

An illustration of a person's face from the nose up, wearing a blue visor. The person has large, expressive brown eyes and is looking directly at the viewer. Their hair is depicted as thick, vibrant, and multi-colored (rainbow) waves that flow around the face. The background is white, and the overall style is bold and expressive, using thick brushstrokes.

# HOW TO BE ME

A SELECTION OF POEMS  
BY LGBT+ YOUNG PEOPLE

**This anthology contains poems  
written by LGBT+ young people from  
across Hertfordshire.**

Young people from YC Hertfordshire LGBT+ projects worked with the poet Dean Atta over a number of workshops to create their own poetry.

The workshops introduced young people to modern poetry, helped them to develop confidence in creative writing and improved their overall wellbeing and self-esteem.

This anthology has been produced to improve awareness of diversity and the needs of LGBT+ young people. It aims to encourage non-LGBT+ people to consider the experiences of their LGBT+ peers and encourage discussion around identity.

With special thanks to the National Lottery Community Fund for funding the production of this anthology. To Dean Atta for leading fantastic and inspirational workshops for LGBT+ young people. To Sandie Wood and Laura Trinder for their creativity, kindness and patience and to YC Hertfordshire Youth Workers for their continuous hard work and dedication.

LGBT+ young people share a range of experiences and thoughts throughout this anthology. Some may be a surprise, some you may relate to and some you may learn from.

Please be mindful that some of the poems may be triggering and contain references to mental health, self-harm, death and drug use. Each page that has potentially triggering content has been marked with a star for you so that if you are sensitive to triggers you can move to the next poem.



YC Hertfordshire provides a range of support for young people. For information on our services please visit [ychertfordshire.org](http://ychertfordshire.org) or for specific LGBT+ information [youngprideinherts.org](http://youngprideinherts.org).



# THIS IS THE YEAR

Where no one should have to choose,  
to confine their ways.

This is the year where people can bloom,  
and blossom with beaming individuality.

This is the year when humanity can be free.

This is the year where no-one falls from pride,  
to be crushed by hate.

This is the year where togetherness thrives,  
and hunts for opportunity.

This is the year we accept each other.

This is the year where no-one is handcuffed,  
to the arms of discrimination.

This is the year where self-loathing is triumphed,  
by self-acceptance.

This is the year for no-one to be forced to hide.

This is the year for everyone.

# HOW TO BE ME

Don't stand out too much.

Be unashamed of yourself.

Listen to the music in your head;

Don't listen too hard or you might find something you don't want.

Be gay.

Have aspirations to finish something but never finish it.

Be a dumbass and take pride in it.

Yell!

Be silent.

Be quiet.

Be loud.

Be a paradox.

Be scared of what people think;

Use the fear to make yourself happier.

Obsess.

Try to be something you're not;

Only do this if it makes you happier.

Roll your sleeves up.

Make your own damn aesthetic.

Finish four seasons of a show in three days.

Start a show in 2014 and don't finish the first season until 2024.

Cry when you need.

Smile when you don't.

Admit when you're wrong.  
Doodle.  
Love people who love you back.  
Dislike people who don't.  
Tell people who you are.  
If they don't like it, just continue to be who you are.  
Be a mess.  
Drink tea.  
Drink coffee.  
Be passionate about things.  
Be confident.  
Be shy.  
Be something in between.  
Be me.

# REMEMBER

I remember when there was more time.

I remember when I wasn't so tired.

I remember when I had more to say.

# CONFUSED

Your boyfriend is confused,  
He doesn't understand,  
Pondering on how 'us' has thrived.

Hidden so far away, you barely know him,  
Five now turns into five lightyears,  
He can't see your star, which blinds on the horizon.

We meet as perfect strangers,  
He knows you and you know him,  
But they don't really,  
Time never stops but your stars aren't burning up.

I love you more but it's impossible.

He thanks you for staying,  
You are part of him but you have,  
Never met him.

As he towers over him, you continue to,  
Look up with your heart outstretched,  
Even through the poet puns,  
You force a hearty laugh.

Even far apart he is with you,  
He's confused, why him,  
That doesn't matter.

Love doesn't have a distance, and it's not,  
A personalised encyclopedia.

## UPSET

Your son is upset.

He knows that same pain that you knew, although you convince yourself otherwise.

He lies awake at night, shackled by a need to be loved.  
Yet he feels none.

He tried to tell you, so many times.

For a child keeping to himself, he's very vocal about one thing.

He told you in so many ways;

Words,

Tears,

Scars,

And yet the signs fell upon deaf ears each time.

He does not know whether you were blind or simply ignorant.

He does not care.

He cannot blame you.

He only wants to save others from this pain.

But he cannot save himself.



# WEIRDO



It's staring from corners of eyes,  
Hunting smirks and giggles from every side.

It's riding a wave of self-confidence,  
And hitting the groynes of judgement.

It's hiding from social scenarios turned courtroom  
judgments,  
And covering in the context of a clique.

It's learning how to take the long way round,  
Becoming somebody while remaining a nobody,  
And growing ever close to the person you want to be.

# FRUSTRATED

Your friend is frustrated,  
He doesn't know how he's supposed to feel,  
or act.

Always told it's inappropriate or wrong,  
Never right even when it has felt it.

He's angry, told he shouldn't feel that way,  
or it's his fault.  
You're never the one to blame.

You made me question myself,  
Couldn't be who I felt I was,  
You told me if I was different it'd be okay.

It's okay though,  
Cause we're just mates, aren't we?  
You should've been clear on your intentions.  
Now I'm confused, angry, insecure.  
You use me to make you happy.  
Yet I've been here for you at your lowest.



I'm taboo.

I'm aggressive.

Your mum thinks I'm a good influence though.

But I'm strong.

I don't need you.

I do not miss that withdrawal.

I'm moving on.

But only if you'll let me.



# PRIDE

Pride is comfort. Pride is home.  
The feeling of not being alone.  
I don't ask you to be proud of me,  
Just of yourself.

## & POSITIVE ☺

Your son is positive,  
Your son is hopeful,  
Your son is open,  
Your son is honest.

Your son tries to be positive,  
or at least comes across as it,  
Your son tries to be hopeful,  
but sometimes it doesn't feel possible,  
Your son is always open,  
despite it sometimes taking time and being  
very challenging.

# TRANSFORM

Imagine being a girl,  
When you're actually a man,  
When you're stuck looking like Wendy,  
and not like Peter Pan.

When life's getting you down,  
Because of stupid gender roles,  
Stopping you from being you,  
and reaching your goals .

But one day when you're older,  
You'll be able to change for good,  
Transform just like a butterfly,  
No longer misunderstood.

# I FEEL MOST FREE WHEN

I can wear what I want without feeling judged,  
I can express myself without feeling annoying, desperate,  
I can be myself without feeling I'm doing this for others.

## GRANDAD

Your granddaughter is inspired,  
She loves your joy and brightness,  
She loves your determination and strength,  
She loves how you wipe her tears and create her smiles,  
You are your granddaughter's idol,  
You are perfect for her,  
You're her rock and her best friend,  
You're her light in the dark,  
You are the granddad of her dreams,  
You're strong and amazing and every positive thing needed,  
You're her shoulder of warmth,  
You're her granddad and you're the reason she is her.

# DRAWING

It's everyone judging me against famous artists,  
It's people saying it's amazing, but I don't like my work,  
It's spending hours on this but end up hating it,  
It's comparing myself to my peers,  
It's creative freedom,  
It's positive recognition,  
It's life drawing,  
It's staring at a penis all day.

## I COME FROM

I come from running mascara,  
and blue eyes and freckles.

I come from a home filled with laughter,  
and love and tears and conflict.

I come from the sound of her tiny footsteps,  
running to greet me and the warmth,  
of that protective older brother hug.

I come from dreams and goals and missions,  
seemingly impossible to complete,  
but with an undertone of hope and determination.

I come from the pressure to succeed,  
and the constant reminder that I must not fail,  
or else my life is ruined.

I come from the knowledge that no matter what,  
someone out there cares for you,  
and that I mustn't lose sight of it,  
or else I'll have nothing more to do.

But these are not what I come from,  
for they are not in my roots; my soul,  
These are just the echoes of what you will hear,  
when you scratch my surface.

Maybe I'm not ready to reveal where I come from;  
and that's okay too.

# ⚡ TEN THINGS ABOUT ME

1. I was born premature.
2. My name makes me proud, because it was chosen by my mother and father.
3. My longest loves have been unrequited.
4. I have a terrible fear of being hated by others, although I hate myself most (lol).
5. I feel safest in my memories because they hurt but in a good way.
6. I am a free person because I am privileged by my race.
7. I am not a free person because my sexuality constantly makes people think of me differently.
8. Best place is my reckless decisions.
9. Best time is feeling like I belong.
- 9<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>. I have a hopeless weakness for Harry Potter.
10. I could easily become someone else, so I must look for myself.

## SOME DREAMS

Dream of the night. Dream of fear.  
Dream of joy and dream of hope,  
Dream of the day and dream of failure,  
Dream of goals and dream on.

# MY PEOPLE

My people are light in the darkness,  
A smoking crater on the face of society.

We are a heartbeat,  
A singular low-pitched beat on a battered drum kit.

The eyes of society,  
The cracks running down buildings long forgotten.

We are the last star that burns in the sky,  
Perhaps the dimmest but the last to be dimmed.

We are a light in the darkness,  
When all other lights have gone out.

# SELF PORTRAIT

I pay close attention to the squint of my eyes,  
How the right closes more than the left,  
And the deep bags below them; never quite looking in the  
same direction.

The more I smile the smaller and more creased they get,  
Just how deep set they are, fractions away from my brow.

No one can quite tell what colour they are,

There will be questions: Can you see properly? Is it lazy?  
Why are you staring funny?

Do you ever sleep?

When I open my mouth I struggle to explain; they don't  
listen or care anyway,

How it's not my fault and I'd fix it if I could.

But it's a quirk, proof I'm happy, it's natural,

They think I could change it where I work. But I can't. It's  
part of me and it makes me, me.

I ignore it but always know it's there. My biggest criticism  
but also my biggest compliment.

Because behind my eyelids and away from my bags and  
brows,

My eyes are 'dreamy' and calm, somewhere safe.

A murky pool of green.

Hidden behind glasses but always noticed. Now I can  
look away.

# I COME FROM ♪

I come from a loving home that I keep distant,  
I come from a black hole with rainbow borders.

I come from over-straightened hair,  
That curls with the constant downpour.

I come from many packs disbanded,  
I come from online words that disappear.

I come from games that I hold near,  
I come from stories that I hold dear.

I come from random rhyming poems,  
I come from memos and I stay with rock.

I come from music,  
I come from the broken guitar string that decides my tune.

# OVERCOME

Step back, take a breath,

Relax.

Think realistically about what's in your struggling,  
overwhelmed mind,

Categorise things into boxes, there's no time for  
overthinking,

Be safe.

Write it down, express your emotion through music or art  
or something positive,

Feel the undeniable relief.

Feel your mind suddenly become safe and free,

You're okay.

You're not alone, others feel the same,

Come together, release your pain,

Be friends with Alex, he makes you laugh for hours,

Take out a pen and paper,

Let your thoughts flow,

Feel the pain go,

Drink some water and know it'll be okay tomorrow.

# WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE GINGER (FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO AREN'T)

For starters it's standing out,  
while on the sidelines.

It's being awed in one place,  
and ridiculed in another.

It's the first defining feature,  
people call you out on.

It's the fiery soul that means,  
you're soulless.

Orange waves dance obnoxiously,  
for a jeering crowd.

It's coming to the conclusion,  
that you're an ugly duckling,  
in a flock of swans.

It's an excuse,  
that everyone assumes it is okay.

Despite the abuse,  
knowing through the dog-eared visage of a smile,  
it's a part of you.

Being ginger can be like a broken rollercoaster,  
but it creates a shield to others,  
and you stand out like a star.

You're burning up with anxious pride; you've learnt to  
love it.

# I COME FROM

I come from Sunday roasts on a Monday and spaghetti on a Tuesday,

I come from adapting my taste buds to different countries.

I come from a semi-broken family,

I come from fights and arguments,

but I also come from putting it back together again.

I come from circles of depression and anxiety,

I come from battle scars on my body and wounds on my heart,

but I also come from learning to love myself and overcoming struggles.

I come from puddles of water from the streams of tears running down my face,

I come from smiles and laughs deep within.

I come from my thoughts and troubled mind,

I come from unanswered questions and unknown certainties.



I come from who I was to who I am now,  
I come from battle scars to recovered wounds,  
I come from deep sadness to major happiness.

I come from emotions becoming words,  
I come from words that become musical melodies.

But with all of the struggle and pain,  
I love who I've become,  
I now love where I've come from.



# — I'M BUILT FROM —

I'm built from regret, wishes and elbow grease,  
Stemming back years and years, slums full of children,  
but not of food,  
Backbreaking labour, minimum wage,  
Left winged but surrounded by ignorance and bigotry,  
Brought up to be someone I'm not,  
Those are my roots but I don't need to grow that way,

I'm built from stares and dirty looks,  
Comments and rumours,  
Degraded for who I am,  
But I'm still me, and I don't hate - now I educate,  
I'm who I always needed,  
No-bodies perfect but what's the harm in trying,

I'm built from bloodshed,  
My own as well as others,  
Dating further back than I could count,  
They went through worse,  
They walked so I could run,



Pop culture, music, politics,  
It's all a journey took something 'bad' or wrong' and  
turned it into something good,  
Role models for children like me,

I'm poor, smart, great, angry, hard-working, a fighter,  
someone in a time of need,  
I'll pave the way, just like we all did; on strike, by protest,  
political decision,  
changing the future one day at a time,

I come from skint, broken, problematic, prejudice,  
immigrant and grief,  
Yet I am proud, determined, educated, inspirational  
and different.



## 🎵 TEN THINGS ABOUT ME 🎵

1. I was born a bit early in a hospital to my mum.  
I caused my mum no pain.
2. My name is neutral, luckily for me, but somehow people still have a bias.
3. My longest love has been music, any genre and any era.
4. I have a terrible habit of biting my nails and picking my skin when I'm nervous.
5. I feel safest when I'm singing, it feels like no one can touch me.
6. I am a free person when I'm happy, respected and loved.
7. I am not a free person because I'm rarely happy, respected or loved.
8. The best place is in a forest in the middle of Summer with a nice cold drink, whilst the leaves rustle in the wind.
9. Best time is when people listen and understand, most time is when they don't.
10. I could easily become the person who I really am, but first I have to get past the people in my way.

# IT ARRIVED LIKE A METEOR IN MY GARDEN

Something once so beautiful destroyed in a moment,  
Plethora of flowers, daisies, roses and buttercups at once  
restored to the ground,  
From where they came,  
The garden is growing back,  
A difficult task when the dust is constantly hovering,  
The meteor hit and the earth will never be the same,  
But maybe, over time, the meteor wasn't so bad,  
A garden once torn to pieces,  
Opens up to possibilities of a new one,  
Maybe your meteor has left you broken,  
And yes the mark will always remain in your thoughts,  
memories, in your blood,  
But you can overcome it,  
Although the meteor hit my garden, it is beautiful again.

# I COME FROM

I come from a family of gamers,  
Immersing ourselves in someone else's journey,  
To forget our own,  
Whether it be catching small creatures to be our friends,  
Or eliminating our enemies with assault rifles,

I come from a family of food lovers,  
Spending way too much money on food,  
And then eating it all that same night,

I come from a family of dweebs,  
Binge watching any anime,  
We see and then,  
Re-binging it a week later,

Though I might be different,  
In my own way,  
This is where I come from,  
And this is who,  
I am proud to be.

## \* TEN THINGS ABOUT ME \*

1. I was born a native English speaker in Western society.
2. My name is a practical joke, played from one parent to another; indicative of my inevitably bubbly personality.
3. My longest love has always been nature, when the actions of others cause concern, nature is a constant, reassuringly omnipresent.
4. I have a terrible secret within myself. I have never truly found my place within myself. But that's okay because I still have time to grow and become comfortable with who I am.
5. I feel safest surrounded by people I trust. My placement of trust is rare to previous situations, so I am able to encompass myself with positivity when I'm with those I whole-heartedly believe in.
6. I am a free person because I have chosen to forget my past problems.
7. I am not a friendly person because my choice doesn't always stand the test of time.
8. Best place is the past, lost in memories of people who have long forgotten my place in this world.
9. Best time is the lull of the night, where day is over and the next is yet to begin; suspended in a happy nothingness.
10. I could easily leave my story unfinished but part of me is compelled to continue holding the pen.

# ♥ WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE IN LOVE WITH ♥ ♥ THE SAME SEX (FOR THOSE WHO AREN'T)

It's the name calling and the foul words,  
Taking all the blood from your body,  
It's the love exploding like a volcano,  
It's the feeling of being loved,  
It's loving things to relate to,  
It's the joy of acceptance,  
It is the beauty of a rainbow,  
It is the rebel side saying, "I don't care!",  
It is waking up with no worries,  
It is just as normal as the opposite sex,  
It is just like female doves flying high,  
It's like two male turtles swimming deep below,  
It is the love of equality,  
It is an experience that takes you away,  
It is like being in a dream land,  
It's the looks that you get from holding hands,  
It's the criticism that isn't needed,  
It is the heavy Superman falling in love with Spiderman,  
It's like Wonder Woman falling in love with Harley Quinn,  
It is normal and a place you can be safe,  
It is special and brings joy,  
It is the love that never leaves.

# I COME FROM

I come from a coven full of psychos and crazies,  
I come from a woman who plaits dandelions and daisies,  
In an attempt to forget mistakes too late to change,  
I come from a household that's cryptic and strange,  
I come from a father who's hard and disconnects,  
A country that denies everything that it did,  
I come from sweet things and music that weeps,  
I come from a family of liars and sheep, butchers and creeps,  
A brother more like me than he cares to admit,  
I come from Rock 'n' Roll and Radiohead,  
I come from where people I wish were dead.



# ≡THIS IS THE YEAR≡

The stern politicians realise this is the end,  
Pressured into denying the problems by corrupt  
companies claws,  
They pull off the wool and take control,  
This is the year we stop promising thoughts and prayers  
to shattered families,  
Those who knew how to stop this with only a few words  
but still sat in silence,  
This is the year of growth in our society, their slumber  
slaughtered morals,  
Put in reverse,  
This is the year the old understand,  
A phone can't hurt as much as being a family  
disappointment.

# I COME FROM

I come from the family known as perfect,  
I come from a non-stereotypical family,  
I come from a house of young laughter,  
I come from the local madhouse,  
that drew attention every 31st of October.

I come from something I wouldn't change for the world,  
Now my world changed from sunshine and rainbows,  
to thunder and a flickering lightbulb.  
It's full of tears and medication.

I come from somewhere that always needs alterations,  
A house that consists of struggling and saying no,  
I come from heartbreak and budget,  
But I still come from a place I know best,  
I come from a flock that can change,  
but my clock is still staying together.



# IT ARRIVED LIKE A METEOR IN MY GARDEN

A toxic, blue orb full of spikes and poison,  
My tulips now ash, grass now straw,  
The impact made me fall, my knees buckle and  
ankles snap,  
I could no longer stand,  
It hurt, and I couldn't do anything.



## ≡ TEN THINGS ABOUT ME ≡

1. I was born into a world divided by love and chaos.
2. My name is ..... but my name isn't all of what defines who I am.
3. My longest love has been using my heart's energy to help and guide the vulnerable hearts of others.
4. I have a terrible need to keep my mind constantly active.
5. I feel safest in nature, the type where all that matters is the beautiful serenity of the moment.
6. I am a free person because I am learning to accept each moment.
7. I am not a free person because I'm confined to my past.
8. Best place is in the memories, with the one I wish was still here.
9. Best time is being in the moment, not caring about forthcoming events.
10. I could easily continue with this poem, there's so much more to come.

# WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE A YOUNG CARER (FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO AREN'T)

It's the press of being there or not,  
It's the difference of absence or presence,  
It's the feeling you're not enough,  
It's the if's, why's, how's and what's,  
It's not having enough hours in the day,  
It's the fear of disappointment,  
It's the relief of achievement,  
It's being proud,  
It's weighing up your life with responsibilities,  
It's managing time, time for them, time for you.



## Ξ THIS IS THE YEAR Ξ

Over the three hundred and sixty-five days,  
You will search and look for yourself,  
Ways to help you find your inner happiness and,  
Your own rainbow.

This is the year,  
You may find yourself or you may not,  
This is the year that you aim to change and grow  
and seek,  
This is the year you become.

# I COME FROM

I come from Sele Farm,  
I come from getting home before the streetlights turned on,  
I come from calling my mum whenever I found a needle,  
I come from being scared to go the park,  
I come from learning the woods inside and out,  
I come from being the extra, the person that's just there,  
I come from watching my friend die,  
I come from many good stories,  
But that's why I am the way I am.



# CHRONIC PAIN =

It's struggling to get out of bed in the morning,  
Wincing at the slightest movement,  
It's constantly aching no matter what you do,  
Struggling to fall asleep at night,  
It's asking why you're limping,  
Why you can't sit up straight,  
Parents not listening, no giving you the chance to complain,  
Remember - someone's always got it worse,  
It's medication that doesn't work,  
Aids that look embarrassing,  
Audible pops, cracks and crunches,  
A worrying look when I un-stiffen my joints,  
I'll survive, but I can't always cope,  
It's invisible, doesn't deserve priority seats,  
It's blamed on weight, poor posture,  
But amongst all the pain, it makes me strong.



# WHAT IT'S LIKE TO EXPERIENCE AN ANXIETY ATTACK (FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVEN'T)

It's like you're walking down the street,  
trembling on your feet,  
It's like a rollercoaster of emotion,  
or like being lost in the ocean,  
You're always lost for words,  
you call for help but no one's heard,  
You're embarrassed, you're scared,  
you're worried,  
You're lost, you cry, you hurry,  
You insist that you're fine but,  
you're hurting inside,  
The pills make you numb,  
as you fiddle with your thumbs,  
Losing air in your lungs,  
no one can hear your scream,  
Anxiety want to fight me,  
Anxiety, stop. Why me?



# I FEEL MOST FREE WHEN

I feel most free when I'm listening to music,  
Taking a stroll, listening to acoustics,  
Pen and paper, write me some music,  
Mellow the melody and riddle futuristics.

## ✓ SWEDEN, 2009 ✓✓

The dusk of night nigh, through sea glass reflection,  
Sanded toes, rocky regrets,  
Old hands worn by oceans, cast out in confidence,  
In the tide's calmness he let his heart rest,  
She, small, unhopeful,  
Dances around in love for the sound,  
Of dad jokes and laughter, and seagulls,  
She lets the tide sway her body,  
A love to be forever formed,  
She lets herself sing,  
Like a sea siren,  
Few freedoms her life had owned,  
And when she'd come back later,  
She'd reminisce and let the sea sway her once more.

# PROUD

I feel proud of the darkness in my mind,  
The fact that I survived,  
Countless rounds of self-deprecation.



# ALONE

Your best friend is alone,  
He has so much happening in his head,  
and yet no-one to talk to,

Your best friend feels nothing,  
and everything.

Your best friend is frustrated,  
and confused,  
and lonely,  
and glad he has you.

He's sat in a room of people,  
and been trapped inside his own head.

But as soon as he sees your brown eyes,  
hears your soft tone of voice,  
he is released.



# THIS IS THE YEAR

I overthrow the systems, the expectations, myself,  
If I am to keep being a lady with legs crossed and  
tongue held,  
Then let me bite off my tongue,  
Let my blood mark the start of riots and rebellion.



# WHAT IT'S LIKE TO LOVE YOURSELF ♡ (FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO DON'T) ♡ ♡

To love yourself is so empowering,  
You feel more yourself and you are happy,  
Never let anyone take that away from you,  
If you do, you'll go back to living in the shadows,  
and not bother coming back out,  
If you block out the haters and fight back,  
You might bring others with you,  
To help them find freedom,  
and to be themselves and to love others,  
and to be happy,  
Love yourself, be free.

## TEN THINGS ABOUT ME

1. I was born, half unwanted, half cherished.
2. My name I've always disregarded, a palace grandeur stands in it's place.
3. My longest love has been writing, my Shakespearean roots twisting my tongue, forcing my pen to paper, filling my hands with rhymes.
4. I have a terrible sense of humour, giggling at every turn, for no reason, for the best reasons.
5. I feel safest in the midst of a mess, with my father's adventurous spirit running through my veins.
6. I am a free person, because you can't hold me down.
7. I am not a free person, maternalism dragging like chains around my ankles.
8. Best place is the nowhere at night, cars running over my lonely thoughts.
9. Best time is the dawn break, a dead world in sunlight.
10. I could easily write more, but why should I do what you want.

# I COME FROM

I come from deep fears and regrets,  
From a family of eight, but I will say seven,  
I come from the corner of what I will say is London,  
But when you ask why my accent's funny, I'll tell you,  
I come from Birmingham,  
I come from Pakistan,  
I come from a father who is ignorant but the most loving,  
From a mother who cares too much and loves too much,  
I come from the hijab,  
I come from my religion,  
I come from contradiction,  
I come from an ashtray and lighters,  
I come from my secrets,  
I come from love and heartbreak,  
I come from my attitude and anger,  
I come from the deepest roots of my self-pity,  
I come from my cat,  
I come from the songs you love to hate,  
I come from my closed curtains,  
I come from cereal and toast,  
I come from distant family I hardly see,

I come from my darkest self,  
I come from a sister who would always leave because she  
can't love me enough to stay,  
I come from a sister who knows everything,  
From a brother who was a man the moment he was born,  
From a half-sister who is not my sister,  
From a secretive older sister whose advice is worth the  
world,  
I come from stigma, homophobia, patriarchy and sexism,  
I come from my mother's womb.

## ≡ HEALING ≡

Your brother is healing as you can see,  
There is a reason he always wears long sleeves,  
What even is self-esteem?  
The scars all over his wrists,  
Are from days he will never miss,  
He was scared to tell you,  
When you were eight,  
As you're still living without hate,  
He would like to talk not scream and shout,  
Instead he bleeds, bleeds right out.



# I FEEL MOST FREE WHEN

I've just stepped off a ride,  
Adrenaline coursing through me,  
The excitement in the screams,  
The happiness in the laughs,  
I'm happy,  
I'm free,

I feel most free when,  
I've just left a show,  
My investment in the story running me through the  
shredder,  
The show tunes running through my head,  
The Phantom singing songs to me,  
Alexander Hamilton talking about his legacy,  
Matilda telling me I can do anything,  
I'm happy,  
I'm free,

I feel most free when,  
I'm in my bed, music blaring,  
On my screen, a chat with my friend,  
We're happy,  
We're free.

# WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE TRANS AND MENTALLY STRUGGLING (FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO AREN'T)

It's not knowing how to explain yourself to others,  
It's not knowing if you're weird,  
It's the unknown territory of the LGBTQ+ world,  
Being transgender doesn't make me less of a person,  
Compared to the next,  
It's not just the binder that makes my lungs hurt,  
It's the fact that the names people call me,  
Are knives stabbing my ribs every day.



# LET ME BE LIKE WATER

Let me be like water, as you cannot contain me,  
I will overflow,  
Let me be like water, free to roam where I want,  
Let me be like water, open to everyone,  
I don't have to hide,  
Let me be like water, as loud or as quiet as I want,  
I don't have to stay quiet after everything,  
That has happened to me or what you have done,  
Let me be like water through your cupped hands,  
Let me be like water, let my tears flow like a rushed river,  
Let me be like water, just let me go.



