

WINDRUSH PROGRAMME RESOURCE PACK

2022



CONTENTS

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Why use this resource pack? | 2 |
| How to use this resource pack | 3 |
| Linking to the Curriculum | 4 |
| Acknowledgements | 5 |
| Introduction to Windrush | 6 |
| Section 1: Journey (Saying goodbye) | 7 |
| Section 2: Arrival (Winter) | 12 |
| Section 3: Settling in (The Market) | 14 |
| Section 4: Legacy (The Gift of Words) | 17 |
| Author profile – Grace Hallworth | 21 |
| Author profile – John Agard | 22 |
| Author profile - Grace Nichols | 23 |
| Author profile – Valerie Bloom | 24 |

WHY USE THIS RESOURCE PACK

"It is no exaggeration to say that the arrival of the Windrush generation fundamentally changed Britain. Black Caribbean migrants' food, music, language and celebrations have all influenced and become part of British heritage. But the experience of Black British people has not always been positive, and there is a need for all British children to learn about the whole Windrush experience. This will ensure a sense of belonging and mutual appreciation among all British students, whatever their background."

Professor Karen Sands-O'Connor, author of *Children's Publishing and Black Britain, 1965-2015*

This resource pack highlights the contributions of Caribbean and British Caribbean writers to British children's literature and the ways they have transformed and deepened our understanding of history, culture and the story of the Windrush.

It is developed to be an inspiration and a guide for young people, with a particular focus on those of Caribbean heritage, so that they can imagine and see themselves as the writers of the future.

The pack will primarily draw on the archives of four writers who grew up in the Caribbean but have lived and worked in Britain since the 1970s, poets: John Agard (awarded the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry and the Book Trust's Lifetime Achievement Award), Grace Nichols (Commonwealth Prize) and Valerie Bloom MBE; and author Grace Hallworth, all of whom have made an inestimable contribution to the British poetry scene.

Their archives offer unique insights into their creative processes and working lives, from finding a voice and facing down prejudice, to getting published and achieving recognition and critical acclaim for their art and creativity.

Grace Nichols and Valerie Bloom have also written novels for children which explore the experience of arriving in England from the Caribbean from a child's perspective, with important parallels to the experience of the Windrush generation.



HOW TEACHERS CAN USE IT

Overview

- The pieces shared from the Seven Stories Collection that are included in this pack offer a unique understanding and insight into the story of Windrush.
- These pieces are supplemented by learning and creative activities that adopt a flexible approach to support personal, learning and thinking skills.
- Through this pack, pupils will explore themes of migration and settlement, language and cultural diversity.

This pack will give you:

- Hints and tips on bringing the story and the legacy of Windrush to life for your class
- Activities designed to inspire a personal and emotional connection to the Windrush generation and the Seven Stories' archive
- Discussion questions that will help your class think more deeply about themes of Windrush
- Recommendations for further reading

The aims of this pack are to:

- Educate young people about real life experiences of migration from the Caribbean and building a new life in the UK
- Give young people a different view of who can be a writer
- Inspire their own creative processes and artistic intentions and to encourage them to see themselves as possible writers/ illustrators of the future
- Share original material from authors' archives to help young people explore how different authors develop their ideas into poems and stories
- Recognise and celebrate the achievements and contributions of writers of Caribbean descent
- Foster pride in the contributions of British Caribbean writers to British children's literature, especially in the realm of poetry



Suitability

This resource pack is suitable for upper Key Stage 2 and lower Key Stage 3. Many of the activities can be adapted to suit older or younger children.

Before starting

If you've not yet done so, it would be helpful to educate your pupils on the history and legacy of the Windrush Generation – you can find a recommended reading list in the appendix of this resource. Some activities included in this resource also require specific titles and so it might be helpful to add these to your school library. Please view and select any recommended books before using them to ensure they are suitable for the children in your class and appropriate for the Key Stage. This resource includes links to online videos hosted on Vimeo and YouTube as well as a link to the BBC website.

Please note that Seven Stories cannot be held responsible for the content of any linked websites so please check and prepare these before using them with your class

How this resource links to the National Curriculum and Ofsted Framework

Literacy Curriculum (KS2 and KS3)

- Engaging in spoken and written discussions
- Understanding and analysing testimonials both spoken and written
- Understanding historical records and extrapolating useful information

History Curriculum (KS2 and KS3)

- Understand historical concepts such as continuity and change, cause and consequence, similarity, difference and significance
- Understand the methods of historical enquiry
- Gain historical perspective
- Local history study
- Social, Cultural change in Britain post WW2

Cultural capital

Celebrating the cultures, languages and traditions that children and their families bring, helping pupils to understand the cultural background of their community's diversity to build the essential knowledge they will need to be educated citizens

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The *Windrush Stories* project (2021-22) was delivered by Seven Stories in collaboration with Melanie Abrahams and Rochelle Saunders at Renaissance One

The project and this learning resource were funded by Windrush Day Grants 2021

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This learning resource features words and poems by John Agard, Valerie Bloom, Grace Nichols and Grace Hallworth (all rights reserved)

Special thanks to Kandace Chimbiri, Beverley Prevatt Goldstein, Prof Karen Sands-O'Connor, and staff and pupils at Welbeck Academy, Newcastle

INTRODUCTION TO WINDRUSH

The following section contains brief background information on Windrush to share with your pupils. Further information can be found in the titles listed in the recommended reading list in the appendix of this resource.

HMT Empire Windrush docked at Tilbury in Essex on 21 June 1948.

The following day, 492 British subjects from the Caribbean were among the 1027 passengers who alighted to start new lives in Britain.

In 1948 Britain was rebuilding after the end of the Second World War and many men and women from the Caribbean had served in the British armed forces. The British government offered employment and the chance to live in the UK to many Caribbean countries who were still under British rule.

That same year, HMS Empire Windrush was traveling from Australia to England via the Atlantic and docked in Kingston, Jamaica, to pick up service men and women who were on leave. The ship was far from full, and an advertisement was placed in the press seeking paying passengers to travel to the United Kingdom.

With the promise of prosperity and employment, the Windrush passengers brought with them to the UK a wide range of trades and skills. The British Nationality Act of 1948 also granted the status of British Subject to citizens of the UK and the Commonwealth.

The 'Windrush Generation' referred to today are the people who emigrated from the Caribbean to Britain between the arrival of the Empire Windrush in 1948 and the passing of the 1971 Immigration Act, which ended large scale immigration from the Commonwealth.

It is important to note there is documented evidence of people of Black/African/ Caribbean descent having been in England for centuries prior to Windrush. Also between 1943-1944 (four years prior to Windrush) around 16,000 West Indians arrived in Britain to support the war effort-many returning home afterwards. However, after World War 2 the British Government encouraged people from her commonwealth countries to come and help rebuild Britain. This saw the start of modern mass migration from the Caribbean islands to England.

“On 22 June 1948 the Windrush sailed through a gateway in history... before and after this historical moment, even simultaneously, the same kind of arrival was occurring in various other parts of the world, as settled populations shifted, driven by one kind of necessity or another.”

Mike Phillips and Trevor Phillips
(Windrush, 1999)

I. THE JOURNEY (SAYING GOODBYE)

How does it feel to leave your home behind and travel thousands of miles to make a new life in a new country? In this section we look at poems, books and other resources that can help us better understand why members of the Windrush generation might have made the journey to the UK and how it may have felt to set out on such a lifechanging voyage.



This advert appeared in the Jamaican 'Daily Gleaner' newspaper on the 13th April 1948

Activity 1 – discussion

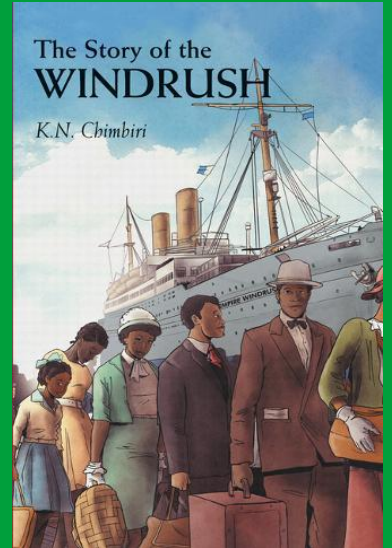
Share the newspaper advertisement featured in the 'Daily Gleaner' newspaper reporting on opportunities for individuals to join

Ask pupils to decipher what the advert reveals, who do they think it might be aimed for? What mode of transport is it offering? What is the ship called? Where is 'Empire Windrush' going?

Ask the pupils which deck of the ship they would like to travel on, imagining they are part of the Windrush generation.

Item 1: *The Story of Windrush* by K. N. Chimbiri

The Story of the Windrush (Scholastic, 2020) by K. N. Chimbiri is an excellent book to share with pupils, detailing accounts of those who made the long journey from the Caribbean to start a new life in Britain.



Activity 2 – discussion and drawing

Share pages 5-14 of *The Story of Windrush* by K. N. Chimbiri with your class. Ask your pupils what the book tells us about why people were attracted to Britain, what the potential jobs and opportunities were, and what was promised to those people coming from the Caribbean

Ask pupils to design a poster to entice people to move to Britain. What could be offered nowadays? Think about things like employment, healthcare, and education. What other ideas do your pupils have about why people might want to live in Britain?

Item 2: Untitled Poem by John Agard

There was a naughty
Little Spiderman
By the name of Anancy
And a naughty little man was he

He emigrates to England
To see what make
Dem call mothercountry

He found the air was hard as ice
He found the food
Didn't have much spice
And the winter faces
Crowding up the tube
Were as Merry as a Cherry

But Anancy took comfort
When dey stamp his passport
That his passport
Said temporary
That was back in 1953

© John Agard

This unpublished poem by John Agard, taken from a notebook in his archive at Seven Stories (an image of the original handwritten poem is included in the appendix to this resource – share this with your class alongside the transcription).

An unpublished poem or story is something an author has created and written down, but that has never been printed in a book for other people to read.

The poem features Anansi the spider, an important character in African and Caribbean folklore, who often appears as a trickster and storyteller.

In the poem Anansi emigrates from the Caribbean to London. The poem gives a playful insight into the reasons why many people moved from the Caribbean to England and their immediate impressions of England. It can also help us think about the feelings of anticipation that a person may feel during emigration.

Activity 3 – Discussion

Talk about the poem with your pupils and ask them to share their first impressions. Ask them to think about these questions: What do you think the poem tells us about why people moved to the UK? What do you think the poem tells us about what people looked forward to in the UK? What do you think the closing lines tell us about Anansi's stay in Britain?

Activity 4 – Examining the Archive

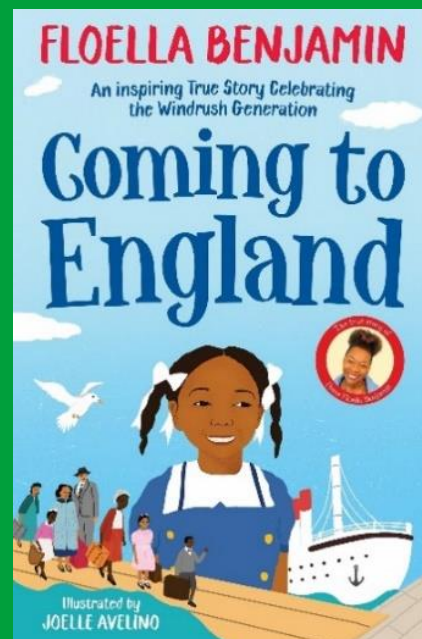
Share the image of the notebook that this poem is taken from with your class (you can find the image in the appendix of this resource). The notebooks that John tends to write in are small – no bigger than a mobile phone – and he often carries one around in his pocket. He's been known to write poems and ideas when travelling on the train and when out and about at the shops. Ask your class what they imagine when thinking of a writer or poet at work. What else could you do to keep hold of your ideas when you're travelling?

Item 3: *Coming to England* by Floella Benjamin

Floella Benjamin is an actress, singer, writer, presenter and politician who was born in Trinidad and who moved to the UK with her siblings in 1960 when she was just 11 years old. She is familiar to many people through her work as a presenter of children's television which she started doing in the 1970s. However, Floella has done many other things including acting in films and writing books. She is also a Baroness and sits in the House of Lords!

Floella's book *Coming to England* (picturebook published by Macmillan, 2020 – originally published Pavilion, 1995) is all about her experience of moving from Trinidad and settling in England in 1960. Floella describes the excitement and many new experiences the journey offered but she also writes about the taunting and rejection she faced at school.

In chapter 7 of the book, 'The Last Goodbye', Floella describes boarding the boat for England, the sights and sounds of the ship and her feelings of excitement and apprehension.



Activity 5 – thinking about senses

Read aloud to your class chapter 7, 'The Last Goodbye' from Floella Benjamin's autobiographical book for children, *Coming to England*.

Using the table on the next page ask pupils to imagine themselves standing at the port ready to board the ship that will take them to start a new life. Ask them to fill it out thinking of the sights they might see, the sounds they might hear, the smells, the tastes on their tongues and emotions they might be feeling, using Floella Benjamin's account as inspiration. Ask pupils to share back their ideas to the rest of the class.

You are at a port about to set foot on a ship that will take you to a new life in a different country. Write down what you can imagine are the...

| SIGHTS | SOUNDS | SMELLS |
|--------|--------|--------|
| | | |

| THOUGHTS | FEELINGS |
|----------|----------|
| | |

Activity 6 – Mapping the journey

For this activity you will need to visit the BBC's webpage, 'Windrush: Who exactly was on board?' (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-43808007>). The page has images and graphics that provide information on who travelled on HMT Windrush, including details such as their ages, occupations and their countries of origin.

If you have a large world map or globe, ask the pupils to gather around it and search for the locations of where people started their journey and where they originated from. Alternatively, you could always find an image of a world map online or use Google Maps for a more interactive experience! What ocean did they need to cross to reach Britain how long do you think their journey may have taken?

Ask pupils to find out how many days the journey took from leaving Trinidad to arriving in Essex at Tilbury Docks. Would you have wanted to be on a ship for that long? What would you have done to keep entertained?



2. ARRIVAL (WINTER)

The Caribbean has a tropical climate which means that the weather is hot and sunny all year round (though it can often be wet and stormy during different islands' rainy season!). The British climate, in contrast, is much colder. The change in the weather is often one of the first things people notice when they arrive in a country that has a different climate. There are lots of poems and novels in the Seven Stories archive in which writers from the Caribbean – or their characters – talk about their first experience of British weather and particularly their first winter!

Item 1: *Surprising Joy* by Valerie Bloom

The following is an extract from a draft version of *Surprising Joy*, a novel by Jamaican-born author and poet Valerie Bloom. *Surprising Joy* is fictional story inspired by Valerie's own experiences and is about a young girl moving from the Caribbean to come and live in England. In this passage, Joy arrives in England and experiences the freezing temperatures of winter and, what she calls, 'cold sunshine'.

'I was a little cold in the airport, but not as cold as when I was in the plane. I still had on my jacket. I saw the sun shining outside and I couldn't wait to get out and warm myself in the sunshine. But when we got out into the open I felt like somebody had just emptied a bucket of iced water over me. I sucked in my breath and stood up stiff with shock. Then I turned round and bolted back inside. There was no way I was going out in that. In all my born days I never knew there was such a thing as cold sunshine.'

© Valerie Bloom

Activity 1 – discussion and exploration

Get your class to think about the following questions: What feelings do you think Joy is experiencing in this passage? What do you think Joy means by the phrase "cold sunshine"? What kind of day do you think Joy is describing here?

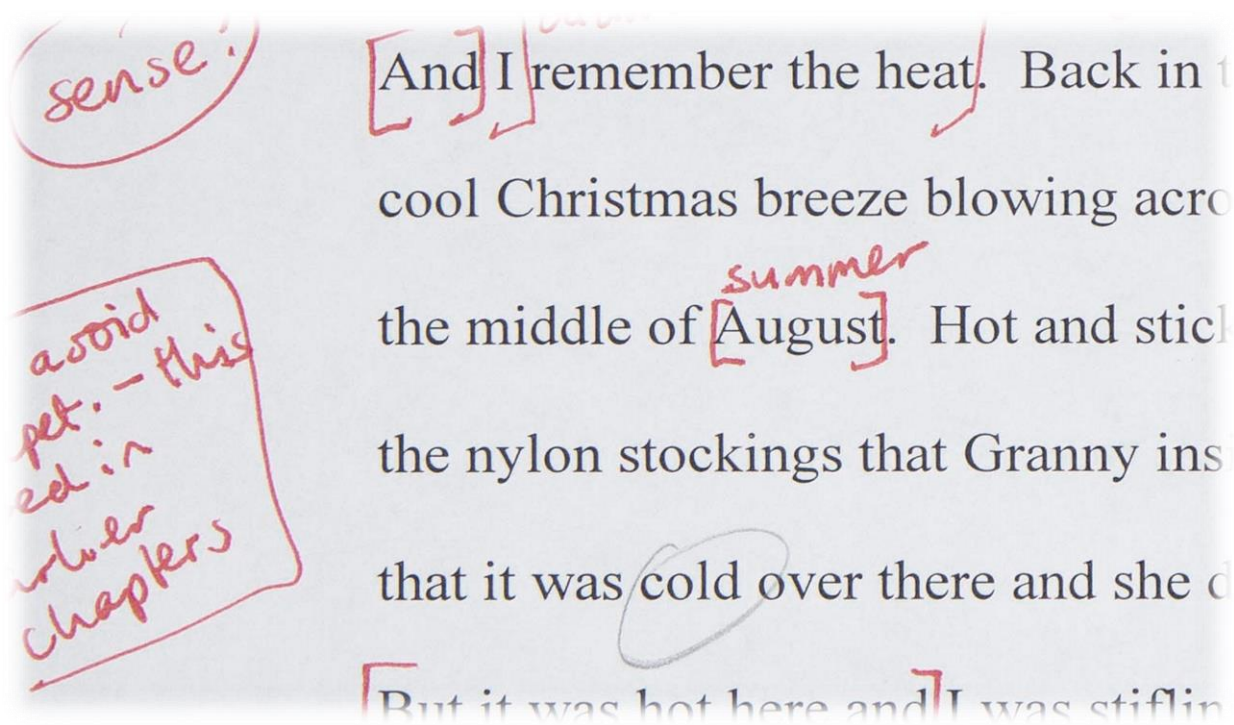
Look at the poems by John Agard featured in Section 1 and Section 3 of this resource. Can the class find any references to winter or cold weather in these?

Activity 2 – Creative writing

Ask your pupils to each write a diary entry describing their experiences of a real journey that they have taken, what feelings they had about going somewhere new and what their first impressions of this new place were. The journey in question could be anything: a first visit to another town, a holiday somewhere new and unfamiliar, or a move to a new home.

Activity 3 – Exploring the archive

Share with your class the image of the original draft of *Surprising Joy* from the Seven Stories archive (you can find the image in the appendix of this resource). This page, typed by Valerie Bloom, is from a 'draft copy' of the story. A 'draft' is an early version of a story that needs some changes before it's ready to be published as a book. There are lots of other draft copies of *Surprising Joy* in the Seven Stories archive, each of which are all slightly different. Why do the class think an author might write several different drafts of a story before it gets published as a book? The red scribbles on the document are notes by an editor. Looking at these notes, what do the class think the job of an editor is?



Item 2: *Leslyn in London*, by Grace Nichols

'They were nearing the underground now, a round, red, black and white sign said so, and soon they were disappearing with a lot of other people into the station. Her father bought some tickets to Tottenham Court Road as her mother wanted to go there to get some books from Foyles, so they followed the people hurrying ahead of them. Down some steps, through a yellowish tunnel, into another tunnel.

Leslyn who had never been on the underground before or had never been on an escalator either (there weren't any escalators in Guyana) gasped in surprise when they came to the long moving shiny stairs.

As they went down, other people were coming up on another one and she thought that the escalators looked like moving slides with steps on them as she watched the heads of people gliding in and out of the ground.'

© Grace Nichols

Beyond the weather, there are many other differences between life in the UK and life in many Caribbean countries that might leave a big impression on people arriving here for the first time. The above is an extract from a draft version of *Leslyn in London* by Grace Nichols. Similarly to *Surprising Joy*, the book is about a young girl who moves to the UK from the Caribbean. Like Valerie Bloom, Grace Nichols was able to draw on her own experiences of making the journey; she was born in Guyana and moved to England when she was 27.

In this extract, Leslyn goes on the London Underground for the first time. This passage gives us an idea of the differences in day-to-day life that people may encounter when they move to a new place. It also captures the feelings of nervousness, wonder, fear, and excitement that someone may experience on arrival in the hustle and bustle of a big city like London.

Activity 4 - drawing

Ask your pupils to draw a picture showing what they imagine this scene at the London Underground looks like to Leslyn. How busy is it? How does author Grace Nichols describe the escalators? What colours are on the sign for the underground?

3. SETTLING IN (THE MARKET)

Food is a big part of life for lots of us. Many people have a favourite food that they love to eat and that reminds them of home. Across Britain, and particularly in big cities like London, there are lots of shops and markets that specialise in Caribbean foods. As well as being a place for people to find their favourite foods, the bigger markets bring some of the life, music and culture of Caribbean countries to British streets.

Item 1 – *Leslyn in London* by Grace Nichols

This is an extract from another draft of *Leslyn in London* by Grace Nichols. In this passage, Leslyn visits Shepherd's Bush Market, hears the calypso music and sees the fruits.

Shepherd's Bush Market is a big market in West London that has been operating since 1914. It has market stalls that sell all sorts of things including food, clothes, jewellery, fabrics and even pets. Lots of people from countries in the Caribbean settled in the area after Windrush and a growing number of stalls selling products for Caribbean communities (as well as African and Indian communities) quickly began appearing.

'At Shepherd's Bush Market calypso music was playing in the background and Mars began to shake-up her waist a little as she moved around, stopping here and there to pick up some nice things for her skin and hair. Leslyn felt good to see her mother looking cheerful again.

The market reminded Leslyn of home. She could see mangoes, even though they were a bit wrinkled, and she could see dried coconuts, plantains and sugarcane.

They bought some plantains and saltfish which her father loved and they bought a red, gold and Rasta beret...'

© Grace Nichols

Activity 1 – examining the archive

Compare the image of this page of the draft of *Leslyn in London* with the page that's quoted in section 2 (you can find images of both pages in the appendix of this resource). Ask your class about any differences they notice between the ways Grace wrote these two drafts down. Which draft do they think was written first and why?

Activity 2 – learn more about Calypso and create a song

In the above passage, Grace Nichols mentions calypso music playing in the background at the market. Calypso is a popular musical form from Trinidad just as reggae is from Jamaica. It's been called 'The People's Newspaper', the idea that you can be the person giving the news. You don't have to rely on important people such as the Prime Minister to give you all the stories that you want to know, you can also make your own stories. You can choose what's important too. You can make it important through putting it in a song or writing about it. As the journey across to England took several weeks, those on board the ship had to find activities to keep them entertained, singing was a popular choice and something everyone could join in with.

Lord Kitchener was the most famous calypsonian on board the Empire Windrush; listen to his calypso 'London is the Place for Me' here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5OEiGditnI4>

Some children may recognise the song from the Paddington movies!

Now, ask the pupils, "What did you do, yesterday morning?" Collect ideas from around the class.

Listen to the sound clip 'Yesterday Morning' (included below); this clip will contain ideas for lyrics for the calypso

Yesterday Morning

Yesterday Morning (x2)

I got out of bed around 7.30

Yesterday morning

I had to have my breakfast in a hurry

Yesterday morning

I grab an umbrella because it start to rain

Yesterday morning

Although I moved very fast I still missed the train



Yesterday Morning with Lyrics.mp3



Yesterday Morning without Lyrics.mp3

Play it again with pupils joining in this time! Ask them to listen to the beat and rhythm in the calypso, does it repeat each time or differ?

Ask the pupils to think about what 'news' they can share about what they did yesterday morning? Tell your own story, it could be funny or comical, but it must be honest. You can say it in your own style like you're having a conversation with a friend, and it could include things important to you and your local area.

Play the second sound clip of 'Yesterday Morning' whilst the pupils are busy creating their calypso's, this version doesn't contain any lyrics, so listening while they work, will help them to count the beats and allow them to fit in their ideas.

Ask if pupils would like to share their calypso's back with the rest of the class, playing 'Yesterday Morning' quietly in the background.

Item 2 – ‘Ackee, Breadfruit, Callaloo’ by Valerie Bloom

The following extract is from a draft version of a poem called ‘Ackee, Breadfruit, Callaloo’ by Valerie Bloom. The poem is an alphabet rhyme which features many different Jamaican foods. Valerie has written this poem in Jamaican Patois (you can find out more about Patois and its origins in section 4 below).

A fe de Ackee hangin high up in de tree

**B fe de Breadfruit taste so nice wid de
Ackee**

C fe Callaloo Papa tek mek Pepperpot

**D fe Dasheen, yuh never know de Dasheen
hot?**

**E fe de Eggplant growin wild outside de
gate**

F fe Fla-Fla, Salt-fish fritters on de plate

**G fe Guinep, small an’ round an’ plump an’
green**

**H fe Hot Pepper, jus mek sure dat knife
was clean**

I fe Irish Moss, drink mek from seaweed

J fe Jack Fruit, eat de flesh and eat de seed’

© Valerie Bloom

Activity 3 – creative writing

Ask your pupils to create an alphabet poem of their own. They could make it about favourite foods like Valerie Bloom did. Or they could take inspiration from the sights and sounds of the world around them such as the town or city they live in. Ask them to include examples of their own way of speaking or dialect when writing the poem

Activity 4 – find out and share

Find out more about the foods mentioned in the poem. Have any of the class eaten these foods before? If they have, can they describe them to their classmates? If the foods are unfamiliar to the class, what do they imagine they taste and feel like?

Item 3 – Unpublished poem by John Agard

I have a little Mango seed
Never would it grow
Never would it bear
And the reason is you see

My grandma
In the West Indies
Sent it for me
All the way from over there

I know
If I plant it in the snow
Never would it grow
Never would it bear

And so
I put it under my pillow
Because my grandma
In the West Indies
She sent it specially for me
That little Mango seed

© John Agard

In this unpublished poem by John Agard, a mango seed won't grow in Britain, due to the cold weather. The author of the poem keeps it under a pillow as a reminder of home.

This poem can tell us a lot about gifts from home and the memories they bring us. It also helps us think about how people build a new home in a different country by bringing together objects and memories from two different places.

Many people who are starting a new life in a different country might think about the future and wonder whether they will be able to put down roots and grow as a person. In John's poem, the imagined author has a mango seed that won't grow in Britain. This makes us think about their own hopes and worries about whether they will grow as a person in their new home.

Activity 5 – discussion and list making

Talk to your class about why they think the mango seed is important for the child in the poem?

Ask your pupils to each make a list of objects or gifts that they would take to a new place to remind them of home.



John Agard performs at Newcastle City Library for a Windrush Stories event
© Seven Stories

4. LEGACY (THE GIFT OF WORDS)

The arrival of the Windrush generation had a seismic impact on British culture. The arts in particular, from painting to theatre to music, have been completely transformed by the influence of Caribbean artists and creators. Caribbean writers and poets have changed the way many of us think about words and storytelling, often using Creole, as well as a distinct musicality and rhythm, to play with language and turn English on its head. As a result, many Caribbean poets and storytellers have found popularity among children and adults, though they've often had to overcome challenges and prejudice along the way.

Item 1: *Fruits* by Valerie Bloom

‘Half a paw-paw in the basket
Only one o we can have it
Wonder which one it will be
I have a feelin dat it me.

One guinep up in the tree
Hanging down there tempting me,
It don’ mek no sense to pick it,
One guinep can’t feed a cricket.

Two custard apple pon the shelf,
I know I hide them there meself,
When night come an’ it get dark
Me an’ them will have a talk.

Three naseberry I jus’ might
Give one o’ them a nice big bite,
Cover up the bite jus’ so, sis,
Then no one will never notice.

Four red apple near me chair,
Who so careless put them there?
Them don’ know now how me love apple?
Well, thank God fe silly people.

Five jew-plum, I can’t believe it!
How they know jew-plum’s me fav’rit?
But why they hide them in the cupboard?
Cho, people can be so awkward?

Six sweetsop, you want a nibble?
Why baby must always dribble,
Come wipe you mout, it don’t mek sense
To broadcast the evidence.

Seven Mango! what a find
The smaddy who lef them really kind,
One fe you an’ six fe me,
If you want more, climb the tree.

Eight orange fe cousin Clem,
But I have only one problem,
What to do with the eight skin
That the orange them come in.

Nine jackfruit! not even me
Can finish nine, but let me see,
I don’t suppose that they will miss one,
That was hard, but now me done.

Ten banana, mek them stay,
I feeling really full today,
Mek me lie down on me bed, quick,
Lawd, a feeling really sick.’

© Valerie Bloom

The poem on the previous page is a transcript of a draft of 'Fruits', a poem by Valerie Bloom. Like Valerie's other poem, 'Ackee, Breadfruit, Callaloo', 'Fruits' features lots of different fruits that are native to Jamaica. This particular poem is written in Jamaican Patois – Valerie often writes her poems in Patois as well as writing in 'standard' English. She often swaps between the two, writing a poem in standardised English before changing it to Patois (or vice versa). When Valerie visits schools to read her poems and talk to the children, she usually begins with a lesson on Patois!

Fruits was later made into a picturebook with illustrations by English artist, David Axtell. The book was widely praised for its clever writing and beautiful, vivid illustrations and won bronze in the prestigious annual Smarties book award.

Jamaican Patois is a form of Creole (a language made up of 2 different languages that have been simplified) that combines many words of English origin with words of West African origin. Jamaican Patois was formed in the 17th century in West and central Africa when African people adopted some dialects and words from the English slave owners.

Activity 1 – reading and discussing

Read the poem out loud, thinking about the Jamaican Patois, what does it sound like? Can you work out what some of the Patois words and phrases mean?

Activity 2 – listing

Try to find Jamaican Patois equivalents for common English words and phrases that you use and make a phrase list



Item 2: 'Poor-me-one' by Grace Hallworth

The following is an extract from a letter written by Grace Hallworth to her editor about Grace's book, *Poor-me-one*. The book is based on a traditional tale from Trinidad and Tobago and the name of the tale comes from the sound made by the Potoo bird.

'I'm not sure whether the illustrator knows anything about Trinidad but get the impression that there is a lack of knowledge of the flora and fauna at any rate, but more pertinently about the bird on which the legend is based.

If she is unable to locate a picture of the 'Poor-me-one' which falls in the classification of 'nightjars', I am happy to provide an illustration. Similarly the illustration of a red-pepper tree or shrub can be supplied if necessary. The representation is quite unlike a pepper-tree but more like a cocoa tree.'

© Grace Hallworth

Activity 3 – Discussion

Do you think Grace is happy or unhappy about the illustrations for the book? What do you think has happened here?

Why might it be important for an illustrator to have an understanding and knowledge of the place they are drawing? Why do you think it is important to Grace that the illustrator can draw the scenes in the story accurately?

Activity 3 – role play: authors and illustrators

Explore the process between author and illustrator with this fun illustration activity. In pairs, one person takes on the role of the 'Author' and the other person is the 'Illustrator'. The author should write down a detailed description of a place that they know well – they should think about how the place looks, describe what you would see if you were there. It could be their garden, their street or a place they visit often. After they've done this they should pass it to their partner to make a drawing of the place based only on the description. See how well the picture compares to the scene that the author has in their mind. Swap roles and try the exercise again.

Ask the 'Authors' to make sure to highlight what is right as well as what is wrong with the illustrator's picture. Imagine that this picture will be used in a book all about them and the place they have chosen. How would that make them feel about the importance of getting the picture right?

Ask the 'illustrators' to think about how challenging they found the task. Does this make them think that being an illustrator is easy or difficult? Think about what the illustrator could do to make sure they can draw the scene accurately

Activity 4 – examining the archive

Look at Grace's original letter from the Seven Stories archive (you can find an image of the letter in the appendix to this resource). Ask your class to work out where Grace was when she wrote the letter and the date of the letter.

Item 3: Letters from children to Valerie Bloom

These are extracts from letters sent by schoolchildren to Valerie Bloom in response to her work. We have lots of letters like these in the Seven Stories archive. They show the response authors like Valerie receive from young readers and the meaning their work holds to children of different backgrounds.

This letter is dated 16th March 2004 from a child in London:

'Dear Ms Bloom

Thank you for the great poems and help you have given the class.

My favourite part was the Jamaican poems as I haven't heard Patawa language in a while. My Grandad is Jamaican and I haven't seen him for years, so it [brought] back memories.

You are probably wondering who I was. I was the guy at the back with the curly hair. My poem was Aargon.

I hope you could come again and give previous classes the fun.'

This letter is dated 1st April 2004 from a child in Scarborough, North Yorkshire:

'Dear Valerie Bloom

This week we have been looking at your magnificent poems. We have listened to some of your poems, Fruits, Haircut Rap, When Granny, Pinda Cake. I have enjoyed all your poems but I enjoyed Fruits the best because it makes you feel HUNGRY and it describes the fruits you eat. It let me learn a lot about Jamaican people and language'

Activity 5 – discussion

Read the letters with your class (images of the original letters can be found in the appendix of this resource). What do you think these letters tell us about the children who wrote them and what Valerie's work made them feel? How are the letters different? What do you think these letters tell us about what different children might get from the work of writers of the Windrush generation and after?

Activity 6 – creative writing

Encourage your class to think about all of the work you have explored in this resource. What would they want to say to these authors? Ask your class to each write a letter to one of the authors featured and tell them what you think about their work and experiences.

AUTHOR PROFILES



GRACE HALLWORTH

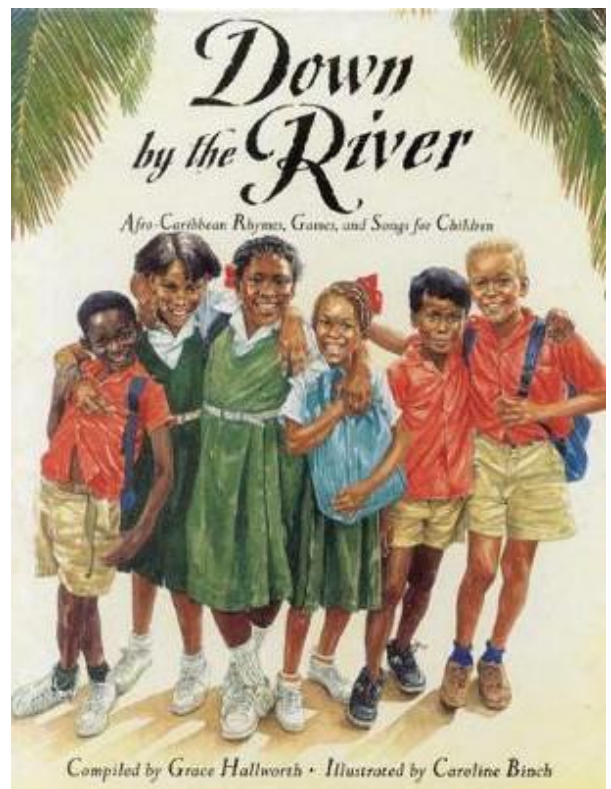
Grace Hallworth was a storyteller, writer, librarian and a mentor to storytellers and wordsmiths.

Born in Trinidad within a family of teachers - including her sister, cousin and aunt - she fostered a propensity for words and a talent for weaving narratives. From early on she told stories to friends and family and cultivated her interest in passing on stories and words - particularly folklore, myths and legends of Trinidad and Tobago. Hallworth had a passion for stories and if she liked one, she would ask teller for permission to pass it on, a habit which is steeped within storytelling traditions.

Grace's first job was setting up libraries in Tobago. Soon after she gained a scholarship to study in Canada, before moving to, and settling in, Britain. There she met Trevor Hallworth, a civil engineer. They married in 1964. Over the years, they visited many countries and made many connections across oral-led cultures and literature practices and heritages.

As children's librarian for Hertfordshire (1957 to 1985) Hallworth created projects and initiatives and appeared on television and radio as a storyteller and a contributor to media discussions on books and multiculturalism. She published several books of folk tales, and her collection *Down by the River* was nominated for the Kate Greenaway Medal.

In the last years of her life, she was working on a novel, *Undersea*, for young people and adults. Set in Tobago, it fused myth and contemporary fiction.



Children's Books – Selected Bibliography

Cric Crac: A collection of West Indian Stories (Heinemann Young Books 1990)

Mouth Open, Story Jump Out (Mammoth 1992)

Down by the River: Afro-Caribbean rhymes, games and songs for children (Mammoth 1997)

Sing Me a Story! Song and Dance Tales from the Caribbean (August House Publishing Inc. 2000)

JOHN AGARD



Photo by Camilla Greenwell courtesy of Renaissance One

John Agard is one of Britain's foremost cross-cultural voices and is widely regarded as a national treasure and champion of poetry. An author of over fifty books of poetry as well as many plays, he is well known for delivering inspiring work with young people and adults. Born in Guyana, he moved to England in 1977 where, prior to becoming a full time poet, he was a touring lecturer for the Commonwealth Institute, travelling to UK schools to promote a better understanding of Caribbean culture. A former Writer-In-Residence at the Southbank Centre and the National Maritime Museum, Agard has also been a librarian, journalist and teacher of languages. He has visited schools to give keynotes and talks for decades and thousands of teenagers across three generations would have read his poems as part of the English GCSE anthology. His poem *Half-caste* has particularly helped to make his work hugely popular among schoolchildren around the UK.

In addition to writing for children, Agard has written many collections for adults and performed monologues, one person shows and plays. He has also co-edited poetry collections with his wife Grace Nichols. His subject matters are varied and his performance style and writing revels in an independent spirit, a puckish wit and keen social observations.

Awards and Accolades

Lifetime Achievement Award, Book Trust, 2021
Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry, 2012
CLPE Poetry Award, 2009 (*Young Inferno*)
Paul Hamlyn Award for Poetry, 1997

Children's Books – Selected Bibliography

The Calypso Alphabet (Collins, 1990)
Hello H2 (Hodder Children's Books, 2003)
The Young Inferno (Frances Lincoln, 2009)
Come All You Little Persons (Faber, 2017)
Books Make Good Pets (Orchard Books, 2020)
Coyote's Soundbite (Lantana, 2021)
Windrush Child (Walker Books, 2022)

GRACE NICHOLS



Grace Nichols is a poet and editor whose work has been central to our understanding of the historical and cultural connections between the Caribbean and the British for nearly three decades.

Her work has touched on various facets of life as a woman, as a Black woman and as a woman of colour as well as experiences of being an immigrant living in the UK. Nichols was born in Guyana in 1950 and moved to the UK in 1977. She has written many books for both adults and children as well as edited collections with John Agard and other writers.

Her work is influenced by the history and culture of her homeland, and has had many ranges of focus including oral story-telling traditions, folklore and the lived experiences and cultures of women and indigenous peoples. Nichols' writing and performance connects the Creole of her homeland with standard English, and creates new possibilities for rhythm, rhyme and the imagination

The Poet Laureate, Simon Armitage, said:

Over the past four decades, Grace has been an original, pioneering voice in the British poetry scene. A noted reader and performer of her work, she has embraced the tones of her adopted country and yet maintained the cadences of her native tongue. Her poems are alive with characters from the folklore and fables of her Caribbean homeland, and echo with the rhymes and rhythms of her family and ancestors. Song-like or prayer-like on occasion, they exhibit an honesty of feeling and a generosity of spirit.

Awards and Accolades

Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry, 2021
Guyana Poetry Award Never live unloved, 2008
Elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, 2007
Cholmondeley Award, 2000
Guyana Poetry Prize (for *Sunris*), 1996
Arts Council Writers' Award, 1986
Commonwealth Poetry Prize (for *I is a Long Memored Woman*), 1983

Children's Books – Selected Bibliography

Cosmic Disco (Frances Lincoln Children's Books)
Under the Moon and Over the Sea, with John Agard (Walker Books)
Pumpkin Grumpkin, with John Agard (Walker Books)
Everybody Got a Gift (A&C Black)
The Poet Cat (Bloomsbury)

VALERIE BLOOM

Valerie Bloom is the prize-winning author of poetry for adults and children, plus picture books, preteen and teenage novels and stories for children.

A poet who is known as an inspiring and charismatic performer as well as an adept writer, she has presented audio and TV poetry programmes for the BBC and other organisations.

Bloom grew up in Clarendon, Jamaica and was enchanted by literature from an early age. Strongly influenced and inspired by Jamaican culture, patois and styles as well as Caribbean identity has led to her fusing them within her books and performances as things to be celebrated and shared. This has resulted in poetry collections that are often exuberant in spirit and which revel in sound, rhythm and performance as well as the creative placing of words.

Valerie moved to England in 1979 and from an early age, began writing and performing regularly, after trying her hand as a librarian, arts officer and even a steel band instructor!

Her work has been published in over 500 anthologies, including GCSE and A-Level syllabi. As well as running writing workshops and courses in schools and elsewhere, Valerie performs across the country and internationally. She has appeared everywhere from local libraries and youth centres to the Royal Albert Hall and is a familiar voice on television and radio.



Awards and Accolades

MBE for services to poetry
CLPE Poetry Award
Smarties Book Prize Bronze Award

Children's Books – Selected Bibliography

Fruits: a Caribbean Counting Poem (Macmillan Children's Books)
Hot Like Fire and Other Poems (Bloomsbury)
Jaws and Claws and Things with Wings (Harper Collins)
Let Me Touch the Sky: Selected Poems for Children (Macmillan Children's Books, 2000)
Ackee, Breadfruit, Callaloo: An Edible Alphabet (Bogle-L'Ouverture and Macmillan Caribbean)

APPENDIX I – RECOMMENDED READING LIST

Picture Books

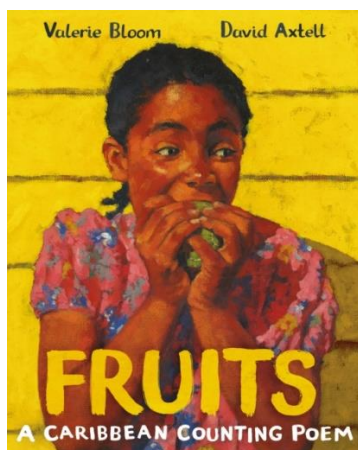


Coming to England by Floella Benjamin & Diane Ewen (Pan Macmillan)

A picture book edition of Coming to England, the inspiring true story of Baroness Floella Benjamin: from Trinidad, to London as part of the Windrush generation, to the House of Lords. Follow ten-year-old Floella as she and her family set sail from the Caribbean to a new life in London. Alone on a huge ship for two weeks, then tumbled into a cold and unfriendly London, coming to England wasn't at all what Floella had expected

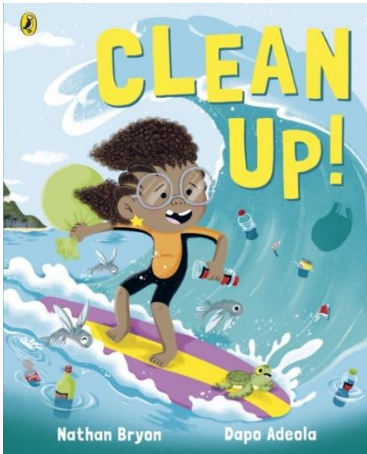
What will her new school be like? Will she meet the Queen? Filled with optimism and joy, yet deeply personal and relevant, young children will resonate with Floella's experiences of moving home and making friends.

Alongside vibrant illustrations by Diane Ewen, this powerful story shows little people how courage and determination can always overcome adversity.



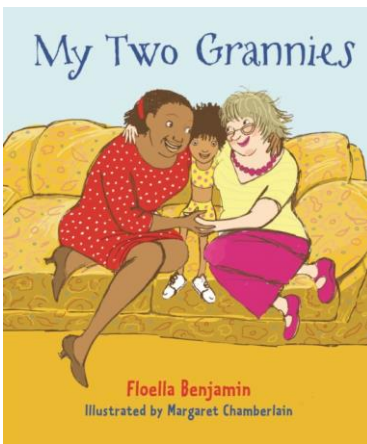
Fruits by Valerie Bloom & David Axtell (Pan Macmillan)

How much fruit do you think one small girl can manage to eat in one day? In the case of the narrator of this counting poem, the answer is a lot! Count from one to ten and learn the names of some Caribbean fruits, and find out what happens after eating a cocktail of mangoes, bananas and more. Valerie Bloom's Fruits is a Caribbean counting poem full of sumptuous illustrations by David Axtell, the creator of We're Going on a Lion Hunt. The rhyming text will help children learn to count whilst exploring the many fruits of the Caribbean.



Clean Up! by Nathan Bryon & Dapo Adeola (Penguin)

Join lovable, passionate Rocket as she sets off on a mission to save a Caribbean island from plastic pollution! When Rocket goes for a holiday to visit her grandparents, she's shocked by the pollution that is spoiling their island home and putting the local sea life at risk. Can she think of a way to save the day? This is a heartwarming, timely and empowering picture book, showing how we ALL can make a difference.



My Two Grannies by Floella Benjamin & Margaret Chamberlain (Frances Lincoln)

Alvina has two grannies who she loves with all her heart. Grannie Vero is from the Caribbean island of Trinidad. Grannie Rose is from the north of England.

When Alvina's parents go away on holiday, both the grannies move in to Alvina's house to look after her. But the two grannies want to do different things, eat different food, play different games and tell different stories. The grannies get crosser and crosser with each other, but Alvina thinks of a way they can do all the things their own way so the grannies can become the best of friends.



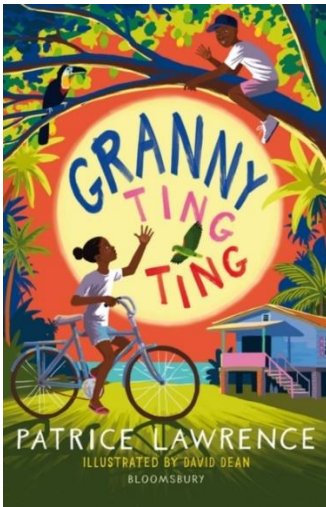
Books Make Good Pets by John Agard & Momoko Abe (Hachette)

Books make good pets and don't need going to the vet. You don't have to keep them on a lead or throw them a stick. They'll wag their words whenever you flick their dog-eared pages.

Even howl an ancient tale for the inward-listening ear. Did you know that a book can take you anywhere? You only need to turn the pages of a story, and in a moment, you and your book could be crossing the waves in a pirate ship... or diving with mermaids... or even snoozing with a dragon.

Books really DO make good pets! Why don't you peep inside this one, and take your mind on an adventure?

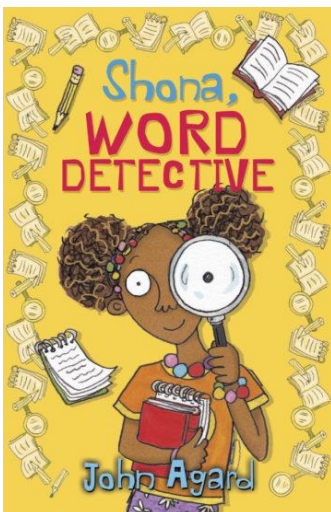
Younger Readers



Granny Ting Ting by Patrice Lawrence & David Dean (Bloomsbury)

A quirky family comedy set in the Caribbean from prize-winning author Patrice Lawrence. Shayla can't wait to see her cousin Michael again. Last time, they had great fun chasing Granny's chickens and playing hide-and-seek in the bamboo by the river.

But Michael thinks everything in London is better than in Trinidad where Shayla lives, which makes him better than her, doesn't it? Soon everything's a competition, especially when there's hot pepper sauce involved! This humorous story featuring characters from Trinidad by Patrice Lawrence, the winner of the Waterstones Children's Book Prize 2017 for Older Fiction, has fun black-and-white illustrations by David Dean and is perfect for children who are developing as readers.



Shona, Word Detective by John Agard & Michael Broad (Barrington Stoke)

Shona has always loved words. She even has her very own strange word thesaurus! When her and her classmates learn that some languages are dying out, Miss Bates tasks them with becoming top-class word detectives, proving to themselves and their families that there are many beautiful languages still thriving, even within their own classroom.

Older Readers



Freedom by Catherine Johnson (Scholastic)

An action-packed and pacy story about a boy's experience of slavery in Britain.

Nathaniel doesn't want to move to England with his master's family, leaving behind his mother and sister on the Jamaican plantation. But then he remembers what his mother told him: once a slave sets foot on English soil, they're free. Perhaps he can earn his fortune and buy his family's freedom, too.



Windrush Child by Benjamin Zephaniah (Scholastic)

In this heart-stopping adventure, Benjamin Zephaniah shows us what it was like to be a child of the Windrush generation. Leonard is shocked when he arrives with his mother in the port of Southampton. His father is a stranger to him, it's cold and even the Jamaican food doesn't taste the same as it did back home in Maroon Town.

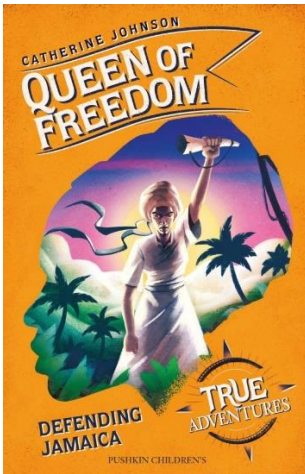
But his parents have brought him here to try to make a better life, so Leonard does his best not to complain, to make new friends, to do well at school - even when people hurt him with their words and with their fists. How can a boy so far from home learn to enjoy his new life when so many things count against him?



When Life Gives You Mangoes by Kereen Getten (Pushkin)

Nothing much happens in Sycamore, the small village where Clara lives - at least, that's how it looks. She loves eating ripe mangoes fallen from trees, running outside in the rainy season and escaping to her secret hideout with her best friend Gaynah. There's only one problem - she can't remember anything that happened last summer.

When a quirky girl called Rudy arrives from England, everything starts to change. Gaynah stops acting like a best friend, while Rudy and Clara roam across the island and uncover an old family secret. As the summer reaches its peak and the island storms begin, Clara's memory starts to return and she must finally face the truth of what happened last year.

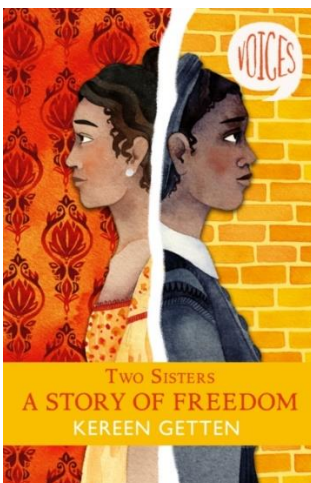


Queen of Freedom: Defending Jamaica by Catherine Johnson (Pushkin)

1720. Blue Mountains, windward Jamaica. In the sweltering heat Captain Shettlewood leads a troop of British soldiers through the thick trees towards the river.

They are hunting slaves who have escaped from the brutal plantations. Their mission: to find them, and kill them. But up ahead, hidden among the rocks above the water, a group of men with cutlasses and muskets wait patiently for the instructions of their leader.

Queen Nanny is a 'wise woman' with a reputation for ancient obeah magic, and a guerilla fighter with a genius for organisation. So the battle for Jamaica begins, the First Maroon War, in which the maroons - escaped slaves - will make a final, do-or-die stand against the slavers and soldiers of Empire.

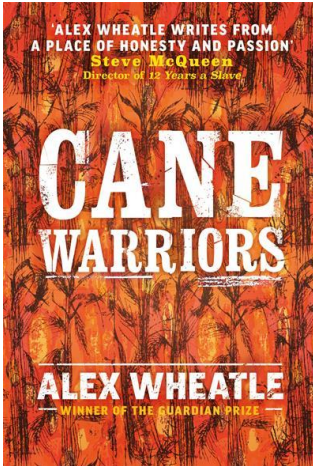


Two Sisters: A Story of Freedom by Kereen Getten (Scholastic)

Ruth has always known her half-sister isn't like her - her almost-white skin means she is allowed certain things that Ruth can only dream of. Anna wishes she could be braver, like her sister, Ruth. But she has had to live with the fact that the smallest mistake would land not only her in danger, but Ruth and their mother, too.

When Ruth and Anna are shipped off to Master John's home in London for their safety, it isn't the haven they imagined. Their differences force them apart - Anna is allowed to stay upstairs while Ruth is banished to the servants' quarters and is forced to work. With whispers of freedom on the city's streets, will Anna find the courage to stand up for Ruth before it's too late?

Young Adult Readers



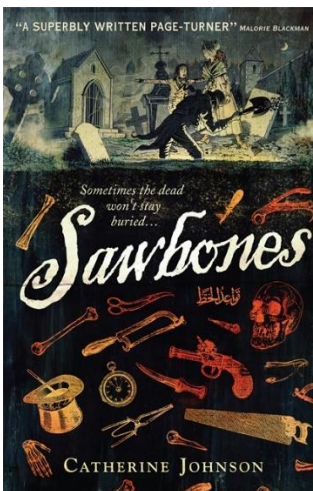
Cane Warriors by Alex Wheatle (Andersen Press)

Nobody free till everybody free. Moa is fourteen. The only life he has ever known is toiling on the Frontier sugar cane plantation for endless hot days, fearing the vicious whips of the overseers.

Then one night he learns of an uprising, led by the charismatic Tacky. Moa is to be a cane warrior, and fight for the freedom of all the enslaved people in the nearby plantations. But before they can escape, Moa and his friend Keverton must face their first great task: to kill their overseer, Misser Donaldson.

Time is ticking, and the day of the uprising approaches . . .

Irresistible, gripping and unforgettable, Cane Warriors follows the true story of Tacky's War in Jamaica, 1760.



Sawbones by Catherine Johnson (Walker Books)

Sixteen-year-old Ezra McAdam has much to be thankful for: trained up as an apprentice by a well-regarded London surgeon, Ezra's knowledge of human anatomy and skill at the dissection table will secure him a trade for life. However, his world is turned on its head when a failed break-in at his master's house sets off a strange and disturbing series of events that involves grave robbing, body switching ... and murder. Sparky, persuasive young Loveday Finch, daughter of the late Mr Charles Finch, magician, employs Ezra to investigate her father's death - and there are marked similarities between his corpse and the others. The mystery takes Ezra and Loveday from the Operating Theatre at St Bart's to the desolate wasteland of Coldbath Fields; from the streets of Clerkenwell to the dark, damp vaults of Newgate Prison; and finally to the shadowy and forbidding Ottoman Embassy, which seems to be the key to it all...

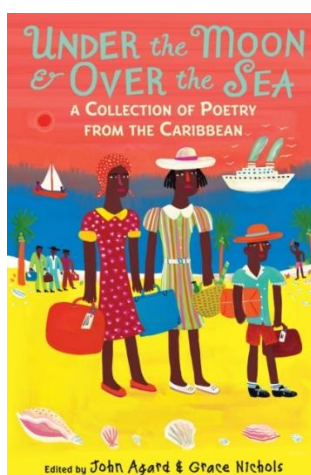
Poetry



Stars with Flaming Tails by Valerie Bloom (Otter-Barry Books)

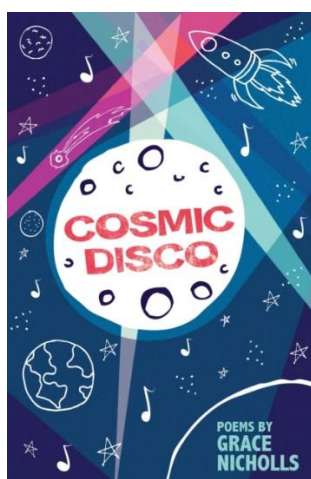
I travelled once around the world
On stars with flaming tails,
And touched the colours of my dreams
Along some silver trails.

Look out for best friends, pancakes, and Grandad singing; discover a river dolphin, a poison dart frog and the most dangerous animal in the world; imagine a talking nose, meet the Zimbats of Zingley Dell and find the colour of your dreams.



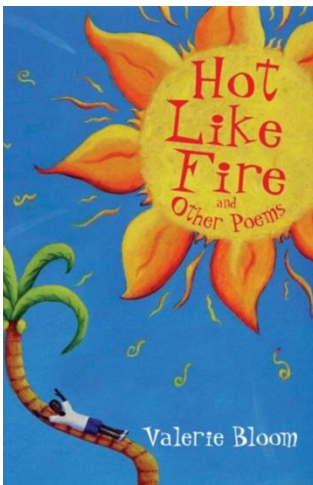
Under the Moon and Over the Sea by John Agard & Grace Nichols (Walker Books)

An award-winning collection of poetry vividly evoking the experience of living in the Caribbean - and of leaving for other lands. This prestigious anthology, which won the 2003 CLPE Poetry Award, conjures up the sights and sounds, tastes and tales of the Caribbean; the experience of living there - and of leaving for other lands. A companion to the acclaimed A Caribbean Dozen, this book contains more than fifty poems by over thirty poets, including John Agard, Grace Nichols, James Berry, Valerie Bloom and Benjamin Zephaniah.



Cosmic Disco by Grace Nichols (Frances Lincoln)

A sparkling galaxy of new poems by one of the UK's most exciting contemporary poets. From Aurora Borealis, Sun - You're a Star and A Matter of Holes, to Lady Winter's Rap, the Earthworm Sonnet and You - a Universe Yourself, this is brilliant poetry with an astonishing range - comic riddles, animals and nature, home truths and the explosive wonder of the cosmos.

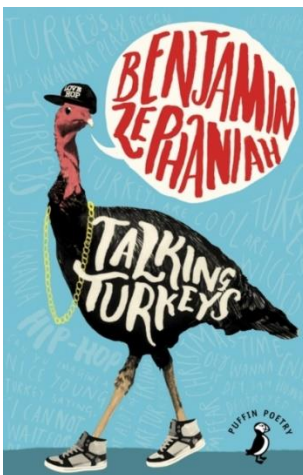


Hot Like Fire and Other Poems by Valerie Bloom (Bloomsbury)

When de July sun hot like fire, Den I have jus' one desire, To run down to de shop an' buy a Kisko pop.

The World Is Sweet and Hot Like Fire published in one volume for the first time. Valerie Bloom's poetry is beautifully crafted yet full of energy and fun.

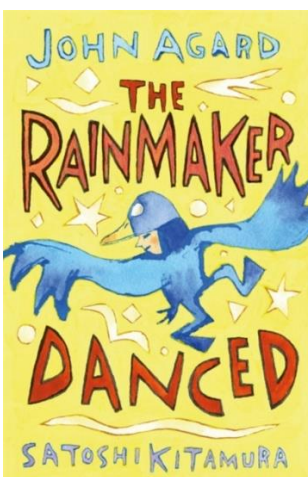
Her mixed use of standard English and dialect is a delight to read and hear. Children love reading and listening to her work! Valerie's subjects range from global pollution, problems with maths homework and the sad demise of pet frogs (he croaked of course) to taking sandwiches to school and being afraid of ghosts.



Talking Turkeys by Benjamin Zephaniah (Puffin)

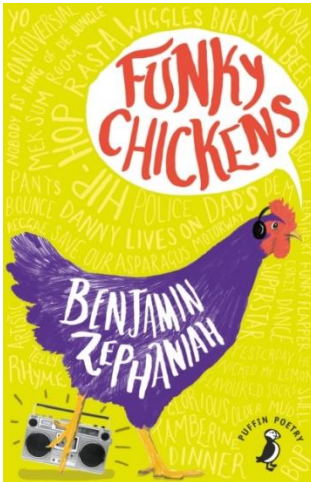
Talking Turkeys is an unconventional collection of straight-talking poems about heroes, revolutions, racism, love and animal rights, among other subjects, that will entice many new readers to poetry. It is Benjamin Zephaniah's very first ground-breaking children's poetry collection - playful, clever and provocative - this is performance poetry on the page at its very best.

Benjamin Zephaniah is the only Rastafarian poet to be short-listed for the Chairs of Poetry for both Oxford and Cambridge University and has been listed in The Times' list of 50 greatest postwar writers.



The Rainmaker Danced by John Agard & Satoshi Kitamura (Hachette)

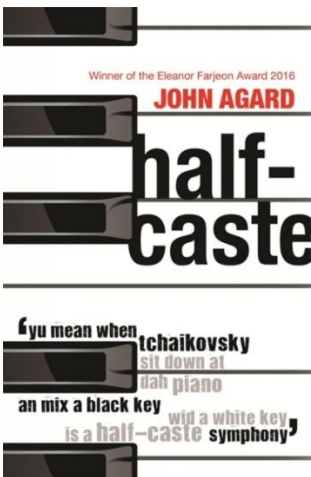
Do triangles ever get into a tangle when their sides meet their angles? A wonderful new children's poetry collection, from a celebrated, award-winning poet. From nature and science to identity, prepare to be transported on a journey through past and present. This collection from John Agard, winner of the Queens Medal and the Eleanor Farjeon Award, explores the wonders of the world - inviting your child to ponder life's questions with lots of fun along the way!



Funky Chickens by Benjamin Zephaniah (Puffin)

Enter the crazy world of rap poet Benjamin Zephaniah! A reissue of the wonderfully irreverent collection of poetry for young people, touching on anything from vegetables to the Queen and from sewage to the sun.

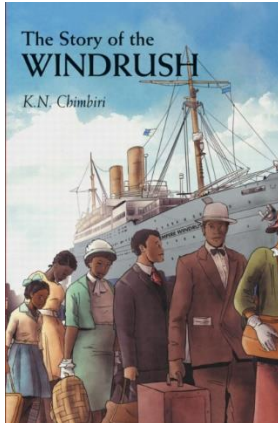
There's plenty of humour as well as poems on racism, pollution and the murder of a cat.



Half-Caste and Other Poems by John Agard (Hachette)

The tensions brought about by differences of race and culture are at the heart of this powerful and entertaining collection by one of Britain's most exciting and original poets and performers. John Agard, winner of the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry, explores the richness of human diversity in the world today.

Non-Fiction, Memoir & Anthologies



The Story of the Windrush by K.N. Chimbiri (Scholastic)

A book to celebrate the inspiring legacy of the Windrush pioneers. In June 1948, hundreds of Caribbean men, women and children arrived in London on a ship called the HMT Empire Windrush.

Although there were already Black people living in Britain at the time, this event marks the beginning of modern Black Britain. Combining historical fact with voices from the Windrush Generation, this book sensitively tells the inspiring story of the Windrush Generation pioneers for younger readers.

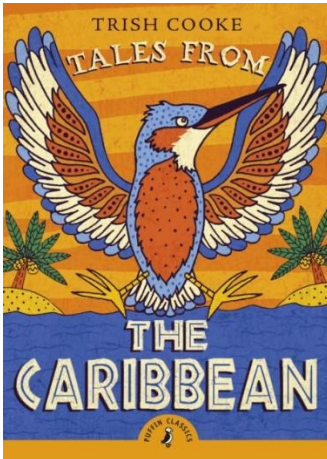


Coming to England by Floella Benjamin (Pan Macmillan)

Baroness Floella Benjamin's classic childhood memoir, *Coming to England*, includes a foreword by the author and some additional historical information. It is beautifully illustrated by Michael Frith. Floella Benjamin was just a young girl when she, her sister and two brothers arrived in England in 1960 to join their parents, whom they had not seen for fifteen months.

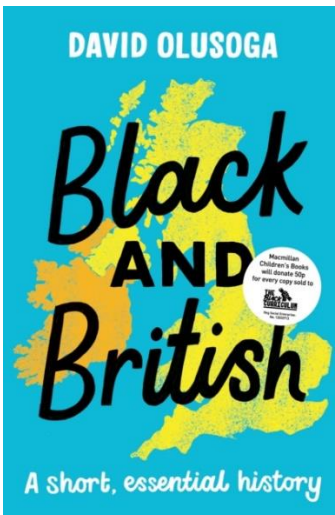
They had left the island paradise of Trinidad to make a new home in London - part of a whole generation of West Indians who were encouraged to move to Britain and help rebuild the country after the Second World War. Reunited with her mother, Floella was too overwhelmed at first to care about the cold weather and the noise and dirt from the traffic. But, as her new life began, she was shocked and distressed by the rejection she experienced.

She soon realized that the only way to survive was to work twice as hard and be twice as good as anyone else. This inspirational story is a powerful reminder that courage and determination can overcome adversity.



Tales from the Caribbean by Trish Cooke (Puffin)

A collection of favourite tales gathered from the many different islands of the Caribbean, one of the world's richest sources of traditional storytelling. From the very first Kingfisher to Anansi the Spider Man, these lively retellings full of humour and pathos, are beautifully retold by Trish Cooke. The book includes endnotes with a glossary, additional information as well as ideas for activities that children can do to explore the stories further.



Black and British: a short, essential history by David Olusoga (Pan Macmillan)

A short, essential introduction to Black British history for readers of 12+ by award-winning historian and broadcaster David Olusoga. When did Africans first come to Britain? Who are the well-dressed black children in Georgian paintings? Why did the American Civil War disrupt the Industrial Revolution? These and many other questions are answered in this essential introduction to 1800 years of the Black British history: from the Roman Africans who guarded Hadrian's Wall right up to the present day. This new children's version of the bestseller *Black and British: A Forgotten History* is illustrated with maps, photos and portraits.

Section 2: Draft of *Surprising Joy* by Valerie Bloom

SURPRISING JOY

Valerie Bloom

“No. I decided to take my annual leave now so that I can spend some time with you.”

“Oh, thank you, Cousin Sophie,” I said surprised. Now that the scare was over, I suddenly felt shy to talk to her.

All the time in my head I had seen how ^{Mama and I} [we] would meet and start chatting bout everything under the sun straight away. But Sophie was like a stranger to me. She looked a lot like her photograph, but she talked like Sister Walters and Helen. She didn't talk like a Jamaican anymore. I followed her out of the termin^{al}as and I just hoped and prayed that Mama was not as English as her. That she was still the mother I remembered from when I was four. clarity

I was a little cold in the airport, but not as cold as when I was in the plane. I still had on my jacket. I saw the sun shining outside and I couldn't wait to get out and warm myself in ^{it} [the sunshine]. But when we got out into the open I felt like somebody had just emptied a bucket of ^{icy} [iced] water over me. I sucked in my breath and stood up stiff with shock. Then I turned round and bolted back inside. There was no way I was going out in that. In all my born days I never knew there was such a thing as cold sunshine.

Cousin Sophie hurried in after me and held me close to her, rubbing her hands up and down my arms to heat them up.

Section 3: draft of *Leslyn in London* by Grace Nichols

33

But the train doors were already closing in.

"Mars Mars!" screamed Leslyn again, shaking her father's arm. Some of the people on the train stared as her father tried to quieten her down.

"It's ^{all} ~~air~~right," he was saying, "she's only in the next carriage. We'll get off at the next stop and go ~~ac~~ross with her."

What if her mother got lost among all those people? Leslyn was thinking. What if they never saw her again? And it was frightening the way the big train doors suddenly seem to snap shut by themselves.

Mars wasn't lost ~~because~~ ^{however}. At the very next stop they hurried across into the next carriage, and there she was safe and sound.

But Leslyn was glad when they were up in the open streets again.

"Oh Boy!" she breathed in relief.

At Shepherd's Bush Market calypso music was playing in the background and Mars began to shake-up her waist a little as she moved around, stopping here and there to pick up some nice things for her skin and hair.

Leslyn felt good to see her mother looking cheerful again.

The market reminded Leslyn of home. She could see mangoes, even though they were a bit wrinkled, and she could see dried coconuts, plantains and sugarcane.

They bought some plantains and saltfish which her father loved and they bought a red, gold and green Rasta beret for

pic

Section 3: draft of 'Ackee, Breadfruit, Callaloo' by Valerie Bloom

A fe de Ackee hangin' high up in ^{called} tree

B fe de Breadfruit taste so nice wid de Ackee

C fe Callaloo Pappa tek mek Pepperpot

D fe Dasheen, yuh never know de Dasheen hot?

E fe Eggplant growin wild outside de gate

F fe ~~frag~~ ^{Fla-Fla} banana, Salt-fish Frittens ~~for~~ ^{on} de plate.

G fe Guinep, small an' round an' plump an' green

H fe Hot Pepper, ^{jus} mek sure dat Knif wash clean *

I fe Irish Moss, ^{drink mek from} dat ~~suppade~~ ^{fe} gi yuh strength, seaweed

J fe Jack fruit, eat de flesh and eat de seed

Section 3: John Agard notebook featuring unpublished 'Mango Seed' poem

I have a little mango seed
Never would it grow
Never would it bear
And I'll tell you why
The reason is you see

My grandma
in the West Indies
she sent it for me
all the way from me there

I know
if I plant it in the snow
it would never grow
never would it grow
never would it bear

And so
I put it under my pillow
because my grandma
in the West Indies
she sent it all for me
the reason is you see
I'll tell you why
that little mango seed
18.4.89

you tell your grandpa
you tell your grandma
you tell your grandpa
you tell your grandma

19.10.81
I
will
you
the
you
the
you
the

Section 4: Draft of *Fruits* by Valerie Bloom

~~Half a~~ ^{paw-paw} ~~rasberry~~ FRUITS
in the basket
Only one o'we can have it,
Wonder which one it will ~~choose?~~ ^{be}
~~Heads I win and tails you lose.~~ ^{I have a feelin' dat is me.}

One guinep up in the tree
Hanging down there tempting me,
It don' mek no sense to pick it,
One guinep can't feed a cricket.

Two ~~star-apple~~ ^{rasberry} ~~pon~~ ^{custard} ~~the~~ ^{apple} shelf,
I know I hide them there meself,
When night come an' it get dark
Me an' them will have a talk.

Three ~~rose-apple,~~ ^{rasberry} I jus' might
Give one o'them a nice big bite,
Cover up the bite jus' so, sis,
Then ~~me~~ ^{no one} will never notice.

Four red apple near me chair,
Who so careless put them there?
Them don'know how me love apple?
Well, thank God fe silly people.

Five jew-plum, I can't believe it!
How they know jew-plum's me fav'rit?
But why they hide them in the cupboard?
Cho, ~~how~~ people can be so awkward?

Six sweetsop, you want a nibble?
~~I wish baby didn' always dribble,~~ ^{my bab didn' always}
~~Mek me wipe you mout',~~ ^{come} It don't mek sense
To broadcast the evidence.

Seven Mango! what a find
The smaddy who lef them really kind,
One fe you an' six fe me,
If you want more,climb the tree.

Eight orange belong ^{fe} ~~to~~ cousin Clem,
But I have only one problem,
What to do with the eight skin
That the orange them come in.

Nine jackfruit! not even me
Can finish nine, but let me see,
I don't suppose that they will miss one,
That was hard, but now me done.

Ten banana, mek them stay,
I feeling really full today,
Mek me lie down on me bed, quick,
Lawd, a feeling really sick.

Section 4: Letter from Grace Hallworth to her editor concerning *Poor-me-one*

SH/04/03/06

Killeen House,

Killeen,
Bushypark,
Galway,
Ireland.

Tel. (091) 24179. Fax. (091) 28065.

29. 7. 94

Dear Joan,

I received Sarah's letter with copies of illustrations for Poor-me-One on Wednesday - there are postal delays due to technological innovations here - and am hurrying to get this letter off.

I'm not sure whether the illustrator knows anything about Trinidad but get the impression that there is a lack of knowledge of the flora and fauna at any rate, but more particularly about the bird on which the legend is based.

If she is unable to locate a picture of the 'Poor-me-one' which falls in the classification of 'night jays', I am happy to provide an illustration. Similarly the illustration of a red-pepper tree or shrub can be supplied if necessary. The representation is quite unlike a pepper tree but more like a cocoa tree.

A group of us have been looking very carefully at the illustrations and feel that it may be more appropriate, if the illustrator is not familiar with the Caribbean ^{islands} ~~islands~~ ^{for} her? him? to do vignettes of things like the bird either at the beginning or end of sections of the story, rather than present an inaccurate representation of things which are typical. The other sensitive factor concerns the emotional response of a broad spectrum of the people of T&T to this story which has been handed down. Even when the tale has been forgotten the music lives on. I would be more at ease if I could meet the illustrator. Can this be arranged? I am due back in England around Aug 8 & will be in touch

Section 4: Letters from children to Valerie Bloom

16/3/04

Dear Ms. Bloom

Thank you for the great poems and help
you have given the class.

My favourite part was the Jamaican poems as
I havnt heard Patawa language in a while. My Grandad
is Jamaican and I havnt seen him for years, So
I it bought back memories.

You are probably wondering who I was. I was
the guy at the back with the curly hair.

My poem was Aargon.

I hope you could come again and give
previous classes the fun.

Yours gratefully,

Thursday 1st April 2004

Dear Valerie Bloom.

This week we have
been looking at your magnificent poems.
We have listened to some of your poems,
so Fruits. Haircut Rap, When Granny. Pinda
cake. I have enjoyed all your poems but
I have enjoyed Fruits the best,
because it makes you feel HUNGRY,
and it describes the fruits you eat.
It let me learn alot about
Jamaican people and language.

Yours sincerely