

# Green Words Poetry Map

The Exeter Cathedral Green Words Poetry Map features nature-inspired poems written by people from the local community and curated by Riddler in Residence Aly Stoneman. The poems celebrate urban nature and wildlife in Exeter Cathedral's green spaces and beyond.

## Cathedral Thinking by Si Egan

*Within the Wall*

A new humanity is born from wild nature,  
Roots and branches tear down the walls  
Of division old humanity used to dominate the world.  
No more us and them. Just us.  
A continuous being, a global life,  
Multiplying, growing, adding new species,  
Subtracting selfishness and greed from the human equation.

In this new Eden, there are no gates,  
No fences, no flame-sword wielding cherubim,  
No forbidden fruit. Knowledge is hidden in plain sight:  
In the microcosmic life of a pine cone planet, in the silence of drowsy bees gathering  
The last dregs of the hot summer's nectar, and in the cracks between slabs where new life grows.

*Outwith the Wall*

Nature builds its own cathedrals of wood and water, leaf and wind.  
When stones have crumbled into dust, the oak and elm will cast their shadows on the ruins,  
Seedlings sprouting through mosaic floors, pigeons nesting in high bell towers.  
Requiem rain will fill the font and organ pipes be sounded by the wind's invisible breath,

As land shifts and seas rise the aisle becomes the beach, city seagulls swirl, now home again,  
And graves eject their passenger's remains, a final resurrection long awaited by the dead.

## City Bats by Jules Young

Dusk closes in and brings  
city bats, tiny hunters  
swooping through cool night air,  
circling moth prey with electric precision.  
The silence chipped by their squeaks of joy  
at the invertebrate smorgasbord before them.  
Leathery wings outlined in moonlight,  
tiny bodies twist and turn to chase their  
fluttering meals and then vanish into  
the night like puffs of smoke.

## The Green by Orianna Xu

The Green is more than green  
space shaped  
by old road-spokes.

Here, green grows  
between cobbles,  
and soothes souls  
more worn  
than the stone steps.

With winter's cool kiss,  
trees blush,  
and pigeons pouf,  
shedding like takeaway pastry flakes.

Here, we meet,  
perched with the birds,  
in this sacred amphitheatre  
of duelling gulls and chasing children.

Under the oaks,  
Over coffee and resting places,  
we rest and tell our tales.



## The Bishop's Palace Garden

## The Bishop's Magpie by Rod Stacy-Marks

Monochrome magpie, perched high in that tree,  
dressed like a nun, are you spying on me?  
As I walk through the garden you're lurking up there,  
beady black eyes looking down on me here.

You're cackling and bobbing your head up and down.  
What's so amusing, you black and white clown?  
Are you laughing at me as I examine these trees?  
Be an angel, fly off, leave me in peace!

I see a tree with a tempting ripe apple.  
You swoop down to the roof of the chapel.  
I reach for the fruit, stretching out my right arm,  
you start squawking like a burglar alarm.

Are you truly more saintly than me?  
Just turn a blind eye to my thievery.  
Mischievous, mythical, magical brute,  
stop screeching, come here and share this fruit.

## The Bishop's Garden by Sarah Bartrum

Pink and white confetti  
Litters the ground beneath a tree,  
Cyclamen marking that long ago wedding.  
A drunken bumble bee sways on a sprig of red flowers,  
Long rangy spines topped with purple hats wave a farewell.  
Lilac discs, dropped with yellow paint, look on,  
Gaping holes in leaves bely the feast that was,  
Crows curse from boughs in the beech.  
She is here, still,  
will always be,  
past the dripping bean pods  
and the three silent figures  
that wait eternally for her alms.  
She, trapped within the horse chestnut,  
Encased in the trunk, her forever home.

*(Inspired by plants and sculptures in the Bishop's garden.)*