

Buds of May Poster poems from EU's new members

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Arts correspondent

Once somebody had an apparently daft idea — poems on the London Underground. Then it went further, with poems in 4,000 NHS waiting rooms.

Now someone else has had what seems an even dafter idea: poems by foreigners in NHS waiting rooms. And the Foreign Office has welcomed it with open arms.

Next Saturday thousands of international dignitaries will find posters of 10 poems by foreigners on display at a grand open day staged by the Foreign Office in London to celebrate the accession of 10 states to the EU on May 1.

The verse that will most directly remind the guests of tensions in Europe is Kamil Peteraj's *Tomorrow Can Be Too Late*, from Slovakia, with its undertones of ethnic cleansing: "I'm shouting/ and I'll wake up my neighbours/ and tell them/ shout as well/ and wake up your neighbours/ and tell those neighbours/ to shout too/ because tomorrow can be too late ..."

Niki Marangou's poem *Roses* is about the Greek Cypriot character and the

Οι τριανταφυλλιές

Παρέα με τον γεωμέτρη και τον κηροπλάστη
φύτεμα φέτος τριανταφυλλιές στον κήπο
αντί να γράφω ποιήματα
την εκατόφυλλη από το σπίτι με το πένθος στον Άγιο Θωμά,
την εξηντάφυλλη που έφερε ο Μίδας από την Φρυγία,
την Μπαγκσιανή που ήρθε από την Κίνα,
μοσχεύματα από τη μοναδική μουσσιέττα που επέζησε
μεσ' την παλιά την πόλη,
αλλά προπαντός την Rosa Gallica που έφεραν
οι αιταυροφόροι,
που αλλιώς την λέμε και δαμασκηνή,
με το εξαιρετικό άρωμά της.

Παρέα με τον γεωμέτρη και τον κηροπλάστη
αλλά και τον τετράνυχχο, τον τίγρη, τον φυλλοδέτη,
τη μηλολόνη, τη χρυσόμυγα,
το αλογάκι της Παναγίας που τα τρώει όλα,
θα μοιραστούμε φύλλα, πέταλα, ουρανό,
στον αφάνταστο αυτό κήπο
κι αυτοί κι εγώ περαστικοί.

Niki Marangou
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Celebrating the enlargement of the EU: poems from each of the 10 new member states - Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

sadness of living on a divided island: "I have planted .../ the centifolia from the house in mourning at Ayios Thomas/ the sixty-petalled rose Midas brought from Phrygia ..."
The other countries featured are Lithuania, the

Czech republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Malta, Poland and Slovenia.

The Foreign Office joined the Arts Council and NHS Services in funding the posters after the Europe minister, Denis MacShane, seized on them as a way of

Roses

In company with the aphid and the grasshopper
I have planted roses in the garden this year
instead of writing poems
the centifolia from the house in mourning at Ayios Thomas
the sixty-petaled rose Midas brought from Phrygia
the Banksian that came from China
cuttings from the last mouchette surviving
in the old city,
but especially Rosa Gallica, brought by the Crusaders
(otherwise known as damascene)
with its exquisite perfume.

In company with the aphid and the grasshopper
but also the spider mite, the tiger moth, the leaf miner,
the mole and the hover-fly
the praying mantis that devours them all,
we shall be sharing leaves, petals, sky,
in this incredible garden,
both they and I transitory.

translated from the Greek Cypriot
by Stephanos Stephanides
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increasing British awareness of the accession states.

Yesterday Rogan Wolf, the British poet who worked on the texts with the editor and poet Fiona Sampson and put the proposal to Mr MacShane, said: "It's a way of trying to make people

less suspicious of foreigners. It's an easy way of introducing them to the experiences of people from other countries. By doing it through NHS posters, you talk to a lot of people."

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