

EMPOWER  **RD**

WORDS ON WINDRUSH

Poetry inspired by the migration of people
from the Caribbean living in the UK



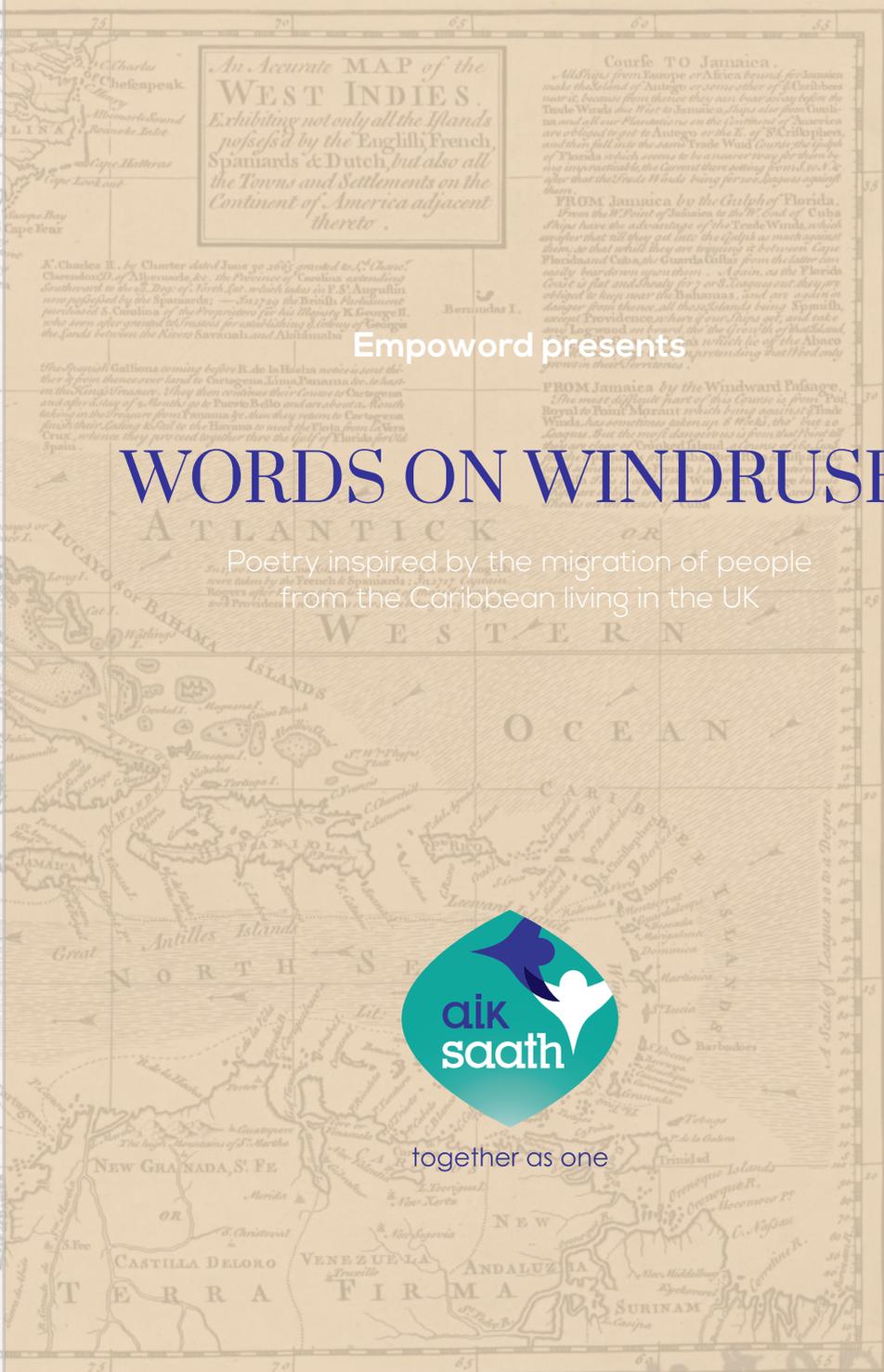
The catalyst for this project; **Words On Windrush**, was the Windrush Scandal that came to light in 2018. People from the Windrush Generation have been wrongly detained, denied legal rights, threatened with deportation, and, in at least 83 cases, wrongly deported from the UK.

The voices of this community have been ignored and marginalised to the extent that when the scandal became public knowledge, policymakers claimed ignorance to the human impact of the 'hostile climate' they had created to reduce immigration.

The poets in our anthology have used their own emotive and powerful language to help us understand the experience of the generation that arrived in Britain on the Empire Windrush, which arrived at Tilbury Docks, Essex, on 22 June 1948, and the ships that followed. This fleet brought workers from across the Caribbean, as a response to post-war labour shortages in the UK. The poems within this anthology have been created from interviews with the Windrush Generation.

Migrants have travelled to Britain seeking opportunity for hundreds of years. The Windrush Generation offer us the opportunity to understand one set of experiences that we can learn from to inspire equitable, humane and just treatment for all migrants. These poems are an attempt to recognise, celebrate and capture the stories of these remarkable people.

They are our Words on Windrush.



An Accurate MAP of the WEST INDIES. Exhibiting not only all the Islands possessed by the English, French, Spaniards & Dutch, but also all the Towns and Settlements on the Continent of America adjacent thereto.

Course TO Jamaica.
 All Ships from Europe or Africa bound for Jamaica make the Island of Antigua or some other of the Caribbees near it, because from thence they may stand away before the Trade Winds due West to Jamaica, Ships also from Guatima and all our Plantations on the Continent of America are obliged to get to Antigua or the E. of St. Christophers, which is that Side the same Trade Wind Course the Gulf of Florida which seems to be a nearer way for them to being imperceptible the Current there setting forward, & after that the Trade Winds being for our Sides against them.

FROM Jamaica by the Gulph of Florida.
 From the W. Point of Jamaica to the N. End of Cuba Ships have the advantage of the Trade Winds, which are lighter that all they get into the Gulph as much against them as that which they are opposing it between Cape Florida and Cuba, the Currents flowing from the latter is easily overboard upon them. Again, as the Florida Coast is flat and thereby for 2 or 3 Leagues out they are obliged to keep near the Bahama's, and are under no danger from thence, all the Islands being Spanish, except Providence where if our Ships get, and take a good Look-out on board, the growth of the Island grows more and more, which is of the Abuse grows more and more, providing that Wind only grows more and more.

FROM Jamaica by the Windward Passage.
 The most difficult part of this Course is from St. Paul Royal to Saint Jago which being against the Trade Winds, has sometimes taken up 8 Weeks, tho' but a League, but the most dangerous is from that point all the way to the Cape of Good Hope, which is of the Abuse grows more and more, providing that Wind only grows more and more.

Empoword presents

WORDS ON WINDRUSH

Poetry inspired by the migration of people from the Caribbean living in the UK



together as one

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First Edition

First Edition: June 2019

This paperback edition first published in 2019

www.empowordslough.org

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Thank you to Eustace Herbert for generously sharing his archive photographs.



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Dr Benjamin Zephaniah

If we don't tell our stories, people who believe they are *'qualified'* to represent us will tell our stories for us. Then when these experts on 'us' are done we will normally find that we have no way to confront them, because they are remote, they are hidden, they are not us.

This anthology is important because it is young people connecting with the elders in their community and retelling, in a very creative way, the stories that are pushed to the margins in a hostile environment. These are the feelings and experiences of a whole generation. A generation of pioneering women and men who have paved the way for people like me, and for the youth of today.



The Empire Windrush was one ship, many came after it, but the Windrush now represents all those that came after it. Words on Windrush is one project from one region in Britain, but it could represent more, and there should be many more. It is important that young people don't just take an interest in the future of their country, but the history of it, especially because as this anthology goes to press forces are working together to divide this country. They benefit from dividing us into us and them, whereas this book is an example of people reaching across the divide.

Aik Saath is an organisation that has been bringing people together since 1998, so this project is a continuation of its aims. Its poet in residence, Desree, and the young people who have worked on this anthology are simply, but creatively living up to their motto, **together as one.**

This is real people's history, these are real people, this is Words on Windrush. A poetic history, by the people, for the people.

foreword

Desree

Poet-in-Residence, Empoword

I often take for granted how lucky I am. I grew up with all four of my Grandparents and have always been deeply situated in my Caribbean roots. With Grandparents hailing from Anguilla and St. Kitts & Nevis; I spent a lot of my childhood and teenage years, running around Auntie Claire and Uncle Carl's yard, chasing butterflies with my cousin Simone and attending 3-hour long church services in thirty-eight-degree heat. Anguilla has always felt like home to me, and that was due to the hard work and dedication of my Grandparents. They laboured to ensure that irrespective of how England would treat us, we always had somewhere to call home.

Anguilla and St. Kitts & Nevis are 101km apart but growing up I visited Anguilla religiously. A British Overseas Territory, with less than 15,000 people, Anguilla is 16 miles wide by 3 miles long – with some of the most beautiful beaches in the world. I often struggled to understand why my Grandparents would relocate from islands renowned for their tranquillity – to Slough, a large industrial town 20 miles from the capital but through this project I have begun to understand why. My Grandparents had all recently started families and man cannot eat off tranquillity alone. England, had handed out an open invite to the heart of the Empire, laced with the promise of steady incomes, amazing opportunities, and streets paved with gold. Family was their priority, so much so they were willing to leave behind familiarity and warmth of home for the minus temperature of post war, Industrial Britain.



This project was important to me for a variety of reasons. Oral histories, from the mouths of those who experienced it is a fundamental tool for learning about the history of a place, an era, and ultimately, history of ourselves; a history of who we are. During the interviews, we asked not just the facts; who, what, when, where and why, but the feelings and emotional implications to such a mass uprooting. History is usually written by those on the outside, with little to no experiential understanding of anything other than the facts. But, we are in a time now where everyone's story can be told exactly as it should and how its teller experienced it. That is precisely what this project has allowed us to do. Another reason I hold this project close to my heart is the richness of the Caribbean community I grew up engulfed in, in Slough. They all have beautiful stories of hope and survival. They have enormous pride and with this comes a need "not to bother no one". With these things combined, it is likely that their stories, and ours, will be swept under the rug.

With the devastation caused by the Windrush Scandal; it has become more and more apparent that we, the Caribbean community need to take charge of our own narratives. We must ensure that our stories are being told truthfully and that these stories are being amplified by us and for us.

This project was a labour of love. Fundamentally, it was about community and recognition. I have learnt so much from those who were interviewed, about the history of the Windrush Generation, and more broadly, the history of their resilience. I have also, learnt so much from the poets and writers who gave up their time and funnelled their amazing talent into a project with such a quick turn-around. I hope Words On Windrush has done you and your work proud.

For a generation who taught us love and sacrifice and togetherness; we are forever indebted to you.

foreword

Rob Deeks

Aik Saath - Together As One

People from the Windrush Generation always have stories to share. It is impossible to travel nearly 5,000 miles from one island to another, to leave one life for another, to live through the changes they have witnessed and experienced, without collecting memories.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our interviewees for sharing their memories so candidly and giving our poets an insight into their lives. Sharing our experiences can sometimes be pleasant, although difficult memories can also resurface. The men and women whose stories provided the inspiration for the pieces in this anthology shared their recollections with the courage and stoicism that characterises their generation.

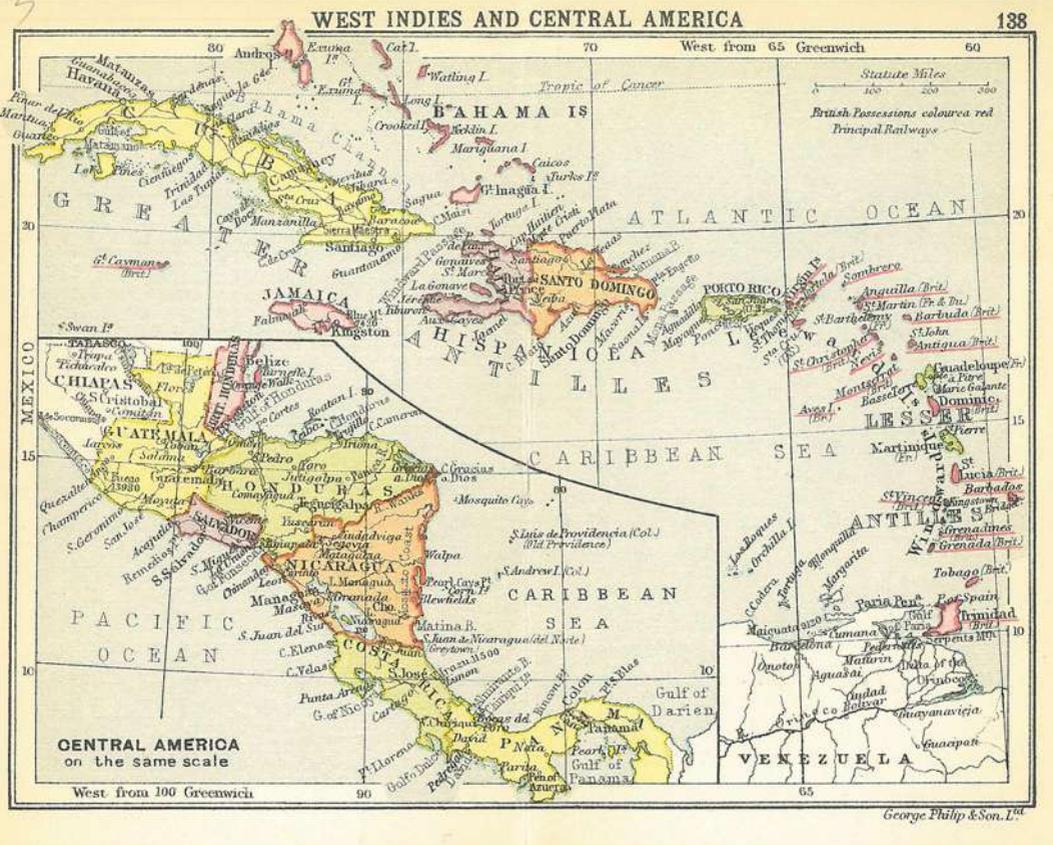
I would also like to thank our poet historians and recognise their commitment to our project. Most of the poets in this anthology are local to Slough and are familiar voices. However, others heard about our project via social media and travelled great distances to be involved. On the day we recorded the interviews, we bundled the poets, some of whom we were meeting for the first time, into my car outside Slough Train Station to flee the pouring rain. As we made our way to Britwell Community Centre, I tried to muster some small talk. Looking over my shoulder at the poets packed into the back, I realised that I had engineered a situation that had all the hallmarks of a kidnapping. Hardly any of the poets knew where we were going or much about who we were, despite this they joined us because they believed in this project and for that they have my heartfelt gratitude.



I would like to thank Desree, editor of this anthology and Empoword poet-in-residence. Working with your heroes is always a dangerous business: What if you don't get on? What if their work doesn't meet the sky-high standards you have (unfairly) set for them? Desree only knows how to exceed expectations. She has invested so much in making this anthology a success and it has been a pleasure and a privilege to work with her. I am so convinced of her eventual global stardom that I advise you to find her and ask her to sign your copy as an investment for the future.

Finally, thank you Arts Council England for funding Empoword's development this year and for making this project possible. We have been heartened by the interest that Arts Council England have taken in this project and hope that they can share in the pride we feel for what has been created.

One of my favourite quotes is from Ben Okri: 'Nations and peoples are largely the stories they feed themselves. If they tell themselves stories that are lies, they will suffer the future consequences of those lies. If they tell themselves stories that face their own truths, they will free their histories for future flowerings.' The stories of the Windrush Generation are some of the most important stories for our nation. They are stories of oppression, discrimination and the callousness of policies that are implemented for political or economic expediency without thought for the lives impacted by them. They are also stories of love, hope, determination, commitment, entrepreneurship and indomitable spirit. These stories have to be told and retold so that they hold a prominent place in our national conscience, lest we forget how poorly our society and our state can treat a people that have contributed so much. These poets are helping tell their story with their words on Windrush.



**POETRY INSPIRED BY THE
MIGRATION OF PEOPLE
FROM THE CARIBBEAN
LIVING IN THE UK**

'Back-Home'

we rushed in on the wind of a promise,
they said come and build,
build upon streets paved with gold;

we built our homes out of unemployment and
spit

we built our homes out of 'no blacks' signs
we built our homes out of crooked backs
factory air and tired feet
painted the walls with our public service
tiled the roof with patriotism
for 70 years we called it home:

it was still not enough,
they rushed in:
cold and cruel and biting,
stripped it down to the bare bones of empire
and showed us,

exactly what our homes were made of.

Theophina Gabriel



Scan me to see this poem
on BBC website

'Dishes'

She did not miss the food from back home
She learnt new dishes here in England;
Chilli con carne
Shepherd's pie
Her favourite – apple crumble.

But they did not have the fruit that she
used to eat
She thought mangoes were meant to be
sweet.

Abdi Jama

'We Went'

We went from nothing to everything,
But everything felt like nothing.

We went from sipping fresh water to
sipping fake glory.
We went from climbing coconut trees to
climbing roofs of our perpetrators.
We went from swimming in seas of cane
and plantain to drowning in a 'mother-land'
of nationalist fabricators.
They forged an empire of unity, whilst our
wind rush winsome melanin was an
exception to this ideology.

We went from humid Caribbean heat that
alleviated our caliginous glow to winter
nights,
Where bone-chilling breeze grasped
its bite on our clothes as we spoke with
smoke.
We went from a canopy of blue whilst
our naked feet were buried in white sand
to washing grime off our hands.
Timeless labour made our bodies ache
more with every choke.

We wrote history using pens inked with our
pigmentation, rich with cocoa.
We went from building wooden homes strong
with our intangible strength to rebuilding a
broken economy with lost stability and our
happiness was a false reality.

We spent the entirety of our lives rebuilding
Yet our citizenship denied,
Loss of files,
These judges put our patience on a trial,
Our future left without discussing.

We went from nothing to everything,
But everything felt like nothing.

Hassan Fazeel



'Dem Can't Keep Up' For Lydia Simmons OBE

When tyranny threatened to claim the
innocent
When people were coaxed to praise the
ignorant
When abandoning all hope seemed
imminent
A leader emerged wise and magnificent

The National Front can't keep up!
The Tory party can't keep up!
UKIP Party can't keep up!
Brexit Party can't keep up!

She fought for blacks to be promoted
Campaigned with pride; the people voted
The opposition had been roasted
Brave black woman she was devoted

The National Front can't keep up!
The Tory party can't keep up!
UKIP Party can't keep up!
Brexit Party can't keep up!

Her roots ran deeper than the English Oak tree
Can't trouble her, she was trouble free
She stormed into history
A politician who was a devotee

The National Front can't keep up!
The Tory party can't keep up!
UKIP Party can't keep up!
Brexit Party can't keep up!

She helped the people to unite
She was never afraid to put up a fight
On injustice she shined the light
No One had ever achieved such heights

The National Front can't keep up!
The Tory party can't keep up!
Ukip Party can't keep up!
Brexit Party can't keep up!

Birdspeed

'New Culture'

Some left and some left behind
Brothers, Sisters,
Mothers, Fathers,
Lovers, Friends
Broken hearted
They find themselves on
Other ends of the world

Left to follow
They'll come too
Come to meet you
When you're ready
So you create a home, steady job
Waiting to be reunited at last
With people from the past
To become part of your now

How do you bring your wife into this new
life?
Your brother follows you,
Your son,
Your daughter,
And you ought to be prepared
Rejoiced
But you're a bit scared

Some people don't welcome you
No dogs, No Irish, No Blacks
Are everyday facts of you new life
You fear for your family
But you are resilient
And part of a community

From this something beautiful is born
A whole new culture
A cuisine, a language
Something never seen before
A new kind of hybrid
An amalgamation of
Jamaican and English

Decades later this will be celebrated by people
of all races
They dance to your music
They eat your foods
Broad smiles on their faces

England loves you
England needs you
England is you

Lily Guy-Vogel



'Salty Foods'

What will England be like?
This far flung corner of the world
Just a little girl,
Imagination runs wild,
In this small tiny child
She's sold a dream
Streets paved with gold or so she's told
Though they do concede, it will be cold

They sit her down in preparation
Lessons on what to expect
Their attempts to protect, forewarn
a generation on what's next.

It will be cold they said
It will be -
It will be -
Yet what she remembers most vividly:
You can't eat salty foods in England
Because you won't sweat
It will be cold they said

Arriving,
Still a small girl
Part of a bigger world
She is immediately hurled into the smog
Thick, black cloud
Grey skies
Bitter winds
She is not in the Caribbean anymore

She cannot see any gold
It is not the way she was told
It is not the dream she was sold
But this will become her home
The place she will grow old
Happily, so
With this first step her new life begins to unfold

Lily Guy-Vogel

'Sounds of the Steelpan band'

For Earl Eustace Herbert

The steelpan band sounds,
Shimmers like sun on sea water,
Rippling rhythms from
Trini to Sandy Point to the UK
West from Basstere across the Atlantic
Floating on waves.
That sound so sweet moves air,
Rising like island heat.

These hips that sway all the way to the UK
From West Africa Kaiso to sounds of calypso.
Slave drum carnival sounds in Trini and mocking
masters musically
With coded music weaponry,
The dance of the free, too rowdy
For this colony
said the mother,
who does not know the meaning of free.
Banned the drums, but she forgot where we got
the beat from,
So we move to the tamboo bamboo sticks for
our music fix,
But the mother bans this,
Her stiff upper lip does not know good music
But we do,

We beat pots and pans and shape oil drums
round,
We wait patient as quakers for the sound of
A legacy proud, each dent crafted into new
melodies,
From Lanteville Trini on to the rest of the West
Indies.
To the mother country, see she could not shut
us down,
She is dancing now
With those early morning plantation sounds,
Those protest sounds.

We share our memories in melodies of sea
breeze through
Palm trees and sandy mornings,
Kids strum makeshift pilchard-tin guitar,
In a place where life was never boring.
With each chime we remember those times
when
Sun kisses skin, melanin warm, comforts ears
like
The sound of mother calling for dinner, and
Where summer isn't winter.
A place remembered in muscle memories,
A life lived free, to the realities of
borrowed pullovers and sharing one bed
between three.

These hands are warmed by heat that shines
Every time we move our feet
That homeland air curves around ears to hips
from hands to lips
We sing this song like those before us
We harmonise the chorus
Putting each foot forward we go,
we bring thyme scented air and a culture,
homegrown
We planted these roots, so our branches grow
The largest carnival in Europe, Trojan 45s,
Islands' communities together, that wouldn't
otherwise.

The steelpans played, by a new generation,
Passed down, shared
Lived histories of these nations
Not forgotten but
Lived through muscle memories
Of second, third and fourth generation
Who tell their own stories.

With us, we brought the percussion
a language created in the streets
The steelpan band sound shimmers so bright
in a new community.

Louise McStravick



'No Coat Is Gonna Save Me'

Grey sky. I realise
No coat is gonna save me
I grasp memories

Desree

'England Needs A Nanny'

So dis is de Queen's country?
Dis is Great Britain?
Mighty lion
Conqueror of lands
Breaker of chains
Inventors of:
De jet engine,
De hovercraft,
De modern toothbrush
and...
De Kit Kat bar?

...

But yuh mean to tell me yuh ain't got no
bathrooms in your apartments?

...

How you keep up wi' bathing twice a day?
Washing yuh clothes so you got a fresh outfit
each morning?
Wait?!
Dat is not the case?
Yuh mean to tell me yuh stink just like de foul
streets
but you got de cheek to call my people dogs?

I see why you need us
Yet when want to improve yuh country
yuh sputter our names when is time to gi'
thanks
refuse we offerings in de places you need de
most help.
Denial may feel good
Too much pride has ruined nations
England, you stubborn.
I doan know who carry out yuh broughtupsy
Yuh need a nanny
Yuh need discipline
Yuh need tuh behave
Yuh manners are atrocious
And yuh need to bathe
...

Scrub your mouth out with soap
Use the same effort needed to remove that
foul graffiti off the walls.
A good old-fashioned wash might
remove the smell on your breath, and
the stains on your teeth
left by your greedy devouring
of foreign foods and spices
a dirty yellow of fool's gold
smearing your taste buds.
Use bleach
Use lemon
Know the taste of compliance.

A badly-behaved child,
spoilt,
attention seeking,
will destroy their room;
Throw wild tantrums;
Curse;
Fight unprovoked;
Scream with crocodile tears
that snap at your senses
which tug at your heart
and eventually
that too
will snap.

Boxing them into corners will only encourage
them to be defiant.
This child needs a better punishment
This child does not love us
Our suffering will not resonate
They need to learn that there are
consequences to their actions
Their toys must be removed
Their playtime must cease

Walking into Britain's bedroom
was a bombsite;
Soldiers piled onto the floor;
Train sets dismantled;
Tower blocks crudely built;
A smell of decaying meat was buried
underneath
the abandoned
play of a child
who hated
to do their chores.

Birdspeed

'Inequality'

There is still inequality
We may have moved past segregation
But stolen passports and illegal deportations

Just because you've been to Notting Hill Carnival
Or you like jerk chicken, rice and peas
Because you listen to Ska, Calypso and Bob Marley
Does not mean we have equality

We may have integration
And opportunities have improved since the 50's
But there is still inequality
It's just harder for you to see

You're far more likely to live in poverty
Be unemployed or earning less money
If you are not White British
There is still inequality

You're three times more likely to be killed
And half as likely to go to university
If you are Black British
There is still inequality

People love to shirk their social responsibility
They say 'We've come a long way'
But it's not far enough, we have a duty
Until there is equality

We need to combat the lowest level hostility
Promote social mobility
And bring about true culpability
Until we have equality

Lily Guy-Vogel

'Black Children Smile'

Black
children smile
like the inside of a geode,
as if to say they are natural wonders
radiating love unconditional to a warm face.
When placed on a mantelpiece, they are dulled
and dimmed. The collector treasures them only
behind glass, labelled and prized. Imagine
the change if they dared to see
black children
smile.

Birdspeed

*"Black boys and black girls faces lit up when I
came through... Sometimes it makes me well
up to think that back how these black children
looked so happy..."*

- Lydia Simmons OBE

'The Harsh Reality'

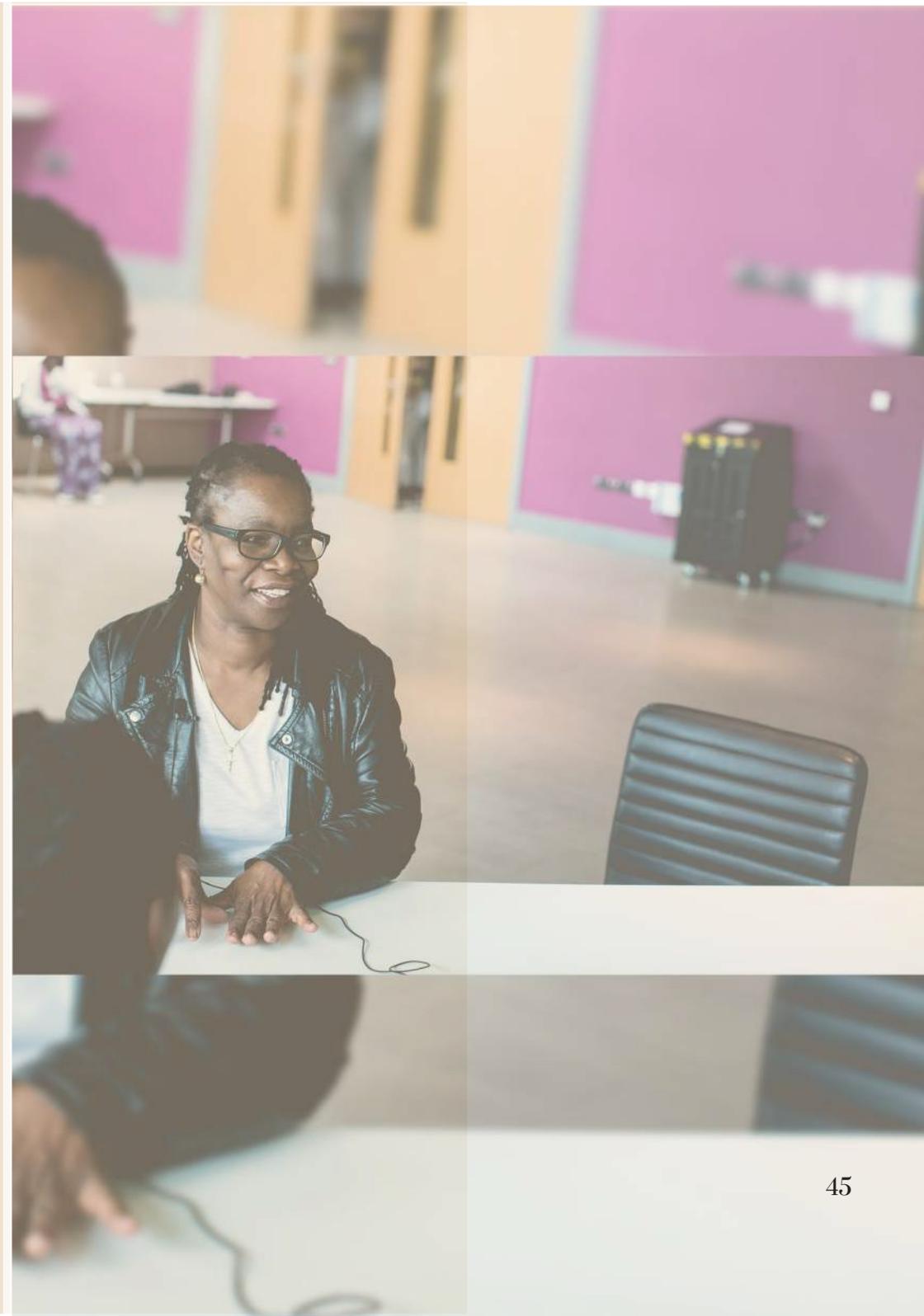
Stained fingertips slipping at the bottom of the hierarchy
yet all they got in return was Theresa May's sorry.

Slaves to the system - churches weren't just for religion, but prayers were judgments.
Togetherness was the cement to building bricks into houses.
Walking through streets paved with gold as it rusted with prejudice.

Differing complexions were a barrier
Fighting that mindset because are 'foreigners' the country's windfall.
They still have crooked backs from the weight of all this injustice.
Even still denied from the National Health Service.
Pensions disapproved, and a compass still can't determine the direction of where our hope went
Unemployment is still in abundance and,
The government doesn't listen as families split.

This is the harsh reality.

Hassan Fazeel



'Mornings'

Fingernail checks as they line up for school
after they had worked the farm, fed pigs,
mules and
swimming so far out they cannot be seen
brash youth salt-water free
then mix sugar with lime,
the taste sour and sweet these ideas on
tongue of one
who has not yet forgotten how to dream.

Louise McStravick

'For Some'

Souls so afraid,
For some a new beginning.
They wished for a better life, stood strong and
appreciated a new chapter
Paying the price.
A slave to a society that tries to make them less
of who they are.
With words like "nigga"

Their home islands where missed,
The smell of their mother's curry dish
For some, it would bring them to heaven
Remembering the reggae music their father
would play for hours on end
Comforted by a never-ending beat,
That would go on and on repeat
The same sweet refreshing sound on replay.

Rachael Adebimpe Adegbola Olusegun

'I Never Complained'

I never complained
when I removed the rubble
from Empire's soul.
When I considered
encouraging her belly
to regurgitate
the lies, the sly fantasies
served on gold platters
to dark skinned nurses
ready to serve her.
Her jugular was
too thick to splice with
weapons made of faith.

I never complained
when bruises resided in
my feet while I served
administering home cures
for shivers I swallowed whole.
My role was always changing
the ground never left,
you learned to run again and
do what you do best.
every stinking shift
Thank - yous; infrequent
Apologies; make believe

I never complained
as if I never existed.

Birdspeed



'We Taught Them Love'

When you are baptised you wear **white**
When you die you wear the memories of other **people**
Synchronised mouths **would -**
never sing national anthems **often**
if homogeneity was not considered a **treat**
Even when it hurts **us**
Even when good intentions become **bad;**
I try to imagine myself without **we**
I try to abandon what I was once **taught**
If I were not part of **them**
Perhaps they would be easier to **love;**
Forgive me for doubting my place, I know **we**
should be grateful, they **showed**
us fear is the spectre that persuades **them**
to herald intimidation so **the**
faces of black folk are one **face,**
whose eyes are closed for the purpose **of**
praying to be remembered by **God.**

Birdspeed

'Kittian Cinquain'

For my Uncle Peets

He can
Tune a steelpan
By ear and touch and heart
Takes fire to an oil drum then,
They sing.

Desree

'Parents already here in England'

Her grandmother used to tell her she will be
alright
That she will go to school
That she will make new friends.

But she has no memories of her parents,
Shown pictures,
Told stories.
But no memories.

Abdi Jama





'Unopened Gift'

Tools wrapped in paper and placed with
the certainty
of a person who sees destiny
at the bottom of a suitcase.
A person who dreams of hands that craft
things.
From St. Kitts to St. Thomas on
an apprenticeship, learning that those
hands can create
dreams out of anything.
Tools unwrapped, used
to make things new.
They will not be left behind.

Dreams carried from island to island to
island
by hands that learned hard work.
Those hands purchase a one way ticket
to the land where the streets were paved
with gold.
Tools wrapped in newspaper stories of
people that leave on ships
to that country across the Atlantic
Dreams, heavy on arms that carry them
with the expectation of a life lived new.

The cold reaches through to hands,
that once saw dreams in full colour.
Not the realities of a country seen
in postcards, in letters from relatives,
and friends across distances.
Suits, shirts and trousers tropical not made
for a country so far away,
that the sun does not reach it.

These tools remain unwrapped.
The indignity of an unopened gift.
A reminder to the hands that
wrapped it, so sure
as to what they were made for.
They craved creating fresh things,
loving the smell of varnished wood.
Things that last a lifetime.
Instead they remain wrapped in
newspaper images, the vague scent of lime,
and journeys in big ships
that did not warn that dreams could be
dissolved with each ice breath in a strange
place
And left, forgotten, at the bottom of a suitcase.

Louise McStravick

'Britain's Eyes'

The youth pickpocketed violence
before Britain's eyes
the adults covered them
with excuses.

Before every knife was drawn
by a forgotten kid
their tongue was a sword
that melted
in the steam fire pit
fueling
Britain's
"progress."

Out of sight...

I heard a West Indian woman once say
"England was so cold
My community would never abandon me."

Birdspeed





MEET THE POETS

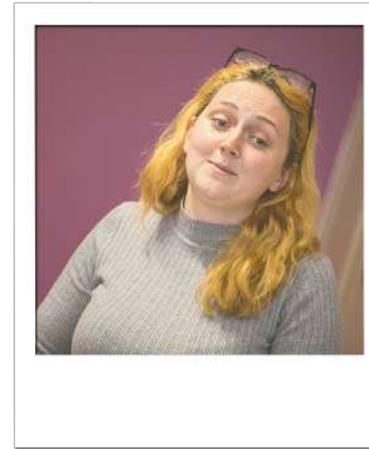
Hassan Fazeel

Hassan represents his local charity, Aik saath, locally and internationally where he also volunteers his time on a regular basis. Soon a 4 year running elected representative for Slough youth parliament, and in his first national role as member of Parliament - where he does not let his age define his ability. One of the youngest performers for his spoken word at Empoword, as well as featuring on the streets of London to even royalty, princess Anne at the UK youth event - to show the underlying power of our voices.



Lily Guy-Vogel

Lily Guy-Vogel is a London-based writer and performance poet. She has written for a variety of online and in-print publications, and performed all over London, Poland and France. Her main focus at the moment is a personal project: an anthology of poems that attempt to address issues facing women in modern British society.
www.facebook.com/lguyvogel



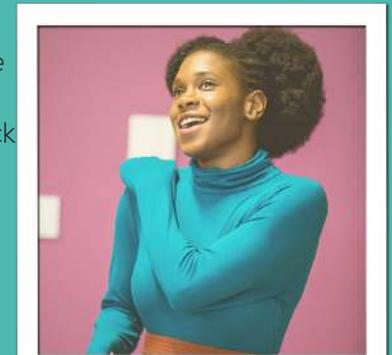
Theophina Gabriel

Theophina is an award-winning poet from Slough. Currently a third-year student reading Philosophy & Theology at the University of Oxford, she has been published in The Soapbox Journal, Linden Avenue Journal, NOTES magazine, amongst others, and has had her poetry featured on the BBC and BBC Radio 1XTRA. She is the founder and Editor-In-Chief of Onyx Magazine, a magazine set up to tackle the underrepresentation of Black creatives.



Birdspeed

Birdspeed is a British born Barbadian raised writer and accomplished performer whose work often uses social commentary and auto - biographical narratives to explore themes on: Caribbean culture and folklore, Afrofuturism, black feminism, mental health (especially in black working class communities), and the lingering effects of colonialism on the black body. Birdspeed is to be published in Bad Betty Press' Anthology Alter Egos in September, 2019.
www.birdspeed.org



Lousie McStravick

Louise is a writer, poet, teacher and proud Brummie. She has featured at events in London and has had work published on and offline. She uses poetry to investigate her identity and to make sense of the human experience. She is currently working on a collection that explore her working class, part Jamaican, full Erdington roots.



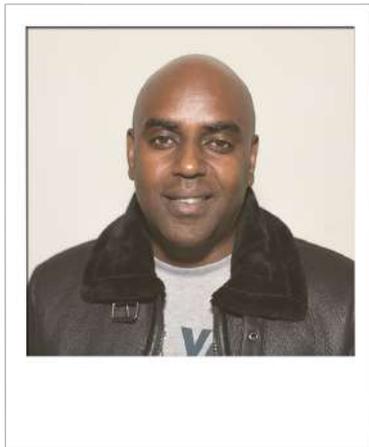
Desree

Desree is a spoken word artist, writer and facilitator. Currently Artist in Residence for poetry collective EMPOWORD, runner up in 2018's Hammer & Tongue final and TEDx speaker, she and has featured at events all over the UK and internationally, armed with a poetry book and a slightly odd sense of humour. She will be releasing a zine titled Find Yourself A Place in June 2019 alongside artist Siannon Saunders. www.iamdesree.co.uk



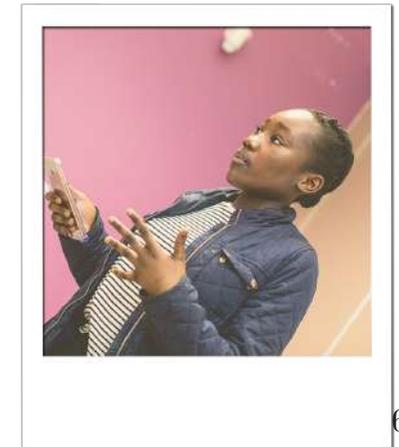
Abdi Jama

Abdi Jama was born in Somalia and raised in the Netherlands before moving to the UK in 2007. An active Youth Worker, Abdi runs drop-in sessions for young people in Slough and delivers talks about gangs, youth violence and knife crime in educational settings. Abdi is also a volunteer for the local Community Mental Health Team as a peer mentor.



Rachael Adegbola

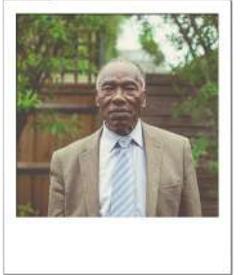
Rachael has worked with different organisations helping and engaging with other young people. She has been performing spoken word for around three years and performs with YES. Rachael hopes to have an impact on other peoples lives.



MEET THE COMMUNITY

Earl Eustace Herbert

Earl Eustace Herbert left the Caribbean island of St. Kitts, moving away from what he describes as “the best village in St. Kitts, Half-way Tree” on the 14th October 1960. He arrived in the UK on the 1st November at the age of 19. His journey across the Atlantic led him to Slough, where he started the career he had dreamed of as a child, in Mechanical Engineering



Dawnette Dunne

Dawnette Dunn was born in Jamaica in 1959. Her parents moved to the UK when she was very young. At the age of 7, her parents called for her to join them. Dawnette had mixed emotions about leaving the Caribbean - she was sad to be leaving her Grandma and the life she knew, but happy to be reunited with her parents. She occupies her time volunteering with her Church and Help the Aged.

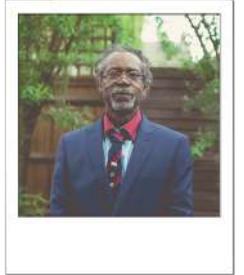
Janice Carty

Travelling on her first journey by plane, Janice Carty arrived in the UK at the age of 10 from Anguilla. At such a young age, Janice's journey was daunting, travelling from Anguilla, to St. Maarten, to Antigua and then finally arriving at Heathrow airport. It was there that Janice was reunited with her parents and met her siblings for the first time, before starting her new life in the UK.



Mo Charles Phillips

Mo Charles Phillips was born in High Wycombe, UK. His father arrived in the UK in 1960 from the Caribbean island of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, followed shortly after by his Mother. He shared with us how his father started work with the Thames Valley Bus Company the same week that he arrived and how a stay that he intended would last a 'couple of years' lasted a lifetime.



Steve Philmore Warner

Steve Philmore Warner was born in Old Windsor Hospital, in the UK in 1962. His parents were from the St. Kitts, and after settling in the UK, took the opportunity to bring over their children who were born and remained in the West Indies. It was a long process which took over five years but after growing up in a household where there were initially two children, it then became six.



Sineta Herbert

Sineta Herbert came to the UK in 1963 from Barbados. Her parents left for the UK when she was 12 and she joined them in Slough four years later. She remembered feeling apprehensive about race relations but remembers good experiences of meeting people from different backgrounds when she first arrived. Her parents later returned to Barbados and she still returns to the Caribbean to visit her mother to this day.



Lydia Simmons OBE

Lydia Simmons OBE arrived in the UK in 1956 from Montserrat. She lived in London for 5 years, where she met her husband. Lydia then moved to Slough, where she went on to become the first Black woman to become a Mayor in Europe. She also holds the record for the longest period of service as a Councillor in the local area.



St. Clair Carew

St. Clair Carew was born 6th August 1944 on the Caribbean island of Barbados. In 1964, he travelled to the UK with aspirations of becoming a mechanic. By the summer of 1974 he had fulfilled his goal. He spent the next 19 years being a bus mechanic for London Transport and enjoyed 'every minute.' St. Clair recalls attending talks in Barbados to prepare him for life in the UK. One anecdote included the lecturer gesturing out of the window at heavy rain, explaining this was similar to the British summer!



Francis Bertie

Frances Bertie travelled to the UK from St. Kitts in 1964 to join her father. She was 16 and remembers feeling excited and optimistic. Frances is very positive about her life in the UK – she recalls that those who arrived before her faced racism and other difficulties but she has not faced similar challenges. To this day, she still feels grateful to her late father for sending for her.





Presented by Empoword, Slough's leading spoken word platform, Words on Windrush is an anthology of poetry dedicated to those arriving in the UK between 1948 and 1971 from Caribbean countries and embraced by the title 'the Windrush Generation'. It is inspired by their stories of courage and determination described in their personal accounts shared with the poets whose work is featured in this book.



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