageous lion, I roar with laughter', 'I take a seat, grimacing as it flattens out like a sunbed' and 'The trees wouldn't give a fig', which were exaggerated for the purpose of humour and melange which intended to engage the reader and to draw them into my world, where we have an equal platform for communication. This figurative language clearly shaped the way character thinks and acts enriches the reader's imagination and their understanding of the prose.

Hoban's unique title *Kleinzeit* and humorous tone in his novel influenced me to invent the title *Excerpt from One that you hold in your hand*, which was deliberately ambiguous. The title also links to the theme of humour mainly expressed in the lines 'What is the difference between an electric toothbrush and a manual toothbrush?' and "You hold both in your hands, you doughnut!".

Word count: 1500

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<sup>3</sup> Russell, Hoban, *Kleinzeit* ( London: Bloomsbury, 2012), p. 10.