



## the forest is a place for *stillness*

But the running boys had a rule about *stillness* too: *'When you're digging you can't be caught.'* They were fascinated by tiny creatures and wanted to search for them uninterrupted. When Queenie, Stellan, Ronnie, and Isabelle found a dead mouse, we made similar slow time for them to look, speculate and reflect together. Stellan thought *'it might be asleep or dead'* holding these two ideas in balance. There was stillness in the children's thinking as well as enquiry. Back at nursery houses were made for the mouse, a fire, clothes, a giant map, and *'three wings...so it can go anywhere'* [Isabella 3:6]. Stillness sometimes needs gifts as well as an explanation.

Leila, Darcey, Effie and Lotte, developed a game in the field next to the forest. They were *'just-born'* horses, not yet able to stand.

*'I'm just born so I have to sleep here. When baby horses are born they can't stand up can they?'* Leila [4:8]

stopping  
resting  
looking  
breathing  
sitting  
lying  
sleeping  
dreaming



We deliberately let this game play out for as long as the children wanted. Phoenix, one of the most active boys in the group, joined the girls; they played *'baby baddy only-born horses'* the whole morning.

Stillness has long interested artists and writers. Sleep, in particular, is intriguing in its ambiguity. The children were fascinated by sleep too, and back at nursery we visited our own sleeping babies, observing them closely, drawing their faces and bodies as they slept.

Our focus on *movement and stillness* continues. We have made new spaces in the nursery; a *'mirror room'* with clear space to move and be still, a room of hanging material for appearing and disappearing. And in the forest children have lots of time to *MOVE* freely, but they also have the right to stop moving, to rest and to dream...

wondering  
thinking  
hiding  
listening  
in secret places  
quiet places  
*invisible places*  
in solitude  
in company

## in the *forest* and nursery

*'Have a little rest. You must lay down for a rest. All curled up, all curled up.'* Darcey [4:6]

*'He's dreaming like he's asleep, he's fallen asleep.'* Imogen [4:5]

