

Welcome to **Creative Bursts**, short creative activities to do at home with children of age 8/9+.

Creative Bursts are created by Sarah Webb in partnership with MoLI – Museum of Literature Ireland. Sarah Webb is an award-winning children's writer. Her children's books include *A Sailor Went to Sea, Sea, Sea*, illustrated by Steve McCarthy and *Blazing a Trail: Irish Women Who Changed the World*, illustrated by Lauren O'Neill.

MoLI is committed to youth creativity and alongside the free primary schools tour and workshops programme, we also run Bright Sparks – a series of creative workshops facilitated by Irish writers and illustrators where families embrace the opportunity to play and create together.

### Episode #11 – Begin Again

This week's theme is inspired by Brendan Kennelly's poem, *Begin*. The first line is 'Begin again to the summoning birds'. Read his full poem below.

#### Creative Bursts Challenge 1

Write a list of all the creative things you'd like to do in 2021, for example keep a journal, draw and keep a sketchbook, create a new dance or write a poem, story or a whole book.

#### Creative Bursts Challenge 2

Write a story or poem starting with the following line:

"Looking back, Evie/Eldrin Elder (you choose or create your own name) was a strange child from day one. For a start ..."

#### Creative Bursts Challenge 3

Create a great name for the following characters. Draw and write about them.

A one-eyed dog – for example Popeye Yap

A gentle dragon

A powerful but tiny queen

A purple giant

A robot pencil

#### Creative Bursts Challenge 4

Snowdrops are one of the first flowers of spring. Their proper name is *Galanthus* which means 'milk flower' in Greek. The 'language of flowers' is an ancient way of communicating



using flowers. In the 'language of flowers' snowdrops mean hope.

Write a poem or story about walking in a forest and seeing snowdrops. Maybe they are magical snowdrops that fill the forest glade with a ghostly white light. Maybe there is someone or something living under the snowdrops. You decide!

#### Extra Creative Bursts Challenge

Draw or paint your own snowdrops. Elizabeth Corbet Yeats, known as Lolly (1868 to 1940) published a special book all about painting flowers and plants, including snowdrops. On this page she shows how to paint a snowdrop's delicate petals.



Lolly Yeats was a fine artist and art teacher. Together with her sister, Lily she ran her own craft and publishing company called Cuala Industries in the early 20th century. It employed only women and used only Irish materials.

You can see the whole book in Villanova University's digital library here: <https://tinyurl.com/cualapress>

#### 'Begin' by Brendan Kennelly

Begin again to the summoning birds  
to the sight of the light at the window,  
begin to the roar of morning traffic  
all along Pembroke Road.  
Every beginning is a promise  
born in light and dying in dark  
determination and exaltation of  
springtime  
flowering the way to work.  
Begin to the pageant of queuing girls  
the arrogant loneliness of swans in the  
canal  
bridges linking the past and future  
old friends passing though with us  
still.  
Begin to the loneliness that cannot  
end  
since it perhaps is what makes us  
begin,  
begin to wonder at unknown faces  
at crying birds in the sudden rain  
at branches stark in the willing  
sunlight  
at seagulls foraging for bread  
at couples sharing a sunny secret  
alone together while making good.  
Though we live in a world that dreams  
of ending  
that always seems about to give in  
something that will not acknowledge  
conclusion  
insists that we forever begin.

With thanks to Bloodaxe Books for their kind permission Brendan Kennelly, *Familiar Strangers: New & Selected Poems 1960-2004* (Bloodaxe Books, 2004) [www.bloodaxebooks.com](http://www.bloodaxebooks.com).

Snowdrops photograph by Kate Krave.

