



#### LOVING EARTH POETRY CREATED BY YOUNG PEOPLE SUMMER 2021

Poet/ Activist Matt Sowerby (<https://www.mattsowerby.co.uk/>) led 2 workshops over the summer with 16 young people aged 16 – 25 interested in poetry and climate activism. Matt designed the content of the workshops to inspire a range of poetic starting points in dialogue with the Loving Earth textile panels. He investigated the creative processes of weaving and linked this to the craft of writing poetry. One of his tasks was to create a response to one of the tapestries with a quote from Chilean poet and artist Cecilia Vicuña (*word and thread*):

*Word is thread and the thread is language.*

*A word is pregnant with other words and a thread*

*Contains other threads within its interior.*

*To speak is to thread and the thread weaves the world.*

Facilitated by Rachael Swancott from Woodbrooke and Ginnie Wollaston (CEQ Climate Emergency Action), these workshop ideas were transformed into a poetry booklet with contributions from most participants. This booklet is available in all the exhibitions in Birmingham (Peace Hub) and the Loving Earth exhibitions in Glasgow for COP26.

Two events during the Great Big Green Week events in Glasgow allowed young people to recite selections of poetry from this collection. Earth Stories with Camino to Cop 26 brought strong audience response for Sanaa Pasha's poem *Anthem for doomed youth* and Paul Bell reading *goat song* by Matt Sowerby. All the other poems were recited at a further event hosted by Extinction Rebellion at the Warehouse Café in Digbeth which has now been recorded and will be available on you tube.

A selection of tapestry panels were also exhibited in Stourbridge Meeting House and the Peace Hub, Birmingham so that textile panels created and designed by local Quakers in CEQ could be

highlighted. The response has been very positive and for many this additional way to engage with young people and allow their voice to be heard has brought a welcome addition to the strong artistic outcomes achieved by the Loving Earth project.

We would like to thank Quakers in Britain for supporting this poetry project with Build Back Better grant, and to additional financial support from Footsteps, Central England Quakers (CEA); Jai Jagat UK and Stourbridge Quakers. Moving Souls Dance (Ginnie Wollaston) managed the project with support from Pete Doubtfire (Peace Hub) and Rachael Swancott (Woodbrooke).



Crested Crane – a symbol of peace for Uganda  
(created through international link to the Hope Project)



Oak Tree – Stourbridge Quaker