

School Resource : The World is a Forest

Sarah Cunningham: *Midnight Sun*

Galleries 2 & 3

Painting at night and in dreamlike states, Sarah's imaginary landscapes are portals to other worlds that speak to the connection between humans and nature.

In order to immerse herself in these other worlds, Sarah would often place her paintings on the floor, working into them and allowing them to surround her in the space.

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Creating a painting

Group of 15 can
be split into smaller
groups of 3

Resources:

- 5 frames
- painted strips
- poetry prompts
 - pencils
 - paper

Warm up:



Look at Sarah's paintings – what
colours and textures can you see?



Imagine walking into one of the
paintings – what would you see,
hear and feel?



What shapes and marks can you
see in the painting?

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Creating a Painting

Assemble your own painting inspired by Sarah's work using the painted sheets of acetate.

Slide the pieces between the front and back of the frame, so when you lift the frame up the pieces stay.

- How can you layer them? You could try turning them around
- What could you take or add to the composition to create a different atmosphere?
- What do different textured marks look like layered together?
- How do different colours change the feeling of the artwork?



- Ask a friend to hold your artwork - Use the torches provided to cast your creation on the floor, wall or window to create shadows

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Poetry Extension Activity

Resources: pencils, paper, word bank and poetry prompts

As well as painting, Sarah enjoyed reading and writing poetry. Her poetry often inspired her paintings, and her paintings inspired her poetry too.

Can you write a poem to go alongside the artwork you have created?

Words taken from an exhibition book about Sarah's work have been used to create a word bank. Use these and the sentence stems to create your poem.

Word Bank

forest

song

moss

light

dappled

flow

midnight

portal

dusk

starshine

squelch

muddy

trunks

rhythm

vine

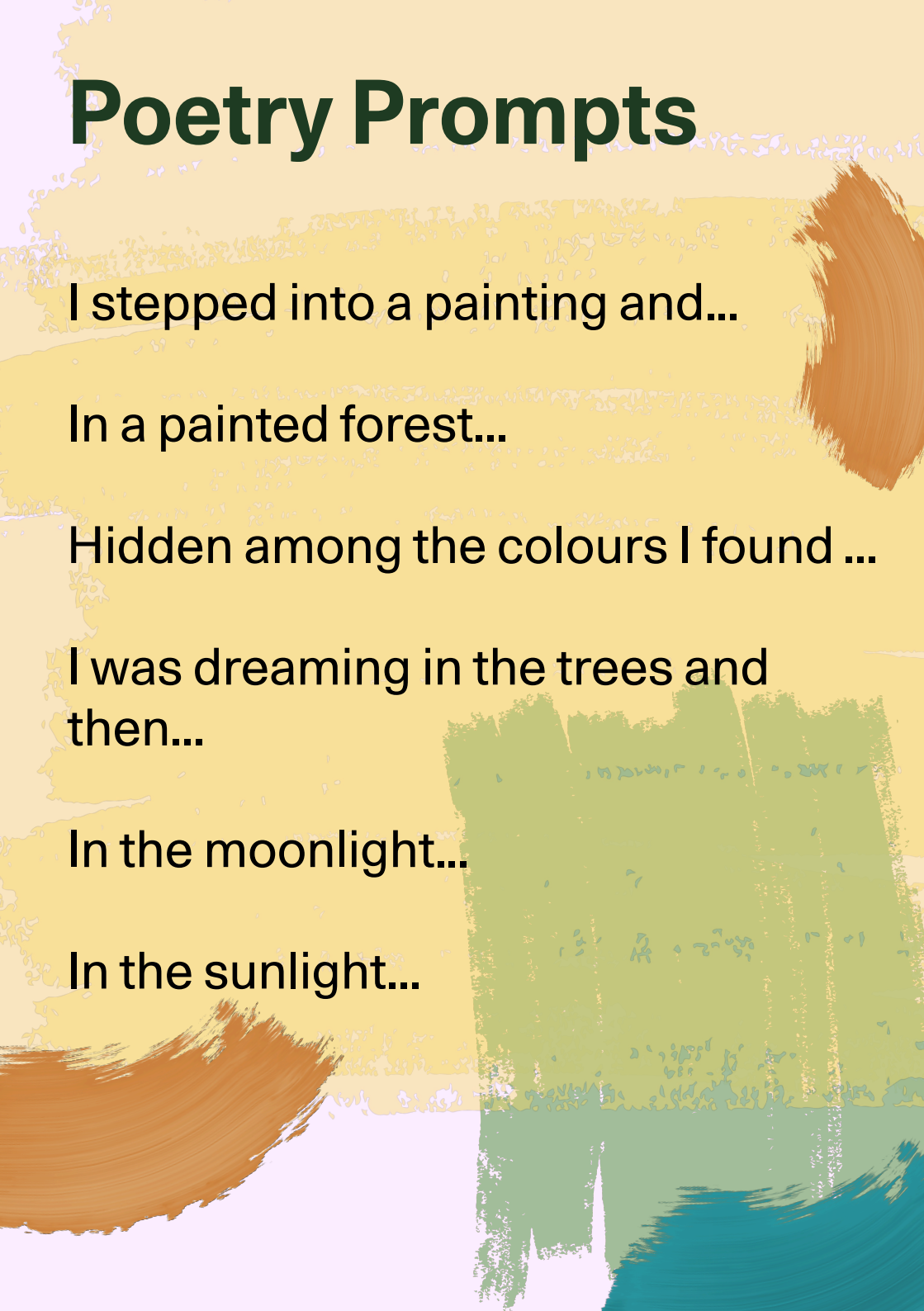
surprise

dream

space

roots

Poetry Prompts

The background of the page is a vibrant, abstract composition of thick, textured brushstrokes. A large, bright yellow stroke dominates the upper half, while a bold, burnt orange stroke curves along the right edge. In the lower right, there are vertical strokes of muted green and a horizontal stroke of deep teal. The bottom left corner features a broad, sweeping orange stroke. The overall effect is one of dynamic, painterly energy.

I stepped into a painting and...

In a painted forest...

Hidden among the colours I found ...

I was dreaming in the trees and
then...

In the moonlight...

In the sunlight...