

I Say, You Say

An anthology of creative writing



An anthology of creative writing by:

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Preface: About The Project

The writing collected here represents the outcome of a project called *Reading/Writing Multilingualism*, held at Queen Mary University of London with a group of students from Morpeth School and St Paul's Way Trust School who are this book's authors.

The project was held at after-school workshops over five weeks. In workshops, we explored how creative writers have engaged with the sounds, shapes, histories and meanings of the languages around them – whether to express a particular kind of social reality, or to explore a particular kind of experience. And, as writers themselves, the students explored the richness of their own languages, from Bengali and Somali to Scots or London vernaculars; and of the images, ideas, feelings, and sensory experiences that are particular to their own small corner of the world.

What have emerged are some extraordinary pieces of writing: about family life, the particularity of home, the sharpness of memory, the power of language. There are poems here to make you laugh and cry. It has been a privilege to work with these young writers, and to edit this anthology. We hope you enjoy it.

Rachael Gilmour

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Introduction

Can poetry help us to become better humans? Can it offer us pleasure? Can it help us make better sense of the world around us and make sense of our own inner world? In short, can poetry enrich us?

As people who read and write poetry, I'd like to think the young poets, the academics at Queen Mary and I have only positive responses to the questions above. I'd like to think we sincerely believe in the life-sustaining power of poetry.

This anthology showcases how young people are engaging with poetry in a serious and mature manner. Our young poets have followed the basic beliefs of poetry, that we can arrive at an understanding of the world, at an appreciation of our own culture and identity by relying on story-telling, the evocative image and sensuality as a way of communicating deep truths. The use of senses, the strong image and heightened use of language can help us feel ideas before we have logically processed them. This approach can help us momentarily suspend judgement or opinion so we exist in the truth of the moment.

The reader coming to these poems will enjoy the rich diversity of styles and content. The reader will enjoy, amongst other things, the smell of pilau, a tongue made of glass, tea drinking, bangers and mash with rice, the hijab and references to many non-English languages.

I was lucky to be approached by Rachael Gilmour, who put together this wholly exciting project. I hope the reader will enjoy the pieces enclosed as much as I enjoyed working with the students.

Daljit Nagra

Language

Language? Language? Language?

Firstly, what is language? Language is a method of communication. Language is a method of sharing. Language is a method of trade.

Language goes through evolution and the best characteristics; in this case the words, are kept. Language expires and inspires like a fruit grove. Present day language is sweet and vibrant. The language of the past was never fully ripened therefore is sour to the tongue so we don't speak it today. Just like our genes language has developed, evolved and settled for some time until one day it will change again.

When you learn a new language it can be terrifying like bullets raining down on you. Unexpected and rapid and so hard to grasp on to the words.

Language is used for all sorts of things. It can be used to invigorate or to dictate, similar to parents. At moments they can share all the sweet and sensational memories, however on the other hand they can drill into the depths of your head and implant the impossible accents and confusing pronunciations of their language.

Language travels. From city to city. From country to country. From galaxy to galaxy. From humans to other intelligent life that we may never know about.

Our language is influenced by culture and history. However, more importantly by our own character. By the little you that you thought never mattered. What we put forward in our language determines what is kept and what is not.

Every language is a star... unique. Every star can enhance hope and imagination. It can both destroy everything in its surroundings or intensify growth on other planets. Language is the same, it can command actions for war or it can motivate people to find peace instead of war.

Yes the famous saying "Actions speak louder than words" should be considered, however words inspire actions. When you speak through the tongue of your language or any, you can make a change. It doesn't matter whether it is slang, posh, Bengali, Chinese or Swahili. It doesn't matter whether it is looked down upon, because every language can be projective, confident and noticed. When you speak, your language should radiate the importance of being present. Of making a change.

"Words are pale shadows of forgotten names. As names have power, words have power. Words can light fires in the minds of men. Words can wring tears from the hardest hearts."

Patrick Rothfuss

"When everyone at school is speaking one language, and a lot of your classmates' parents also speak it, and you go home and see that your community is different – there is a sense of shame attached to that. It really takes growing up to treasure the specialness of being different."

Sonia Sotomayor

Communication – Something to consider before you speak

If the tongue were made of glass, I think people would take so much more care into how they speak to each other. Words can be bullets that the mouth shoots, and can be the cool breeze from a summers day. We are all one. But yet speak in different languages, follow different religions and have different cultures. But all of these boundaries, all of these barriers can be broken when we add emotion to what we say. For example, for one to shout ANA BEHIBEK!!! in the angriest tone, you would assume that this person was mad right? But, lo behold the direct translation of ana behibek which some actually may already know, is “I Love You”. From assuming that the person was mad, we can see that the actual words can mean something completely different. This is also the same with how we as individuals react to what people say to us. We assume from their delivery of the words, that the words are to be of negative meaning. The truth is, is that there are 7 billion of us living on this earth, the trade of information is the most fundamental interaction that we all share and something that we simply take for granted. This is the use of 26 letters (in this language) that are combined in millions of ways to express our feelings and thoughts. Perhaps we should consider what we say before saying it, because the tongue can be mightier than the sword.

Shamul Ahmed, Morpeth School

Speak

What language can speak my feelings?
 Even English does not seem to fit
 My A in Spanish does not mean a thing
 No language can speak my feelings

Words are words because they have meaning
 But I have no words to describe my feelings
 Continuously I search for something
 That can understand my past and changes
 Though it's pointless searching through all these places
 Because no language can speak my feelings

Yet here I am still trying and learning
 Languages and words all new and old
 Seeking the linguistic gold
 So I can finally speak my feelings

Masuma Sultana, Morpeth School

Family

"Nahema can you make me tea please?"

"Nahema did you eat yet?"

"Afu let's watch Batman!"

"Nahema can I have another cup please?"

"When was the last time you ate?"

"Afu it's started!"

"Nahema can I have tea again please?"

"Just tell me what curry you want and I'll give it."

"Afu hurry up you're missing all of it!"

"Nahema another cup please?"

"Is it me or have you lost weight?"

"Afu hurry up come on!"

"Nahema – "

"Nahema – "

"Afu you missed it!"

Life

المَوْتِ ذَائِقَةُ نَفْسِ كُلِّ – *Every Soul Shall Taste Death*

The Imaam told me

I ignored him and smoked a cigarette

المَوْتِ ذَائِقَةُ نَفْسِ كُلِّ

My friends told me

المَوْتِ ذَائِقَةُ نَفْسِ كُلِّ

I ignored them as I drank alcohol

My mum told me

المَوْتِ ذَائِقَةُ نَفْسِ كُلِّ

I ignored her as I took money from her purse

My brother told me

المَوْتِ ذَائِقَةُ نَفْسِ كُلِّ

I ignored him as I took his car

المَوْتِ ذَائِقَةُ نَفْسِ كُلِّ

I ignored it when I was driving

المَوْتِ ذَائِقَةُ نَفْسِ كُلِّ

Ignored it when I was speeding

المَوْتِ ذَائِقَةُ نَفْسِ كُلِّ

Ignored it when I crashed...

المَوْتِ ذَائِقَةُ نَفْسِ كُلِّ

I listened when I tasted it.

When I speak...

When I speak...
I combine Bengali and English together
When I speak I project my voice as far as I can –
Thinking I'll be able to talk to the world,
But this is only when I'm full of joy
When I speak I whisper my words
And the tiniest creatures can't even hear me
But this is only when I am blue

When I speak...
I ramble on and on, not realising when to stop

When I speak...
I become cautious about my words

When I speak...
I combine Bengali and English together
When I speak I project my voice as far as I can –
Thinking I'll be able to talk to the world,
But this is only when I'm full of joy
When I speak I whisper my words
And the tiniest creatures can't hear me

But this is only when I am blue.

Ambia Begum, St Paul's Way Trust School

5th Period Spanish Class

I take my seat,
 I glance at the clock,
 I slump further into my seat,
 I look at the clock, properly this time, not just a shifting glance but an excruciating
 stare,

I slip yet further into the chair,
 Slowly at first but with a gathering speed, like falling asleep only with a less
 comfortable result.

I lie on my chair,
 With my knees scraping the ground and my back to the base of my seat,
 I feel the cold seeping through my tights from the unforgiving, harsh floor,
 Kind of like ice water trickling through the mesh of a warm sieve.

I sit up,
 Running my eyes over the thick black ink that gloops across my page I become aware
 of the all-of-a-sudden unbearable weight of my eyelids,
 Pressing down on my pupils and threatening to succumb to gravity.
 I usually like Spanish class but today,
 The grammar is difficult to grasp,
 The tenses just make me tense up,
 The subjects subdue me.
 Language shouldn't be a set of rules to learn,
 But instead a fluency to earn,
 By speaking.

Today I know that I won't be producing one word,
 I'm just so tired of writing and reading something that yearns to be spoken and heard.

Beattie Green, St Paul's Way Trust School

Poem 2

I sit here confused.
 I don't know what to do.
 My parents telling me, speak your language
 While society demands to speak their one.
 These two sides collide painfully.
 It's like putting bangers and mash with rice and meat.
 Sounds weird doesn't it?
 Well, that's what I must speak.

Naima Omar, St Paul's Way Trust School

When I speak

When I speak
I am free to be who I am
To dance amongst the letters
And play with the words

When I speak
I perform tricks with my tongue
To sing under the many rays of the sun

When I speak
I imagine a world where the letters play games
And my tongue is the controller, for of the rules I can change

When I speak
I let my mind paint a thousand pictures
And my tongue dance around the paint
Making all types of mixtures

Summer Lewis, Morpeth School

I am Talha – a tree

I am the tree that bears fruit of seven deadly and vengeful sins for every satanic human tongue.

I am the fruit that releases deadly acids so full of grandiose mercy and majestic blasphemy.

I am the envious green putrid vegetation that grows onto life's sinful enthralled tree.

I am the field of rice, housing millions of grains and sands of each and every said sin.

I am the roots of all crucibles burning and illuminating with the scorching red blood of your burning and desiring hearts.

I am what absorbs the vengeance of all there is in this world and feed it to my envious and chaotic leaves and regal branches.

But I am the result of two red human substances. One on the face the other in the dungeons creating molten hope and releasing inductive words.

I am the vines that unravel to latch to all the hopes of this world and set it free for all man to use.

I am the leaves that discharge all purity for all life to breathe, for them to cool down their spiritual furnace.

I am me, I will set you free, I will guide you to a path of liberty or entrapment. I will create havoc or peace, I am me.

I am life's enthralled tree.

Talha Hanzala, St Paul's Way Trust School

Poem 4

Words are like seeds,
They do more than blow around,
They land in our hearts,
And not the ground.
Be careful what you plant,
And careful what you say,
You might have to eat
What you planted one day.

Naima Omar, St Paul's Way Trust School

Just Bread and Butter

And the outside world faded into insignificance,
With windows steamed up, and everything else a distant blur,
All at once everything that mattered was there,
In my humming, glowing home,
And the world was just me and my family.

Then
Mum burst in with a radiating grin,
And a child in her eyes,
“Bread and butter pudding” she gleamed,
The words trickled from her mouth like a tune from a musical box,
“We’re having bread and butter pudding”
She declares it like a message on a scroll,
With all the majesty of an ornate, gliding carriage.

But really it’s just bread,
Bread and butter.

But to her the scent that floats on the air through the corridor is a reminder of the streets of Ellesmere Port. It lifts her up and guides her North. And the golden, bubbling, crispy top sends her back to the ends of grey school days. She would say it was “dead ace” in her sudden Northern way. And the sizzling of burnt sugar sparks a memory of waiting for her dad on a crumbling brick wall. Until he returns from work and she can hug him as tightly as I hug her now...

Because what to her is plain unforgettable,
To me is unforgettably plain,
And soggy slopping from my spoon,
Because what to her feels like home and warmth and love,
To me
Well
It’s just bread and butter.

Beattie Green, St Paul’s Way Trust School

Bread

“Dumplings?” “Aye!” “How long?!”

“Tae long, just wait!”

“Ugh aee, hav’d ya say eight?”

“The tatties arnie done, you’re gonnee have tae wait.”

The potatoes weren’t done: dinner was going to be late.

“Quick, a loaf, meejum, Hovis, best of both.”

“Hurry, nae breed, nae breed!”

“What?”

“I’ve nae breed!”

“Dumplings!” “Aye!” “How long?!”

“Nae long, just wait!”

“Ugh aee, hav’d ya say eight?”

“The tatties arnie done, you’re gonnee have tae wait.”

Bread.

Dylan Turner, Morpeth School

Curry

The smell of curry lingers on my hijab as I walk in to school.

Ah, the struggle of living in an Asian house – curry for breakfast, curry for lunch, curry for dinner.

You know what? Curry for when you're ill as well.

You could put on deodorant, body spray, or even bleach and it still wouldn't go man

But to be honest, I wouldn't prefer it any other way.

You have to be born and bred in to this life, the curry life I mean.

It's an art, curry isn't your everyday food, you have to be an artist of curry to eat it.

We eat with our hands so you have to have that perfect grip

And at least 50 years worth of experience to be able to make it.

That's why everyone turns up at nani's house on Eid.

Habiba Chowdhury, Morpeth School

If undelivered, please return to The Present Time, if you know how to find it

Dear whoever it may concern, and soon that will be everyone

Letters.

Made up of only words

Yet so powerful

Creating memories, imprinting in the mind

Arousing emotions, strong and unforgettable

Strengthening the bond between person and person.

Ink marks mean so little on their own

Yet so much when threaded together

The thought, the effort, the pride gone into them so precious.

Letters.

Its beauty has been lost

Into the spiralling whirlwind of the past

Its former glory and value dissolved into nothingness

Replaced by the ever-changing monster we call technology.

With kind regards,

Time

PS: we lay aside letters never to read them again and at last we destroy them out of discretion, and so disappears the most beautiful, the most immediate breath of life, irrecoverable for ourselves and for others. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Mahjuja Sheikh, St Paul's Way Trust School

Home and Family

My Bibi

Grandmas are special
They are all quite alike
There aren't many
But they keep us in delight

Special is an understatement
It's just not quite...
Keep in mind
That your grandma just might...

They leave you when you're young
They even understand you when they're gone
But we want them most of all
Because they keep us strong

My Grandma
My Bibi
She's my strength, and my confidence
All gone down the drain when she left my presence.

Maryam Hekim, Morpeth School

Kicked Out

Separate but close
Lonely in the same home
Games were played
Fights were faced
And I was kicked out

Inseparable forever
Glued together
My guardian and saviour
Fighter and warrior
But I was kicked out

Pushed to the limit
Harshness infinite
Sins committed
Anger emitted
And I was kicked out

Silence ear-splitting
Heart aching
Then a light came
Made us one on that day
In his security again
Admiring our sibling unity again
I was no longer kicked out

Masuma Sultana, Morpeth School

Cemetery

Laying in my bed
Thinking about the same old ground
Soil and the rocks surround her sweet sound

I pray to God every day for her to be awake
I want her near me, even if the earth quakes

If she didn't leave me
I probably wouldn't be a mess
I know inside
Everything happens for the best

Crying out loud
That's all inside my head
Every moment passes
But she doesn't pass my head

Comfort comes and goes
Life goes on
We can't keep it on

I'm simply alone
With a memory and a home
Love your family
They are all great
Don't forget them
Even if you're late

Sighing again
It's not the same
My grandma is gone
To a willing home

I will wait to be strong
When the time isn't wrong
Hopefully I'll understand
Having a helping hand

Rest in peace
I love you a lot
Crying for my grandmother, for what I pray for her is more than this world.

An eternity in paradise with her loved ones I hope...

Listen

"Don't be too loud, cover your hair, be modest, be kind, work hard, don't get in to trouble, don't mix with bad people, don't go out so much, come home straight aw-"
 "alright mum, alright dad, I get it, just get off my back!"

Then one day, sitting alone with a mess in my hands that was created by everything I was advised not to do, I realised my parents were the only ones who ever really had my back.

Habiba Chowdhury, Morpeth School

The Family Picture

"Get closer, smile with your teeth, stop picking your nose!"

We've all gone through it

That one legendary family picture that will be referred back to for generations to come.

And if you're unlucky enough, it will go down in history for... not being the nicest, but the most stupidest

Either for you being too confident and smiling too big with those two missing front teeth or a really ridiculous outfit mum chose.

Mini saree, pigtails, and ridiculously big bangles

And from there you will never hear the end of it.

"Hahaha bugs bunny with no teeth!"

So the moral of this story is

Stand right at the back, hide yourself as much as possible, and don't speak of it, ever.

Habiba Chowdhury, Morpeth School



Sinta Khoris Na

It all starts with the sleepless nights,
The endless struggles and fights,
Sinta khoris na,
Just do well,
But you know they're expectant,
One B and you're a mutant.

Maybe a doctor,
Maybe a lawyer,
But that isn't for me,
And they don't mind,
Sinta khoris na,
Just follow your dreams.

The smell of pilau
Roast chicken,
Kheemar bora,
Drifts from the kitchen.
What if I don't do well?
All this food will taste like hell,
The disappointment will sting the tongue,
The tears will sink the heart,
Still they'll say, sinta khoris na,
You've tried your best.

Ready to leave the house,
Nana, Nani,
Mama, Mami,
They all wish you luck,
I say Bismillah and take the first step out,
And in the words of home,
Say to myself,
As their voices echo,
Sinta khoris na,
It will all be ok.

By Jumana Haque
Sketch by Sourish Adhya
(one very important friend who helped me survive my GCSE's)

Trust

You're so good, I wish I was like you
 You have such a calm aura, I wish I was like you
 You're a really good listener, I love talking to you
 You're such a humble girl, I wish my daughter was like you
 I can trust you with my life
 You're a good child, you're free to make your own choices.

Then one day – BAM

I can't believe you did that
 I will never trust you again
 Rotten child
 Do not utter another word
 Sit in silence

"Trust takes years to build, seconds to break and forever to repair"

Habiba Chowdhury, Morpeth

Puzzle

You're missing from the photos
 Your absence depresses me
 I have never met you
 But you are still a part of me
 You're the puzzle piece I've lost
 I need you in my life
 I don't dare to pay the cost
 You're a necessity
 A need
 A dream
 My past
 But you won't come back
 So now I am aghast
 I need to know your smell
 I need to hear your voice
 The pain of your absence
 Leaves me with endless noise

Summer Lewis, Morpeth School

The House

Everyone is under this roof. I walk in and out of rooms saying "hello" and "long time no see". I say all of these things to all of these people but I'm still looking. Looking for that one person that has been missing for a long time. They have been missing so long that I question their existence. My heart begins to race as I run in and out of rooms and closets. There is always something different behind each door and someone different to be found in this house. But not him. This house is family and he is not in it.

Summer Lewis, Morpeth School

Palestine

In the living room we sit inside
Feet up on the sofa, I come and hide

Away from the people, on the news channel it lands.
Al Jazeera - Palestine
Children crying, mothers dying.

And my parents are like...
"There's nothing we can do, nothing to stop this."

But then I retaliate with a horrible speech.
"Clearly you don't care. What if I was there?
You spend money on Bangladesh, but don't even help the people who have less" I say.

"You don't understand." My parents try.

Thinking of them gone, sometimes makes me cry.
The sky darkens while our speech deepens.

"This war has gone on longer than your life." They make a point.

"We need to stop it even if it is long."
Little by little, time passes by.
Hopefully the war will be fully over before we say goodbye.

Maryam Hekim, Morpeth School

A Typical Family

My mother was boiling that baat (Rice) while I looked after my sisters. My dad would arrive from his mini-cabbing, and sit down and eat with my mother. “Waaa” screamed my sister when she fell over, and then my relatives would arrive in their Land Rover.

My mum asked if they would like tea, like any other typical Bengali adult. My Sasa (Uncle) said “Gee Deilow” (yes please can you give me). All seven of my cousins came out of the doors and then two more from out the boot and two more from under the seats. This was a typical family who doesn’t have a car big enough for the kids pretending if they do they will get a surprise treat! They brought phoolah (pillar rice) with them. I gave mine to my sister and she stopped crying, then the spices of ginger and garlic hit my nose like a wrecking ball. My mom must be cooking lamb ... my favourite.

Shueb (Mizanur) Rahman, Morpeth School

Foolish Child

Oh you foolish child, walking the earth as if you own it.
 Oh you foolish child, full of pride and arrogance.
 Oh you foolish child, you think you're worth more than them?
 Oh you foolish, deluded child, could you make the mountains shake? Could you make the earth rumble? Could you turn night to day and day to night?
 Not if you tried for a thousand years.
 So be humble, for your lord is ever merciful, all powerful and much loving of those who are generous and adequate.
 You are nothing but a speck of dust in a busy, buzzing world of a hive.

Habiba Chowdhury, Morpeth School

Back Home

Let me tell you about a place where when the sun shines...
 Its shine is so beautiful...
 When it rains...
 It looks so magical...
 Where the people are never sad or never miserable...
 Even if they are poor and have nothing at all,
 They just hold their heads up and have a ball...

Where the sand is so bright that it looks like crystals...
 Where the people carry themselves
 With pride and look so presentable...

A place that can only be described as wonderful...
 When you sleep in this place,
 You feel like you have slept for days...
 Where money is no worry...
 Well what can I say?
 There's no place like home.

Naima Omar, St Paul's Way Trust School

Baby Me

My eyes rolled along the dusty VHS tape.
 I blew it off and put it in the box.
 The baby me danced to the music probably thinking it rocks.
 Spinning, falling, tumbling and jumping,
 Baby me was having fun.
 The slide changes and I'm dancing outside, looks like my Dad and I are playing football
 in the sun.
 My smile widened – I thought, I'll treasure these memories I have.

Shueb (Mizanur) Rahman, Morpeth School

Poem 3

The soldier stood proud and tall,
Through 1945 when the enemies shall fall.
The familiar crinkles forming around his eyes.
The hurt evident through the love and the lies.

His blue eyes sparkled, through the black and white.
With the knowing and familiar dancing light.
Shot and wounded, but still smiling.
Soldiers around him, dying whilst trying.

Orphan and lonely, but still smiling.
The light of justice, helping and guiding.
Young and innocent, in a world that's beguiling.
My grandpa, may he rest in peace, yet still smiling.

Naima Omar, St Paul's Way Trust School

City

My Poem

as I walk through the busy streets of Brick Lane
many familiar faces pass me
a salam from a sister
a good morning from an uncle
a "how beautiful you are" from nanu

Each street is lined with different spices from all over my country
You can step in to each of the shops and have all the different flavours dance in your
mouth

Pillaw rice, chick peas, pakoras, sticky rice and even the mouth-melting mishti like
shimai, semolina and gulab jamun

How can I ever miss my home when a part of home is right here?

Shaema Hussain, Morpeth School

URBAN DECAY

CHANGE

Change over the years has brought us together
 From formal to informal
 Walking down the street alone to partying hard until the morning rise
 Eating bagels in the morning to drinking coffee to cure that hangover you got from last night
 Having that last lie in watching Netflix
 Having a walk down the street saying hello to walking down the street not saying hello
 Headphones in blasting the 1975's "just girls breaking hearts"
 Having a conversation – checking on Instagram, what are the new posts?

THE CITY

Alienation in the city
 Arrogance in the city
 Alternative in the city
 Never noticed in the city
 Stressed in the city
 That's just being in the city
 Me in the city

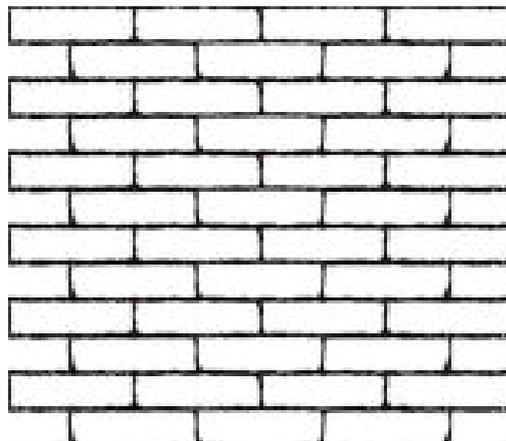
SOCIAL

Never see us social always see us alienated
 Never see us talk always see us text
 Never see us happy always see us grumpy
 Never see the real me always see what you want to see

MISFITS

We don't fit in
 We have different opinion
 You see this we see
 that
 You have the question we have the
 answers
 You have the classic we have the rock
 You have the missing we have the
 found

MISFITS



Shania Charles, Morpeth School

Festivities of the Searing King

How long has it been?

The Grand Carnival might not exactly be serene,

But now I am forgetting the potential live reggae beats,

I mean, who would really want to miss the rare blazing British heats?

As a child, I was passive, overlooking the grand scheme of the event.

With granddad, we blended into unruly crowds, but I completely forget where we went...

From what I hear now, the taste of festival had never been sweeter...

Caribbean vibes are rife; passion ignites life, so there's no time for a breather.

It would be nostalgic to witness the wild festival once again,

But for now, my enjoyment is limited to paper and pen.

When the opportunity returns, I might tackle the crowd and win, just to taste the ackee, saltfish and dumpling,

But for now, I will explore the tale of the Carnival of the Caribbean, the Searing King!

Malachi Willis, St Paul's Way Trust School

On Eid

On Eid

A traditional Islamic gathering.

Where ethnicities and languages are not of the essence.

Where attending and praying only makes sense.

Where men and women hold each other in one embrace, different mouth-watering sweets sold on the streets where brothers and sisters are bustling and hurrying towards the next prayer tower or greeting one another.

My name, Zamzam, blends into the crowd – a water that cleanses the soul and washes sins away, like the prayer on Eid day.

Samsam Farah, Morpeth School

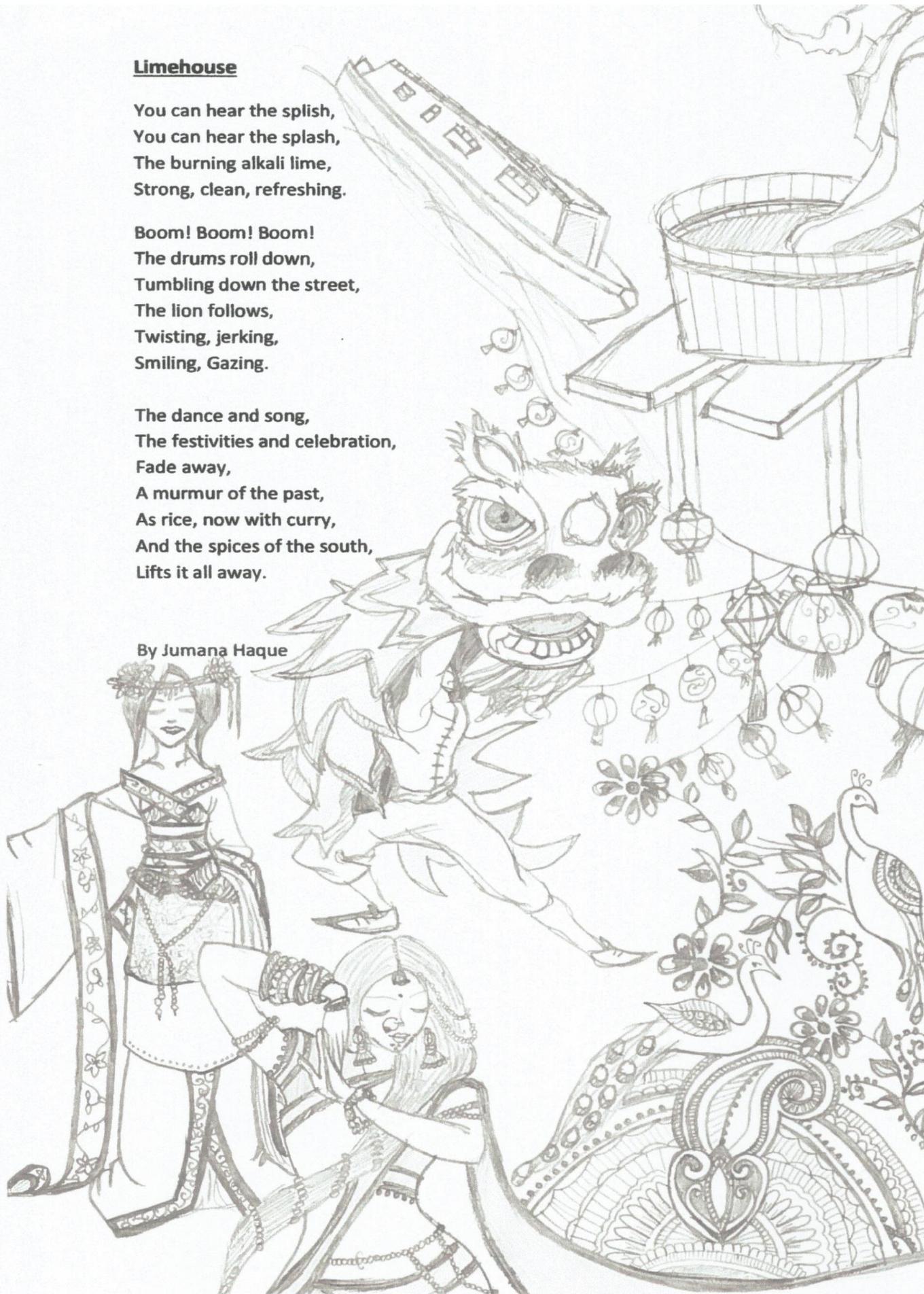
Limehouse

You can hear the splish,
You can hear the splash,
The burning alkali lime,
Strong, clean, refreshing.

Boom! Boom! Boom!
The drums roll down,
Tumbling down the street,
The lion follows,
Twisting, jerking,
Smiling, Gazing.

The dance and song,
The festivities and celebration,
Fade away,
A murmur of the past,
As rice, now with curry,
And the spices of the south,
Lifts it all away.

By Jumana Haque



Seeing, remembering, imagining

Lost Soldier

Nobody gets
Help from people
We only get rejects

I'm a lost soldier

Helpless lives
At stake
Clearly love doesn't make no difference

I'm a lost soldier

Rough times kill
Death separates
Nobody sees the truth that I see

I'm a lost soldier

No humanity
No respect
Lifeless deaths
Keep making more mistakes

There are no soldiers

Maryam Hekim, Morpeth School

Shell

Our lives are shaped by our experiences. Our experiences are preserved in our memories. But what if we had a chance to remember things that we never actually experienced? If you could look through a window that softened the edge between reality and fiction, what would you want to see? What would you want to remember? What if we had a chance to remember something that never existed, where the feelings could be real and you could decide what happens?

What would you want to remember?

I'm nervous. I'm sure she can tell. But for one single arbitrary moment, I gather enough courage to whisper something into her ear... Something I've always known, but never told her. Holding my breath only made my heart beat faster. She looks at me for the first time...but, differently. But with the same eyes I fell in love with. She takes my glasses off...

And then... Fiction becomes reality.

Shamul Ahmed, Morpeth School

The Beast

I open my eyes to the piercing light,
penetrating through the thistle curtains,
I groan, and muster all my strength,
to sit and look into the mirror.

Grey, speckled skin with freckles dusted all over,
small naked eyes, beadily studying an unfamiliar face,
I panic, blood pumps, heart thumps.

My fingers shakily spider to a black tube,
I unscrew the cap and awe at its greatness,
My big paw dabbles at the tube,
before swigging under my tired eyes,
I take a look at the ticking time bomb,
I panic, blood pumps, heart thumps.

My arms snap at a small box,
like a magician,
powder erupts from the box
I close my stinging eyes,
the box envelopes me, covering my face with a pricey powder.

Suddenly, a loud livid ring erupts from my phone,
I panic, blood thumps, heart thumps,
A pencil.
A dark pencil
A thick dark pencil,
Childishly, I draw on my eyes,
evolving it into a bleak, black hair.

BANG! A fist pounds on my door,
angry feet, angry hands,
dredge on the dark wood,
I panic, blood pumps, heart thumps.

My mouth opens a slit,
I know what's to come,
A small brush, drags itself through my lashes,
a cold hard liquid envelopes it.

My eyes swivel to the mirror,
and a woman stares back,
pale rough skin with bumps dusted all over,
large soapy eyes study an unfamiliar face,
But.
I relax, blood flows, heart low,
It's just makeup.

I wipe away the fakeness,
I wipe away the Barbie,
I wipe away the plastic,
Revealing Beauty,
Revealing EM - a reflection of ME.

Holly Ha, Morpeth School

5 4 3 2 1

I don't know where I'm going
 My fear growing
 My heartbeat never slowing
 No breeze blowing

Amongst the green setting
 I can hear some clawing
 Something sickeningly gnawing
 I start withdrawing

I start and I don't stop running
 My falls and fumbles unbecoming
 The heat of the sun stunning

I didn't see the beginning
 Sweaty and lost and panicking

But I think I've found the ending

Masuma Sultana, Morpeth School

Dehumanised

Dehumanised, will not be sympathised
 You cannot empathise, look through the eyes
 It comes alive, a spark and fire
 The animal inside, roaring bright
 And it comes alive, dehumanised

Masuma Sultana, Morpeth School

Made In China

They can have my savings
They do provide my cravings

The planes I enjoyed when I was young,
Says I appreciated their fingers
It says
"MADE IN CHINA"

The fabric and cotton that I wore.
Well they died and tore
It was their hands I appreciated
The label on my computer read
"MADE IN CHINA"

The chopsticks I own
A golden dragon – it flies over my food
I see it turn and churn over the noodle semi earth
Both bowl and sticks
"MADE IN CHINA"

The laptops and computers, not made in UK
They say only one thing in straight writing
"MADE IN CHINA"
Thank you China for making our possessions
NO! Better yet
Thank very much you China

The label says on my globe says made in China
But the globe is a trillion times bigger

This world "MADE IN CHINA"

Talha Hanzala, St Paul's Way Trust School

Steel

Her heart is made of steel because
she doesn't know how to feel

Honesty is what escapes her mouth
everyone says her words go south

She's rude but she doesn't even realise it

She just wants people to understand without emphasizing it

She's misunderstood
clearly a fault in her childhood.

Regret.

Sorry for all the rude comments
she doesn't understand it yet

Her friends tell her to be nice
but she doesn't want to even hear it.

Truly she needs a helping friend to help her conquer all of it.

The devil has filled her mind with useless thoughts to hit
Her tongue is a sword don't ever try to fight it

She's clearly not an angel but better than the devil
she's on a completely different level.

She wants to change, to show some love,
but she's fearful
like she'll hurt a dove.

But that doesn't matter because it's time to start fresh
together we'll start step by step.

Whether Or Not

A choice we make
We must make
To decide our everyday

Being given free will
To choose our move
To choose our own path

To do this
To do that
To walk away from greed

To give
To love
To plead

For what we believe
For what is right
Our choice makes us strong

Standing strong
The four letters
Clear and Precise

Tasnim Maria, Morpeth School



The path we take has many routes
We can follow any route
We were given 'Or Not' – a choice

Existence

I sit here lonely,
I sit here lost,
Fearing the outcome,
Fearing the cost.

I'm not like these people,
I don't look the same,
Don't think the same,
Don't feel the same.

They speak one way,
Dress one way,
Walk one way,
Live one way.

I am not the same,
I don't want to be,
But does that make me weird,
Does that make me me?

I sometimes wish I could change myself,
Sometimes I feel like I don't know myself,
Sometimes I feel like the outsider, the other,
Sometimes I wish I didn't have to give so much.

I wish that this would end,
I wish that I could be myself,
I wish that this war would end,
I wish there could be a brighter day.

I hope that this will be the end.

By Jumana Haque

