



Observations: Words make a lot of scent: poetry in the form of perfume

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A dozen poets were given anonymous scents from which they had to write a poem. Meanwhile, six perfumers were asked to come up with a new fragrance inspired by a poem.

This is the brainchild of poet Claire Trevien and Odette Toilette. Together they set up Penning Perfumes, an ongoing project with poets and perfumers exploring the two worlds. It will culminate in a read and sniff event at East London's Book Club in June.

"I feel like smell is neglected in poetry – it's used quite lazily and people feel illiterate when it comes to smell. It's a challenge for poets to learn to smell," says Trevien.

Penny Williams, a perfumer at Orchadia, was paired with poet David Morley. "When the poem was first read to me, in my 'mind's nose' my initial odour reflexes did not make a nice smell!" says Williams. "I've spent more time getting to know the poem and am developing a perfume that captures its essence."

*'Penning Perfumes' at The Book Club, London EC2, on 12 June
(penningperfumes.tumblr.com)*