



Unit 1 Lesson 2: Multilingual Britain

A selection of Poems.

A) I have Crossed an Ocean by Grace Nichols

I have crossed an ocean
I have lost my tongue
from the root of the old one
a new one has sprung.

B) There are over 350 languages spoken in the British Isles. Why do we have so many languages spoken here?

C) “Ton Christ est Juif” by Julos Beaucarne. Listen to the French song. Can you understand the cognates and write down the English translation?

Your Christ is _____

Your car is _____

Your couscous is _____

Your democracy is _____

Your coffee is _____

Your chianti is _____

D) Over to you! Write your own list things in your house and where they come from. You can create your own, or use these prompts:

My shampoo is....

My car is....

My bananas are...

My trainers are...

My jumper is...

My coffee is...

My medicine is...



My laptop is...

D) Search for My Tongue by Sujata Bhatt

You ask me what I mean

by saying I have lost my tongue.

I ask you, what would you do

if you had two tongues

in your mouth,

and lost the first one,

the mother tongue,

and could not really know the other,

the foreign tongue.

You could not use them both together

even if you thought that way.

And if you lived in a place you had to

speak a foreign tongue,

your mother tongue would rot,

rot and die in your mouth

until you had to spit it out.

I thought I spit it out

but overnight while I dream,

(munay hutoo kay aakhee jeebh aakhee
bhasha)

(may thoonky nakhi chay)

(parantoo rattay svupnama mari bhasha
pachi aavay chay)

(foolnee jaim mari bhasha nmari jeebh)

(modhama kheelay chay)

(fullnee jaim mari bhasha mari jeebh)

(modhama pakay chay)

it grows back, a stump of a shoot

grows longer, grows moist, grows strong
veins

, it ties the other tongue in knots,

the bud opens, the bud opens in my
mouth,

it pushes the other tongue aside.

Every time I think I've forgotten,

I think I've lost the mother tongue,

it blossoms out of my mouth.

E) Over to you. My Poem about Multilingual Britain

You could use words from the many languages spoken in our country.

You could write about how it feels to be bi-lingual or multilingual, or how you'd imagine it would feel.

You could think about the richness, diversity and interest languages have brought to Britain.