

Write Now is a unique talent development programme for 16–18 year olds that aims to nurture young people's creative writing abilities. Participants are supported through mentoring, workshops and networking as well as having an opportunity to take part in **The Times and The Sunday Times Cheltenham Literature Festival**.

Here's Write Now participant Cameron with his poem 'Raven'.

I watched a raven take flight
feathers glistening in blistering sunlight
Soaring through the air.
Wings cutting the screaming winds
talons released their asphyxiating grasp, launching with all its might.
the raven ascended from the perch in the barren branches of an ancient dying oak tree
standing courageously, fighting the onslaught of the bleak winds
rotten appendages twisting towards me

I stumbled back and attempted to run
but the endless sea of black mud encased the pale flesh of my legs.
Falling
drowning, I stared at the black cryptid as it soared over me
stalking above, the raven descends.
Descends
to pick at the exposed skin of my forehead.
I watched
unable to move, mud locking my arms like dead
restless souls were preventing me from escaping.

But the raven flew over me.
Horrific talons drawing bloody streaks across skin
Moving unnaturally against the battering winds it flew
High enough to resume circling over me
soaring, taunting, taunting.
The malicious mud's grasp released.
shocks of pain pulsed down my withered body as I rose warily to my feet
caped mud falling like ashes
spinning Ghastly spirals in the howling wind
I marched on, with the raven circling overhead.