



## **A Change of Climate – How Poetry Can Help Localise a Global Problem**

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Climate change is real. It is happening now. It effects all of us. And the only way that we can mitigate its effects in a meaningful fashion is to take collective action. Part of the challenge that we face in mobilising this collective action is in convincing people from currently less affected areas that climate change is right now, this second, responsible for the destruction of thousands of ecosystems, insects, animals, plants, birds, and humans. What is needed is something that can transcend cultural barriers, and which can contextualise and localise a global problem. What is needed is poetry.

In the summer of 2017, we initiated a global poetry competition. A challenge to find 20 poems that spoke about climate change in different voices, and which would help to make real this global, interdisciplinary problem. The only stipulations that we set were that the poems had to be about climate change (however the author might perceive this) and that they had to be 40 lines or less. We received 174 entries from 23 countries in five different languages, and after a rigorous selection process 20 poems were chosen, the result of which was A Change of Climate. Some of the poems in this collection are sad, some of them are angry, some of them are even funny. But all of them are real. Real poems from real people about the very real topic of climate change.

Talking about climate change is difficult. Even experts find it challenging to establish a common language that communicates their research, statistics, and emotions effectively. Poetry presents an opportunity for people to express themselves in a different way, to find a fitting language that enables them to talk about climate change in a manner that is personable to them, one which can help them to make sense of this global problem in a very local context.

A thematic analysis was used to look for emergent themes in this poetry, and to determine how different people from different countries and cultures used poetry to help them localise this global problem. This poster presents the results of this analysis, demonstrating how poetry can be used to help comprehend different people's perceptions of climate change, and in doing so how we can better understand what is needed to help mobilise collective action.