

The Colourful Life of Calum McCall

Pre-reading

The Meaning of Colours

“For most of us, a rainbow of colours envelopes our lives. Over 80% of visual information is related to colour. What colours and combinations of colours stimulate people to be interested in different things? What colours make us feel pleasure or disapproval, hot or cold, to be attracted or repelled, our appetite stimulated or suppressed? Many reactions to colour are instinctual, universal and cross cultural boundaries.” *Where do you think this text comes from?*



1. Look at the descriptions below and match them to the colour you think is being described.

	Colour A symbolizes energy, passion, strength, courage, physical activity, creativity, warmth, and security. It is also associated with aggression. In healing, use red to bring warmth and burn out disease. It is a powerful colour and should be used in moderation. It signifies materialism, materialistic ambition, a focus on sensual pleasures and a quick temper
	Colour B symbolizes the individual's relationship to the external world, the needs and wants of the physical body and the ways in which these are satisfied, the world of work. In healing it may increase immunity and sexual energy. It signifies thoughtfulness and creativity.
	Colour C symbolizes intellect, creativity, happiness and the power of persuasion. It is also associated with cowardice. In healing use it to promote clarity of thought. In some cultures it is the colour for weddings. It keeps evil away. This colour signifies intellectual development, for either material or spiritual ends.
	Colour D symbolizes money, luck, prosperity, vitality and fertility. It is also associated with envy. It is the colour of healing; it is beneficial in all healing situations. It signifies balance and peace
	Colour E is the colour of spirituality, intuition, inspiration and inner peace. It is also associated with sadness and depression. In healing it is used for cooling and calming, both physically and mentally. It indicates serenity, contentment and spiritual development.
	Colour F is associated with truth, purity, tranquillity, cleansing, healing and protection. It is a good general healing colour for the removal of pain and suffering. In some cultures it is associated with death and rebirth.
	Colour G represents unconditional love, love requiring nothing in return. It is also the colour of friendship and conviviality.
	Colour H is the colour of the earth and represents practicality, material success, concentration and study. It indicates "down to earth-ness" and common sense.
	Colour I is the absence of colour. It represents the unconscious and mystery. Its visualization can help promote deep meditation.

2. The story goes that a child, looking at her parents old photograph album that contained black and white pictures from long ago, asked “Mummy, when did the world get colour?”

Imagine a world without colour, just various shades of grey, white or black. What would the effect be on you personally? How would you feel? Imagine waking up to world without colour. Calum McCall did.

During the early years of his life, Calum McCall was surprised to find himself waking up every morning in a winter country of darkened tenements, black railings and streets of pitiless traffic.

He wanted to know what had happened to all the colours he had known as a small child.

Every so often he tried asking his parents: 'What has happened to the multicoloured suns that used to bounce across the sky, and to the colours that trailed after like rain?'

Answer these questions (without reading the rest of the text!)



1. What do you think his parents said to him in reply to his question?
2. What event when he was a young man caused the colours to temporarily come back?
3. What was his reaction to his own son looking with pleasure at the sky?
4. Why did the doctor prescribe him multi-coloured pills?



3. Vocabulary

These words (on the left) appear in the story. Match them with their correct meanings (on the right)

tenements	1	completely, totally
railings	2	noise, usually of contentment; associated with babies
pitiless	3	house containing many apartments
trailed after	4	OK; sure (perhaps ironically)
Aye right	5	followed
gurgled	6	fence made of metal posts
dishevelled	7	without mercy
utterly	8	untidy (clothes) disordered (hair)