Poetic Directions: imagine that you are accompanying someone you care about on a familiar journey you take, or once took regularly - to work or school, to the shops or park for example. Describe the route so the other person can see it through your eyes. Be as selective as you like about which details - however small, wild and eccentric - you choose to include.

Jacqueline Saphra

An artist has offered to paint your portrait. Write a poem to her, to say how you would like yourself to be painted.

Chrissy Williams

Access, at random, various books, web pages, newspapers, magazines, etc. that happen to be within grasping range. Copy down lines and phrases as they leap into the eye - again, more or less at random. Mix up the words and ideas, let them buffet around. Is anything there redirecting your thinking and feeling in a fresh or unexpected direction? Through all the white noise, this is the collective language whispering to you. Write from that whisper.

Mario Petrucci

Imagine that archaeologists are uncovering the remains of our society. What do they find? Which objects have stood the test of time? What do they theorise that they were used for?

Suzannah Evans

Find the biography of a major writer. Use a random procedure to pick a 'double-page spread' from each chapter of the book - you might also use jacket-copy, contents-page, dedication, foreword, index, foot-notes, notes etc.

Sift each page for pungent phrases, images, lines, words. If there are photographs you might convert some to text-descriptions.

Using this text-hoard as material - hone into a poem by re-ordering, erasure, overwriting -you might use an established form if it suits. It need not have any connection to the original subject - perhaps the less of an obvious connection the better.

Title the resultant work by the first name of the biography’s subject.

Matthew Caley

What scares you the most? Is it on this list? phobialist.com. Could writing a poem about it conquer your fear of it?

Julia Bird

Write a poem about the insides of a waste paper basket, real or imaginary, and what’s contained therein (failed poems, to-do lists, utility bills, banana skins, Q-tips, junk mail – anything else?)

Will Barrett

Still stuck for ideas? Visit www.poetryschool.com for a course or workshop to kick-start your creativity.