

**YOUNG MIGRANTS
SPEAKING OPENLY AND
WITHOUT FEAR**



**WORDS APART
PASSPORT**



**WELCOME TO
WORDS APART.**

**PLEASE KEEP YOUR
PASSPORT WITH YOU
AT ALL TIMES.**

**DO NOT LEAVE
THE COUNTRY UNLESS
YOU ARE TOLD.**

**YOU HAVE NO
FREEDOM.**

I AM PHENOMENAL

When I enter the room
Heads turn in appreciation
Everybody goes WOW
Because I am making it a brighter future
I own it, I am a boss
I am phenomenal

When I enter the room, people smile
Everybody knows because of my son
A proud mum, sister, auntie
I own it, I am a boss
I am phenomenal

I have a great style
Because I have a nice lifestyle
My body looks good
So I feel confident
I own it, I am a boss
I am phenomenal

I shine with this kind heart
And though my voice screams of fatigue
I still fly amongst the clouds
Shine with the stars
Blaze bright next to the sun
I own it, I am a boss

Resilience, Patience
It's in my heart for peace
It's in my tongue to say
I am an amazing grace
I am phenomenal



WHO AM I?

A story complex as a skyline
Spinning round my face like the
London Eye
Stomach churning
A raging ocean
Eyes sharp as an urban fox
Heart of gold like a defibrillator
Standing tall for justice
Roaring like a lion
Fist like iron
Demeanour like a flowing river
A voice of encouragement
With this expression of fearlessness
This tongue from the leaders
of fables lost
With a brain like a worker ant
A brain like Einstein
Bones of Adamantium
Ox-strength
Standing tall
A fighter for justice
With a posture of hope
A mind as certain as the rising sun
As awesome as me.

WHO IS THIS POEM FOR?

For the decision makers
For the people who know our lives are
worth understanding
For the people who see a piece of paper
Where I only see gold
For people seeking to be educated
For people without people
Who stand in the shadow of the past
Waking up at 9am, to earn, to survive
For people who tolerate, stand, bear each other
For people living alone
Searching for a way to make a better world
For people who see me as more than a percentage
Who believe in themselves
Who have found love
Amongst the jail of death and life
Who hold on to that last glimmer of hope
For people who care for my story
And for people who can't write it down

COS BREXIT'S ON THE NEWS

woke up in the morning
put the TV on
and Brexit's on the news

drinking morning coffee
hearing people talking
saying Brexit's on the news

Kevin wants to talk
about the football, time gone by
but Brexit's on the news

can't afford my bills
standing in a queue, still waiting
but Brexit's on the news

scrolling for a job
filling out a form
but Brexit's on the news

waiting for a bus
open up a paper
Brexit's on the news

famine, poverty across the world
knife crime on the rise,
cuts in disguise
but Brexit's on the news

now I'm homeless
a tear in my sleeping bag
but Brexit's on the news

I haven't eaten in two days
I can't raise my voice
Brexit's on the news

I'd slit my wrist
but no one would notice
cos Brexit's on the news



RULES FOR A MIGRANT

Wait
until we make the decision
You have nothing to do until
who knows when?

Work only when allowed to
Or not at all
until we decide your status

We restrict your right to be

We are helping you
Do not work
You are only a place

You don't have a decision of your own self

You want to explore the world?
You have no right to travel

We are working on your case

You're fit and able but should just sit
And do nothing

Do not collect what you are entitled to

Do not collect universal credit
Report yourself,



show your ID every week to us

You do not know how long you will wait
Do nothing

Follow the policy
Do not question us
No right to remain

Can't go elsewhere
No right to remain
Assimilate. But you can't be one of us

GO BACK HOME

When you die we will shed tears for
how we treated you
We will make no changes

We will rob your children of their own home
Do not leave the country unless you are told

You have no freedom

Don't say you don't fit the profile
This is United Kingdom
Land of the free



(HUMAN RIGHT) (BROKE THE LAW)

when I left my home (human right)

made some decisions, joined a group
(broke the law)

cried for help (human right) but no one came

lost two babies, tried to save one (human right)

denied help (human right) or healthcare
(human right) (broke the law)

sought refuge, got misinterpreted,
no help came (human right)

got stripped of citizenship, no help came

they make the law (broke the law)

This collection of poems has been collaboratively written by members of Brighter Futures, as part of a series of workshops exploring how poetry can act as a tool for social change and can give voice to those silenced in public and political discourse. The poems provide an insight into the lives of young people on the sharp end of hostile immigration policy – and give control and agency over how their experiences are told, and by who.

The group were inspired by the work of BAME poets from migrant backgrounds including Gil Scott-Heron, Jose Olivarez, Jonathan Edwards and Maya Angelou and created their original work in collaboration with poet and current Jerwood/Arvon mentee Arji Manuelpillai.

‘Words Apart’ was a free evening of art, poetry and discussion hosted by Brighter Futures at the Ecology Pavilion, Mile End on Tuesday 19th November 2019.

An exhibition of artwork, inspired by this collection of poems, was created for the event. This artwork was developed through a series of workshops with Brighter Futures members, in collaboration with artist and graphic designer Kathryn Corlett.

Brighter Futures are a group of young people who work together to speak up for young migrants and their rights, using creativity as a tool to challenge negative perceptions of migration in the UK.

A collaborative project led by Praxis Community Projects and Kazzum Arts, Words Apart is brought to you by Brighter Futures with the support of Arts Council England, Paul Hamlyn Foundation and The Equality Trust.





www.brighterfutureslondon.co.uk