INTEGRARTI
Festival 2025

FLOWERS AND COLOURS

Leanne Ellul, November 2025

What stood out to me most in the stories of children and the elderly were the repeated images of flowers and colours — so varied and colourful, much like the children and the elderly themselves. Integrarti festival aims to encourage collaboration and creative exchanges amongst diverse communities with different backgrounds, ages, and interests. Throughout October, four writing workshops with children and four with the elderly were held. Led by Inizjamed's writers and researchers, these sessions explored the process of storytelling and recorded narratives from the lives of our protagonists, stories which might otherwise have remained untold. Our elderly participants journeyed back in time, whilst the children delved into their imagination. In November, the festival will bring both generations together for the first time to celebrate this very publication you now hold. Within it lies a collection of stories, poems, and reflections — pieces you can enjoy freely, even playfully!
By following the simple instructions, these pages can be transformed into a delightful little game, shaped like a duck's beak.
How wonderful it is to remember where we come from, while still moving forward with curiosity and joy.
So let's play hard — and keep creating — for more Integrarti!

ST MARGARET COLLEGE, PRIMARY A, ĦAŻ-ŻABBAR

FIRST YEAR CHILDREN'S STORIES

*Sessions led by **Kit Azzopardi***

WHAT A FRIGHT!

How he scared me! From the sink crawled out a monster with a face as green as grass and a body as blue as the sky. His hands were white as paper, and his feet yellow like daisies! And look — these weren't the only colours he had! He had brownish teeth, hair black as mulberries, and a jacket red as fire.The second I saw him, I ran — and I ran so fast that I crashed into a tree, while he kept coming towards me on a bicycle. Of course, I knew he would catch up to me! But just as he reached me, he began to speak. He told me his name was Lav, that he was forty-four years old, and that he was still a student. It really wasn't worth the fright he gave me! We made peace and started playing *noli** together. I then offered him a burger with noodles, and once we were tired, we went for a swim in the pool. Before long, the fright he gave me was completely forgotten.

**Noli* is a traditional Maltese game similar to hide and seek.

THE FLOWER STORY

Once, in the pitch-black silence of midnight, our car suddenly came to a stop. You wouldn't believe what we saw next — flowers had sprouted where the wheels used to be! We had to call a mechanic for help, and when he arrived, we could hardly believe our eyes. He had two heads, seven hands, and four legs — and his skin was made up of countless colours: black, blue, red, pink, yellow, violet, white, and many more I can no longer remember!

Once he arrived, he removed each flower one by one, installed new wheels and replanted the flowers in the soil so that they could grow in the rain. As time passed, those flowers grew — and with them tall blossoms. And not only blossoms, but also numerous trees sprouted, including apple trees.

SECOND YEAR CHILDREN'S STORIES

*Sessions led by **Justine Somerville***

CELERY CARROT AND THE TABLET

In a small house by the sea lived a girl of seven years by the name of Amy and a lazy dog named Celery Carrot. Celery Carrot's favorite pastime was eating doughnuts in front of the tablet. Amy was tired of constantly telling him to stop being lazy. She often said, "Oh, Celery Carrot, why don't you put something of substance into your mind and do something worthwhile instead of wasting time on that tablet?"

Once, Amy had gotten so angry that she threw his tablet into the sea. When Celery Carrot saw what she had done, he didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. Instead of taking it badly, he drank a glass of seawater and thought about what he could do. He wondered, perhaps the salty sea water could add substance to his brain? *Amy would love that!*

Celery Carrot then came up with an idea: he would put on a mask and dive for the tablet. He forgot one small detail — he didn't know how to swim. He didn't bother with the flippers or the floaties Amy had bought him that summer. Confidently, he plunged into the deep end, and the tablet would have been easy to retrieve — if he hadn't swallowed so much water and started losing his breath. He was nearly drowning when, fortunately, Amy saw him and jumped into the sea after him, clothes and all. She struggled to pull him up because Celery Carrot was not a small dog. In the end, she managed to swim to the shore with Celery Carrot wrapped tightly around her, holding the tablet between his teeth.

After the ordeal, Celery Carrot needed to rest. Amy dried him off and tucked him into bed. While he drifted off, she told him his favorite story about a girl who had saved a lion from a moth that had turned into a vampire. While Celery Carrot slept, Amy quietly fixed his tablet. The next day, they went on a picnic by the sea. They enjoyed oiled bread and a slice of banana cake, played with a ball, and built a sandcastle decorated with seashells. They had so much fun that Celery Carrot completely forgot about the tablet and doughnuts that day!

MISHA, TULI AND THE FLOWERS

One day, when the garden's flowers were in full bloom, a cat named Misha wandered in. She loved the scent of the flowers and leaned in to smell them. Then something happened that surely no one would believe: the flowers began to smell *Misha*! "How delightful Misha smells," said the flowers. "Instead of a cat's usual scent, she carries the smell of … flowers!" As Misha and the flowers were getting to know each other, a large dog entered the garden. His name was Tuli. When he saw them talking, his stomach rumbled. *How hungry I am! I wonder … who would taste better, the cat or the flowers?* he thought.

After some time, he remembered all the delicious food waiting for him at home and decided he wouldn't eat Misha or the flowers after all. Realising she was safe, Misha suddenly felt hungry. She wandered around the garden, and when she spotted the fountain, it seemed to her that nothing would taste better than a fish dinner. Poor garden fish! Misha showed them no mercy. The trouble was that these fish didn't sit well with her stomach. So, Misha went home and made a feast of the aquarium fish. Don't you feel ashamed Mish?! All those bones she swallowed made her feel awful. She went back out to the garden for some fresh air. The flowers realised that she was unwell. They sent her to drink all the water from the pond so that she would recover**.** When they learned what she had done, they told her it was wrong — and you can imagine how they cried for their poor fish friends. Misha felt guilty and began to cry as well.

Tuli was fast asleep under the pomegranate tree, but when he heard Misha and the flowers sobbing, he woke with a start. He ran over to them, and their sadness melted his heart. To cheer them up a bit he told them a joke. He succeeded and they spent an hour repeating jokes and laughing together. Misha, Tuli and the flowers became best friends and they promised each other that they would never eat each other.

SAINT JOSEPH'S RESIDENCY, FGURA

WRITINGS BY THE ELDERLY

*Sessions led by **Claudia Gauci** and **Priscilla Cassar***

I REMEMBER

I remember that school was very close to my heart
I loved learning
I loved the teacher
I would ask her with hope
"Will we have tonight? Will we have tonight?"

I remember we used to live in Rabat Ġdid
Dad would come from work
I would hold his suitcase
In the kitchen, after school
We would eat ħobż biż-żejt

I remember our honeymoon in Sliema
day and night
quiet and beautiful
tasty and varied food
walking along the sea
fishermen catching fish
we enjoyed ourselves
I wish we stayed for longer
I remember Wied il-Għajn in summer
that's where we would go
to play outside as though we were shopkeepers
with small bottle taps, those that we had
mixing water with dust as though it were tomato paste
I remember Ħaż-Żabbar
We would go to the square
We would bring the żinżel
We would play with it
We would wait in the queue
We would buy meat
That would smell of liver
My mother would bring an egg during break
I must admit, I miss her

SAVIOR, PAWLA AND MARY

WHEN

When I was young / when we were six years old / eight years old / we would always play in the street / those days there was no traffic / we would meet to play *xixu* or with a ball / these kind of things /many different games / at night our parents would meet in the street / like that / and we would recite the rosary / we would meet many families outside / and we would discuss / like that / we would take a chair out and we would manage like that anyways / I will never forget these moments / what I remember that is most close to my heart / is how I used to greatly enjoy when I would be shaken up a bit and when we would play football / like this and like that / and then we would sometimes go and watch the Żejtun team play football / because I am from Żejtun / and we would go on foot from Żejtun to Rabat Ġdid / can you believe it / the Schreiber / Schreiber where now you find Ċensu Moran / and anyways, we would pass our time / like that / these moments I will never forget / what I remember that was closest to my heart / I used to enjoy this a lot

once when I had around seventeen years / I would go out a bit to the city Valletta / like this, like that / and I would sometimes remember when we would go to Sliema / I will never forget it / villas all around / it was something one enjoyed / when we would go to Sliema / from eighty-three you would reduce seventeen years / in '68 / these moments I will never forget / what I remember that was close to my heart / I used to enjoy it a lot how time has passed and I got married / another time when I grew older / when I used to go abroad / when I worked in the Dockyard / I went abroad fifteen times / I used to work a lot / I worked overtime and then / and then I would take one week off and we would go abroad, me and my wife / I would say let's take a flight / these moments I will never forget / that which I remember that was closes to my hear / that is what is closest to my heart / I enjoyed it a lot / that is what I took

CARMEL

OFFERINGS MASQUERADING AS WEIGHTS

When we were young, they would make the streets, in Imsida many trenches. We would make offerings, as though they were weights, and we'd play as the shopkeeper. They were still making new roads here, those days. How old was I? It was in the 60s. Because I was born in the fifties. And we would play amongst ourselves, girls as well as boys. Sometimes we would escape, with beads and with rocks. To see a car those days … they were creating trenches to dig quicker. L-Imsida is my favourite place.

DOREEN

DO YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING?

Shhhhhhhhhh, I'm recording. I was born in *Marsa* and then my mother took me to *Birgu*. We lived in *Birgu*. *Were you young though?* Baby, baby, she took me as a baby, she was in *Birgu* when she got me from her mother in *Marsa* and then we went again to *Birgu*. *Is that where you grew up?* Yes. *Do you remember anything in particular?* I remember *Birgu* has two rooms only and that my mother would wash me and change me and place me on the door to sit and that my cousin was there in a different place and that he would throw eggs at me. *Throw eggs at you?* Yes, to get me dirty! And my mom would get angry! She would wash and he would make dirty. Yes, yes, I remember this well! Every day. *Every day?* Yes. *That's what remained with you?* Yes I've kept it in mind.

PILAĠA

MY YOUNG CHILDHOOD – A STUDY ON THE SENSES

They mention many loose ends, pieces, thoughts. Fragments
They've coloured us blue, red, violet … You can almost try them, smell them and taste them.

1.

The Pea Pie with Rabbit
The rabbit sizzling in the pan
In the pan, the pork stew
And the cabbage you chop at home
The imqaret my mother makes
And the octopus with spaghetti
And that little bit of wine
The Sunday baked potatoes with fennel — my father's

2.

The white of the First Communion dress
My mother used to dress me all in blue and they would call me Celestina
The sky-blue colour and the fortress of Binġemma
My husband's sister, she died young, the *verdemar*
The violet of the dress I stitched for the feast
And a sky-blue dress for the feast
Green — a little hope, Saint Michael
And pink — a little less than red

PAWLA, DOREEN, HELEN, JOSEPHINE, AGNES, FURTA, SAVIOUR, KARMENU, CARMEN, MARY, PILAĠA

WARTIME

I don't really have many beautiful things to tell you. About the War. I am ninety-five. Everyone bursts into applause. I can't tell you when I was born. I don't even know. But I know that I am ninety-five. We were refugees … Siġġiewi … St Paul's Bay … we went everywhere, up and down.
I remember us pumping water. Because of the shelter where it was, the water from Wardija would seep down. And once there was a pair of siblings. We had a staircase in the shelter, and whoever went down first at night would sleep on the chairs. We were thirteen siblings. And there was another pair of children, Lilly and Rokku — may God bless them, poor things — and me, once, the staircase collapsed and fell into the water. And I told him, well then, did you have your last gasp? Childish as I was!

Then an air-raid warning. And we would go inside. Hunger you cannot even fathom. Whenever they felt like it, they would drop the bombs. The siren would sound, you'd know you had a house, but when you came out, you wouldn't find it. They would give you blankets to cover yourself. The house had collapsed in the War.

L-Isla.
Strada San Lorenzo.
Strada Macina.
Strada Crucifisso.

Then we went up to Siġġiewi.
The church of Qrendi collapsed.
And it caught us.

Then we went to St Paul's Bay.
The church of Gillieru collapsed.
And it caught us.

Then we went up to Wied il-Għajn.

And from Wied il-Għajn onwards, Christmas for me can never come because I don't like it. Cries.
Twice I was robbed.
On the Immaculate Conception, and on Christmas.
Not beautiful memories.
Just experiences. Nothing about them is beautiful.

FURTA

Veronika Mercieca (Cultural Manager within the Port Regional Council) and Joseph Galea (Artistic Director of the Integrarti Festival), Mary Doris Mifsud (St Joseph Residence) and Anton Falzon (Żabbar, Primary A),and Jean Paul Borg, Keith Borg, and Kenneth Scicluna (Inizjamed)
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SCAN HERE FOR MULTILINGUAL ACCESS FILIPINO, HINDI, MANDARIN, ARABIC, SERBIAN, BULGARIAN, SOMALI, TAMIL, PUNJABI, MALAYALAM & CEBUANO.

INTEGRARTI · ARTS COUNCIL MALTA · INIZJAMED · St Margaret College, Zabbar Primary A · Care Residence · Residenza San Ġużepp

HOW TO PLAY COOTIE CATCHER

1. Play between two.
2. Ask your friends to pick one of the colours.
3. Open and close the game according to the number of letters in the name of the colour they choose. For example, if they choose lilac, open and close it 5 times (L-I-L-A-C).
4. When you finish, your friends can look inside and choose a number.
5. Open and close the game according to the chosen number.
6. When you finish, your friends must choose a panel under which there is an activity you can do together! Each activity is taken from or inspired by the writings of the children and the elderly!

2

play hide and seek together

3

eat ħobż biż-żejt

1

have a picnic by the sea

4

plant flowers in the soil

8

recount your favourite story

7

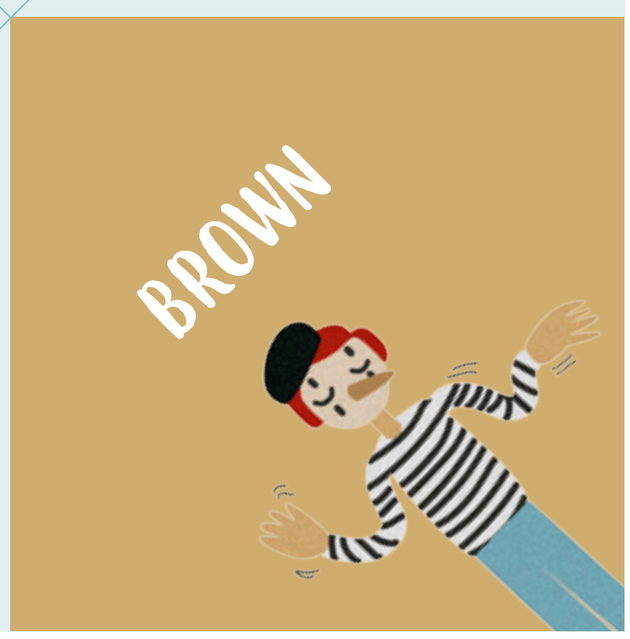
walk along the sea

6

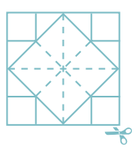
play outside and pretend to be shopkeepers

5

camp on the roof

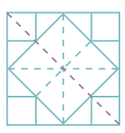


INSTRUCTIONS



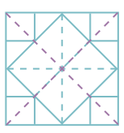
Cut along the shape of the box. Turn the paper upside down.

Fold the paper in half.



Open the paper.

Fold the other half.



Open the paper again.

Fold the 4 corners to the center of the paper.

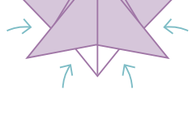
It should look something like this.

Keep the paper as it is and turn it over.

Now fold the 4 corners to the center of the paper again.

It should look something like this.

Fold inward from the middle.



Insert your fingers into the spaces and play.