

we will sing • letters to the future

While digital technology has amplified the speed and distance of our reach, a letter—words set to paper in pencil or ink, written in silence—is still a hand-carried thing. Folded, placed in a stamped envelope, the letter might travel across time zones to land some days or weeks later at your door: a material connection between you the reader, and the writer. The weight and smell of the paper, the image on the stamp, communicates as surely as the news, congratulations or condolence, ideas or feelings the letter might contain.

History is full of correspondence that has crossed oceans and endured over decades of friendship. Bundled in string, saved in attic trunks, each letter is a form of touch, is a looking back and a looking forward. Every letter stitches the near at hand to the far away from a particular place in time. What might a letter addressed to the future, a not-yet time and place, contain? If you imagine that the future is a winter coat, with what would you fill its pockets? What does the future need to know, to remember, to carry forward? What stories need repeating? What knowledge needs passing on? What memories need carrying into the future?

a wish, a poem, a song, a memory, an essay, a story, a sense, a description, a history, a list, a book, offered to the future

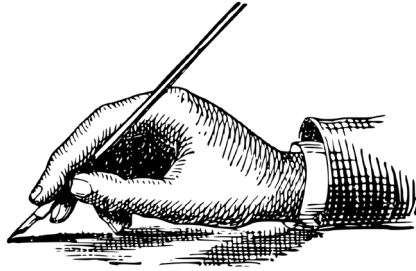
Letters written to the future will form part of **We Will Sing**, a project developed by visual artist Ann Hamilton for the vast top-floor of the former textile factory, Salts Mill, as part of Bradford 2025. Letters will be solicited from the community: schools and libraries, reading and writing groups, retirement homes, social clubs and individuals. Letters scribed and donated to the project will be read out loud during the exhibition with a selection reproduced and shared in a free newspaper accompanying the project. Please consider contributing your letter to the future.

Be sure to keep your letter free from any personal details that may identify you or anyone else, and submit at bradford2025.co.uk/opportunity/we-will-sing-letters-to-the-future or post to:

The Future
c/o Bradford 2025
1a Aldermanbury
Bradford
BD1 1SD

Letter-writing stations and drop-boxes will be set up around Salts Mill during the exhibition (3 May – 2 November 2025). At the culmination of the project, all the letters will be archived and published online at wewillsing-letterstothefuture.tumblr.com.

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General:

What do you think the future needs to know?
 What do you imagine the future will need to know?
 If you could carry only one memory into the future, what might it be?
 Can you list ten things the future should know?

Metaphors:

If you think of the future as a coat, what would you fill its pockets with that won't weigh it down?

Knowledge:

What do you know about our world now that you think will also be true in the future?

- Will there be planets in the sky?
- Will there be worms in the earth?

What should the future know how to do?
 Is there a skill that you or someone in your family knows that you can teach to the future?

- Braid hair?
- Sew a coat?
- Glean the field?
- Make a fire?
- Care for animals?
- Grow fruits and vegetables?

Are there stories you might want to pass on?

- An event in history?
- A personal memory, recent or from childhood?
- A family memory?
- A memory you have of a favourite pet?
- An experience you had with a community?

Can you describe an image you want the future to remember?

- A photograph?
- A painting?
- A drawing?
- A view from your window?

Can you describe a place that you want the future to remember?

- A room?
- A building?
- A garden?
- A piece of architecture?
- A landscape?
- A city?

Is there something that gives you faith in the future?

- Developments in science and medicine?
- Your children or family members?
- An act of kindness?

The Senses:

Is there a feeling, sensation, or emotion you want to share with the future?

Is there a **smell** you want the future to remember?

- Is there a flower whose smell you especially love? Can you describe it?
- The smell of the start of your favourite season?
- The smell of your favourite food?

Is there a **taste** you want the future to remember?

- Is there a fruit whose taste you especially love? Can you describe it?
- Is there a recipe you would like to share with the future?

Is there a **sound** you want the future to remember?

- If you could sing a song to the future, what song would you sing?
- Is there a bird song you especially love? Can you describe it?
- Is there a word or phrase you love to hear or say that you hope is never lost?

Is there a **colour** you would like to share with the future? Can you share a list of all the things that are that colour?

Objects, Gestures, Actions:

Can you describe an object or thing that you hope will be treasured by the future?

- A toy you played with a child?
- Something that was passed down in your family?
- A book you love?
- Your favourite type of animal?
- Can you describe the quality of a piece of cloth?

Is there a gift you once received that you might want to pass to the future?

Is there a gesture of kindness you received that you might want to pass onto the future?

Is there a game you played as a child that you can share with the future?



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