Exploring Cultural Identity through Poetry

How many of you speak another language?
Why poetry?

Sharing poetry in other languages / from other cultures:

• empowers students and validates their experience

• encourages students to explore their own backgrounds and the influences that have shaped them
Why poetry?

Hearing poetry in other languages / from other cultures:

• immerses students in the aural/oral tradition - and shows them that you don’t have to understand something to enjoy it

• introduces students (and teachers!) to authors and poetic traditions that they don’t know anything about

• can help to target stereotypes and misconceptions students may hold about other cultures

• serves as an antidote to the Anglo-centrism of current educational policy
Cultural Identity
The project

A range of activities to explore cultural identity and poetry as aural/oral tradition:

• listening to readings of poetry in Latin and ancient Greek

• listening to poems brought in by members of the class - in other languages, dialects, representing different places

• group work to create a presentation on a poem of their choice

• creating a leaflet on a poet or poetic tradition

• writing poems that explore their own cultural identity and what this means to them
Listening

Latin Poetry Recited - Horace, Ode I.-4

Christopher
- ‘Missing the South of the Yangtze River’ by Su Shi

Olive
Opening of ‘Eugene Onegin’ by Pushkin
Student leaflet on Wole Soyinka

Example Poem
Jal ki rani
Machhi jal ki rani hai
Teewan usko pani hai
Haath lagai der jagaye
Bahar nikaalo gey mar jagaye

Water Queen
The fish is the ocean queen of the ocean
Water is her life
If you touch her
She will get scared
If you take her out of the water, she will die
Das bin ich

Wo komm ich her?
Wo soll ich hin?
Haben diese Fragen einen Sinn?

Werd ich bleiben?
Soll ich gehen?
Aber die Zeit wird nicht stehen.

Ich bin deutsch,
Mein Pass ist deutsch,
Meine Erinnerung sind nicht nur von Deutschland.

Da ist Cairo
Die Türkei
Aber ich weiß
All das macht mich frei
Und die Erinnerungen fliegen vorbei.

Ich erinnere mich!

Die Idylle
Den Sonnenbrand
In den Hotels an dem Strand.

Niederlande,
Meine Freunde
Ich weiß das ich nichts versäumte.

All das macht mich,
Das bin ich!

My poem is about my Cultural identity not simply being written in my passport.
My memories are who I am and what makes me me.
The memories from all the countries I have lived in.

This poem is about the three things that I like to do in Holland: hockey (hockey), fielen (cycling) and schaatsen (ice skating). I also mentioned the freedom we have in Holland.