

RSL maps pandemic poetry across London

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Poems written in response to lockdown displayed on interactive online map of the capital



The Royal Society of Literature is launching the Write Across London Poetry Map: 'showcasing the creativity of Londoners and celebrating the power of poetry to bring us together in times of isolation.'

'In April 2020, the Museum of London put out an open call for submissions of both objects and first-hand experiences to reflect Londoners' lives during the COVID-19 pandemic and received a huge number of poems.'

'Inspired by this, we launched Write Across London to create a poetic snapshot of the city at an historic moment in its life.' So far the project has collected 60 poems which can be read by travelling across this virtual poetry trail.'

The map can be accessed at rsliterature.org/write-across-london-poetry-map/#-map/ and individual poems read by clicking on the markers. The map reveals a concentration of poems in North and Central London, a steady scattering elsewhere except for South-West London, which is, currently, a poetic void.

The project is seeking new poems however. 'If you need some inspiration, the Write Across London Poet Ambassadors have been writing collaboratively – watch them talk about their process of writing together while miles apart.'

'Write Across London Poet Ambassadors are RSL Chair Daljit Nagra, Raymond Antrobus, Natalie Linh Bolderstone, Imtiaz Dharker, Inua Ellams, Jamie Hale, Mimi Khalvati, Cecilia Knapp and Theresa Lola.'

New poems can be submitted at rsliterature.org/write-across-london-entry-form/

According to the RSL: 'This programme is specifically to encourage the creativity of those who have been worst affected or most compromised by the pandemic across London – people of colour, people from lower socio-economic backgrounds, older people, people with disabilities and those with pre-existing medical conditions.'

'We are grateful to the London Community Response Fund and City Bridge Trust, the funding arm of the City of London Corporation's charity Bridge House Estates, for supporting this programme.'

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