Add your voice to the poet-tree
Foreword

Here’s an inspiring collection of poetry in a first language, in a second, in a third, in a mixture of tongues; in fusions, and in collisions, in varied combinations. Here’s the poems that remind us of where we’re from, and where we’re going, the poems that tell the story of the many ways we have of speaking in tongues. Some mother tongues might be your tongue, others might be unfamiliar, but the tongue the poems here all surely share belongs to poetry. Poetry is the language of being human. We might speak one way at home, and another in the street, but when we write poetry two opposites can meet, greet, shake hands, exchange surprising gifts.

And it is poetry that will be stood there waiting whenever you’ve encountered something difficult, something that you might at first struggle to find words for, to explain. People often turn to poetry when they are going through the deeps, or the highs, when something has happened, or been observed, that already seems lit, remarkable, marked. Poetry is a sign language, and sign language is poetry. Maybe poetry is our third tongue. To some people poetry is a foreign language, inaccessible, that they might think they can never translate, or fathom, but to many people the act of writing a poem makes them feel at home, makes them feel they belong. And once people get a taste for writing a poem, they come back to the form again and again, finding in it endless possible ways to enjoy the language, to experiment, to step out into the unbound land. Poetry, almost as soon as you develop a love for it, becomes part of your landscape, your territory, even when the land looks eerie and strange. Poems have in them a sense of returning, back to the wild reaches of the imagination. Poetry here is the place on the map, and is already a secure place in our minds, a safe haven, a sanctuary. Poetry has no borders, no checkpoints; and poetry can knock down walls, bridge gaps.

We can be our complete and complex selves in a poem. We can listen to the music of who we are play in all its magnanimous symphony. We can see the signs of who we are form and reform their interesting patterns and pictures. Writing in a mixture of styles and tones, using metaphors and similes, metres and rhythms, old forms and new ones, these poems form a different kind of map. We do all have another possible language. It is called poetry. Enjoy!

Jackie Kay
Scots Makar
**The Sea**

The sea is beautiful
The sea is beautiful and wonderful.
The sea is beautiful, wonderful and blue.
The sea is beautiful, wonderful, blue and alive.
The sea is beautiful, wonderful, blue, alive and never ending.
Powerful.

My poem is about the sea. I chose this theme because I like the sea. I have written an adjective poem and thought of six words that describe how I feel about the sea. My favourite one was ‘nigdy nie kończy’ which means ‘never ending’. Sometimes you can swim in the sea when it is hot and it feels never ending. When it is a long holiday I sometimes go to Poland and visit the seaside town of Jastarnia. I swim the Baltic Sea and we buy ourselves special treats like hot dogs. My sister and I play a game where she pretends to be a mermaid and I have to save her. My older brother and sister eat food and chat with my mum and dad and other family who love in Poland. I have good memories of my time here.

**Jan Piwowarczyk**
P1-P3, St Benedict’s Primary School (Polish)

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**Piłka Nożna**

Piłka nożna jest mają pasją
I czuję się jak bohater
Łącząc się z nim
Kocham to!
Autorynie i zdrowo
Nikt nie może mnie powstrzymać
Oczy i nogi pracują razem
Żo pomoca swoik umie jet nosu
Nie ma nic lepszego niż piłka nożna
A bsolutnie genialny!

I decided to write about Football for my poem because it is my passion. Once I have the ball at my feet no-one can stop me. When I play football I feel like a hero. I wrote an acrostic poem because we learned to do this with my teacher in Scotland. Football is absolutely brilliant.

**Kacper Jodelka**
P1-P3, St John Ogilvie Primary School (Polish)
A tree is like my life

In my country there is a terrible war, so I had to leave. I came to Scotland with my uncle and my two brothers and sister. My mother is still in Syria with my sister. I miss them. I wish the war would end. My poem is about my life in Syria and Scotland. I compared my life to a tree. My roots are from my life in Syria and my branches now grow in Scotland. My roots are in Arabic and my branches are in English. I can read and write now in both languages. The poem shows the two different parts to me. I am happy here in Scotland and I am learning so much, but I miss my family and country. Writing a poem in Arabic made me feel closer to my home.

Laith Kabour
P4-P6, St John Ogilvie Primary School (Arabic)

Crossing the bridge

I read lots of Chinese poems before writing my own. I listened to their sounds and rhythms and I tried to do the same with my poem. I wrote about a girl crossing a bridge. She has to solve maths problems before she can cross over. She answers the questions correctly and then she crosses. I chose this idea because I sometimes find maths problems tricky. I liked writing in Mandarin and reading my poem to the class.

Ashley Li
P4-P6, St James’ Primary School (Mandarin)
Eid Hajj

We wrote an acrostic poem about Eid Hajj. We chose this theme because it is a special celebration for us and our families. We spend time with our families and we like to enjoy ourselves. We fast for Ramadan because countries that relate to us are poor and don't have food and it helps us help them and feel what is like for those people. It is also a pillar of our faith. Our favourite part of our poem is talking about our family and cousins because we are cousins and we love our family. Eid is the perfect time to join together and stay together.

Amira Shaaban and Aidah Abubaker
P4-P6, St Rose of Lima Primary School
(Swahili)

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Eso Sister

We wrote this poem because we feel like sisters. We used English and Yoruba to write our poem. We didn’t know how to do it all in Yoruba because we can't speak all the words in Yoruba. We have decided to call our poem “Eso Sister”, which means “Thank you sister”. We aren’t sure if the spelling is right but we can say it properly.

It was fun and it made us feel like we could learn more about Yoruba from our parents. It was really fun and great to work with Caroline because she would listen and help me with the words I didn’t know. We hope that we can learn more.

Caroline Rotimi and Joolade Adekoya
P4-P6, St Maria Goretti Primary School
(Yoruba and English)
La tardor

Summer is over.
Autumn is here.
The wind howls angrily
And the leaves fly in the garden.

I look through the window
And everything is rain and colour.
The forest turns red like the fire,
The path fills with leaves and sadness.
You can’t see any animals anywhere.

The rain beats against the window
And does a sweet music
While outside
Everything is covered in moss.

The lazy sun hides
Behind the mountains
While the children are happy
Looking for chestnuts.
In the house you can feel the warmth
And the lovely smell of my gran
Cooking chestnuts in the fire.
The muscatel wine is ready in the table
And the children all exclaim together:
‘Autumn is here!’

My poem is about the season of Autumn and it explains what I see from my window. Autumn is a beautiful time of year full of colour and vibrant leaves, but it is also tinged with sadness because the weather changes and the light begins to fade. It also reminds me of my grandmother. I miss her. The smell of chestnuts always reminds me of her love and warmth. We used to celebrate this time of year together. I enjoyed writing my poem in Catalan and I am pleased that I could make it rhyme.

Miriam Espinosa
P7-S1, St James’ Primary School (Catalan)
I Still Remember...

Dimly lit corridors haunt my dreams, of who we once used to be.
We would laugh, we would cry, we would share a goodbye.
My heart is hurting for your love, for your wisdom of above.
I still feel you letting go of my hand,
I still see the car that ended your life,
I still hear the scream.
I still feel my heart dropping
I still remember who we used to be.

My poem is about a man who has lost his love of his life and was remembering about it. I chose to write this poem because it reminds me of Slovakia. When I left there when I was only 1 years old. I came here to Scotland. I like writing sad poems because they help me show my emotions.

My favourite part is 'I still remember who we used to be' because even when somebody leaves you, you still can remember them and remember what it was like when they were still there...and then you write what you feel like.

Noemi Dzurjanikova
P7-S1, St Rose of Lima Primary School (Slovak)
My poem's theme is the moon. I chose this because the day I started thinking of inspirations for a poem was the day of the Supermoon. I decided to not mention the word "moon" until the last line so that the reader could imagine what the poem was about before finding out. Writing the poem in French was a lot harder than in English but I managed to come up with some good ideas and I would definitely do something like this again as it was a good experience.

Éva Tallaron
S2-S3, The Royal High School (French)

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The Boxer
WINNER
S2-S3

Feel scared,
First time.
Then unafraid.
First the fight,
In the boxing match
Feeling like I'm going to
Get hurt.

Then the feeling of wanting to give up,
But still fighting.
Then the look - where to punch?
I hear people - the noise.
People screaming at me
Then saying: "punch him!"
Then they say: "don't let yourself down!"
Then the win...

I love boxing and wanted to write a poem about a boxer because I enjoy boxing training myself, it makes me feel healthy and strong. It is important to never give up and this is something that boxing has taught me. I enjoyed writing in my own language!

Stefan Benyak
S2-S3, Castlehead High School (Hungarian)

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Au-dessus de nous
HIGHLY COMMENDED

La lumiére passe à travers les arbres
Le reflet miroite dans la mer
Le sable doré est éclairé
En nuance de blanc et d'argenté
Sa face rocheuse nous regarde
D'un air attentif
Amenez-moi quelque part
Où je puisse la voir
La Lune, au dessus de nous.

My poem's theme is the moon. I chose this because the day I started thinking of inspirations for a poem was the day of the Supermoon. I decided to not mention the word "moon" until the last line so that the reader could imagine what the poem was about before finding out. Writing the poem in French was a lot harder than in English but I managed to come up with some good ideas and I would definitely do something like this again as it was a good experience.

Éva Tallaron
S2-S3, The Royal High School (French)

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Éva Tallaron
S2-S3, The Royal High School (French)
I’m a sparrow

My poem is about a dream. It is written so that the person reading the poem is actually talking to another person. It makes people imagine the situation. The dream is very magical. Imagine you find yourself in a beautiful forest, where there is no-one else, only you. It’s just the silence that is surrounding you. You can hear the water flowing and see a deer and her fawn. Everything seems lovely and magical and This memory will always live in your mind, even when you wake up.

I think the last stanza of the poem is the most powerful because it tells the person that this dream makes them feel happy and loved inside, and the clouds that covered the skies are disappearing like a flock of sheep in the meadow, and this beautiful memory will always stay in their mind.

The message of this poem is to see the good things in everything and not to worry about bad ones. We have to be happy and remember the memories forever.

It was fun to write the poem and I feel like because it was in my own language I made it rhyme better. I think it would’ve been harder to make it rhyme in English and I prefer poems that rhyme, I just find them more interesting.

Boglarka Balla
S4-S6, Graeme High School (Hungarian)

I am not very good at Urdu as I mostly speak English with everyone other than my parents. I would like to get back into it because of how beautiful the script is and so I can read the news in Urdu.

I chose to write this poem because it is about a bird living his life, stuck in a routine, in an endless cycle even though birds are supposed to be a symbol of freedom. I think that this represents a lot of how people live today – they have the freedom to do great things, but don’t. While writing this, I felt like it came to my head quite quickly because most of the words used were simple and uncomplicated.

Ayesha Mujeb
S4-S6, George Heriot’s School (Urdu)
Eternal Winter

Время с вито в кольцо
Зимнюю белое Лицо
снежинки падают вокруг
Тепло теряем с наших рук
Печеные улыбки больше не сияют
Тети мы мы однажды
были больше не мечтают
Это наша последняя меча
Где только ты и только я
И наша вечная Зима

I wrote this poem thinking about my grandmother and grandfather in the winter 2016 before my grandmother died in the spring. I used the symbolism in the last line "вечная зима" which means eternal winter so they could keep their childhood dreams alive. I used the word “рук” which means hand, in its context I said that there once was feeding from the hands since the energy and life is slowly fading from my granny. "Зимное белое лицо" means winter white face, which symbolises my granny’s pale features and falling snow that winter.

The poem really talks about how time is of the essence and the last moments that they spent together were probably their most cherished ones just like the ones they had when they were children when they promised to stay with each other until death do them part, and that was exactly how they parted. Even in my grandmother’s last moments she still smiled and made others smile too, which filled others with hope and that’s why until the last moment I almost didn’t believe she was truly sick and neither did my grandpa, so I tried to morph their dreams, promises and their last winter into a poem. In her memory.

Nadya Clarkson
S4-S6, George Heriot's School (Russian)
Il y a du papier
Il n’y a pas des arbres

Il y a la mer
Il n’y a pas des poissons

Il y a de champs
Il n’y a pas des maisons

Il y a des moutons
Il n’ y a pas de laine

Il y a des voitures
Il n’y a pas d’huile

Il y a une guerre
Il n’y a pas d’arrêt

The name of our poem is 'poème écologique', which means environmental poem. We really care about the environment, because we want trees to continue to exist. If there weren't any trees, we couldn't live.

We divided our poem up into couplets so it's easier to read and is not a huge chunk. Every couplet starts with 'il y a' which means 'there is'. Then followed by 'il n’y a pas' (there isn't). This is an easy way to describe products and resources. For example: the product of a tree is paper, but there aren’t enough trees.

The end of the poem is important to us because, if war goes on, then people continue to die and we are afraid of that.

When people read the poem, we hope they stop cutting down trees, stop war and stop putting oil in the sea. We already started by picking up rubbish when it’s lying around in school and we do recycling at home.

We had fun writing the poem because it was something new and we never did something so hard in French before. That’s why it was a good challenge.

Nathan Watson and Aiden Wardrop
P4-P6, Johnshaven Primary School (French)
Die Farben

Teuchtend, glücklich
Schön, ausgezeichnet, traurig
Künstlerisch, farbig, nett, beruhigend
Berrlich, lebhaft, sinnvoll
Wunderbar, sympathisch
Die Farben

My poem is all about colour. I chose to write about colour because I can’t imagine life without colour! It’s everywhere! I used positive adjectives to describe colour because I love it. I know that colour can have lots of different meanings, yellow can be happy, red can mean angry and blue can be sad. Sometimes in cartoons when a character’s face goes green it means they might be sick. Colour can mean all different things. I love all the colours in the world so I don’t have a favourite one.

I wrote this poem in German. It took quite a long time to find out what all the words were in German. I felt proud of my work when it was finished.

Eva Campbell
P4-P6, Gartcosh Primary School (German)

Die Eule

Wer do you meet?
Wo do you go?
Wann do you eat?
Was do you do?
Warum do you cough up pellets?
Wie do you fly so silently?

My poem is called ‘Die Eule’ and it is about owls. We were learning about question words in German. My poem is in both English and German and all the question words are in German. It is a question poem. These are questions I would like to ask an owl. We were learning about owls in class. I feel very happy with this poem because I worked really hard to make it special. I like learning German.

Jack Shaw
P4-P6, Gartcosh Primary School (German)
At battlefield we talk
At battlefield we chatter
At battlefield we speak in different languages
It’s an important matter

It helps us learn to care
It helps us travel too!
It helps us if we ever end up in
Germany or Peru

J’aime bien, j’aime bien
J’aime le irn bru
Mais je déteste, je déteste
Homework that is due

Me gusta mucho, me gusta mucho
Oor Scottish saltire flag
No me gusta nada, no me gusta nada
Getting a pure sore jag

Ah dae like, ah dae like
A bonnie steak pie
Ah dinnae like, ah dinnae like
A dark grey sky

Mi piace, mi piace
Oor Gallery of Modern Art
Non mi piace, non mi piace
A really stinky fart

Meji pasand, meji pasand
The bonnie Scottish hills
Meji pasand nei hai, meji pasand nei hai
Weather that gies me chills

Is maith liom, is maith liom
A wee fluffy terrier
Ní maith liom, ní maith liom
Edinburgh Dungeon ‘cause it’s scarier

Rosalind Turnbull
P7-S1, Doune Primary School (French)
L’anxiété

Il y a un monstre dans ma maison
Il m’empêche à dormir la nuit
Il me coud les lèvres serrés
Alors je conserve ma bouche serre

J’ai du mal à lui parler
J’ai peur
Mais quand je suis tout seul
Il me hante dans ma maison

Je ne peux pas m’enfuir
Il est là tous les jours
Je me cache de mes amis
Ils ne peuvent jamais me voir pleurer

Chaque jour est un combat
C’est difficile
Le monstre est malfaisant
Il me fait me détester

Je ne peux pas le tuer
Et il n’y a pas de remède
Parce que le monstre est l’anxiété
Et la maison est ma tête.

J’ai choisi le titre du poème pour refléter le thème du poème – l’anxiété. Le thème du poème est la santé mentale. Je voulais utiliser mon poème pour montrer la peur qu’il y a chez quelqu’un qui souffre de problèmes de santé mentale. Je pense que la santé mentale est un sujet important car de nombreux de mes pairs ont souffert de problèmes de santé mentale. Il est également un sujet qui est largement couvert dans les médias à l’instant.

J’ai utilisé le métaphore étendue de comparer la tête de la personne à un monstre parce qu’un monstre est un endroit où la tête de la personne se trouve. Il influence tout ce qu’elle fait.

Écrire un poème en anglais est beaucoup plus simple car il est plus facile de choisir la bonne mot qui convient. J’ai rencontré des difficultés directes de traduction de ce que je voulais dire et j’ai dû être très soigneux d’en choisir les bons mots. J’ai beaucoup apprécié écrire cela et j’aimerais le faire encore une fois.

Ciara Wilkie
S2-S3, St Margaret’s Academy (French)

Mon lycée

Je déteste l’anglais
Mais ma matière préférée c’est le français
Je n’ai pas la technologie
Mais j’ai la géographie !
Le prof est sévère en l’informatique
Parce que personne ne comprends pas la mathématique
Je n’aime pas l’histoire
Parce que j’ai trop devoirs !
Je pense que le dessin est utile
Mais la technologie est assez inutile
Je trouve la musique compliquée
Mais le prof est très animé !

Ma poème parle de mon lycée, ses enseignants et ses sujets. J’ai choisi de parler de mes coupables et de mes détestés. J’ai choisi de parler de mon lycée car c’est un sujet que nous étudions à l’école. J’ai aussi choisi d’écrire une poème qui se termine par un refrain car je voulais me défier et voir si je pouvais vraiment le faire. Faire une poème qui se termine par un refrain m’a aidé à améliorer mon français car choisir les mots qui se terminent par le même son fait que je réfléchisse à la façon dont je prononce les mots et qu’un regard sur la fin des mots.

Simi Singh
S2-S3, Graeme High School (French)
Highly Commended

En el prado
In the Meadow

En el fondo del país
Deep in the country
En el prado está echado
And the meadow you lie
Y la gente solo mira,
Shake their heads and sigh
Sacude la cabeza y suspira

El cielo es tan azul
The sky is blue
Como lo era antes
As it was back then
De viejos y jóvenes
Of old and young men

Así que salvame, mi amor,
So save me, my love
Una silla a tu lado
A chair by your side
Hasta el día que mueran,
Until the day I die
Por nuestros votos respetaré
By our oaths I will abide

Porque aunque te hayas ido
For although you are gone
Mi corazón todavía es fuerte
My heart is still strong
Y te encontraré en el prado
And I will find you in the meadow
Una vez más.
Once again

I wrote this poem in the middle of November. I wrote a poem that I feel is relevant not just to our present but also to our past. Also as it was the month of remembrance I decided to write something about the war. The poem is written about a man who is going off to war and leaving behind his love. It is told from his love’s point of view and expresses her pain of losing him. She also speaks about how nowadays no one really understands and tells him that she will meet him in the meadow where he died, when she too passes on.

Holly Mincher
S4-S6, St Andrew’s Secondary School (Spanish)

Winner
S4-S6

Je voudrais te revoir en été
I wrote a poem because I write poetry in my free time. It’s a way I feel I can express myself and writing is a way for me to try and make sense of my thoughts and feelings. I generally hide from the rest of the world.

It is a poem that means something to me and a poem that I was pretty proud of. I wrote this poem in an emotional state. It’s about a friend I cared a lot for and at that point they were very important to me. However the person I wrote about lived far away, but we used to talk about seeing each other in the summer.

Regardless of how much he said this, I knew he was lying and we were only fantasizing. I knew the whole thing would never last, but I used to dream about it a lot, still knowing one day I’d have to eventually wake up and not have 1000 texts waiting for me when I did. So that being said, we don’t talk anymore, as I expected. It didn’t hurt any less, but instead of crying about it, I wrote a poem about it.

I decided to write it into French because although I find learning languages difficult, I really do like French and the way it sounds and I’d love to be able to speak it fluently.

Jordanna Bashir
S4-S6, Shawlands Academy (French)
La fleur

Je suis comme une fleur
En printemps les fleurs brillent
La fleur est si délicate, si pure
Et parfois la pluie
A tendance à tremper cette fleur
Comme les larmes me fait dit
Que l’enfance me manque dans mon cœur
Je cache de l’orage et s’enfuit
Loin de la fleur qui est meurt
Je cours au soleil et vit
Mais je ne retrouve à la fleur
Qui surement a grandi

My poem is centred around the theme of growing up.
I chose this theme as it is personal and important to me. Also I believe in writing what you like to read and I like reading stories and poems about children who grow up and the effects that time has on a child.

As I have experienced the loss of childhood, I feel that I can write passionately about this theme. I have represented the theme of growing up through the change of seasons/weather on a flower. I chose a flower to represent childhood as flowers have connotations of innocence and beauty. The rain and the storm symbolises hardship and sadness as a child grow up. This tests the strength and will of the flower and by the time that the rain has stopped, it has gotten bigger.

My overall message of the poem is that even though there is hardship through the teenage years, a child comes out stronger at the end of it.

Writing a poem in French, which is not my mother tongue, was challenging and exciting. I learned that I can be creative in writing in another language.

Rachel Cairns
S4-S6, Graeme High School (French)