

Contents

Introduction	4
About One World Foundation Africa	5
About Lynk Reach	6
Competition Prize Winners	7
Southern Road Primary School, Year 5, Class CC: Incredible Journeys	9
Southern Road Primary School, Year 5, Class LV: Amazing Collaborations	17
Southern Road Primary School, Year 5, Class GD: Stories	23
St Luke's C. of E. Primary School, Year 6: Sunny Places	31
Manor Primary School, Year 6: Adventures	37
Poets Afterwords	41
Krista Franklin	42
Ugochi Nwaogwugwu	44
Da Boogie Man	46
Acknowledgements	48

Editors: Da Boogie Man, Jennifer Wilde and Nirali Shah
Design: Chimeine Kemp
Project Managers: Jennifer Wilde, Fahro Malik and Lianne Parrett

'My Incredible Journey' is published by Lynk Reach

Lynk Reach, 49 Merchant Court
61 Wapping Wall, London E1W 3SJ
Tel: 020 7481 1819 Mob: 07958 550 508
Email: lynkreach@hotmail.com www.lynkreach.co.uk

Copyright in the individual poems rests with their authors.

ISBN: 0-9548120-8-5

'My Incredible Journey'
First published by Lynk Reach in 2005, in association with
One World Foundation Africa and Help A London Child.

One World Foundation Africa and Lynk Reach are grateful to the following for making this publication possible: the young people, teachers and schools and especially the poet coaches Ugochi Nwaogwugwu and Krista Franklin who participated in the 'My Incredible Journey Project' to celebrate Black History Month 2005. Printed by Multiline Systems Ltd.

Introduction

The 'My Incredible Journey' anthology documents the personal histories and experiences of primary school children in Newham.

The poems are competition entries contributing to the Black History Month Celebrations of October 2005. Every year Black History Month celebrates African and Caribbean history with the intention of promoting knowledge of Black history and experience, and heightening the confidence and awareness of Black people in their cultural heritage.

We have encouraged children in Newham to share parts of their own lives, no matter what their background with the intention of promoting greater understanding of global issues, migration and asylum in multicultural Newham.

Newham is the 11th most deprived borough in England and experiences lower economic activity, lower average income, and lower educational attainment than London as a whole. Black and minority ethnic groups make up over 60 per cent of Newham's population. In Newham schools approximately 20 per cent of pupils are refugees or asylum seekers.

Lack of awareness and understanding of immigration issues leads to the isolation of these often vulnerable communities and limits their meaningful participation in mainstream society.

It has been One World Foundation Africa's honour to work with Lynk Reach and the participating primary schools to give children of the borough an opportunity to share their stories with us through poetry.

All of the children have experience of immigration and asylum whether through personal experience, friends, families or classmates and each experience is valuable.

We would like to thank all those children who participated and sent in their poems, and hope that others enjoy reading them as much as we did at One World Foundation Africa.

Jennifer Wilde
Development Officer
One World Foundation Africa

About One World Foundation Africa

Who we are:

One World Foundation Africa is a registered charity number 1098889. We work in Uganda and in London with the aim of empowering the socially excluded.

In Uganda our work centres on work with those affected by HIV/AIDS, particularly orphans and vulnerable children. We currently support over 600 pupils at 44 schools in the Kiboga region of Uganda, providing free school meals, scholastic materials, securing safe water sources and running recreational programmes.

We also work within the boroughs of East London, primarily in Newham, where our offices are based. We work with people from black and minority ethnic, refugee and asylum seeker communities in the field of employment and training. We facilitate voluntary work placements in order for members of these disadvantaged groups to gain valuable UK work experience, skills and references with the intention of securing meaningful employment in the future.

One World Foundation Africa Trustees:

Chair	Mrs Sarah Kakayi
Secretary	Mr Keefa Kiwanuka
Treasurer	Mr Robert Ntege
Committee Member	Ms Faidha Iga
Committee Member	Ms Margaret Sengooba
Committee Member	Ms Maureen Hester-Smith

One World Foundation Africa Staff:

Patricia Asitolo Iga	Finance and Admin Officer
Lianne Parrett	Volunteer Coordiniator
Jennifer Wilde	Fundraiser/Development Officer
Victoria Remmie	Youth Worker

Contact Details:

One World Foundation Africa	Tel: 020 8555 0788
Unit 114 Burford Centre	Fax: 020 8522 6662
11 Burford Road	oneworldn@yahoo.com
Stratford, London, E15 2ST	

Please visit our website www.oneworldfoundation.org.uk for more details on our ongoing activities and how you can support and our work and ways to get involved.

About Lynk Reach and Black History Month October 2005 Project with Chicago Poets

Lynk Reach is a registered charity number 1104188 that was established in 2003 with the aim of addressing under-achievement of children and young people aged 0-25 by providing innovative arts and education programmes, with poetry projects as a major focus.

Poets Ugochi and Krista came over to the UK from Chicago in June to perform at Lynk Reach's annual London Teenage Poetry SLAM and to meet students from the SLAM highest scoring team from Lister Community School in the run-up to their visit to Chicago in November 2005. Lynk Reach seized on this opportunity to work with Ugochi and Krista at schools in Newham and Waltham Forest as part of its Black History Month 2005 project whilst they were on tour here. All the schools involved responded very quickly to the opportunity to work with these poets. All the poems in this publication were inspired by the workshops that Ugochi and Krista ran as part of this project. The workshops certainly contributed to the diversity of poetry generated. In addition, the arrival of New York poet, Boogie, was timely as he was able to edit the poems and schools found time in their tight schedules to hone the poems for entry into the competition.

For further information about this and forthcoming projects, please contact:

Ms Fahro Malik
Executive Manager
Lynk Reach
49 Merchant Court
61 Wapping Wall
London E1W 3SJ

Tel: 020 7481 1819
Email: lynkreach@hotmail.com
www.lynkreach.co.uk

Competition Prize Winners

Manor Primary, Year 6:

OUR INCREDIBLE JOURNEY

My parents fled Afghanistan because of a war.
People fighting like wild animals.
It was as dangerous as a non stop earthquake.

People fleeing like sailor ants.
People dying
People lost
Children crying for their parents.

Now Afghanistan is just like dust in the wind.
I also see dead bodies and blood.
I think we are the only family alive in Afghanistan.

Marshall Habibi

OUR MAGICAL ADVENTURE

I went to Tunisia
I went to Nigeria
I rode on a camel
I rode on an elephant
I love the curry,
It's spicy hot like my personality
I love my mum's sister's pepper soup,
It tickles through my taste buds
It smells like a fresh cookie
Baked by your best friend
It smells like the scent of a rose
Passing through the air
The African drum beats
Day to day,
Night to night
BOOM...BOOM...BOOM...BOOM

Laura Smith and Ese Egbeighur

Competition Prize Winners

Southern Road Primary, Year 5:

MAZOONI MOOMBASA

A lovely view,
Runny sand,
At night water is so blue
Looks like it's twinkling
Lots of stars,
Uncle has a house made of straw
The tree keeps the shade.

Sadiya

St Luke's Primary, Year 6:

ZAMBIA

Zambia has
Tall palm trees
Swaying in the cool breeze.
Market fruit and strong hot soup
Children chatting
going to school
Blue rivers flowing
Under a beaming hot sun.

Bwalya

**Southern Road
Primary School
Year 5, Class CC**

INCREDIBLE JOURNEYS

MY INCREDIBLE JOURNEY

I felt excited, happy.
I smelled fresh ocean water
BBQ chicken just for me,
Smoking fire in my face.
I saw a big fish.
Dolphins,
Lots of lovely animals on the sand
Like seals.
Bright sunset,
Cat fish.
I heard dolphins speaking -squeaking
Speed boats.
The swaying trees.
I taste bread rolls,
Sizzling sausages,
Bacon,
Eggs,
Hot melted chocolate
mmmmm.

Iram

MY INCREDIBLE JOURNEY

Barbados sea water
Colour of morning
Sky warm and cool.
I felt a rough Dolphin skin
I couldn't believe my eyes
The dolphin came shooting up
And some little fish was swimming
Around the dolphin.

Kernisha

MY INCREDIBLE JOURNEY

My dad took us to the airport in His car.
My mum, sister, cousin, and grandma
All of us went on the plane.
It took us 12 hours
To get to Somalia.
In Somalia my granddad
Drove us to the sea.
In his shiny red Land Rover
I slept in the back.
The sea in Somalia looked lovely and deep and blue.
I swam like a Fish
I had my goggles on
the water was really sandy.

Mubarak

MY INCREDIBLE JOURNEY

The swimming pool is cold as ice
My bed is nice and neat

I got to the airport and the
Food was really sweet.

When I was in Ghana,
I was Going to the airport.
My dad and I got on the plane
The name of the plane was
Aircase.
We ate on the plane.

Eniola

MY INCREDIBLE JOURNEY

I remember
My uncle driving us to the airport
In his sky blue car.
We got on
A plane, it took 15 hours

Then we went to my
Friend's house
I fed my friend's
Baby sister
My friend's baby sister
Got bitten by a mosquito

I drove to my uncle's
And ate honey
It was delicious.
It was a funny day.

Sulqarnain

MY INCREDIBLE JOURNEY

Plane
Enjoyed
but scared
Outside smelled of fish
Rows of happy uncles
Strange,
Bored,
Lots of people
Tons of shops,
Kebabs,
Etc.

Rayhan Ahmed

MY INCREDIBLE JOURNEY

The London hot sun
Was shimmering
In my shiny eyes.
We drove to the busy airport
As fast as a speeding bullet.
In Pakistan it's like a Sandstorm.
The big beautiful garden
In the Tall mansions
Was covered with bright red Roses.
There were lots of
Colourful clothes in the
Rushing shops.
The jewellery shops were really packed.
The food shop smelled spicy.
We visited places Inside Pakistan
like Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore
And Mari.
In school we made lots of models,
Paintings and art work.
We watched movies like
Kal ho na ho,
Kuch na kaho,
Me hoo na,
And Devadas.

Amna Jawa

MY INCREDIBLE JOURNEY

Italy airport	noisy.
Fast car	seven-seater.
Suitcase	heavy.
Trolley	easy.....happy.

Nono Nona

MY INCREDIBLE JOURNEY

Me my mum,
Plane-Sick,
Airport,
Train,
7 hour
Car next day
Like oven
Arena
Colourful,
Rough
John Cena
Screams,
Excited!
Chi-town,
Pizza,
Delicious,
Best of my life.

Patrick

WHAT I DID IN FRANCE

I rode on massive boat to France.
It smelled fresh
like strawberries.
I saw a show with three 20 foot snakes.
They all were massive.
They had a broken ssssss voice.
They came
Towards me
And I named them asmodayas.
The snakes' colour was half aqua blue and
Half blood red.
I smacked them
With the Spade in my hand
Then I punched them.
Then they went away.
I brought the spade
Because I was also going
To the beach.

Tanvir Ahmed

MY INCREDIBLE JOURNEY

In Bangladesh.
My family greeted me
Aslamwalaycom,
I saw a small green Snake.
I was scared
But it was far away from me.

I was fishing with my cousin
With nets.
One got stuck on my sister's foot.
At the beach
I felt like I was being fried.
We were jumping in the sea
Then we had ice cream
And watched the sun set
it was orange
And beautiful
Then we drove back to the village.

My uncle about 10 years older than me
Took me and my cousins to the
Sweet shop on a boat,
We got lost
Then my older cousin
Had to get us back
We had fun.

Tamanna

**Southern Road
Primary School
Year 5, Class LV**

**AMAZING
COLLABORATIONS**

OH THE PLACES YOU'LL GO!

A: I felt excited because I met my nieces
It was fun.

S: I felt really hot eruptions
Which will melt in your mouth:
Hot and Spicy

L: My body is getting warm,
Hot and really,
Very Spicy.
Because is fun and sunny

J: I felt the perfume of the volcanic french roses
Which will make good poses.

T: I smell perfume
My dad's perfume
I felt excited I have been here before
I hear a lot of talking

J: I feel unpleasant

Jeffery, Ali, Lance, Safat and Tari

ROAD OF HAPPINESS

Everyone: On the road of happiness
We touch smell and taste

Stef: The fresh air
Blowing against my face
The great taste of a beautiful country
The cattle mooing and clucking and baying
And a smooth,
Relaxing sound
Calling me to listen.

Lyndon: taste fudge cake
Splattering in my mouth

Naz: I was riding across the farm.
I could smell fresh trees
And pollen on my face.
I could feel a red strong apple in my hand.

Omar: I enjoy the fresh air,
Because I had a lot of fun

Safu: When I left
I felt happy
Because I could see
My family and friends again!!

Stefnie, Lyndon. Nazia, Saju, Omar

THE SHARK'S ROLE

Saberiya: In Somalia I smelled the fresh air
 Going Up my nose
 It's much better than
 Sticking a hose up my nose

Ivonne: In Madame Tussauds
 I touched this smelly
 Gooey blood.
 Thank God I never touched
 Poohie flood

Sumi: In India I listened
 To the birds in early Morning
 When I rise from bed
 Then I take a slice of my ted

Michael: In Chesington this scary ride was fun
 It was called the Devil's fir
 But it's Nicer
 Than looking at a whole bunch of wire

Demi: In Ireland
 I saw the millennium stadium
 And it was magnificent
 It was better
 Than a frog in a pant.

Saberiya, Ivonne, Sumi, Michael, Demi

THE INCREDIBLE ADVENTUROUS JOURNEY

Becky: When I left
 I felt upset
 and started to
 Cry

Ayesha: Jub maa jaa
 hoon gie moojie
 dur lug he gaa

Bolu: I tasted awesome chilli hot dogs
 With fantastic chips,
 Which tasted delicious

Sharif: The sand felt hot
 Like it was going
 To burn
 ---clap---

Sharjeel: I went on the beach with my bike

Abdullah: I saw another donkey
 while I was riding my own.
 ---stamp--

Becky, Ayesha, Bolu, Sharif, Sharjeel, Abdullah

THE INCREDIBLE SUNSET

All: Clap clap clap
T: I went to a place it was fantastic
Ar: I went to a place it was massive
Ab: I went to a place it was astonishing
B: I went to a place it was beautiful
V: I went to a place it was great

All: **I hear** the waves
Splashing on the beach
With fish swimming
In the deep blue sea.
I hear loud screaming
I taste salty water
I felt happy
I smell people cooking fish
Clap clap clap
Its time to go back home
Stamp stamp stamp

Taylor, Abbass, Arshad, Banusa, Viola

Southern Road
Primary School
Year 5, Class GD

STORIES

SCARY SCORCHING

Scary scorching,
Rats,
Violent people,
Scary,
Rats,
Violent people.
Scorching sweating
Scary,
Rats,
Violent people.
Scorching,
hot,
Sweating people.

Ugrelin

THE SCORCHING AND EXCITING SAUDI ARABIA

Saudi
The scorching deserts of Ryadh
The sun shining in my face.
City of Mekkah.
One last look
I get back on the plane.
That's my exciting journey.

Tahmina Khanon

AN EXCITING DAY

Disneyland was fun.
Kids saw Mickey Mouse
Goody
An exciting day.

Saiful

BUSY POOR PEOPLE AND RUSH

I am always busy in Pakistan.
There are lots of poor people.
When you are driving there is always traffic
And busy people, chattering, laughing
So much noise.

Najam

FRESH

Smelling fresh, I'm climbing on mountains
Eating colourful fruits
I am enjoying the views
of eye catching exotic trees.

Refreshing blue beaches
lovely golden sand
Fresh smelling air
steep mountains,
I look into the distance
I see the colourful view
of eye catching trees

Darren

PAKISTAN

Hot
Flood comes to your knees
When it rains
Water fights
Rides at park
Sit on fast boat
Play on roof
Get ladder
Go higher

Anonymous

POEM

Roses are red
Violets are blue
You are the best
And we'll miss
You too

Gabriella

MY JOURNEY IN LONDON!

London is a brilliant place
Because load's go
Fantastic clothes
Marvellous toys
There is Tower Bridge,
Tower of London,
Buckingham palace
The dirty, interesting,
Noisy markets and
The traffic
The pollution

Jahima Khanum

Untitled

Big mosque
You read there
You pray there
Had a fun picnic

Ali

FLOOD AND FUN IN PAKISTAN

I went to a cricket match.
The teams were Pakistan and India.
Pakistan won.
I had a ball signed by Wasima Kram and Insaman Wal
From the Pakistan team.
I went to KFC
Played in the sand
Watched a movie
And played with my cousin and brother

Anees

PAKISTAN

Beautiful beach
At night
Sit in boat
Takes you
Where you want to go

Adil

BANGLADESH

Bangladesh
Nearly every home,
Has a big swimming pool
People bath outside,
Wash their hands
And wash their feet
I come back sun burned

Noshin

MCDONALD

It had good music
Lots of good toys
Good food in McDonald
You gain trees

Anonymous

EXCITING FUN

I have a house in Spain
I live near a massive golf course
I fell in love

Donovan

MY JOURNEY TO COVENTRY

My journey is to Coventry.
It was a long way
I've seen the fields
There were cows
And I saw the sheep
The journey was going fast
It was hot and sunny
Far, far away
but finally got there
At a journey ahead

Taylor

I AM TRAVELING

I am travelling to Coventry
There's something that approaches
It is a long way to travel

Anonymoous

MY INCREDIBLE JOURNEY TO PAKISTAN

It was fun
I sat on my uncle's bike
When it rains a flood comes
It's up to your knees
It's hot
That's why we always have water fights
And bath for one hour
I go to rides parks
I go to fun fair
My cousins Hira and Soib sat on a fast boat.
We play on the roof
We get a ladder and go higher.

Iqra

Untitled

It's fresh
Because we were near the Beach
And air came in
It's sandy because it is a sandy beach
It's clear because it is a clear beach
It's juicy because it's got juicy fruits.

Emmy

**St Luke's C. of E.
Primary School
Year 6**

Sunny Places

MY CHANT

Jamaica's breeze is so cool
All the children walk to school.
St. Vincent is so sweet
I always listen to reggae beat.
Yellow Blue Black and White
That's St. Lucia's flag at night.

Carl

MAJORCA

The sun is so hot
That you can fry an egg on the ground.
The beach is full of lovely white sand.
When I get up in the morning
I look outside my balcony
Oh what a view
It takes my breath away
The sound of the music
Makes my feet
Tap to the beat.

Savannah

AROUND THE WORLD

I heard the sea crashing on the wall
I left scared and alone
When I grew up I saw that Ghana was a lovely country.
I went to the beach to make a sand castle with my family.
Eating fufu going on the plane
And flying to Ghana and back to London
I got to America and I went on a ride
Called Hulk
I was with my cousin and we went to the fun fare

Anonymous

BRAZIL

Brazil is cool
You can lie in a pad
I felt excited, nervous
I got new clothes
I chased a goat down the street
On a sunny afternoon
I felt sad because
I didn't wanna go home
I went to the football pitch
It's relaxing
It's hot
It was fun watching people playing
Sadly it has to end

Anonymous

GHANA

I felt like jumping for joy (jumping to heaven)
Before I felt I was happy
My favourite memory is
Seeing my first black and orange lizard
When I had to leave
I felt happy because
I was going to have a party
For my homecoming

Kofi

THE HOLIDAY

My little cousin's birthday party,
My bread and tea at home,
The ride was cool,
I saw a fancy shop,
You can see through the sea in Spain,
People have fun in the sea,
Claxton has green grass.

Jermaine

The Asian group poem

Spending time
With mates
At
The bar

Smelling the smell
Of wood

Meeting Abbi, Ruby
And
Anita

Going to the cinema
And
Watching fantastic 4

Going to the hot
Beach
And
Tasting rainbow
Ice cream

Burying my brother
In the
Sand
And
Buying 8 boxes
Of chopsticks

Scaring the fox away
And eating crisps and chocolate on the roof.

Anonymous

SCORCHING WILD

Scorching
People walking around with fans
Lots of wild animals

Humayun

EXCITING, FANTASTIC

Mansion in Sheffield called
Rahman Monzil.
Big house higher than a tree top
If you see in the balcony
On the top floor
On top of the tree
You can see a nice
View
I like going on the seesaw

Anfa

**Manor Primary School
Year 6**

ADVENTURES

CANADA

Canada was boiling
 Like the heat in the NBA,
 The sea waves were colourful,
 Spell binding like a hypnotiser.
 We all sat around a wood fire.
 It looked like several candles had been lit,
 Toasted marshmallows,
 Prayed,
 It felt like paradise.

Khaylem Beecher

CONGO JOURNIES

Congo is blazing
 Like a barbeque in a summer time
 Flaming like the sun is on my shoulder
 Seeing my family is as amazing
 As travelling to a new place
 The body jewellery is made of beads
 So colourful
 Dazzling like the night sky
 The colour of the flag is mesmerizing
 It is magnificent
 As if I am in a wonderland

Aaron Oliveira, Amibel Mukuna, Elisa Matumona
 and Tracey Ndan

Untitled

The food, semolina, is nice,
 Soft and squishy like play dough
 Salt fish with soup and pepper taste fantastic
 In the Congo, some people speak Lingala,
 And some people speak French,
 In Congo we like to play different games,
 In Congo, we like sleeping
 Like a lion under an African tree.

“Boni”
 “Bonjour”

Anonymous

WET POETRY

It's getting hot in here
 I'm in the middle of a volcano eruption,
 Manchester as lovely at it was before.
 Sweet smelling flowery air,
 Flowers like wet poetry.
 You are my world!

Jaye Walsh

RAINBOW JOURNEY

Red, yellow, purple, green, blue on turquoise,
 I can see a rainbow of colours
 In a hot April afternoon.
 Children at parties opening their gifts,
 Saying thanks to relatives and parents.
 I love Saudi Arabia
 As much as I love watching cheetahs chase gazelles
 Life is unfair, but I love my surroundings.
 It's magical like a shining star.

Fatima Abokor

OUR COUNTRY

Our country is Bangladesh
It's as wondrous as heaven.

It's as blazing as the sun
And
As freezing as a river of ice.

We would love to be here for the rest of our lives.

England smells like fresh flowers
And
Tastes like cake from an oven.

England,

England is where we live.

At times it is hot like mercury
And
Cold as Pluto.

It is always wondrous
like the sun shining
through the night,

England, England is the best!

Shasoty Sharmin and Rizwana Salam

Poets Afterwords

Hunting Honey Suckle On A Xenia Sunday

Perhaps it was my cousin Kevin,
With dented black halo for hair,
Who showed me
One Sunday afternoon.
His dusty hands breaking the lean, fragile
Necks of honeysuckle,
Their stems snapping loud enough
To startle hairy bumblebees,
Or still the rubbing hands of praying mantis.

The color of mandarin,
All the petals – velvet and
Blooming sunlight tips –
Met at the sweet heart of the pistil
That burst in our mouths
Like a secret.

I remember,
The runagate green of the stems
Braided through the chain link fence
And the taste of pollen
On my tongue.
Remember, like a death,
The withering petals
Released from the heaviness of beauty,
Tumbling from my hands.

Krista Franklin

It was a wonderful pleasure and learning experience creating poems with London Primary School Year 5 and Year 6 students through Lynk Reach. Their wealth of experiences, stories and their ways with metaphor and simile regaled and delighted me. While writing about “Our Incredible Journeys” we traveled to numerous countries – Algeria, Bangladesh, England, Ghana, Ireland, Lithuania, Nigeria, Pakistan and Somalia, just to name a few – and moved from one end of the globe to the other together. Each young person had their unique experience and languages to add to the beautiful brew of words and images. It is my hope that their experiences writing poetry will continue to inspire, and help them to continually connect with their future life stories and experiences.

Krista Franklin
Chicago-based poet and collagist

Home

I have solved the mystery
The pieces of this jigsaw puzzle have been together
Now I see the full-spectrum of its vision
Of kola nuts and palm wine
Ritually prepared for me to dine
Banana trees and cassava leaves line the dirt road
As they romp in the breeze
Night shadows attempt to eclipse the light
But the sun beams relentless
Despite
The wickedness it was birthed to fight
If these natural blessings could talk
They would scream harder than the times
That never seemed to change
Shout louder than the rooster's crow
Wake the world with the rhythm of change

Africa is the space no other piece of land can replace.
Your face
Shrouded in secrecy
I used to dream of you incessantly
Haunted by the memories
I felt but could not seize
Lost in thought as I remembered
Familiar villages unseen
First cousins unknown
Acres of endless green
Unconditional love never shown

Traded in sun-kissed smooth melanin skin
For wind burned epidermis
Eskimo-thick layers of frostbite
On prodigal return to my people
Arms open wide
Migration denied
I resort to flight

Tribal compound labels me beke
Which means that I'm white
I beg my family don't deny me
This isn't the way I wanted it to be
I was forced to separate from my homeland
Before conception
Taken to a place where hate and insurrection
Became my fate
But I can't neglect to mention the irony
How the war my parents sought to flee
Was waiting here just for me
In the Land of the free

I want to claim I'm a native
But I've been gone so long
Can't they see Nigerian blood accentuated
aboriginal features
distinctly strong
If I am a stranger in my motherland
a foreigner where I live
where do I belong?
Scripting passions onto paper
Breathing lyrical song

Ugochi Nwaogwugwu

"I had a fantastic time working with all the young poets. Weaving their incredible journeys and migrations into contemporary poetry was revolutionary and enlightening. Most of the blossoming writers were unaware that the experiences lurking underneath their subconscious were valid and part of the patchwork that makes them who they are. Watching cultures come alive was magical and transformative. I learned as much from them as they learned from me."

Ugochi Nwaogwugwu
Chicago poet, writer

If I Was A Poem

If I was a poem
I would be so simple I would be complex
I would keep everything forever changing
And unpredictable
So people would always anticipate
What's coming next
I would lull the world to sleep
Teach it how to dream
How to make rivers of joy
Out of tears of pain
How to make
Laughter out of screams
If I was poem
If I was poem
I would write you emotional transfusions
Give you love to replace hate
Give you peace to replace anger
Vengeful thoughts I would replace
With childlike illusions
If I was a poem I would write enemy
And pronounce it friend
I would write orphan
And pronounce it my child
I would write lost
And pronounce it found
I would write deaf ears
And pronounce it beautiful sounds
If I was a poem
If I was a poem
I would echoooooo
The words of GOD
Whisper words of healing
I would synchronize syllables of salvation
Weave them into the fabric of every day conversation
I would take ignorance
Place it next to knowledge

And let it learn
I would take death
Tie it to the grave
Tie them both to fire
And watch them burn
I would take night
Melt it into day
Make an eternal afternoon
And Bless babies with the wings of butterflies
So they could fly
When they emerged
From the womb
If I was a poem

Boogie

It is so refreshing to be in the company of pure souls and great minds. To be able to honestly reflect on where you came from and compare it to what you've become. It reminded me that the world is never without smiles, and laughs, and love, and trust, and joy, and faith. The reasons most adults think these things are becoming extinct is because they are looking in the wrong places. Children are not only here for us to nurture and protect, but to remind and teach us the nature of our true selves. Interacting with the children reminded me how wonderful it is love myself and love others. My journey: After a five or six hour flight, being stopped by immigration for four hours and riding the tube with four heavy bags and a stranger, who by word of a mutual friend let me stay in his home, I came upstairs at Brixton station. The first thing I thought, having lived in New York for the last four years, was this looks like Harlem: meaning the people, the dress, and the flavor. From vegetable patties to corner stores I felt like it was home with a "twist" of British spice in it. The one thing I learn the more I travel is people are more alike then they are different.
Love, peace, and & GOD BLESS,

Boogie

Acknowledgements

One World Foundation Africa would like to thank:

Help a London Child
30 Leicester Square
London
WC2H 7LA

Lynk Reach
Fahro Malik, Chimeine Kemp and Gita Vitkovska
49 Merchant Court
61 Wapping Wall
London E1W 3SJ

Cotswold Outdoor Piccadilly
23/26 Piccadilly
London
W1J 0DJ

Newham Bookshop
745-747 Barking Road
London
E13 9ER

Theatre Royal Stratford East
Gerry Raffles Square
Stratford
London
E15 1BN

One World Foundation Africa Volunteers

Nirali Shah
Erin Klemm

Participating Primary Schools

Southern Road Primary School
St Luke's C. of E. Primary School
Manor Primary School