



In this section we have given some activity ideas to use alongside the poems on the album *Homeland: Chapter 1*.

The poems are:

***'Deportation Blues'* by Hannah Lowe (for older learners)**

Performed on the album *Homeland: Chapter 1* with Seckou Keita

Hannah is a poet, memoirist and academic, currently Reader at Brunel University. Her latest book, *The Kids*, a Poetry Book Society 'Choice' for Autumn, won the Costa Poetry Award and the Costa Book of the Year, 2021. Hannah's website can be found at <https://hannahlowe.me/>

Deportation Blues was commissioned for the album.

***'Reflections'* by Zena Edwards.**

Performed on the album *Homeland: Chapter 1* with Seckou Keita

Zena is a poet, curator and project maker who has been writing since she was a child. Zena graduated from Middlesex University and studied storytelling and performance at The London International School for Performing Arts. She is a renowned award-winning UK based poet of Afri-Carib-British heritage; however she is also a multidisciplinary artist, at home with collaborating with musicians, choreographers, environmental growers and visual artists. Zena's website can be found at <https://www.zenaedwards.com/>

Reflections was also commissioned for the album.

Background information

- Although *Deportation Blues* and *Reflections* are more suitable for young people and adults, the backing tracks from them can be used for learners of any age.
- We have included poetry from Valerie Bloom and another from Zena Edwards to inspire younger learners.

Resources

1. Audio files of *Deportation Blues* and *Reflections*
2. Transcripts of three poems
3. Audio file of backing tracks



The Session

Zena and Hannah have used poetry to express thoughts, feelings and reflections about humanity, self, movement, home and homelands. They use different approaches to express something from within, in response to two different journeys. In *Deportation Blues* the journey is forced. We are observers looking in. In *Reflections*, the journey is travelled over space, time and within us. Both pieces on the album start with the sounds of travel - a plane in *Deportation Blues* and a train in *Reflections*.

1. We have provided both poems. You could use either or both to gauge initial responses, analyse the language and the structure of the pieces, and then listen to the recordings from the album.
2. The music adds another dimension to the work. You might invite learners to listen with the whole of themselves and to notice where in their bodies they feel any emotion, reaction or sensation.
3. You might allow learners to discuss their responses to the questions below in pairs before responding to the whole group. Or to have some time to write down or doodle their own responses before sharing with a partner. Then invite reflections. You might use some of these questions:

How did you respond to the performances emotionally? What feelings emerged for you? Did you notice any physical responses in your bodies (maybe in the tummy, behind the eyes, in the heart...)?

How do the performances from the poets affect our responses to their work?

What does the addition of the kora bring to these pieces?

What questions or thoughts emerged?

Did you make any connections between what you heard in the poems, and your own experiences (these might include spiritual as well as other experiences), or what you might have heard in the news, social media or elsewhere.

Did you make connections with other poetry you know (Island Man by Grace Nichols for example).

Look at the way the poems are written in comparison to the way they are performed. How does the performance reflect the written piece?

4. We have provided the backing tracks to both *Deportation Blues* and *Reflections*. This offers an opportunity for learners to write and perform their own pieces, with the kora as their backing track. They might record these digitally or video their performances. Themes might include:

My Home

Homelands

Journeys

Reflections



5. Younger learners (in fact any learners!) might watch video performances from their favourite poets to inspire them. We have included three here from Valerie Bloom, which also reflect the themes suggested here. Learners could try to create their own music to accompany these poems or create their own poems using the kora backing track.

Kisko Pops - memories of enjoying icy Kisko Pops in Jamaica! This is great for younger learners.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRiOrRkmZvU>

The Tall Ships - a poem about the first time Christopher Columbus arrived in the Caribbean.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_CR4RbwRVs

The poem can be printed from here <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poems/tall-ships>

Journey - an echo poem with themes that resonate with Seckou's song *Wakili* (from the album *Homeland: Chapter 1*), to explore confidence, risk-taking and self esteem.

<https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/valerie-bloom-journey>

The poem can be printed from here <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poems/journey>

6. The poem from Zena Edwards, *Our Story*, was inspired by Little Amal. In 2023, Zena was invited to walk with Little Amal in Trondheim, Norway.

'Little Amal is the 12 foot puppet of a 10 year old Syrian refugee child at the heart of The Walk. She has become a global symbol of human rights, especially those of refugees. Since July 2021, Amal has travelled to 166 towns and cities in 17 countries and been welcomed by two million people on the street and by tens of millions online. 475 events unique to each community that she visits have been created for her by thousands of artists and civil society and faith leaders.' www.walkwithamal.org

Zena felt a connection with Little Amal and wrote a poem inspired by her. It can be found here <https://www.zenaedwards.com/post/walking-with-amal-in-trondheim>

Learners could create their own performance of the poem, using one of the backing tracks or their own compositions of music.