



DIFFERENT MOONS

# POEMS

LETTERS & STORIES

*South Asian writing from Rossendale*





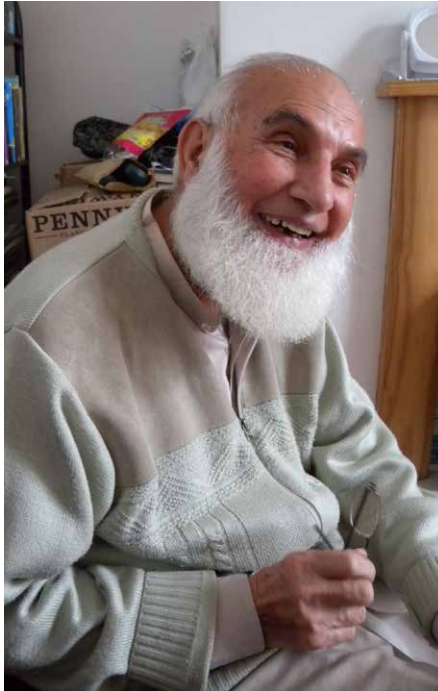
DIFFERENT MOONS

# POEMS

LETTERS & STORIES

ROSSENDALE  
ENGLAND

*South Asian writing from Rossendale*



### *Different Moons*



his collection of writings and images grew out of a project to record the history, lives and stories of individuals from Pakistan, Bangladesh and India who came to Britain after the Second World War and settled in Rossendale.

The project, called Different Moons, has been led by artists, themselves mainly women from a South Asian and Muslim heritage, who used the stories of the first immigrants and the rich legacy of South Asian and Islamic art forms both to inspire and feed their own work and then to encourage different generations of other women, girls and children living in Rossendale to express their own feelings and thoughts. The poems and stories collected in this book are part of that response.

The heritage interviews, animations and other Different Moons project materials are available on the Horse + Bamboo and Different Moons websites: [www.horseandbamboo.org](http://www.horseandbamboo.org) and [www.differentmoons.org](http://www.differentmoons.org).

*Names of the interviewees opposite: Clockwise, from top left: Mr L Ullah, Mr M Ishaque, Mrs S Hussain, Mr M A Miah, Mr M Hussain, Mrs S Choudhury, Mrs Z Rahman, Mrs Wazfar, Mr S Rahman, Mrs F Munir.*



## A short history of South Asian Communities in Rossendale

During the immediate post-war period, migrations began as a result of a combination of economic and political developments. After the war ended in 1945 Britain faced huge challenges. The economy had to be rebuilt and it was a time of great social change. The NHS was established, slums were cleared and industries began to expand. Servicemen and women returned from the war expecting better conditions at the workplace and were no longer prepared to accept pre-war standards of dirty, unsocial work with long hours and low pay.

It was also recognised by the UK government that there was a shortage of labour, so Britain looked for workers from Europe and the countries of the Commonwealth, particularly the West Indies, India and Pakistan. The Royal Commission on Population reported in 1949 that immigrants of ‘good stock’ would be welcomed ‘without reserve’.

The textile industry, on which Lancashire’s prosperity once depended, had been in decline before the war but in 1945 there was confidence that it could recapture some of its past glories if it was able to massively reduce its costs. As a result the industry enthusiastically grasped the opportunity offered by men emigrating from overseas to work in the cotton mills. The majority of these jobs were low paid and in the least popular shifts, such as night work.



Paper-cuts by Maryam Golubeva

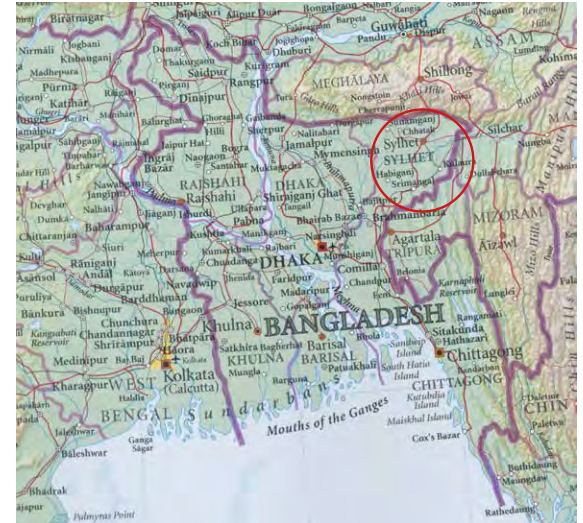


Most of this new workforce were from Pakistan, which was a major producer of cotton and jute and so had existing trade links with Lancashire. Pakistan had been initially divided into West and East Pakistan after Partition from India in 1947, but in 1971 East Pakistan seceded to become the independent country of Bangladesh. The majority of the men who came to work in Lancashire fully expected to return to their homes in Pakistan or Bangladesh after a period working here during which they would save sufficient money to guarantee a decent future for their families.

From Pakistan the main areas of migration were the villages around the town of Attock in the north-west, and many people in Haslingden come from this area (note the Haslingden-based Attock Travel and Attock Taxi Company) and from Mirpur, closer to the border with Kuwait. In Bangladesh the main centre of emigration was Sylhet, then a poor region in the east of the country, and many people from Mirpur region and Sylhet settled in Rawtenstall.

Each of these regions spoke different languages - Urdu is the official language of Pakistan, although Punjabi is also spoken along with dialects such as Hindku. Many of the immigrants from the north and west of the country were Pashtuns, speaking Pashto, while Bengali (or Bangla) was the language of most Bangladeshis, though many who came to Rossendale speak a Sylheti dialect.

Workers usually made their way to Rossendale after arriving in Liverpool, Hull or one of the other ports, or on a flight to London from Karachi.



Map of Bangladesh, showing Sylhet



Pakistan, showing Attock and Mirpur regions



Family photograph: Courtesy Mrs W Azfar



Many would then use the informal network of contacts within the South Asian community to discover where work might be available. After settling into a job, it would not be unusual to be encouraged by the mill owners to ask their brothers, uncles, cousins - other male family members - to join the workforce. In this way several male members of an extended family would often gather to work and live close by to one another.

Communications between Lancashire and home were difficult. There were very few telephones, both in the UK and in the villages in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Telephone lines were notoriously unreliable. As a result the new arrivals found it very difficult to keep in touch with families and friends back home, postal and telegram services providing the main means of contact. Feelings of loneliness and isolation were very common and hard to bear.

For most of the men, when they first arrived in Rossendale, living conditions were fairly primitive. Few of the houses they rented would have had baths; toilets were usually in outhouses and often not connected to the sewers. In the 1960s this wasn't unusual; many people in Rossendale lived in similar conditions. Initially, it wasn't unusual for 10 or more of the immigrant workmen to rent a house together, sharing a limited number of basic dormitory-type beds to cover different shifts at the mill.



Family photograph: Courtesy Mr M Hussain

Karachi c.1950



Few of the men spoke English particularly well, and as a result were unable to understand what services were available to them. As a result the refuse collection system, council wash facilities (such as slipper baths, available at the municipal pools), medical and housing services, were all difficult to access. Because most of these men still expected that their sojourn in Lancashire would be a temporary one, very few – at first - gave any thought to creating support networks of their own.

Slowly things began to change. A few of the men got together to set-up informal support groups and organise themselves. Many of the testimonies from people interviewed for the Different Moons project dwell on this period. The struggle to improve their living conditions and life-style, and the slow process of saving in order to send money home, purchase houses and gain control of their own living requirements, dominated much of their limited spare time.

Many friendships were made with the host community, and there are frequent stories of support and help that the immigrants experienced.

Equally there were the challenges of racism and intolerance to be confronted.



Family photograph:  
Courtesy Mrs S Hussain



Map of India showing  
Pakistan and Bangladesh

*Courtesy Mrs W Azfar*



*Mrs Azfar with her young family (top)  
and today*

### *The Past*

**F**or both the immigrant and host communities things changed substantially during the 25 years following the arrival of the first South Asians to Rossendale. From the 1970s onwards there had been much debate about UK immigration policy, and successive governments began programmes of legislation to restrict the rules governing the right to immigration. This both contributed to, and coincided with, a recognition among many South Asian workers that their move to Lancashire was likely to be for a number of years, and in fact for many became a permanent one.

From this period onwards, women, and sometimes children and parents, began to move from Pakistan or Bangladesh to be with their menfolk. Families now settled in Rossendale together and, as a result, the nature of the South Asian community changed fundamentally.

At work, in housing, and in education South Asians often faced the challenges of misunderstandings and discrimination. To escape these problems and to improve their standard of living and escape factory work, many became self-employed. The Lancashire textile industry was by now also clearly failing, and Asian-owned businesses were started to create their own jobs, while others worked to increase awareness and change practices within institutions. As this happened South Asians began to contribute more and more to the local economy and community.

### *The Future*

**I**n the 60 years since the first South Asian immigrants arrived in Rossendale things have changed beyond recognition. Families originally from Attock or Sylhet now have three generations settled and at home in Rossendale. Despite this, strong links with the mother countries have been retained, and individuals and families often return regularly to the villages in Pakistan or Bangladesh that their grandparents left 50 or more years ago.

A settled community of South Asian families has developed in Rossendale. It has opened mosques for worship, and shops and businesses to cater for food and other necessities. Throughout Britain cultural exchange has resulted in exciting fusions of music, art and cuisine. Second and third generations of young people from Asian families took the opportunity to study in college and universities, and this is beginning to have an impact on families in Rossendale. Many of these have achieved a prosperity that the first generation of immigrants would have been astonished to witness, even when it may have been their own aspiration and dream.

However, as a result of rapidly changing economic circumstances and overseas policies there is evidence of a recent growth in Islamophobia within the UK. This has created a new set of challenges, and the project has shown how South Asian women in particular continue to play a significant role in challenging expectations from within and perceptions from without their communities. No doubt the whole community will continue to rise to these complex challenges to create an ever more intricate social tapestry.

The Different Moons project has, we hope, made a small contribution to this process and has played a part in celebrating a local South Asian heritage community that is vibrant and visible and here to stay, very much part of Rossendale as it is in the twenty-first century.

*Bob Frith, March 2016.*



*Scenes from Haslingden today*



## Introduction

The poems, accounts and stories presented in the following three sections represent the main groups who took part in the Different Moons workshops: women, young girls and children. We have succeeded in including a few words from nearly every single one of the over one hundred and thirty participants who took part in the workshops, either as solo pieces of writing or joint pieces made up of lines or verses from a number of individuals in the group.

There are intimate and beautiful poems written by the Haslingden Community Link Women's Group; defiant and tender letters and poems by young girls from two Haslingden girls' groups; and quirky and surprising stories written by pupils from the Rossendale Valley Islamic Supplementary School (Haslingden) and St. Mary's C.E. Primary School (Rawtenstall).

Heritage interviews, art and themed discussions were used as springboards for inspiring the writing. For many participants who engaged in the workshop series it was the first time that they had tried out the art forms on offer including mehndi (henna) art (Habiba Shenza), paper cut (Maryam Golubeva), Arabic calligraphy (Farzana Patel) and animation (Rehmat Gangreker).

As part of the creative process participants were encouraged to "have a go" and feel that it was "okay to make mistakes". Participants showed great pleasure and pride in the use of materials of South Asian and Islamic Heritage which they were familiar with or keen to learn about. In particular the poems of writers including Safuran Ara (Bengali), Imtiaz Dharker (English), Hafez (Farsi), Samina Raffat Hussain (Urdu) Basir Kazmi (Urdu) and Baba Rahman (Pashto) were used as inspiration.

Women, girls and children showed equal surprise and pleasure in the writing that they produced. The confidence that they developed and the joy shared in working with the themes of the moon, fathers and education, early Asian migration, family stories and Asian women role models is evident in the pieces that follow.

It was wonderful for me to be able to experiment with rich and evocative source materials and to use these in the writing sessions. It has been a privilege to work with such a wide range of talented and creative participants. We hope you enjoy the starry array of poems and stories that have been created as a result of these Different Moons workshops.



*Shamshad Khan, March 2016.*







## Women



he poetry and accounts in this section were written by women who are of first and second generation and of mainly Pakistani and Bengali backgrounds. Most pieces were written in English, a few pieces written in Bengali and Urdu and translated into English, others spoken and scribed by support staff.

For many of the women the workshops were a journey of creative expression and confidence building through the creative writing process. The poems range from brief comparisons of each other with the moon to spiritual reflections on the moon and water. Other pieces are based on researching and recollecting their parents own experiences of arrival to Rossendale, father – daughter relationships and attitudes towards education inspired by the heritage interview with Farida Munir.

The sessions were emotionally challenging as the themes touched on memories and experiences of intimate relationships and journeys of displacement and loss. There was also deep and fond sharing of common experiences and learning.

For the women to engage in these sessions and to achieve these pieces has been a triumph. Many signed up to the series attracted by the mehndi (henna), paper cut art and Arabic calligraphy offered. Most, not unusually, felt they would not be able to write a poem.

The poems and accounts created are a celebration of how these self-limiting perceptions were overcome and the creative process embraced wholeheartedly. To quote one of the participants (R.Z.) “She is like the moon. Powerful and bright. She shines at everything she does.”





*Mehndi - Habiba Shenza*

## *Chaand (moon)*

*Chaand is like a comparison to a fuller life.*

*Life is good now*

*Chaand was half and dark before.*

*As in life there was some darkness*

*With troubles and difficulties*

*Now a lot fuller.*

*A woman's light is like the patience she has*

*Like that of the chaand.*

*She has to wait before she can shine.*

*Has to wait against the daylight of the sun.*

*Also has to wait, as the days of the month.*

*Like her role in life, she has a few glimpses of*

*Only when she is full.*

*Minaz Begum, S. B., Salama Begum and Elias Bibi  
(translated from Bengali by Arry Nessa)  
Haslingden Community Link Women's Group*



## *Full circle of ability*

*Shahmim is a full moon because*

*She takes pride in her appearance*

*Always looks 100%.*

*Qulsoom is a half moon*

*Because she is a truthful person.*

*You don't know whether it is alright to approach her*

*Or not.*

*Nagina is a full moon because*

*She has the full circle of ability to listen.*

***Razna Begum and Shahmim Shah  
Haslingden Community Link Women's Group***



## *Never ending light*

*Hameeda to me is like the full moon*

*Which is never ending with light for everyone all over the world.*

*The same can be said of Hameeda*

*Never ending with ideas so bright and unique for the whole community.*

***Shakeela Jan  
(translated from Urdu by Hameeda Mahmood)  
Haslingden Community Link Women's Group***





## *Moon and stars*

*Sajida is a full moon*

*Good at listening to others' problems*

*Full moon to her kids*

*Her nieces and nephews*

*And her husband.*

*Jabeen is a full moon to family*

*Looking after parents.*

*She puts herself behind and puts others first*

*She is a star to her kids.*

*Jabeen Nawaz and Sajida Usman*  
*Haslingden Community Link Women's Group*



## *The same moon*

*Cried when we got married, for everyone we left in the family*

*Cried when we left, tears for everyone we left behind in the country.*

*When it is clear, the moon can be seen all the time there*

*Now here, even though it is the same moon,*

*It cannot be seen, let alone the sun.*

*It is still the moon, but it's not the same*

*The moon is still the same shining brightly for us.*

*Back then, the moon shone for us, still the same*

*It shines for us all the time, clouds or not.*

*It is us that have changed.*

*S. (e) B. and Elias Bibi*  
*(translated from Bengali by Arry Nessa)*  
*Haslingden Community Link Women's Group*



## *First impressions of the country*

*At first the weather didn't suit us. A lot of the time, for the safety of our children and women, when the men used to go to work, the women would stay at home. This slowly changed as time went on and the children went to school. The street became a community with both Pakistani and Bengali people celebrating Eid and children playing. Before the ladies had arrived in England, there had been a house arranged to allow the men to pray together. This slowly became the first mosque of Haslingden.*

*Every week the younger girls (who are all grown up now with their own children, many still in Haslingden) would come during the week to help me cook. They would learn how to cook, look after my children. Every Saturday my husband would teach Bengali from home.*

*Many happy times were spent in 'Cross Street' we had become our version of Bangladesh. We would send the men to Rawtenstall to get rice and fish. Now everything is available, even in Tesco!*

*S. (e) B.  
(translated from Bengali by Arry Nessa)  
Haslingden Community Link Women's Group*



## *Yearning unfulfilled*

*The yearnings left behind  
How do the yearnings go?  
To take on a new identity  
She shed herself of wishes and took on a new skin  
Everything she knew, she had to shed.*

*Elias Bibi  
(translated from Bengali by Arry Nessa)  
Haslingden Community Link Women's Group*





## Dear Grandma and Granddad,

*I sit and think of the wonderful stories you told me when you first came to the UK.*

*It was in the 50's when Granddad came on his own. He settled in a big house along with his two younger brothers. He used to go to the textile mill, do his twelve hour shift and come back and cook for all the men in the house. Then my dad came over to stay with you. He was young and didn't have any documents to show his appropriate age because you (Granddad) wanted to put him in school. So, the head teacher checked his teeth to decide what school he needs to go to.*

*Then you (Grandma) came over to join them in the 1960's. You did not like it because you were the only lady in the house. My dad used to do the atta (knead the flour) after coming home from school, for his dad (you Granddad) to do the roti (chappati), but he never got it right each time. Then years passed by and your family and relatives came along to join you all in the UK. Grandma used to say Granddad said: "Sab kuch lutta ke, hosh mein aa'ae, tou kya kiya" ("I've come to my senses, after having lost everything, but what have I achieved?").*

*Jasmine (your Granddaughter).*

**Jasmine Shah**  
**Haslingden Community Link Women's Group**



*(title inspired by U2 song "Where the streets have no name")*

## Where the streets sings our praises

*Left behind the world we knew,*

*For what was deemed an amazing opportunity.*

*Scrambled, raced and sacrificed towards what was carved as our destiny.*

*Never envisaged it as our home,*

*But a station from which our dreams will be built.*

*Even after many generations have graced,*

*We await for our return ticket to be dealt.*

*It's alien to what is endearing, to our rich culture*

*It's a world so far apart, full of unfamiliarity and rupture.*

*We are different, diverse and will always be*

*Can't they just appreciate that, don't they just see.*

*But here we stand, we have truly made our presence*

*By building a community in which we are an essence.*

*Even though they view this, as just our personal victory*

*Little do they know we have positively shaped their history.*

**Hameeda Mahmood**  
**Haslingden Community Link Women's Group**



## *Fathers, daughters and education*

*For my father, education was a waste of time. Honour comes first.*

*If lucky enough to have a husband who lets you educate, then it's okay.*

*I think education is like a garden, the more you go into it, the more it grows.*

*I can't say much about what my father thought about education because I left*

*school at ten. It was my mum who was against education, more than my dad.*

*I think education is like a rain drop in an ocean because once you step in you can*

*feel the ripples going further and further. The wider your thirst for knowledge.*

*My father is a genius because even though in the olden days he tried to make us an*

*education. That's why I'm here.*

*Education is like a tree because I'm educated I can pass it on.*

*Education is like the air, immeasurable. It's hard to contain and an absolute*

*necessity and without it man is as good as dead.*

*For my father, education for girls was no different, it was just there, a part of life.*

*Education is like a cleaning thing, it cleans our minds of dirty things.*

***Olima Begum, Sufia Choudhury, Nagina Gul, Hameeda Mahmood, Shahgufta Naz,  
Nusrat Rahman, Shahmim Shah and R.Z  
Haslingden Community Link Women's Group***



## *Everything happens for the best*

*Rustling of the wrapper, as he secretly slipped the snack under my pillow*

*whilst I pretended to sleep.*

*Impatiently waiting to take a bite and feel the honey-glazed sesame seeds*

*disperse slowly in my mouth.*

*The stickiness of the honey and crunchiness of the seeds bound together*

*Perfectly.*

*The seeds working one by one*

*Each subtly embedding a valuable lesson of life*

*Work hard, be patient, don't give up*

*Inevitably growing in every form*

*I have become the person I am today.*

***Shahgufta Naz  
Haslingden Community Link Women's Group***







## *Treasures of the world*

*Silence is truly golden to me now.*

*The essence of life I am truly*

*Beginning to understand and*

*Appreciate through dad's words.*

*Tick, tock, tick, tock, time is slipping*

*Through my hands like golden*

*Shards of sand.*

*That's my answer!*

*"It is meritorious to remain silent."*

*Is now my opening gambit.*

**Nusrat Rahman**  
**Haslingden Community Link Women's Group**



## *White fish*

*My father understood me*

*Like a mother did.*

*On a day he brought lots of*

*Small fish, two days' worth.*

*I didn't like them and*

*Cried, he returned them*

*All straight away.*

*That's the gift I learnt*

*To love my kids.*

**Tanzina Akhter**  
**Haslingden Community Link Women's Group**



## *Symbols of love, jewels of life*

*He made me feel like a princess on a throne, precious and special to walk the grubby roads or paving*

*My father has taught me how to value time, as time cannot be stopped.*

*Rubies, emeralds, diamonds catching the light. Beautiful colours lifting my mood.*

*The Qur'an does protect you from sins plus things and evil thoughts and things doesn't it.*

*When I read I feel proud of myself, that I can read, even though I don't know the meaning.*

*The seeds working one by one, each subtly imbedding a valuable lesson of life. Work hard, be patient, don't give up.*

*If you have love for others, think, think of what your love awakens for, if not for your parents.*

*Even if I don't have the land to pass to my children, but I can teach them the gift of loving the poor.*

*You're still for me, my little child. For all the day I'm still alive, it is your right that I still gift to you.*

*If we compare his effort to others, it is so much more. If mine is worth two bricks, his is thirty or forty.*

*"It is meritorious to remain silent" is now my opening gambit.*

*Tanzina Akther, S.B., Riffat Bi, Juhela Bibi, Olima Begum, Sufia Choudhury,  
Nagina Gul, Hameeda Mahmood, Shagufta Naz, Nusrat Rahman, R.Z  
Haslingden Community Link Women's Group*



## *Call for prayer*

*Birdsong early in the morning*

*Sounding like the call for prayer.*

*Come downstairs.*

*Wiping sleep from my eyes.*

*Throwing open the door, pigeons waiting outside.*

*Twittering to each other.*

*What are we going to do today?*

*Where are we flying?*

*Rummaging around on the ground for the*

*Bread I throw their way.*

*Reminding me of my family and me.*

*Planning for their day.*

*R.Z  
Haslingden Community Link Women's Group*





## *My full moon (mera pura chaand)*

*It's full moon again, another promise fulfilled.*

*The daughter I yearned for has emerged in my life.*

*Like the moon that orbits the whole of the world*

*She like the moon has an impact on me.*

*Brings fulfilment and is magically radiant.*

*The whole moon shimmers in the moonlight on a clear night*

*Like our friendship.*

*The full tide, the water in abundance*

*Being pulled towards the moon*

*Just the way she makes me tick.*

*The sea of love dancing to the moon's movements.*

*When she is low or sad, it seems the clouds have covered my moon -*

*The whole world goes dim and dull.*

*The clouds lifted, chaandni (moonlight) sings*

*Making my whole life worthwhile, with the stars in my pastures green.*

**Kauser Choudhry**  
**Haslingden Community Link Women's Group**



## *The ocean and the moon*

*The moon shines bright onto the water.*

*Rippling of light on the water,*

*Beaming across the sea.*

*Calming and relaxing.*

*Mum is the moon shining for her children.*

*Dad being the ocean, full of life and so much to give.*

*He is the ocean, funny, chatty and very caring...*

*Mum is like a moon with clouds going across it*

*Because she can be reserved as well...*

*The moon shines.*

*My mum would set it off.*

*Then it wouldn't be a calm motion.*

*My dad would argue it out with her.*

*Like when there's a thundery windy sea and it's crashing*

**Nagina Gul**  
**Haslingden Community Link Women's Group**



## *My dearest moon*

*Through my eyes I will always see your aura shining brightly onto me.*

*For in my dark days your love's light guided my ways.*

*My dearest moon, my strength, my friend.*

*On the path with different shades of sorrow and woe,*

*In my loneliest hours.*

*Hidden behind the night skies you still shone*

*And comforted your warmth onto me.*

*In the happiest hours of my laughter and joy,*

*You smiled and held my hand.*

*Side by side my dearest moon, my desire, my friend.*

*In this journey of life, come what may.*

*My dearest moon, my partner, my friend.*

*In this journey of mine, you became the essence of my soul*

*My dearest moon, my dearest love, my friend.*

**Arry Nessa**  
**Haslingden Community Link Women's Group**



## *Yearning*

*The dark blackout of night folds on the silent, calm earth.*

*I am not calm, I am alone.*

*My entrapped soul yearns for your presence with every breath I take.*

*The strong harsh web of rope tangles and tightens,*

*Suffocating, forcing tears to flow.*

*The shining streams flow unstoppable.*

*My heart aches unbearable.*

*My heart yearns for your presence every moment.*

**Umerah Shuaib**  
**Haslingden Community Link Women's Group**





## *The moon is a Muslim*

*Wandering, floating, hovering, I soak you into my heart,*

*I lift my arms, twirl, smile, raising my eyes towards you,*

*You shine and glow, we are so far apart,*

*Surrounded by the sparkling stars,*

*Glowing, shimmering, radiating,*

*You are a beacon in the midnight blue,*

*Do you follow me as I make my way?*

*Lightening my path, everywhere I tread, do you?*

*Do you see me as I walk, beautiful moon?*

*Shining, sparkling, twinkling, rippling tiny waves in the sea,*

*Do you believe what I believe?*

*Who created you my moon? Are you a Muslim like me?*

*Do you praise Allah's glory as you shine?*

*Wandering you say Subhan'Allah (glorious is God)*

*Radiating you say Alhamdulillah (praise to God)*

*Shining Allahu Akbar (God is the greatest).*

**Qulsoom Khan**  
**Haslingden Community Link Women's Group**



## *Moon beams*

*My magnificent moon shines across the world*

*So beautiful, bright and bold*

*Glistening in darkness whilst all is silent*

*Hangs high so proudly in the sky*

*Giving love in all directions, not looking for any back*

*All on one side fighting for love, it is love fighting*

*My prophet, a moon for all*

*Showing the straight and special way*

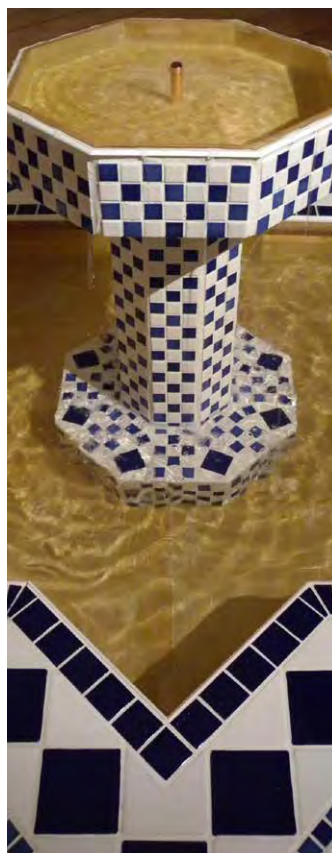
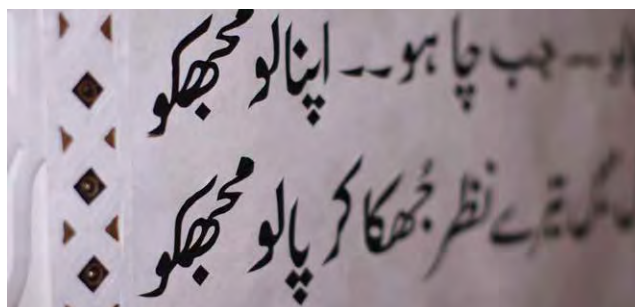
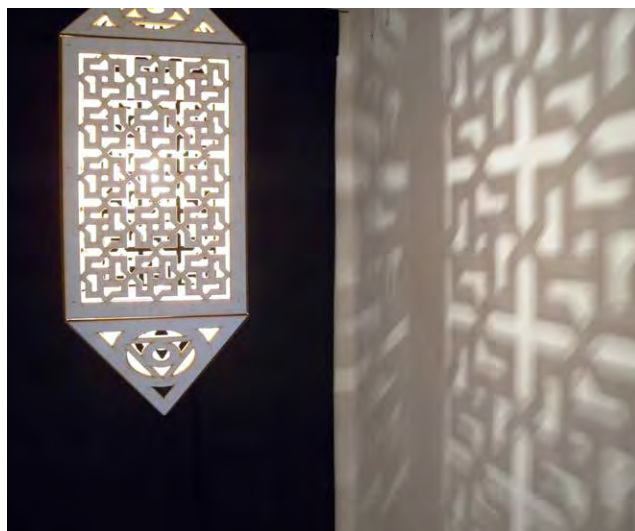
*My moon is beaming in the bustle of all the rush*

*And in the stillness of sleep.*

**Zafeera Shuaib**  
**Haslingden Community Link Women's Group**







*Lantern - Bob Frith; detail from fountain - Phil Milston;  
detail from Urdu poem - Samina Riffat Hussain (typeset - Shakil Salam)*



## Girls



he poems in this section were inspired by the heritage theme, the paper cut carpet (created by Maryam Golubeva) and poetry.

Poems were written in response to a visualisation exercise of a journey to the moon seated on the paper carpet. The girls listened to extracts from the interview of Mrs Zamro Rahman (Habiba Shenza's grandmother). As part of the heritage theme, girls were asked to find out who the first woman in their family to come to Rossendale was and what they might like to ask their grandmothers about their lives. The letters to Grandmas written in response to this exercise are touching exchanges with a poignancy all of their own.

Finally, inspiration was drawn from the poem "A Bengali Woman in Britain" written by Safuran Ara and translated into English by Debjani Chatterji. The two girls' groups discussed the feelings and attitudes described in the poem and wrote their own version of being an Asian girl in Haslingden. There are solo pieces and a group poem that was generated by the girls choosing a favourite line from their poems.

The two girls' groups that took part were the regular Haslingden Library Girls' Youth Group and a specially convened group based at the Dave Pearson Studio. Girls were aged between age eight and eighteen. The poems are a charming and lively expression of contemporary British Asian girl power.



## *Bengali woman and an Asian girl*

*Even though a Bengali woman in Britain is having a hard time*

*She still keeps on glowing like a moon in the night sky.*

*She is not a beggar.*

*An Asian woman's life was really hard back then.*

*Her beauty is like a crescent moon in the dark shimmering night.*

*An Asian girl in Haslingden is fiery and feisty.*

*Her mind is full of dreams that can come true and will come true.*

*An Asian girl in England takes comfort when she looks at the moon*

*Knowing that it's one of the only similarities*

*Between England and her true home.*

*She is a fearless body wandering the dark night.*

*She is brave, unique and needs no-one's assistance.*

*She is not a disguised goddess - so leave her be.*

***Hafsah Begum, Tanya Elahi, Hamima Jakiya, Aysha Munir, Fatima Munir, Arzoo Shah, Tamanna Shah, Maryam Laila Shakeel, Hajrah Sanam Yaqub, Insha Yasir  
Haslingden Girls' Group***



## *Amongst the dark clouds*

*An Asian girl in Haslingden is unique and beautiful.*

*Her life is no cosy chat in the garden,*

*She must stand her ground in all aspects of life,*

*Nothing frightens her, nor threatens her.*

*She is her own person and proud of it.*

*An Asian girl in Haslingden is fiery and feisty,*

*She stands out amongst a crowd,*

*Just as the moon stands out in amongst the dark clouds.*

*The radiant glow of her face never fades.*

*An Asian girl in Haslingden,*

*Does not surrender easily, she is not a stiff statue,*

*Nothing gets past her,*

*No lies or deceiving faces,*

*She is wise and cannot be fooled.*

***Hafsah Begum  
Haslingden Girls' Group***



## *Taking comfort from the moon*

*An Asian girl in England takes comfort when she looks at the moon,*

*Knowing that it's one of the only similarities*

*Between England and her true home.*

*An Asian girl in Haslingden ignores the stereotypes.*

*She wears what she feels comfortable in and has ambitions.*

*She dreams about a future where she has a job she enjoys instead of cooking and*

*cleaning all day like her family.*

*She enjoys her freedom that she may not have had if she was born 20 years earlier,*

*and she ignores anything people might say about her.*

***Tanya Elahi***  
***Haslingden Girls' Group***



## *Like a crescent moon*

*An Asian girl in Haslingden*

*Walking down the streets, blossoming*

*And they are so intrigued*

*People are staring and she isn't caring*

*People are so attracted*

*She hasn't even noticed.*

*An Asian girl in Haslingden is so fearless.*

*Her beauty is like a crescent moon in the dark shimmering night.*

***Hamima Jakiya***  
***Haslingden Girls' Group***





## *Exploring the world*

*An Asian girl in Haslingden has it easy,  
There are no limits on what she can and can't do,  
She can explore the world,  
Wear what she wants,  
Her mind is filled with dreams that can come true,  
And will come true.  
The moon reminds her of her true home.  
Reflecting the busy streets filled with spices.*

***Fatima Munir  
Haslingden Girls' Group***



## *An Asian woman in Haslingden now and then*

*"She is no wretch to crawl in anyone's dust."  
She is not a beggar.  
The moon is gleaming so she knows she doesn't need help.  
She knows she'll be fine.  
  
I think it's easier for us because they had to make their own food.  
They didn't have very good vehicles. Most food wasn't Halal.  
They had to make their own dough and now we have machines.*

***Arzoo Shah  
Haslingden Girls' Group***





## *A different moonlight dance*

*“The scent of lemons, moonlight dancing on tamarind leaves,”*

*Remind her of her home.*

*“Even today such sweet memories have not dimmed.”*

*Even though a Bengali woman in Britain is having a hard time*

*She still doesn’t surrender*

*And keeps glowing like a moon in the night sky.*

*As a young Asian girl in Haslingden, honestly I feel kind of hard to fit in.*

*People are more judgemental about your actions. As a young girl in Haslingden,*

*I feel it’s easy because much has improved from centuries ago.*

*We have many types of technology and transport because it has improved vastly.*

*The population of Asian people has increased in Haslingden than before when*

*older relatives lived here.*

**Insha Yasir**  
**Haslingden Girls’ Group**



## *Dear Grandma,*

*Thank you “nani” (maternal Grandmother) for all the things you gave me and all the things you said good about me and also what you did for me. I want to also thank you for taking me lots of places and getting lots of sweets for me to eat and thank you for treating me the same, like you treat my brother and sisters and also loving me so much.*

*Nani you are like a half moon, because you share all the good times in your life and you keep all the pain inside you from another side.*

*Nani I want to ask you some questions:*

*When is your birthday? How old are you?*

*When you got married was your mother-in-law caring and helpful?*

*When you got married were you scared (nervous)?*

*Do you want to come and visit us in England?*

*Lots of love from Shammi.*

*My mum’s mum. I know my Grandma quite well. I speak Bengali to my Grandma. She is special to me because she is really caring and she gets us treats and she’s really helpful. She lives in Bangladesh.*

**Shammi Akter**  
**Haslingden Library Girls’ Group**





## Dear Grandma,

*Thank you for making me laugh in the odd times.*

*You are like a crescent moon.*

*You are serious and quiet*

*But you can make people laugh.*

*The questions that I would like to ask you are:*

*Do you miss home? (Bangladesh)*

*When did you come to Haslingden?*

*Did you have a job?*

*How old were you when you got married?*

*What were you like when you were young?*

*Grandma, my dad was your oldest son,*

*How did he act when he was young?*

*Love from your favourite Granddaughter.*

*My mum's mum is Bengali (Pakistani). I've met my mum's mum twice. The first time I don't really remember because I was a child (I met her when I went to Bangladesh). When I got older I met her when she came for the first time to England.*

*My dad's mum is Bengali (Pakistani). I currently live with my dad's mum. She comes and goes to Bangladesh. I would ask my dad's mum: "After you came here did you want to go home?" My dad's mum is special to me, even though I don't quite get along. She still does make me laugh the odd times.*

**Akeefah Tasnia**  
**Haslingden Library Girls' Group**



## Dear Grandma,

*Thank you "nani" (maternal Grandmother) for all the good things you have done for me.*

*You help me with my tidying up.*

*You are a half moon because half of you is happy,*

*Joyous and is always smiling*

*The other half of you kind and helpful.*

*I want to know:*

*When were you born?*

*When did you meet Granddad?*

*How do you make the best food? (chicken)*

*What were you like when you were little?*

*How old were you when you met Granddad?*

*From Afsana.*

*My mum's mum speaks Bengali. She's kind. She's helpful. She lives in Bangladesh. I speak in Bengali to her. She's special to me because she's caring. Helpful and always laughing*

**Afsana Rahman**  
**Haslingden Library Girls' Group**



## *A Bengali girl in Haslingden*

*A Bengali girl in Haslingden.*

*Sat on a white elegant rug, she lifted off and floated.*

*She is creative, she needs papers and pencils.*

*She is an imaginative being*

*She glows when she makes things,*

*She glows like the moon.*

*A Bengali girl in Haslingden loves light from the sun and moon.*

*“It is not allowable for the sun to reach the moon,*

*Nor does the night overtake the day,*

*But each, in an orbit, is swimming”.*

*(Quote from the Qur’an 36:40).*

**Aaneesah Tahseen**  
**Haslingden Library Girls’ Group**



## *A Bengali girl in Haslingden*

*A Bengali girl in Haslingden is quiet and friendly*

*But does not easily give up,*

*She’s no shining star*

*But caught in an imaginary world.*

*A Bengali girl in Haslingden*

*Earns her money by working hard.*

*She may be a “silent statue”*

*But she doesn’t let that get in her way.*

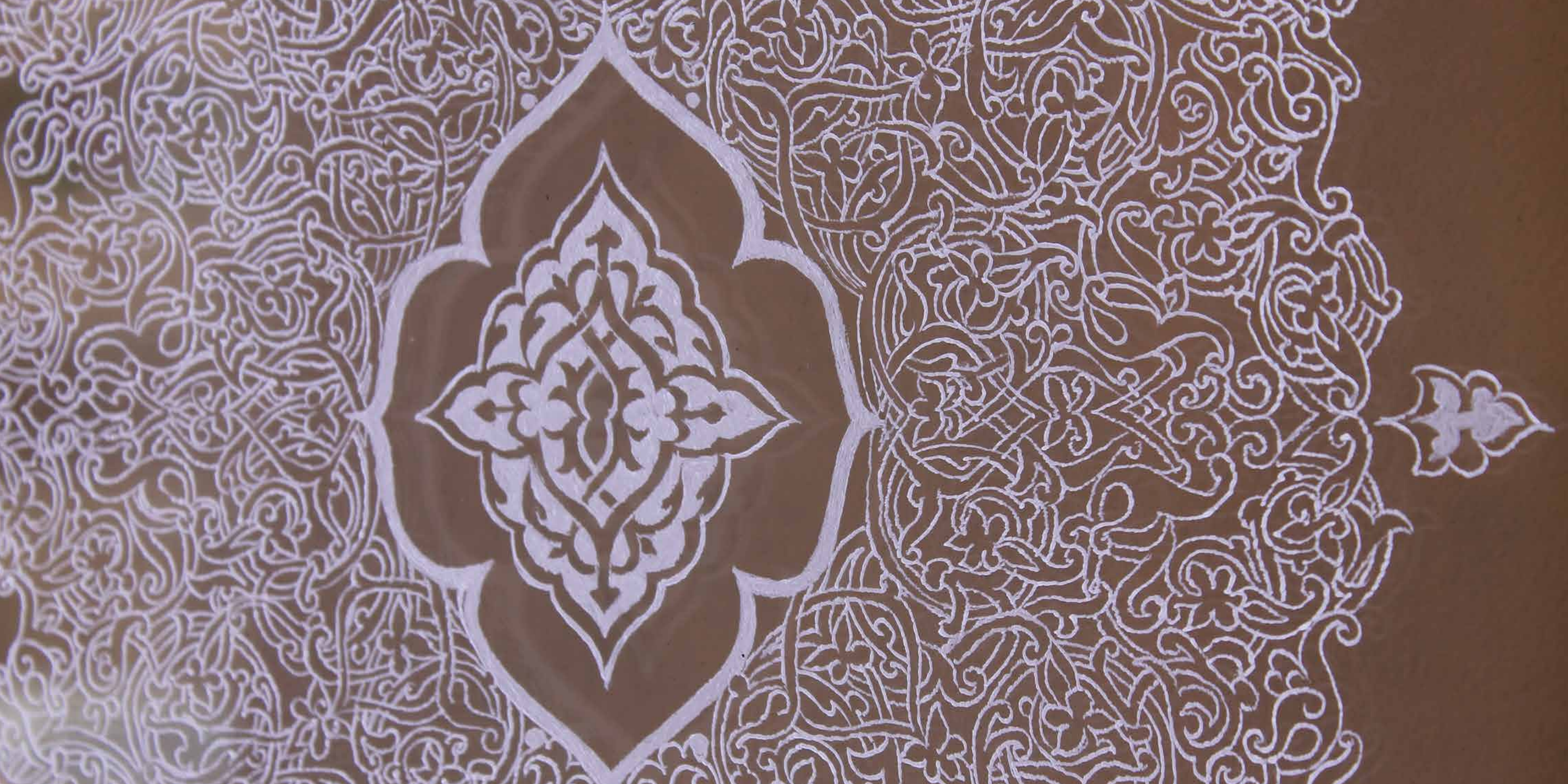
*She may be quiet and shy*

*But she is never alone*

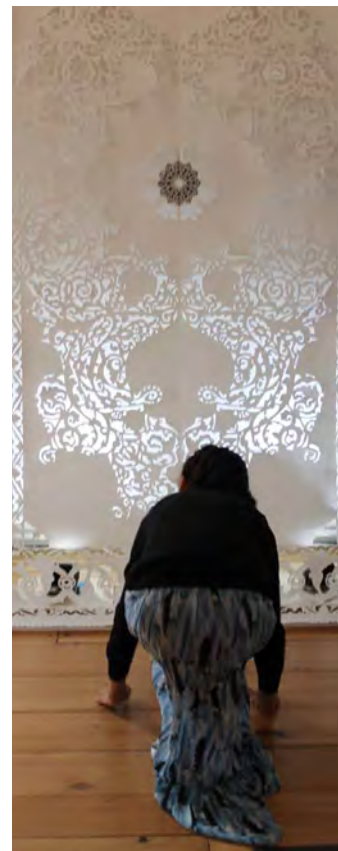
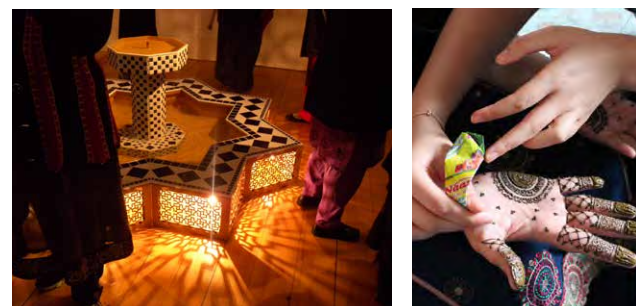
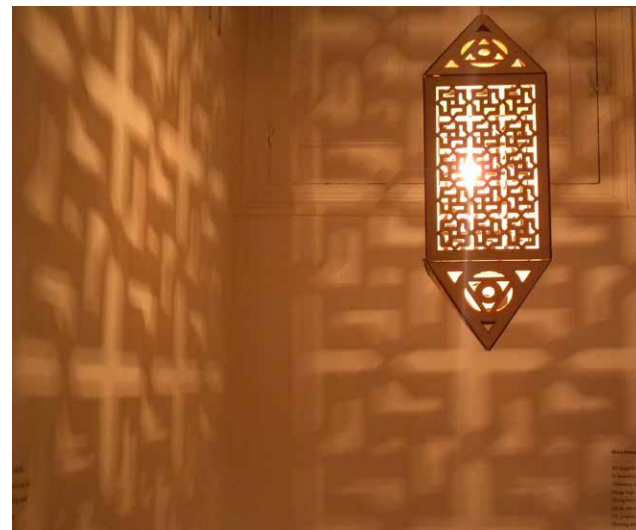
*(there are more people like her).*

**Rina Begum**  
**Haslingden Library Girls’ Group**









## Children

The children featured in this section are aged from as young as six to twelve years of age. The greatest number of sessions were run as part of the Islamic culture lessons at the Rossendale Valley Islamic Supplementary School (RVISS, Haslingden) and others with Year 4 and Year 6 pupils at St Mary's C.E. Primary School (Rawtenstall).

The sessions with RVISS included mehndi (henna) and Arabic calligraphy sessions. They visualised journeys to the moon seated on the paper cut carpet and wrote charming and quirky pieces imaging taking their Grandmas to the moon. They also responded to the story of the bird told by Samina Hussain recorded as part of the heritage interviews.

Both groups brainstormed facts about the moon and used these to write comparisons of themselves and their partners with the moon, also drawing on the exercise of sharing good things about themselves and each other. They learnt new facts, for example, that a crater on the moon is named "Nasireddin" after the Persian astronomer and scientist Nasir al-Din al-Tusi and about the life achievements and journey of Mazhar Hussain one of the first Asian men to settle in Haslingden in 1956.

It was significant to see how readily the youngest participants engaged with the creative process. Playfully making unexpected links between themselves and the moon. The children generated some of the most open and exuberant responses to exercises like what their favourite letter is in any language and who was the first person in their family to come to Rossendale. They have woven this wonder and imagination into delightful stories and poems.

The enthusiasm and interest the children took, whatever their ethnic backgrounds, in the creative activities and materials drawn from South Asian and Islamic culture is encouraging and identifies a thirst and the value of offering sessions of this nature to young children. The pieces you will read in this section we hope will fill you with a joy and optimism for the future.



*Detail of paper-cut - Maryam Golubeva*

## *Moonlike flower*

*I am like the moon, soft and round  
With an oval face and bright white teeth.  
I blossom and bloom like a flower  
I am full of good ideas.  
Looking up at the moon, helps me think  
It calms me and soothes me, ready for the next day.  
I like baking cupcakes, round like the moon  
They taste heavenly and sweet.  
I am not like the moon in many ways, for starters  
I have long black hair that goes around my face.  
But I am unique and special just like the moon,  
I help people and am always there for you.  
I am proud of who I am because it makes me different  
From everyone else.  
Like the moon, unique and special all by itself.*

**Jamila Khanom**  
**Rossendale Valley Islamic Supplementary School**



## *Do you know?*

*Is the moon made out of cheese?*

*Does the moon have trees?*

*Are there people on the moon?*

*Are there plants on the moon?*

*Is there water on the moon?*

*Is there an ocean on the moon?*

*All these questions are coming from my head*

*You can't drive a car on the moon.*

*Are there homes on the moon?*

*Are there shops on the moon?*

*Are there schools on the moon?*

*Is there a take-away on the moon?*

*Is there TV on the moon?*

*Is the moon a hot potato?*

*I would like to count how many times the moon goes round.*

*If you kick a football into a crater it will go for ever and ever.*

**Joshua Thomson**  
**Year 4, St Mary's C.E. Primary School**



## *Like the moon*

*I am like the moon because I am good at goal keeping and the moon stops the light from getting to the Earth at night.*

*I am not like the moon because it cannot speak, if it could it might say, go away sun.*

*I am like the moon because it has style and it is the king of the night sky.*

*I am not like the moon because I have my own light and the moon gets the sun's light.*

*I am like the moon because I am good at drama and the moon rises dramatically.*

*I am not like the moon because I am good at singing, but the moon cannot sing.*

*If it could it might sing stories about what happens at night.*

*I am like the moon because I am good at swimming and the moon swims in space.*

*I am not like the moon because I can draw but the moon cannot draw.*

*I am like the moon because the moon gets further away from the earth every year*

*and the football gets further away from the foot.*

*I am not like the moon because it has its own gravitational pull, unlike me who is pulled towards the gravity of earth.*

*I am like the moon because I am good at art and I draw pictures like the moon draws light.*

*I am not like the moon because the moon is not good at art.*

*I am like the moon because it is stylish like me because the moon turns around when I turn around and says – voila!*

*I am not like the moon because though it is 385,000km from the earth it can't do maths.*

*I am like the moon because it makes waves like I make houses out of leggo bricks.*

**Jahedur Ali, Favour Bamidele, Taylor Clegg, Aidan Riched Eddelston, Cassidy Harper, Anisha R. Hussain, Akshay Navayan, Samiul A. Rahman, Mohammed Ruhel, Mahek Siddaka, Josh Smith, Amelia E.A. Stanley, Oliver Thompson, Samir Uddin and David Vaughan - Year 6, St Mary's C.E. Primary School, Rawtenstall**





## *The babysitter*

*I am like the moon because I like babysitting*

*And the moon babysits us*

*All the way from space.*

*I am like the moon because I'm good at art*

*And the moon is creative in all its features.*

*I am not like the moon because I'm athletic*

*And the moon takes 28 days to go round its orbit*

*(The moon is lazy).*

*I am like the moon because I am good at drawing*

*The moon is drawing stars in the sky.*

*I am like the moon*

*Because the moon moves and I do too.*

*I am not like the moon*

*Because I am a chatterbox*

*And the moon is not a chatterbox.*

*The moon is silent like the night.*

**Anita Begum, Rehan Haque, Imran Hussain, Ehsan Miah**  
**Rossendale Valley Islamic Supplementary School**



## *Journey under a gleaming moon*

*A handsome man is on a black wonderful horse.*

*At night the stars shine at him because he is a star.*

*Two of the sets of stars look like bunnies, the moon was in between them. It looked like bunnies were playing catch.*

*He travelled first class, he was sick on the ferocious boat, he saw some wonderful dolphins.*

*Then the doctor gave him some medicine and he was really better.*

*My first journey was to Turkey, the car ride was jerky.*

*The best thing about the holiday was making new friends and playing with my cousins that I met before.*

*We landed in Dubai and then my dad said let's choose something to buy.*

*I saw the white gleaming moon rose up.*

*We got entertained by the people who were Africans, dancing*

*I can't wait to see lambs jump and play, they jump and leap and cuddle in a heap.*

*I could see the glamorous moon, it was a half moon and I was just staring at it.*

*The moon was always with me.*

*The moon is nice to learn about, because it is nice to learn about new things.*

**Dil-Baaz Ali, Elizabeth Astin, Usman Azam, Olivia Black, Jack Dickinson, Nadya Eddison, Callum Hassan-Jones, Eleanor**  
**Haworth, Nazim Hussain, Fatima Jalal, Nichol Jones, Ikram Mahmood, Joshua Thomson, Safiyah Yunus**  
**Year 4, St Mary's C.E. Primary School**



## *Degrees of closeness*

*My nan came to Helmsore. She went through World War 2.*

*After it had finished she met a man that was from World War 2.*

*They started dating, then he died.*

*So my nan came to England and had a baby.*

*When the child was ten she wanted to move back to Greece but she couldn't*

*because she was really poorly.*

*Mr Hussain might have met my Grandma in England.*

*When Mr Hussain was 72 near enough*

*All of the Year 6 class was born.*

*Taylor Clegg  
Year 6, St Mary's C.E. Primary School*



## *The moon floats by*

*I lived in Pakistan and India, now I'm coming to England. I am Mr. Hussain.*

*I'm coming on a boat to England. I can see the birds flying by and also dolphins  
in the night swimming past. Oh it's a wonderful sight, looking up at the sky, seeing  
the moon floating by. Feeling happy, seasick too. For three weeks straight. Coming  
soon to England. Is it a happy place? Will there be sun shining in the sky or will  
there be rain splashing on the roof tops. Would I feel like I'm at home or will I  
feel dull, black and sad. What can I do? Can I go to mosque.*

*Can I go pray to God there?*

*I'm like a dolphin in the sea looking for something I need to be. Rossendale is the  
place for me. I shall build a mosque for the people to read, to go to the place where  
God wants them to be. Get other books for the library! Urdu, Bangla, Arabic too!  
I learnt English to mix with other people, to make friends and connect.*

*Samiyah Akhtar  
Rossendale Valley Islamic Supplementary School*



## *The unsuspecting moon*

*Taylor, oh Taylor*

*He makes people laugh*

*Even the unsuspecting moon*

*Taylor, oh Taylor*

*Your impressions are class*

*With a good rhythm and tune*

*Taylor, oh Taylor*

*I say “go with the flow”*

*Even when you get trapped in a room*

*Taylor, oh Taylor*

*He makes people laugh*

*Even the unsuspecting moon.*

**Akshay Navayan**  
**Year 6, St Mary’s C.E. Primary School**



## *The empty sea*

*It wasn’t a pleasant journey, like Mazhar thought. It was cold,*

*His journey was long, he wanted it to be short. He became ill*

*Then that day the sea became calm and still.*

*Mazhar suddenly saw a beautiful view. He saw many amazing things. Things he had never seen before.*

*He leaned over the boat and closed his eyes. Imagining how the sunset dies.*

*He opened his eyes and there he saw the yellow sun becoming pink.*

*Then disappearing until he could see the sky as blue as a bottle of ink.*

*Another three weeks passed, the sea was empty.*

*He imagined how he would build and design his College of Technology.*

*Then down below he saw a dolphin swimming so slow. Mazhar looked up and there was land.*

*Mazhar knew his journey was over.*

*With excitement he stepped off the ship. He was so joyful he felt like doing a front flip! His studies will  
now begin. And his journey would now end. In his straight line of life, there was now a bend.*

**Maryam Laila Shakeel**  
**Year 6, St Mary’s C.E. Primary School**





## *The astonishing journey*

*I could see the gigantic grey moon in the pitch black sky with the golden stars dancing in the thin air.*

*I travelled on my ship and the waves were splashing round like animals.*

*The moon was beautiful with the sunny stars.*

*The moon gazed at the ship, just then the sun appeared, while the moon went down.*

*The water was like the moon because the sea shines and the stars shine.*

*I was on the deck with the captain and it was dusk, but I saw a full shiny astonishing moon living in the sky.*

*I was walking around, I fell to the ground.*

*At night I saw the white glistening moon, I really hope we get to England soon.*

*My Grandfather is like the moon because he is rich, also he shines bright like a diamond.*

*I always look at the moon because the smile on the moon reminds me of all my friends and family in India.*

*Then I saw the moon and I felt back at home, the moon was beautiful with the lovely stars.*

*I was in my mum's car driving on top of tar.*

*There are some animals here.*

*So the birds were singing a lullaby, I felt so relaxed.*

*Zzzzzz the best thing was to sleep.*

**Mickdad Abdulla, Simrah Aftab, Akbar Ahmed, Sara Ali, Xander Balo, Amelia Begum, Rahima Begum, Elle Harrison, Hadi Islam, Bilal Khan, Aamir Mahmood, Sajid Miah, Samina Miah, Israel Muhammad, Bethany Payne, Tahia Rahman**  
**Year 4, St Mary's C.E. Primary School**



## *Travelling to Rossendale on a ship*

*While I travelled on my hard ship I saw some wriggling grey fish in the blue reflective water. I saw my reflection in the water and I saw the beautiful stars shining and the silver moon right in the middle of the black sky. Just at that moment I noticed it was night time. I was really shocked that it was dark.*

*It felt unreal or as if it was just my imagination - Soon the wind was howling like a wolf, consequently I had to go back inside... I thought to myself, "what an imagination!"*

*One cold night me and my sister Tahirah were exploring the ship to find anything interesting. Suddenly we heard a loud bang noise, so we looked up. There we saw the beautiful glowing moon looking upon us. We found out that the noise was a wave and we were a bit scared.*

*The water glittering in the night and the moon and stars shining in the night gets me in a mood of poetry.*

*The moon was glimmering in the pitch black sky, underneath it was a wobbly mirror. My body feels as light as an angel soaring through the sky. Loads of stars were dancing in the sky. With no roads I felt more like I could die!*

**Anika Niema Ali, Sumaya Begum, Humaira Shama Haque, Aliyah Khanom, Kameela Fawziya Miah**  
**Rossendale Valley Islamic Supplementary School**



## *My name is Mr Hussain*

*My name is Mr. Hussain. I am on a boat on my way to England. I can see the moon. It is almost sunset. I have been on this boat for two days now. I can see vast forests, remote islands, jungles. I also see fish swimming in the water. There were dozens of people on board the ship.*

*On our way there we were fighting robot pirates on a boat five times the size of our ship.*

*Luckily we had guns and canons. We fought for four hours, twenty minutes and twelve seconds, but someone made a hole in the boat and they sunk to the bottom of the ocean.*

**Hamzah Uddin**  
**Rossendale Valley Islamic Supplementary School**



## *For the first time*

*I came to England for the first time*

*I sat on the aeroplane for the first time*

*I tasted pasta for the first time. It was so spicy*

*Touched my tongue like cold ice cream in Pakistan.*

*I buyed lots of toys when I came to England*

*For the first time.*

*It was different from Pakistan.*

*My dad buyed a new house.*

*And I have my own room.*

*And I felt very happy when I came to England.*

*I thanked my dad for bringing me in England.*

*Like Mr Hussain liked his journey, I liked my journey.*

**Bushra Azam**  
**Year 6, St Mary's C.E. Primary School**







## Truly astounding

*In the night I was travelling to Rossendale. I am from India but live in Pakistan. After I decided to become the first person to end up in Rossendale. So during the night I decided to say all my goodbyes to my family and friends. So I set off on a yacht which is white and really expensive. The sea was very mad, it made me feel really sea sick. As I look up to the moon I wish to myself good luck. Then I decided to go to a little island.*

*It was amazing! The adventure, the feeling of seeing beautiful skies whizzing past me and the wind blowing in my face. I can hear the birds singing and heart beating as the boat moved swiftly. If I was to compare India to Rossendale there would be no words to come out of my mouth. Because Rossendale has truly taken my breath away. When I look up I can see an old bearded man looking at me and the face spoils my mood as fast as lightening. But then I think no.*

*I am not going to let anyone spoil my mood.*

*That person never knew I was actually going to come to him because he was concentrating on the sea. All the sea did was sparkle and swayed side to side. Next I had tapped him on the shoulder and he jumped in surprise. Then he turned around and I started talking to him about how he ended up here. His clothes looked really ragged and dirty. So I told him “how about I take you to my yacht and we’ll get you some nice clean clothes.”*

*“My name is Burtukali.” So I said to him “that’s quite an interesting name, I really like it.” Then he asked me “what’s your name?” So I said to him “my name is Minaz Rahman.” So he said to me “I like your name as well.”*

*I could tell that he didn’t really like my name. But I didn’t care.*



*So now we reached up to the evening and the time went really fast and it has been two weeks already. Also it was lunch time and we had to go to a takeaway to get some food. Fortunately I had some English money on me and I had about twenty pounds. So I decided to get chicken curry, chips, mayo, mint sauce and naan bread. So we sat at a table, so when we got the food it looked all delicious but we couldn’t eat it all because there were large portions of the food. So we had to take some food for takeaway and that was a really good idea because we can eat it later if we get hungry.*

*Now we have ended our journey and we have ended up in Rawtenstall and that is the end of my journey.*

*I’m finally here. Oh I can’t wait to explore, be adventurous. The moment I set off I start to wander around, I can see that lots of people are wearing different clothes from me but I don’t care. Happily I stroll around looking at all the beautiful shops and houses. This place is truly astounding. The things I see in Rossendale are things that I have never seen back in India but one thing is the same, mums are happily walking with kids.*

*Then I see that there are not lots of plant life in Rossendale like India, so I start to think maybe I could start growing plants.*



## *Mr Hussain and me*

*I was really inspired by Mazhar Hussain, I think he was really committed to get to England.  
Mr Hussain liked looking at the wondrous blue sky and the beautiful fish in the blue calm ocean.  
He felt sick, someone helped him to feel better.  
It became dark and behind him was a beam of moonlight.  
When I see the moon I think to myself it looks like a spoon.  
The balloon is white just like the moon.*

*When Mazhar Hussain came people loved him and he helped the mosque go on in Haslingden in the 1950's and 60's.*

*Mazhar felt good at the event and I felt good at "Trecco".*

*I went to Spain it was my first time going on the plane.*

*I went to Bangladesh on the plane, I was excited.*

*Everything I saw was new to me. I drank a delicious scrumptious juicy cola slush.*

*I tasted lots of mouth-watering things, spicy and warm.*

*I tasted pasta for the first time, it was so spicy it touched my tongue like cold ice cream in Pakistan.*

*We saw a lot of camels. A man asked if we would like to ride it. It smelled so I said no thanks.*

**Fayaz Ahmad, Sahid Ahmed, Shakil Ali, Bushra Azam, Luke Birtwistle, Mia Forden, Max Glover, Mohammad Samuel Islam  
(Raju), Moinul Islam, Hena Khanom, Ismail Mahmood, Bailey Mc Cavana, Abdul Mojid and Maryam Laila Shakeel  
Year 6, St Mary's C.E. Primary School, Rawtenstall**



## *The magic bird*

*Once there was a very poor family who lived in a village in Bangladesh. They had no money or food to eat. There was a  
jungle with lots of berries and fruits. So one day they all decided to go to the jungle.  
They all picked some berries and fruit and sat down in a nearby tree. They started to eat when they heard a small voice above  
them. It said "I heard about you and I know you are very poor and have no money but you are lucky to live near this jungle  
because I am a magic bird."  
The bird was a pigeon but an odd one. It was colourful with black spots! "I lay golden eggs filled with cash and if you come  
here every day you will be very rich." The pigeon lay one hundred eggs a day.*

**Anisah Ali  
Rossendale Valley Islamic Supplementary School**



## *What the bird said*

*I like my wings the way they are.*

*The bird said “Are my rainbow feathers beautiful?”*

*I think that they are all beautiful, none of them is better than each other.*

*I will not be jealous because I will appreciate what Allah gave me.*

*Where did you come from?*

*Have you come to explore?*

*Do you want any food?*

*Are you injured?*

*What do you have in your room?*

*Can I fly inside your house?*

*My mum won’t scare you, she will be fair to you.*

*If you are hurt, I wouldn’t let you down, even if you got a frown.*

***Sahil Ahmed, Anisah Ali, Reyan Ali, Kylah Choudhry, Radeyah Lais, Kamran Miah,  
Leyah Miah, Zayd Quraishi, Ayman Rahman, Khadija Reiah and Sanjeyda Reiah  
Rossendale Valley Islamic Supplementary School***



## *The green path*

*One day in a poor village in India, four brothers headed into the jungle.*

*After three hours they got lost.*

*A few hours had passed and the brothers had given up.*

*A large tiger appeared in front of them and they yelped when he suddenly started to talk. “Follow the green path, it will lead to riches and when you’re home, don’t*

*take anything that appears on the path!”*

*Before the eldest brother could ask a question, the tiger vanished into the shadows.*

*The brothers walked across the path until they came across a chunk of gold.*

*“Don’t touch”. . . . .*

***Ibrahim Quraishi  
Rossendale Valley Islamic Supplementary School***





## *The queen of birds*

*A green bird named after the queen had found some buried treasure near the golden crown jewels. The green bird or shall I say Queen was very poor and had been on mysterious adventures. The fake queen was very needy, selfish and astonishing. He was astonished for some reason like going on missions, but he was selfish and needy because people would ask the queen for favours but he wouldn't do it.*

**Rayhan Ali**  
**Rossendale Valley Islamic Supplementary School**



## *My caged wings*

*My caged wings wish so dearly to be spreaded and let free.  
I can see the little children playing in the park and having lots of fun.*

*Us three need to leave this tree because this tree is damp  
and that's why we need to camp.  
I have a very beautiful view from my cosy Oak tree.*

*I can't wait for supper. I like worms.  
I can't wait to get to my nest and dig up more worms.*

*I don't know, what are they doing?  
Oh no, not again, I've come back from the river to find my home destroyed again,  
Those annoying humans won't let me rest in peace.*

*Take care of yourself and your family.  
The other birds are starting to spread their wings because spring is here.*

**Nafisah Ali, Rayhan Ali, Rizwan Ali, Jamila Khanom, Jumana Mahmuda,  
Kawsar Miah, Hamzah Uddin, Tahirah Khanom and Ibrahim Quraishi**  
**Rossendale Valley Islamic Supplementary School**



## *When I set sail*

*When I sail, I saw a whale*

*When I sail, it started to hail*

*When I sail, I got a mail.*

*When I sail, I went to Wales*

*When I sail, I broke my nails.*

*When I drove, I saw a car*

*Then, I saw more and more.*

*When I ate, it was late.*

*When I looked up I saw the moon*

*Then I dropped my spoon.*

*When I got to Wales, I saw another person sail.*

*When I went to Wales, I saw people eating cats' tails*

*I was sad and mad because I was a lad.*

*The moon was like a big gold spoon.*

*I was like a big baboon and a person died in June.*

**Motiur Rahman**  
**Rossendale Valley Islamic Supplementary School**



## *Dear Moon,*

*Thank you for the wonderful trip. Me and my Grandma loved the trip.*

*It was scary, it was fun, it was EXCITING! I hope you didn't mind us bringing lots of stuff. I hope you liked the mat. My Grandma was asking who made it and*

*I'm sure you want to find that out as well but I forgot! My Grandma found it hard to read and do namaz (prayers) on you because she was floating around and reading! She could feel the non-gravity pulling her up.*

*We could hear shooting stars. We loved the trip!*

*Love from Kylah x*

*If I went on a journey to the moon on a paper carpet with my Grandma she would say: "I've never been this high."*

*"It feels different."*

*"Jump in the air together."*

*"Wow! that's a beautiful carpet, who made it?"*

*She would take a namaz (prayer) mat, she will take the Qur'an.*

*We would be excited and nervous.*

**Kylah Choudhury**  
**Rossendale Valley Islamic Supplementary School**



## ‘All too soon, the winter moon’

*My Grandma would bring a friend to talk to and would bring something like a phone. My Grandma would never on purpose break her bone. If she would take me, then I would bring something to play with. My Grandma might lay down on the carpet. I might say “all too soon, the winter moon.” I might see some kids around outside on the street. If I go too fast I think my heart would beat. When I go higher and higher, then I might see the blue sky and I would say bye, “all too soon, the winter moon.”*

*If I went on a journey to the moon on a paper carpet with my Grandma she would say: “The carpet is comfortable” and “I’m scared of heights.”*  
*She would take: Paan, (betel) green like leaves, gua (betel nut), food (banana),*  
*Qur’an for reading, namaz (prayer) mat and something to drink.*

**Leyah Miah**  
**Rossendale Valley Islamic Supplementary School**



## My visit to the moon with my Grandma

*Last night I had a weird dream of me and my beautiful Grandma floating on a carpet to the moon. It goes like this:*

*In a dark night my Grandma was packing for Bangladesh, so it was my last goodbye!!! After a while I said my goodbye, but then me and my Grandma were shocked because our carpet was floating. So with my Grandma’s heavy suitcase, we put it on top of the carpet and then we sat on it...*

*Minute by minute we were floating higher and higher, until it touched the ceiling... But suddenly the ceiling opened itself and the gravity was pulling us to space...*

*Oh my God! Is this a myth? I had reached the shiny moon with my Grandma. I jumped out and started jumping as hyper as I could. My Grandma was unbelievable. She got out her stuff and prayed to the mighty Allah. I started playing on my best friend, my PS3. Later on I was really desperate for food but today was my lucky day. My Grandma had cooked pilau rice and curry, with a little biscuit for my dessert. How I needed the loo. As I said it was my lucky day. She brought the lota (water vessel for ablutions) and a spade. So I went off to do my stuff. Finally it was time to sing a song before bedtime! Hangover!*

**Rizwan Ali and Lamees Rahman**  
**Rossendale Valley Islamic Supplementary School**



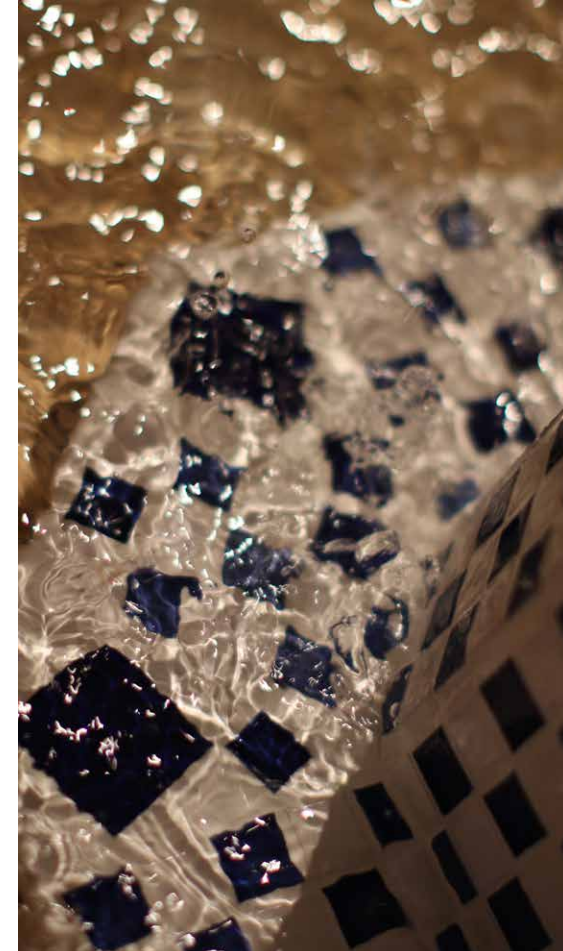


# *A thousand questions on the way to the moon*

*When I was a kid I went to the moon with my Grandma. She asked over 500 questions half way through. We went on a magic carpet to the moon. It felt scary but awesome. My Grandma had almost forgotten her glasses. We went past the trees and even past Mount Everest! It felt like a dream. I could hear the azaan (call to prayer) and my Grandma asked if we could stop and read namaz (prayer). So we read namaz. Then finally we reached the moon with over 1000 questions.*

*The End!*

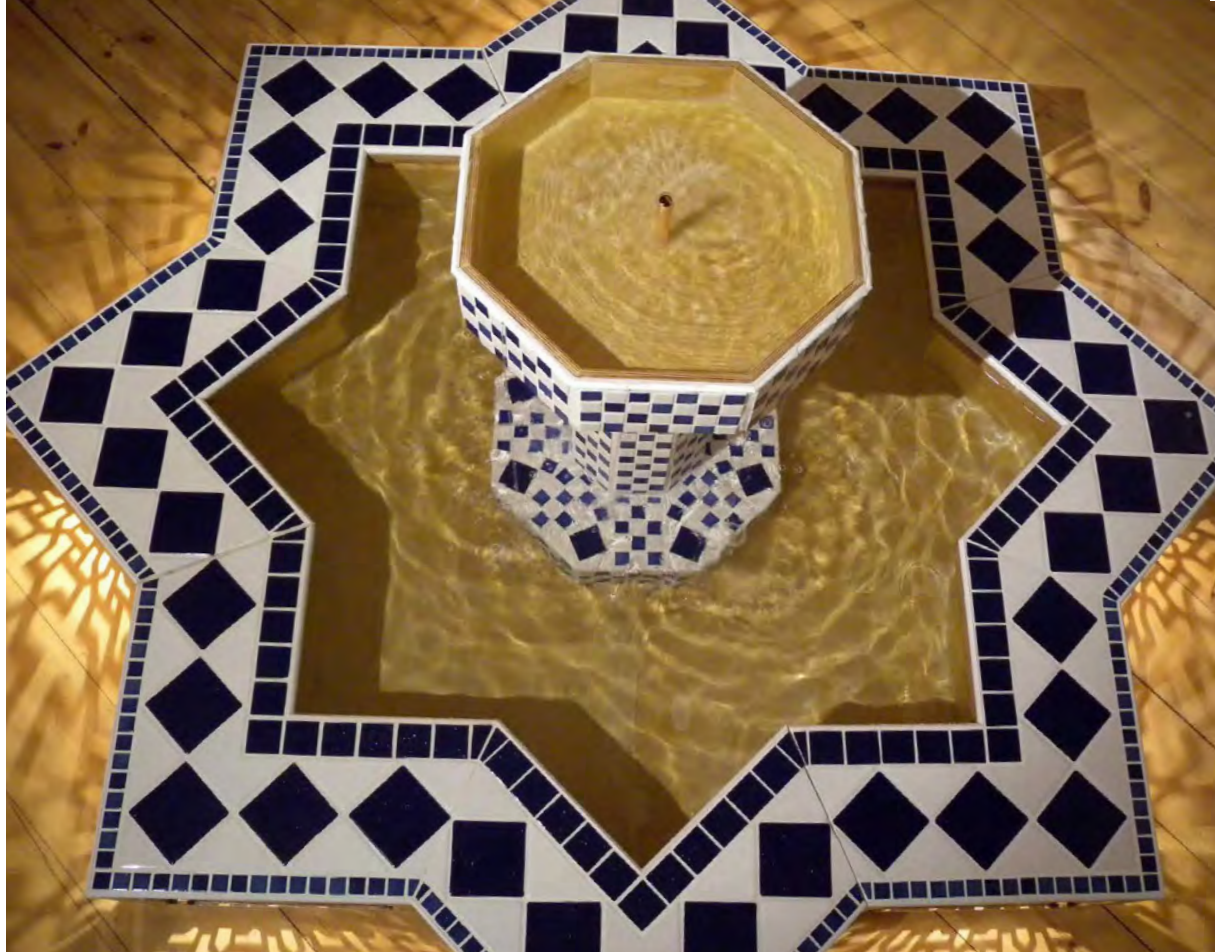
**Saihaan Zahid**  
**Rossendale Valley Islamic Supplementary School**



*Detail of fountain*







*Fountain, from the Different Moons Exhibition 2014 at the Whitaker*

### *Acknowledgements*

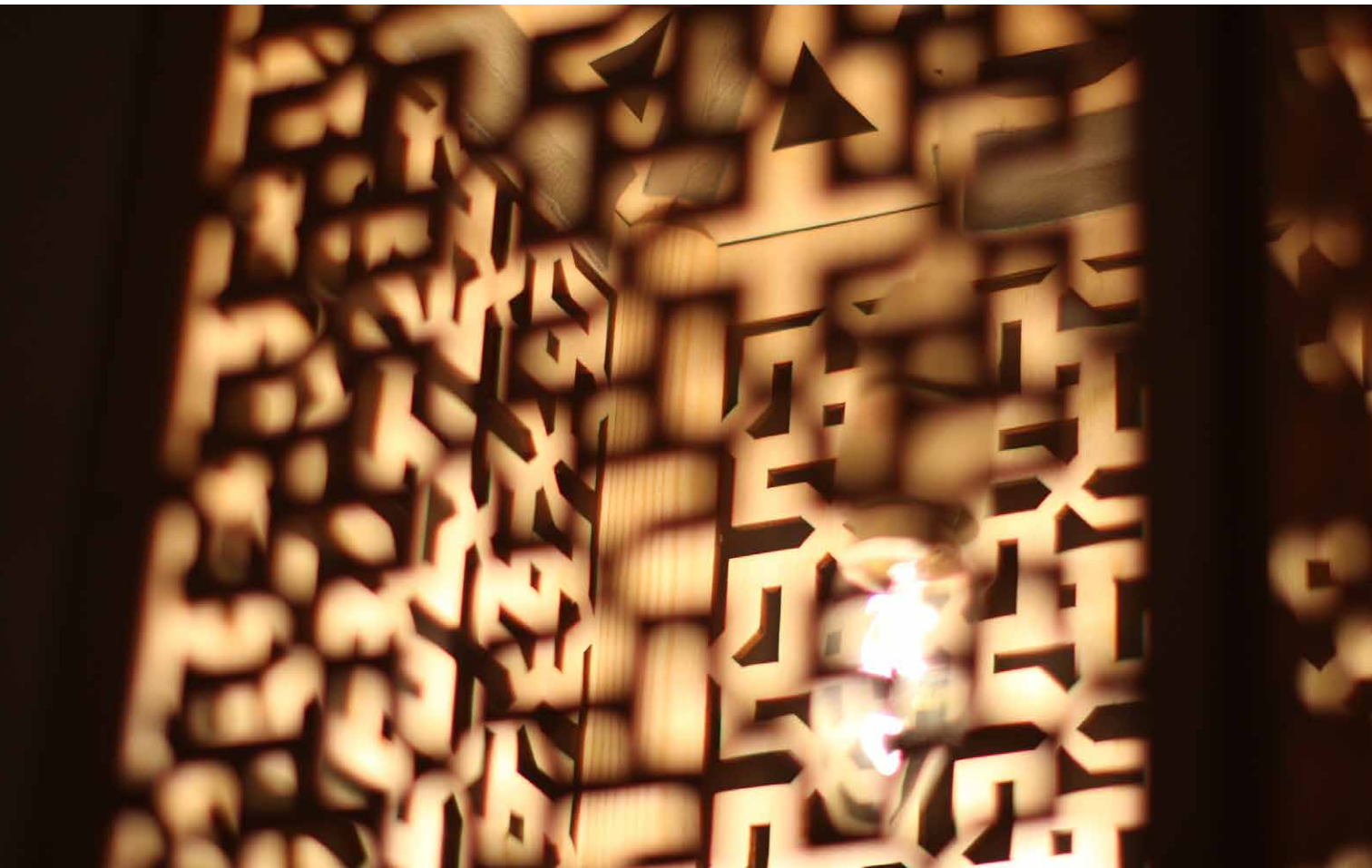


Thank you to everyone who came and joined the many workshops and sessions held between 2013 and 2015 as part of the Different Moons project. In particular the many women, girls and children who worked with Shamshad Khan, looked inside themselves, and created the writings, many of which we've collected in this book.

To Shamshad Khan, who led the project and the writing groups, ably assisted by a great group of people - Habiba Shenza, mehndi artist and advisor; Maryam Golubeva, paper-cut artist; Arry Nessa, for her creative project support; Farzana Patel, calligraphy; and Elisa Sarchi. We also benefited from the invaluable help of Hameeda Mahmood, who was instrumental in bringing many of the women to these workshops.

Thanks to Rossendale Valley Islamic Supplementary School in Haslingden, St Mary's C.E. School in Rawtenstall and Haslingden Library for their enthusiastic participation in the project. Also to the Whitaker Museum & Art Gallery who first showed this work in 2014 and the Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Resource Centre, Manchester for their advice, and we would also like to thank Yasmine Choudry and Muzammil Quraishi who made up our Advisory Group and the staff and trustees of Horse + Bamboo who have supported the project throughout. An enthusiastic thank you too, to the designer Graham Hackett and his team at Osprey Delivers for their design work and advice on this publication. Also to Farzana for her beautiful calligraphic lettering and Shamshad for her selection of these writings.





*Detail of lantern*

*Continued...*

**T**he photo credits: Cover - Maryam Golubeva (paper cut and photograph), Bob Frith (mehndi hands by Habiba Shenza); p.13 Shamshad Khan; p.16 Bob Frith (mehndi by Habiba Shenza); pp.28/29 and 40/41 Ricardo Vilela (paper cuts by Maryam Golubeva); pp.48/49 Bob Frith (mehndi by Habiba Shenza); pp. 58/59 Bob Frith (etched design by Maryam Golubeva); p.62 Bob Frith; p.76 Bob Frith; p.91 Ricardo Vilela (fountain by Phil Milston); pp.92/93 Habiba Shenza (mehndi and photograph); p.94 Bob Frith (fountain by Phil Milston); p.96 Ricardo Vilela (lantern by Bob Frith).

Other photos by Bob Frith, Habiba Shenza, Aray Nessa, Shamshad Khan, and Maryam Golubeva.

Different Moons would also like to thank the following for their contribution towards the recording and archive around which many of the writings are focused: Mr Mazhar Hussain, Mrs Samina Hussain, Mr Said Rahman, Mrs Zamro Rahman, Mr Aslom Miah, Mrs Farida Munir, Mrs Sufia Choudhury Mrs Waseema Azfar, Mr Luai Ullah and Mr Mohammed Ishaque.

Finally to acknowledge the Heritage Lottery Fund for their financial support for the project.

Contributions to Different Moons were also made by the Arts Council of England, The Granada Foundation and Lancashire County Council.

The project was directed by Bob Frith.

© Horse + Bamboo.  
Published March 2016.

PRODUCED IN CONJUNCTION WITH



Horse + Bamboo Theatre  
679 Bacup Rd, Rossendale, Lancashire BB4 7HB  
United Kingdom



T: +44 1706 220241  
[www.horseandbamboo.org](http://www.horseandbamboo.org)  
[www.differentmoons.org](http://www.differentmoons.org)

