



WRITERS' BLOCK WORKBOOK



Centre for Health Humanities



Foreword

We have put together this short workbook to help keep you busy during the COVID-19 outbreak. It has been assembled, rather quickly, in response to the pressures we all feel during a time of lockdown and uncertainty.

We all know the power of doodling and scribbling; seldom do we sit through a boring meeting or an endless phone-call without making some marks on a piece of paper. At the Centre of Health Humanities at the University of Reading, we are convinced in the power of writing, drawing, and quiet reflection, in getting us through difficult times.

The materials used for this workbook come from a range of materials in the University's archives and museums. We are blessed at the University with important and unique materials relating to local history, the history of science, natural history, and industry at Reading. To know more you can visit the Special Collections website: <https://www.reading.ac.uk/special-collections/>

Finally, we would love to hear from you! Tell us how you found this workbook, take pictures of your masterpieces and/or subscribe to hear more about our work at the Centre for Health Humanities: @heathhums

Happy scribbling!

Kate Mattacks
Andrew Mangham

Animal Matters

These pictures (from 1658) are to shade, colour-in and even write a story about. Where does the animal come from? What does it say? Where would it go? What shoes would it wear...?





Some writing prompts:

If today was a colour/shape/texture/animal, what would it be ?

If you could talk to a animal for 5 minutes, what and who would you ask?

If your current emotion walked through the door, what shoes would they be wearing?

Hasbro has made you into an action figure. What extras would you come with?

You have 2 pens, a ticket and 3 keys in your pocket, Why?



THE
HISTORY
OF
SERPENTS:
OR,
The second Book of living Creatures:

WHEREIN IS CONTAINED

Their Divine, Natural, and Moral descriptions, with their
true Figures, Names, Conditions, Kinds, and Natures of all venomous
BEASTS: with their several Poisons and Accidents; their deep harm to
Mankind, and the wonderful works of God in their Creation, and Destruction.

Necessary and profitable to all sorts of Men: Collected out of divine Scriptures,
Fables, Philosophers, Physicians, and Poets: amplified with sundry accidental
Histories, Hieroglyphics, Epigrams, Galleries, and Magnificent Observations.

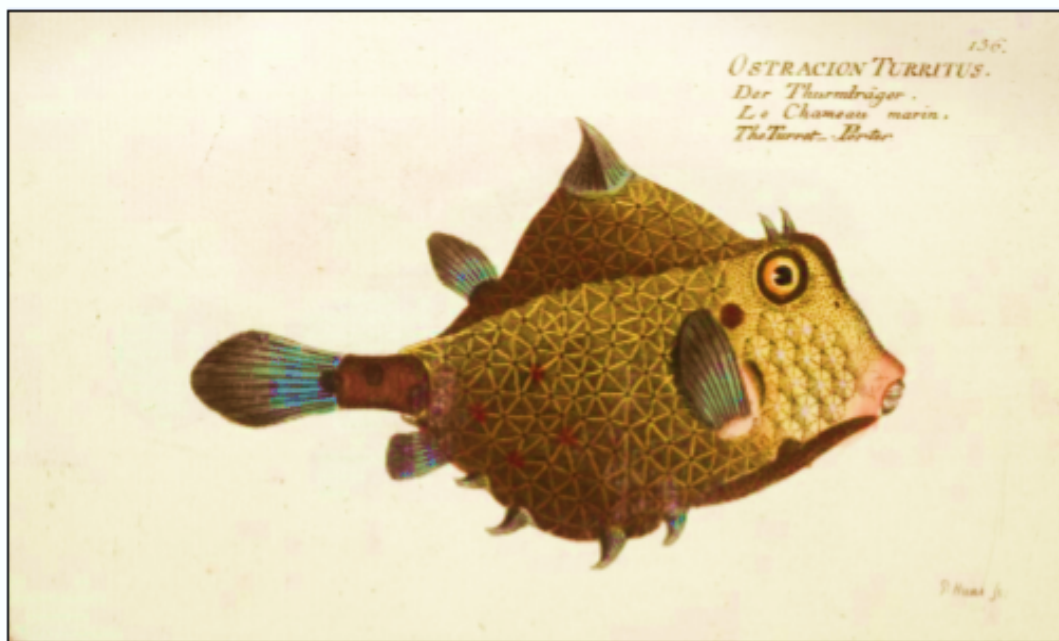
By EDWARD TOPSELL.



London, Printed by B. Coss, 1658.



Copy the details in these pictures from 1796...

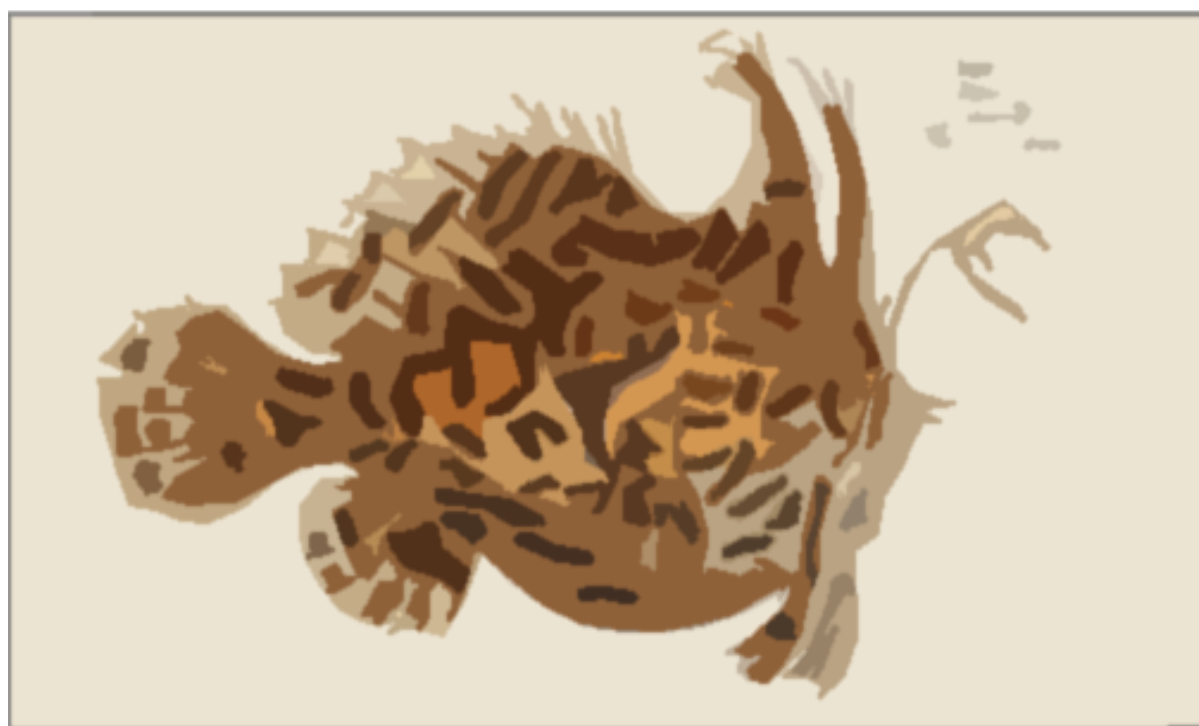


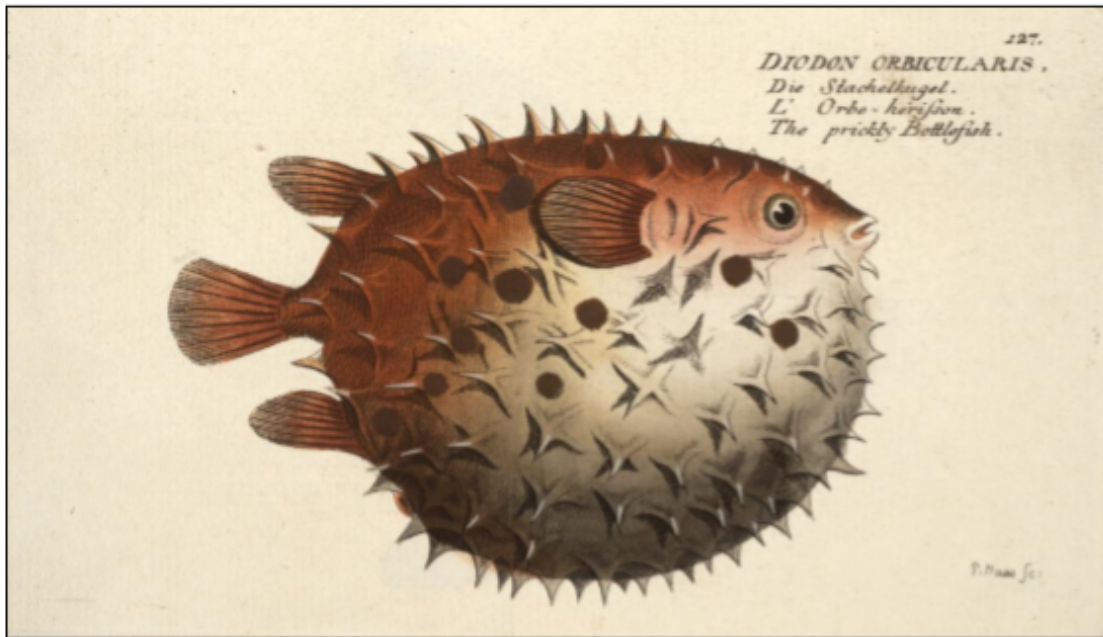
Ostracion turritus / The turret porter





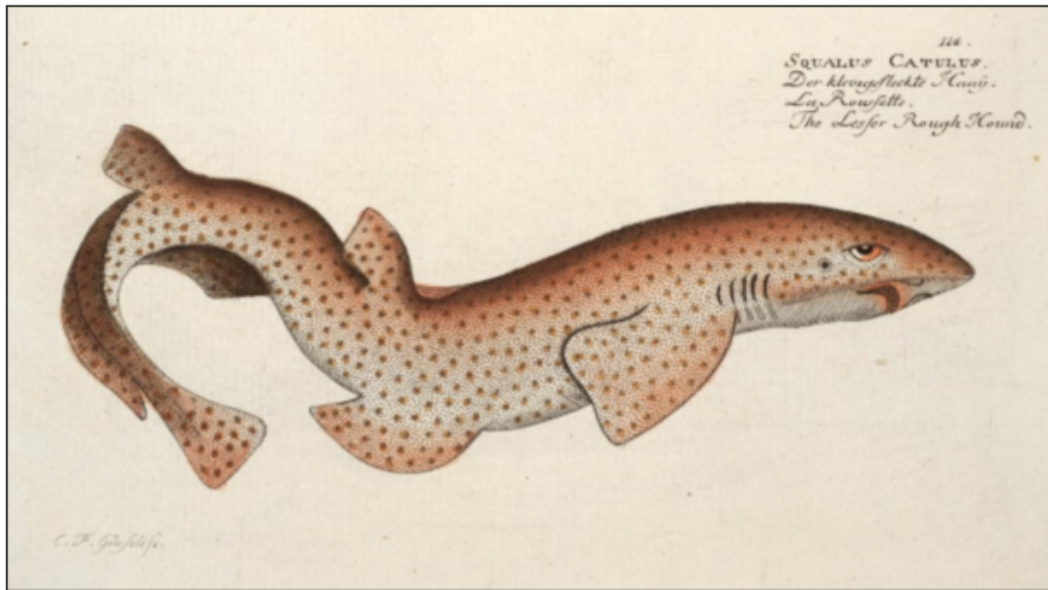
Lophius histrio / The American toad fish





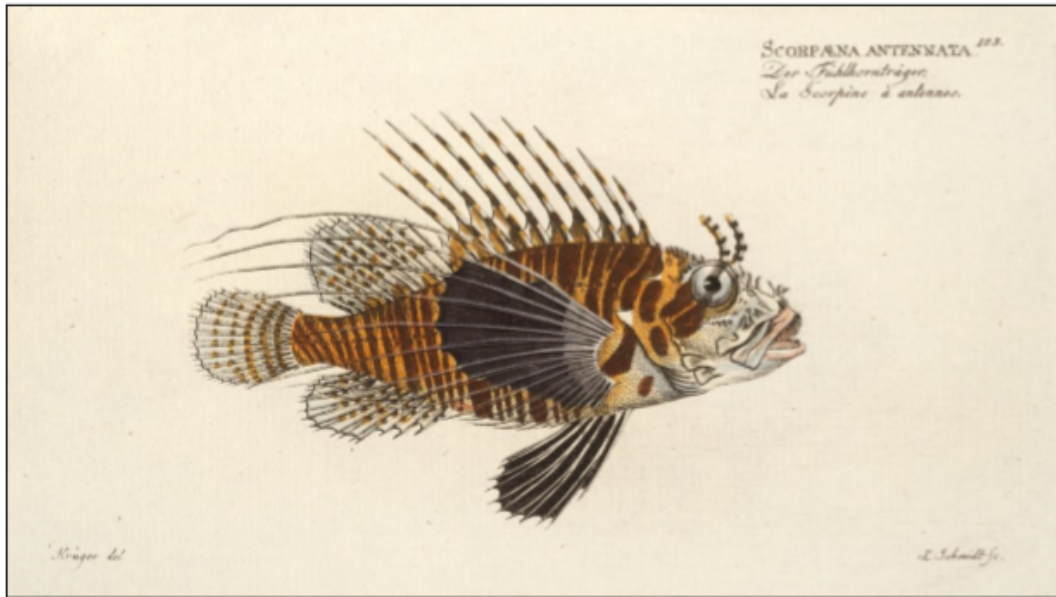
Diodon orbicularis / The prickly bottlefish





Squalus catulus / The lesser rough hound



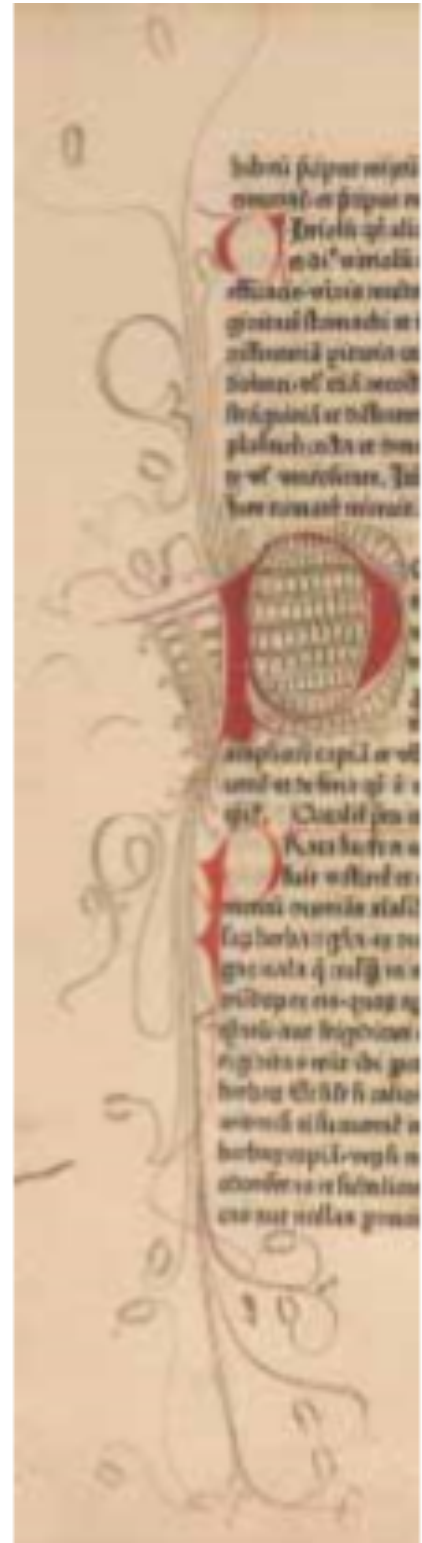


Scorpaena antennata



Monkish Marginalia

This book from 1471 had some incredible details in the margins. Monks often painted comic pictures outside the words they were supposed to be copying. Add your own doodles to the margins here...

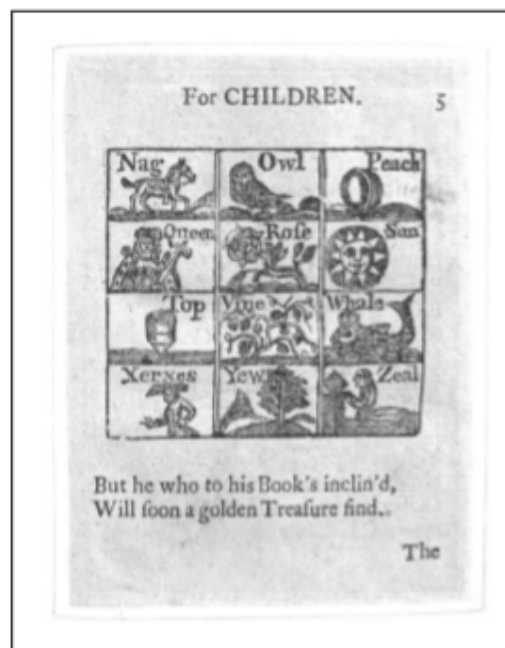


Winning Big



So what would you do if you won the lottery?

Alphabet Books



Alphabet books are a useful way of showing the objects or jobs that are important to us. These change over time. Write an alpha poem about your favourite things. Each line should begin with a letter of the alphabet, beginning with A, B, C...

Art pads

Biscuits

Crisps and

Dips

Use the charts to list items beginning with each letter. Check your score out of 26.

Letter	Fruit	Hobby	Animal
A			
B			
C			
D			
E			
F			
G			
H			
I			
J			
K			
L			
M			
N			
O			
P			
Q			
R			
S			
T			
U			
V			

W			
X			
Y			
Z			

Letter	Film	Sport	Biscuit
--------	------	-------	---------

A			
B			
C			
D			
E			
F			
G			
H			
I			
J			
K			
L			
M			
N			
O			
P			
Q			
R			

S			
T			
U			
V			
W			
X			
Y			
Z			

Letter	Actor	Song	Book
A			
B			
C			
D			
E			
F			
G			
H			
I			
J			
K			
L			
M			
N			

O			
P			
Q			
R			
S			
T			
U			
V			
W			
X			
Y			
Z			

Letter	TV Show	Dog Breed	Body Part
--------	---------	-----------	-----------

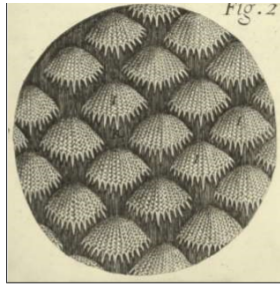
A			
B			
C			
D			
E			
F			
G			
H			
I			
J			

K			
L			
M			
N			
O			
P			
Q			
R			
S			
T			
U			
V			
W			
X			
Y			
Z			

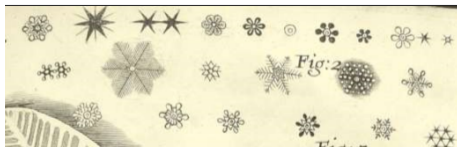
Microscopia

These pictures are taken from one of the first microscope books (1665) or with the latest technology. Can you tell what they are? (Answers are at the end of the booklet).

1.



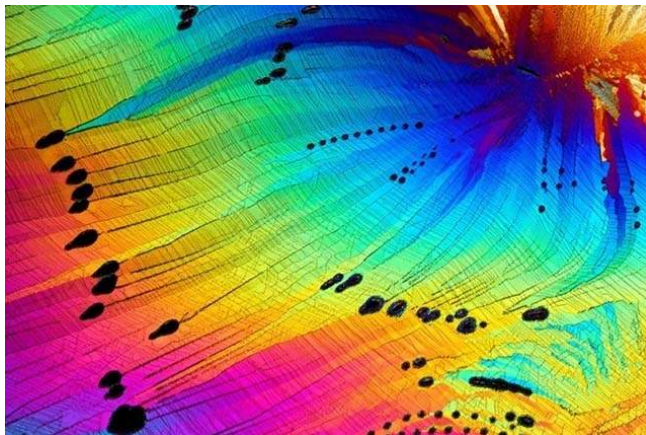
2.



3.



4.



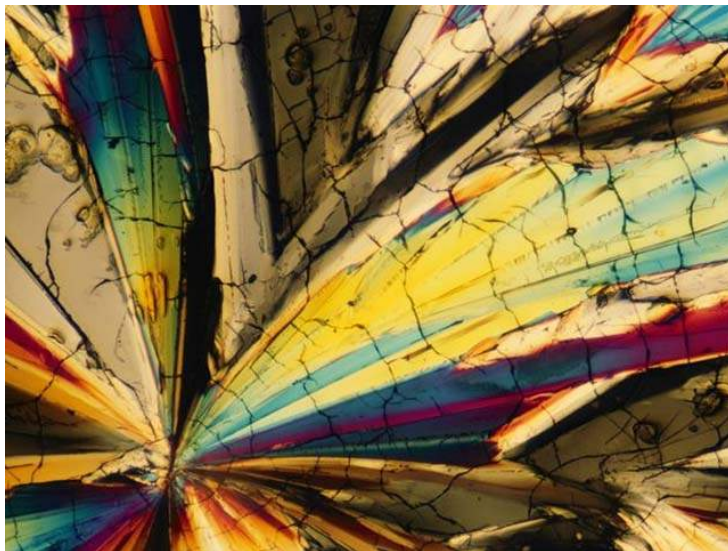
5.



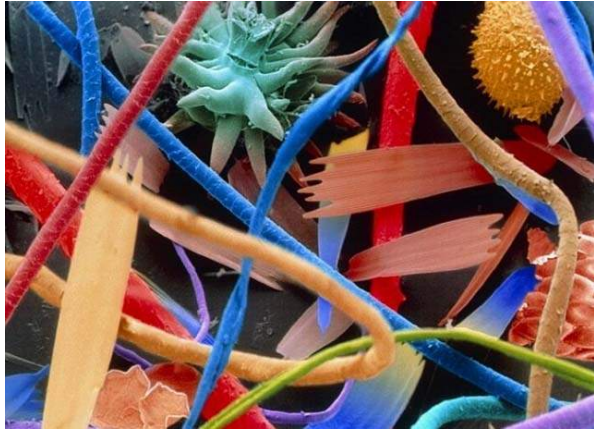
6.



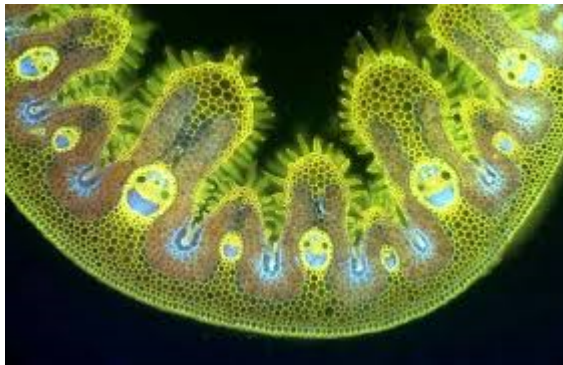
7.



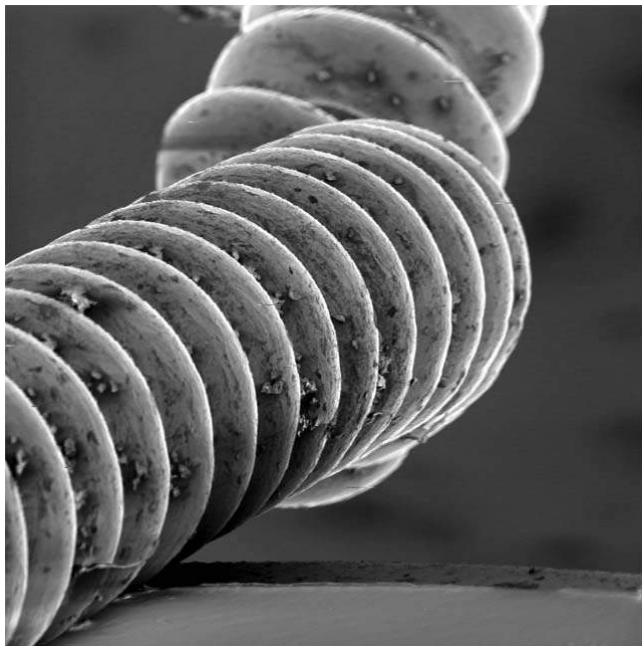
8.



9.



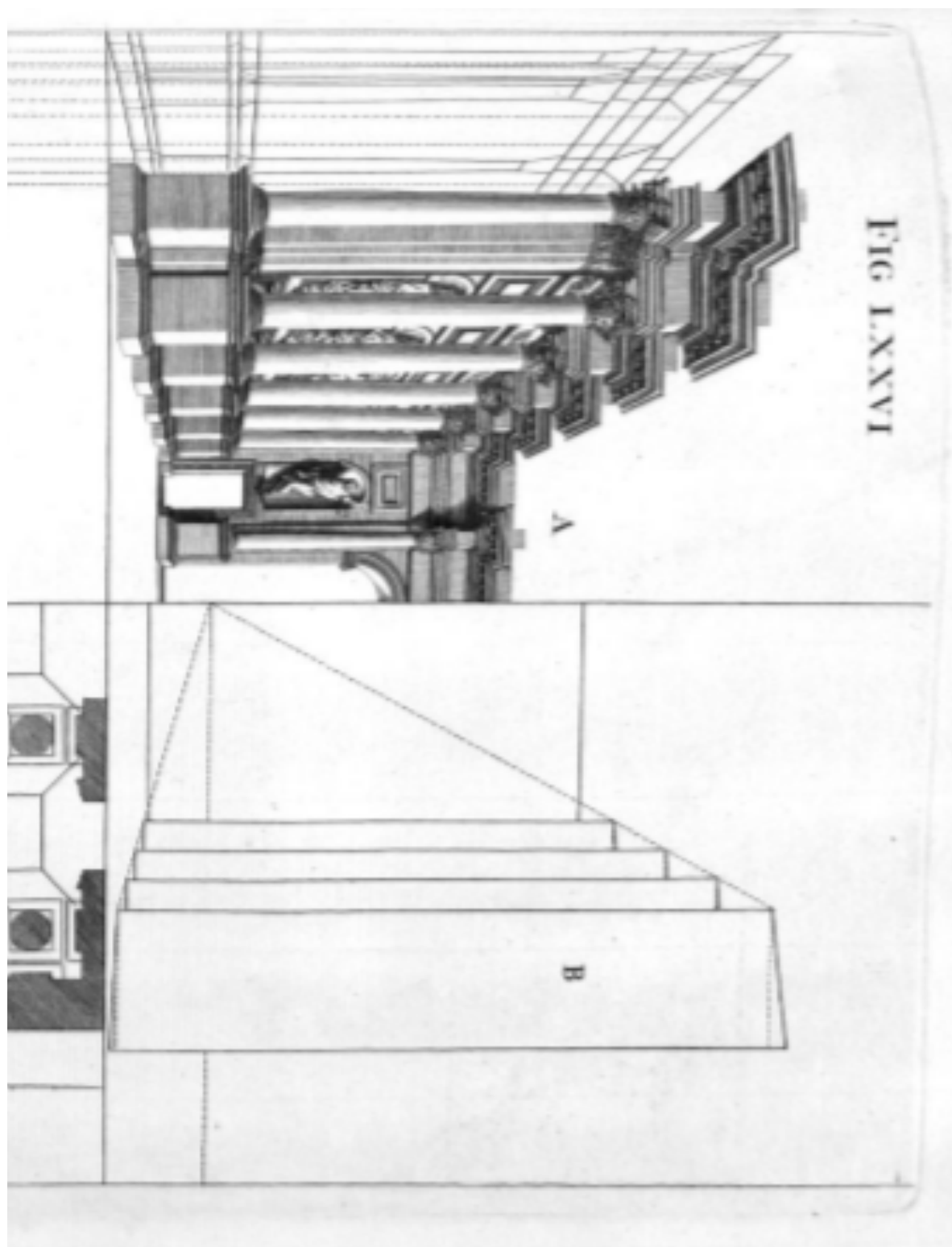
10.



The imitation game

Fill in the gaps in the second picture from this 1707 book...





Draw the mirror image in perspective.

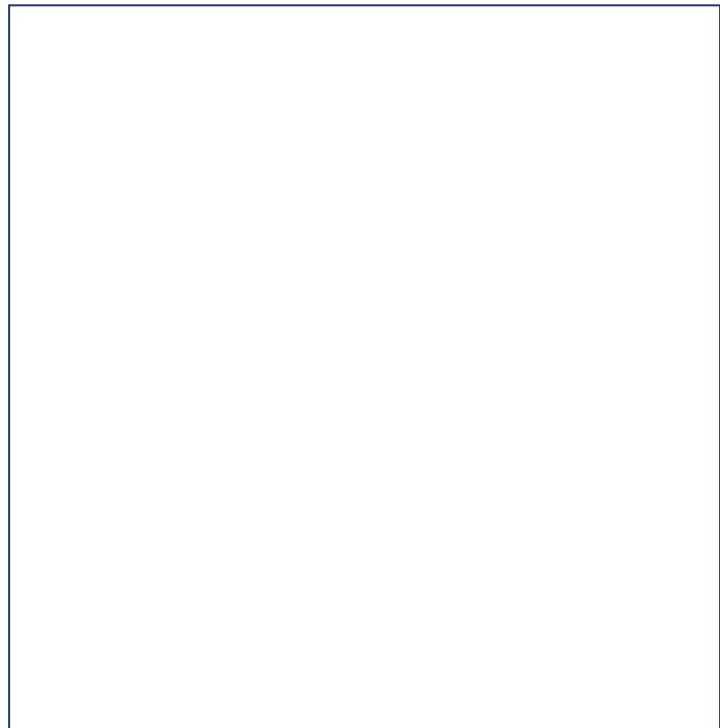


Fill in the gaps!

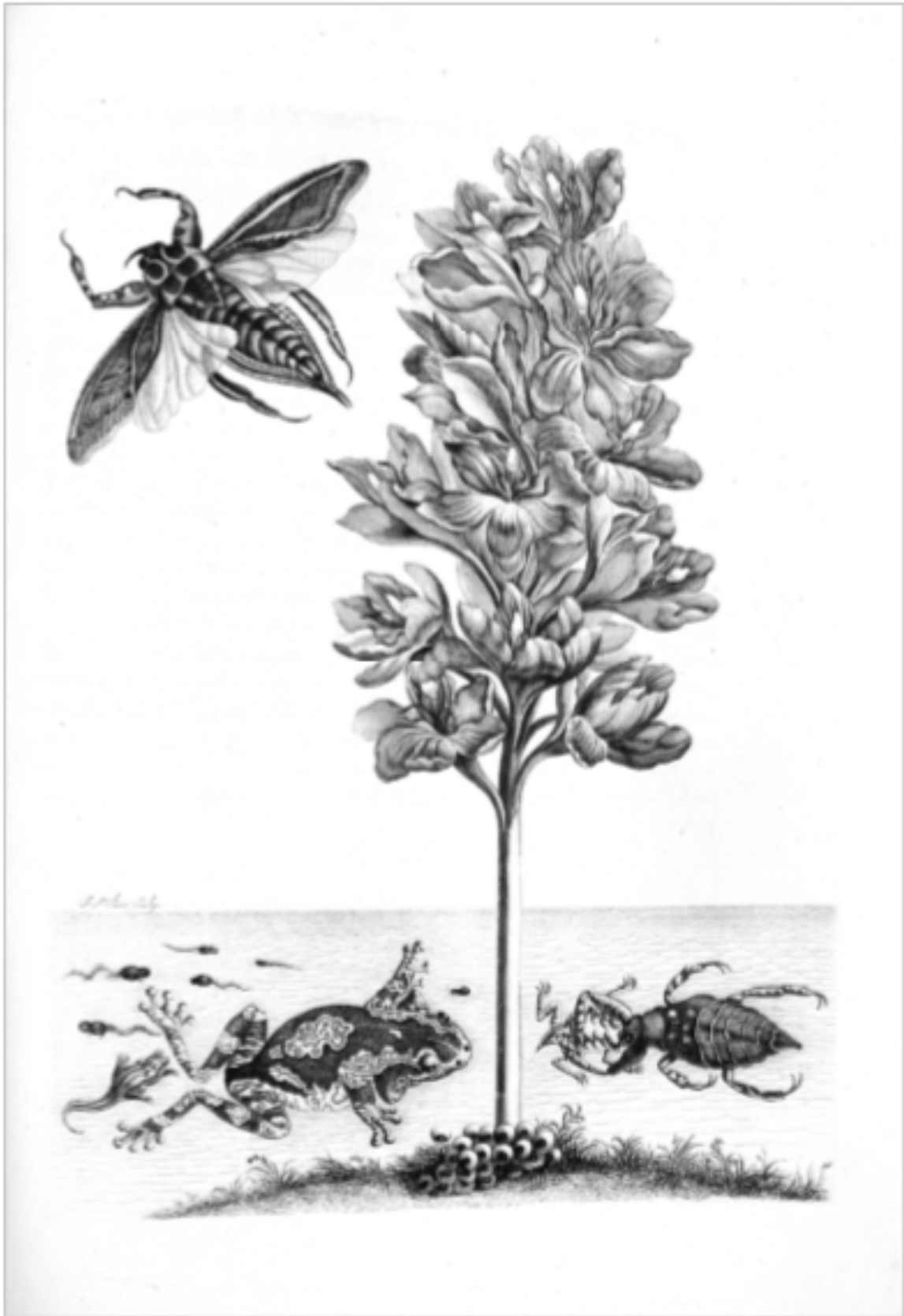


Teatime!

Draw some biscuits in the Huntley & Palmer's tin. Or perhaps something different...buttons, precious items, tools...?



Life Cycles



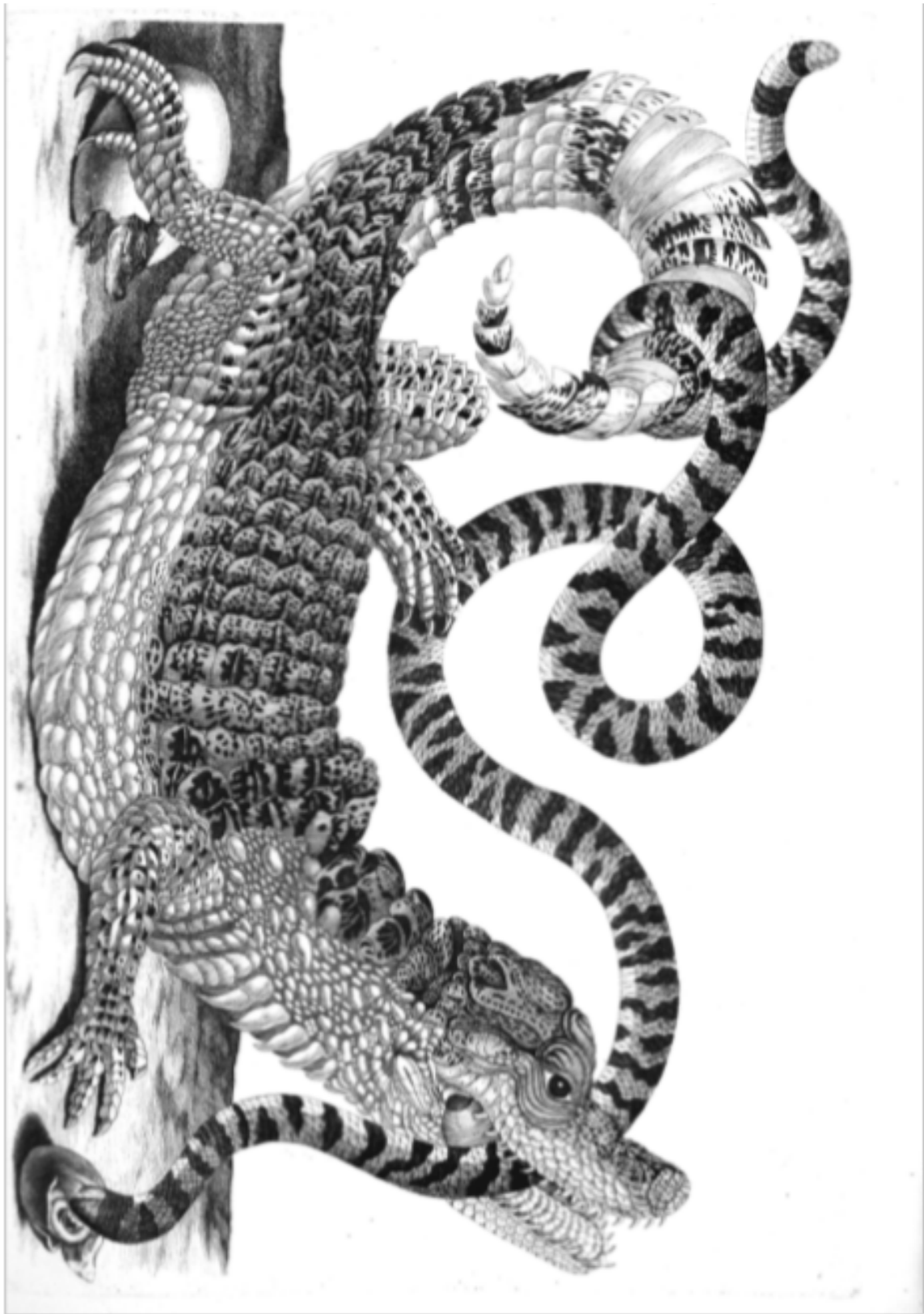
How many life cycles can you spot here ? Write a 6-word short story based on the word 'life'.



This Victorian image celebrates the growth and development of a moth. Write a 12-word story about the word 'growth'.



Pick 2 insects and write what they'd say to each other...



What's happening here ? Is this the end or the beginning or the middle of a story?

Answers to the microscopic images:

1. Fish Scales
2. Snowflakes
3. Fly's eye (the squares are reflections of a window)
4. Caffeine
5. Cigarette paper
6. Coffee
7. Dissolved sugar
8. Dust
9. Grass
10. Guitar string

All of the book illustrations here are from the Special Collections at The University of Reading.

Workbook authored by Kate Mattacks (@mypaperskin) with support from the Joint Application Board at the University of Reading and the Royal Berkshire Hospital and Andrew Mangham (@mangham).

Follow the Centre for Health Humanities on Twitter: @healthhums



Centre for Health Humanities

