

YOUNG
WRITERS

ME AND MY CITY

An anthology of
poetry by students at
Excelsior Academy

NEW WRITING
NORTH

 Stephen
Spender Trust

 EA
EXCELSIOR ACADEMY

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In autumn 2021, students at Excelsior Academy (as part of NWN'S Young Writers' City programme) worked on a multilingual creative writing project with translators and writers from the Stephen Spender Trust, an organisation inspired by the cultural activism of Stephen Spender, poet and champion of international literature. With more than 45 languages spoken at Excelsior, it was the perfect setting to try out this new and exciting collaboration.

Over ten weeks, two year nine classes and a lunchtime club were introduced to translation through a wide range of different tasks, including haiku and sijo poetry, calligrams and acrostics, responding to songs and translating a number of different texts in everything from French and German to Latin and Korean. Young people who spoke more than one language themselves were encouraged to use those languages in their writing, while those who spoke only English used translated handouts as well as English slang and Geordie dialect.

This multi-lingual activity resulted in over twenty poems incorporating an incredible fourteen different languages! This anthology showcases the potential and creativity of incorporating translation with creative writing; it has inspired us, and we hope it also inspires you to explore multi-lingual writing in the future.

With thanks to:

All staff and students at Excelsior Academy, especially Chloe Mullins, Kaila Brogan and Hannah Sharp

Our fantastic Young Writers' City Producer, Bridget Hamilton

Our wonderful writer-translators Harry Man, Chloe Daniels and Jessica Rainey

Charlotte Ryland and Stacie Allen at the Stephen Spender Trust
Ruth Dewhirst and Emma Wallace at New Writing North

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Big Time

Lainie, Alex and Alessia

When I was at the Metrocentre
I saw a peacock prejt' okolo

When the peacock spread its coda,
I wished my hair was mint like that,

But my hair's gotta grow like فيرخلا,
then I'll get some layers put in

with every tropical colour
and a ドレス that makes me look

my best, (shhh!) even better
than Grimes at the Met.

prejt' okolo [Slovak] go by
coda [Italian] tail
mint [Geordie] brilliant, awesome
فيرخلا *alkharif* [Arabic] autumn, the autumn
ドレス *doresu* [Japanese] dress

Himar: A Mesostic

Fouad and Eray

My backyard is the bouncing of a football,
a game that is nolsy,
a game that Makes you want to meet your friends
and have a kick Around.
And my backyaRd
is the splashing of birds,
like a new day,
it makes you feel hyped.

Newcastle We Are

Now that we're at the Metro Centre, we bring friends.
We are *usras*.

Everywhere we go in St James' Park, we bring Callum Wilson.
We are *insieme*.

Whenever we arrive at St James' Park, we bring the Newcastle strip.
We are *insieme*.

Creating our place, Tyneside, we bring pride.
We are *imprema*.

Arriving right here at Grey's Monument, we bring colour,
we bring *svetlo*.

Stating our names Fenham Park, we are pride.
We are *luce*.

Telling our friends about St James' Park, we bring football,
we are *mumtaz*.

قُرساً *usra(s)* [Arabic] family
insieme [Italian] together
impressionante [Portuguese]
impressive

svetlo [Slovak] light
luce [Italian] light
مُمَيَّز *mumayaz* [Arabic]
excellent, distinguished

9Y1

Letting you know, when at the Tyne Bridge, we bring colour,
we are *iubire*.

Everywhere we go at school, we bring love.
We are *ensemble*.

Whenever we arrive home, we bring colour.
We are *bun*.

Everywhere we go in the street, we bring love.
We are *lubnije*.

Arriving at South Shields, we bring colour.
We are *juntos*.

Reaching this place is like reaching the top of a mountain, where we bring love,
we are *mint*.

Everywhere we go in the Metro Centre, we bring friendship.
We are *usras*.

iubire [Romanian] love
ensemble [French] together
bun [Romanian] good *juntos* [Spanish] together
lubnije [Slovak] love, likes *mint* [Geordie] brilliant, great

Fouad and Martin

Newcastle Sijo Freestyle

I broke in a heart dancing
and singing in the library.

I got chased by a dinosaur outside
and it was tryin' to eat me alive.

Oh my days, I came back from the dead,
I'm never gonna die,
I just wanna live a life.

You can't kill me, so don't even try.
You can't bring a dead dinosaur back to life.

I'm gonna travel through time
with a T-Rex tooth, sharp as a knife.

And I'm coming to see you,
because like Doctor Who
I've got foresight.

Such Country: A Sijo

Dominika

I was born in the Czech Republic, but I live in Newcastle.

Ja to vidim. 🙄

Ale pak me hibyčesko protože tam mam
rodinv ale mam v. newcastlu kamaradi.

Ja to venquidim [Czech, slang]

I could literally die / makes me want to kill myself / does my head in

*Ale pak me hibyčesko protože tam mam
rodinv ale mam v. Newcastle kamaradi [Czech]*

But then I love it, because I have family out there and I have some
awesome Newcastle friends.

Sijo

Anon

I love and hate *scuola che mi a dormire*
but I have to go to get an education

I love it *per le attività in cui sono bravo.*
I hate it for having to study and solo.

scuola che mi a dormire [Italian] school that makes me sleepy
per le attività in cui sono bravo [Italian] for the activities I'm good at
solo [Italian] alone / on my own

Long Distance Views Kacey

from the high level bridges and gorge slopes:
the open water of the Tyne.

There ain't no gold in this river,
the one that flows the wrong way round...

And I'll follow right down the river,
where the ocean meets the sky,
to you.

The upside down river
flows the wrong way round.

Sme každý na inej strane rieky
A mosty sú spálené
To platí na večné veky

It constantly changes
with the rising
and falling
tides.

Sme každý na inej strane rieky / A mosty sú spálené /
To platí na večné veky [Slovak]

Each of us on a different side of the river / And the bridges are burnt
down / It has been set this way for forever and ever.
(from *Rieka* by Richard Müller)

These Waters

Diana

Nu există aur
în acest râu,
where the ocean meets the sky

Știu că există speranță
în aceste ape
and I'll follow right down the river,

a long way into the distance,
even though you can't hold on to water,
it is still in my heart

Nu există aur în acest râu [Romanian] There's no gold in this river.
Știu că există speranță în aceste ape [Romanian]
I know there is hope in these waters

Jayden
Quickly

I was born in the Congo
and I moved to England 5 years ago.

I didn't understand everything they said,
but *gyorsan tanultam*.

Though I live in Newcastle,
the Congo is still in my heart.

gyorsan tanultam [Hungarian] I learned quickly

To Be Placed on a Building

Alex

Přinášíte život Excelsioru

Přinášíte život Excelsioru [Czech] You bring life to Excelsior

A Recipe for a Very Big Family

Imogen

Simply take a mixture of annoying things,
a single promise to go to Flamingoland,

All my family, so: Kacey, Imogen, Tamzin, Lani,
Alexis, Star, Junior, Jason and Oliver

Add a sprinkle of moodiness from Mam and Dad,
And a sprinkle of naughtiness from us and mix

with a dash of sassiness, lots of mischievousness
and bake with some rascals, serve with a pinch

of grumpy people and serve with a helping
of kindness.

Comfort and Care

Anon

Why do we go to clothes shops? Why do we go to school?
Corridors and walls, white like the snow I saw my brother

Cody eat one winter when I was younger, smaller,
less busy, when I probably thought a tie was something only

Harry Potter wore, or the presenters of I'm a Celebrity...
Among the shirts of my three brothers is a door

to another school, where my bedsheets keep my thoughts,
some silver as spray on a whiteboard drying out,

others like letters in a book older than me, black as comfort,
some orange as a streetlight when it's late. A story is

a way to lie down, hang out with myself – it can be
texts among friends. Beautiful and smart are words

I don't say aloud enough, brother, brother, brother,
I'll tie your tie if you tie mine? Can you help me hear

my thoughts, talk with me about the future, fill in all the smart,
beautiful spaces? Brother, brother, brother, mother

let's not go shopping, but let's loosen the knot of the day
and, no longer so busy, go together and together go.

My City Wakes Up Like a Coyote

Lainie

My city wakes up
like a coyote.

It laughs and lingers,
jumps and sprints.

Meanwhile our school,
slow, like a snake, slithers away.

My house wakes up,
loud as a gorilla.

My busy city

Anon

My street wakes up
like a sloth,
it sighs and stretches
and reaches for fruit.

Brooke's Recipe for Shouting

Brooke

Take a jug with no reasons,
and a bucketful of other people shouting too,

a sprinkle of face-offs,
and a dash of happy energy.

Mix with a generous splash
of humour and a topping of fear,

dust with joyful uncertainty
and bake and serve with some fake fear.

Why do people ship Ochaco Uraraka and Deku?
When love is a gift, quirks are a gift too.

Half-dreaming, I find my sister's face in the morning,
the fan, the ceiling and I throw a wish in the air.

Later, I feel moody, like the time I cut my Barbie's hair,
think about Uraraka and Deku and how it's unfair:

sometimes, although we plan things carefully,
opportunities feel like they won't grow back, like Paris,

at the top of the Eiffel Tower, why did Mari freeze
when Adrien revealed his identity? When ladybirds

fly between humans they are supposed to bring
a message of faraway love. White, grey, grey-white

or white-grey? No two clouds fit together perfectly,
why can't it be marichat? or adrigami? What if boats

flashed their searchlights along the Seine and cast
expelliarmus on near-misses and mixed messages,

to find new kinds of ship beyond bakudeku,
shigarakisaki, pharoposte, barbieken...

Adrigami

Uma

adrigami a portmanteau, a hypothetical romantic relationship between
Adrien Agreste (superhero in disguise) and Kagami Tsurugi
(supervillain in disguise)

ship want to put into a romantic relationship
Uraraka and Deku Protagonists in the anime series My Hero Academia

marichat a hypothetical relationship between Marinette (superhero in
disguise) and Cat Noir (superhero), characters from Miraculous Ladybugs

expelliarmus a disarming spell used in Harry Potter

bakudeku a hypothetical relationship between Deku (hero) and
Baku (antihero)

We Are Newcastle 9Y3

Whenever we arrive at the shops,
we bring pride.
We are lumina.

Everywhere we go at Monument,
we bring poetry.
We are periculoase.

Arriving right here at McDonalds on Grainger Street,
we bring lovely pride.
We are grozav.

Reaching Newcastle College,
we bring life.
We are minunat.

Everywhere we go by the ocean,
we bring colour.
We are frumos.

Now that we're here at the beach,
we bring life.
We are beraber.

Everywhere we go at Excelsior,
we bring pride.
We are kouzlo.

Whenever we arrive in Chinatown,
we bring love.
We are vynikající.

Creating our place at Primark on Northumberland Street,
we bring colour.
We are magia.

Arriving right here at Excelsior,
we bring pride.
We are vynikající.

Stating our names in America,
we bring love.
We are slavio.

Telling our friends in Elswick,
we bring light.
We are pohromade.

Letting you know at Elswick Road,
we bring life.
We are eccellente.

Everywhere we go at Newcastle College,
we bring magic.
We are iubire.

<i>lumina</i> [Romanian] light	<i>kouzlo</i> [Czech] magic
<i>periculoase</i> [Romanian] risky, hazardous	<i>vynikající</i> [Czech] excellent
<i>grozav</i> [Romanian] wicked, terrific	<i>magia</i> [Spanish] magic
<i>minunat</i> [Romanian] wonderful	<i>slavio</i> [Croatian] celebrated
<i>frumos</i> [Romanian] beautiful	<i>pohromade</i> [Slovak] together
<i>beraber</i> [Turkish] together	<i>eccellente</i> [Italian] excellent
	<i>iubire</i> [Romanian] love

Xbox Gang Michael

Why does school have to be school?
Sitting on my Xbox trying to concentrate,

wondering if my bro will come and play 360
or be so tired he'll just sit and slam a Big Mac.

Then: snow for the first time.
Without snoring I wake up out of it.

Burger King onion rings can be invigorating
and anyway, they have bigger buns.

Puppies are love and each one is cute in the snow –
what I keep picturing, when I have to tidy

up my stuff or get ready for school,
it's not easy being π

the number that spins out and out to infinity
or solves for x, I punch the X button,

see if I can make another bunch of snowflakes
topple off the trees, or get wagged away

by a puppy, dump my clothes in the washer,
say *Roll on Thursday*,

my favourite day of the week,
watch my uniform make a perfect circle.

YOUNG WRITERS

This anthology was produced by New Writing North as part of Young Writers' City at Excelsior Academy, in association with the Stephen Spender Trust's Multilingual Creators programme.

Young Writers' City is a long-term partnership with schools in Newcastle, Gateshead and Durham. The programme introduces young people to creative writing and supports those who find a talent or interest to develop further.

Multilingual Creators is a new creative learning programme from the Stephen Spender Trust, launched in 2021, which involves training translators and writers to design and deliver creative translation activities in schools. These activities support young people to become multilingual creators, able to access and interact with literature in multiple languages, and to use it as a springboard for their own creative writing.

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