

## Poems for the Waiting Room: another collection now available – In praise of diversity

A new collection of “Poems for the Waiting Room” is now available, to widen the audience for this initiative even further. The new set of poems follows on from a previous bilingual collection, providing poetry in even more languages including Arabic, Bengali, Kurdish, Mandarin, Farsi, French, Gaelic, Urdu, Vietnamese, Hindi, Punjabi, Somali, Turkish, Greek, Bulgarian and Romanian. The collection is available free of charge; the only cost is for postage.

The launch of this collection was held at the Central Middlesex Hospital, and enlarged versions of a selection of the poems are now on permanent display. The collection is endorsed by the Poet Laureate himself (Andrew Motion), who chaired the launch. He described how poetry was a wonderful way of putting yourself in “other people’s shoes”, and the more languages and cultures the collections encompass, the more “shoes”. Andrew Motion also described



Barry Mussenden of the Department of Health Equality and Human Rights Group

how the health service is a diverse community, where people meet those they might not have otherwise met.

Barry Mussenden of the Equality and Human Rights Group, Department of Health described how the NHS is unique in that throughout its whole history, it has always had a diverse workforce, which has been of great benefit to both staff and patients. He felt that this was something to celebrate.

The collection can be tailored to local communities, by making languages widely known in the area more prominent. For instance, the poems displayed at Central Middlesex Hospital reflect the languages most commonly spoken in Brent.

The English translations can also be enjoyed by many, and the poems can enable people to understand other communities, as many of the poems also have interesting cultural connotations. *The Peacock in Walpole Park, Ealing*, by Amarjit Chandan, is written in Punjabi, a language widely spoken in India where the peacock has a special significance as the country’s national bird and is widely found in woodland. In the launch many of these connotations were explained. In the poem *Yet Another Day* by Shadab Vajdi, certain landmarks were referred to such as the Karoon, a river in southwest Iran. Lotfali Khonji (the poet’s



Permanent display of poems at Central Middlesex Hospital



Audience at launch



Pupil at Queen's Park Community School reads one of the poems

husband), who read the English translation, explained the significance of this river and its whereabouts. The poem also has footnotes explaining the landmarks, for people who are not familiar with Iranian geography. Such references could

open conversations between patients sat side by side in a waiting area.

Your trust could join 127 health centres and 47 hospitals displaying these poems in their waiting room.

### How to obtain a set of poems

Contact Rogan Wolf at [r.wolf@hyphen-21.org](mailto:r.wolf@hyphen-21.org) or 0208 871 4020. The collection is free of charge; the only cost is for postage.

For a more detailed evaluation of the project, see the following website: <http://www.hyphen-21.org>

### ΠΡΩΙ *Από τη συλλογή «Μαρτυρίες Α» (1963)*

Άνοιξε τις γριλλίες. Άπλωσε τα σεντόνια  
στο πρεβάζι. Είδε τη μέρα.  
Ένα πουλί την κοίταξε κατάματα.  
«Είμαι μόνη», ψιθύρισε.  
«Είμαι ζωντανή». Μπήκε στην κάμαρα κι  
ο καθρέφτης είναι ένα παράθυρο.  
Αν πηδήσω από δω, θα πέσω μέσα στα χέρια μου.

Γιάννης Ρίτσος (1909-1990)

### Morning *from "Testimonies A" (1963)*

She opened the shutters. She hung the sheets  
over the sill. She saw the day.  
A bird looked at her straight in the eyes.  
"I am alone," she whispered.  
"I am alive." She entered the room. The mirror  
too is a window.  
If I jump from it I will fall into my arms.

**Yannis Ritsos**

*translated from the Greek  
by Nikos Stangos*

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The new collection:

Title	Author	Language
The Dog	Dedaj	Albanian
From Exile	Nasser	Arabic
Prison	Barghouti	Arabic
Sparrows	Youssef	Arabic
David Widgery	Naz	Bengali
Too Long I've Wandered	Tagore	Bengali
From Fruit Diet	Radulova	Bulgaria
Fate	Blatny	Czech
Meeting in a Lift	Holan	Czech (EU)
The Mother the Water	Kopland	Dutch
A Last Cloud	Kaplinski	Estonian (EU)
From Nudity 10...	Ebrahimi	Farsi
Lightness	Bateman	Gaelic
Making Butter	MacNaecail	Gaelic
Morning	Ritsos	Greek
Roses	Marangou	Greek Cypriot (EU)
Constantly	Milan	Hindi
Home	Rana	Hindi
Loneliness	Saxena	Hindi
Daily I Change	Gomori	Hungarian (EU)
Only You Should Read My Poems	Yozsef	Hungarian (EU)
On the Back of a Photograph	Pilinszky	Hungarian (EU)
Acceptance	Hardi	Kurdish
The Black Time	Belsevika	Latvian (EU)
From the History of the Train	Alisanka	Lithuanian (EU)
Island Agenda	Azzopardi	Maltese (EU)
Question in the Mountains	Li Bai	Mandarin
In the Mountains	Yang Lian	Mandarin
Kindness Embodied	Khoi	Persian
Yet Another Day	Vajdi	Persian
Station Lights	Sommer	Polish (EU)
The Peacock in Walpole Park	Chandan	Punjabi
After Listening to Beethoven's Fifth	Tirmazi	Punjabi
A Stop	Ursu	Romanian
Tomorrow Can Be Too Late	Peteraj	Slovakian (EU)
How the Hills	Salamun	Slovenian (EU)
Evening	Simonovik	Slovenian
From Samadoon	Axmed	Somali
From Has Blood Been...	Hadraawi	Somali
Counterparts	Paz	Spanish
Love	Ceylan	Turkish
24 September 1945	Hickmet	Turkish
The Trees	Gul	Turkish Cypriot
Monsoon Moments	Kazmi	Urdu
On the Road	Ho Chi Minh	Vietnamese