



Manchester
Literature
Festival



Manchester
Metropolitan
University

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Poetry
Library



Hafsa Aneela Bashir

NEW COMMISSION

The 8th Day

Hafsah Aneela Bashir is a Manchester-based poet, playwright & producer. Her debut poetry collection, *The Celox and The Clot*, was published by Burning Eye Books and she was a Jerwood Compton Poetry Fellow in 2019. Her play *Cuts Of The Cloth* was commissioned for PUSH Festival 2019 and she has worked creatively with Manchester International Festival, Ballet Black Ldn, HOME, ANU Productions Irl, the Imperial War Museum and the National Festival Of Making in collaboration with Luke Jerram. She is also founder and Creative Director of the Poetry Health Service – a free digital service providing poetry panaceas as a tool for connection and healing with over 80 contributing poets.

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In summer 2021, Manchester Literature Festival and Manchester Poetry Library at Manchester Metropolitan University co-commissioned Hafsah Aneela Bashir to write a new poem inspired by the rich tapestry of Oxford Road and her own connections with the corridor. MLF and MPL also commissioned Modify Productions to produce a short film capturing Hafsah performing her work on location at All Saints Park, Manchester Metropolitan University & Oxford Road. The film was showcased at Manchester Poetry Library from 21-23 October 2021 for the inaugural Corridor of Light alongside new co-commissions by fellow poets Andrew McMillan and Reshma Ruia.

You can watch the film of The 8th Day on Manchester Literature Festival's Vimeo channel: vimeo.com/mcrlitfest

www.manchesterliteraturefestival.co.uk

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Oxford
Road
Corridor

**CORRIDOR
OF LIGHT**

The 8th Day

After Derek Walcott, Love After Love

It's the way I hold her hand,
guide her through the old church car park
on to Oxford Rd, quick glimpses of us
mirrored in the glass fronts of Archies & Popolinos.

My mind goes back to 11 summers ago.
A student, testing the still watering ground
of imagination, tentatively, growing into my skin,
skin that once held five beautiful children.

I take her arm, we cross, to a familiar book stall
where a young mother once spent hours
cultivating potential, a love of words
creating constellations for her to orbit in.

Through the iron railings of All Saints Park
our eyes skim the green of new beginnings.
We've made peace with the bodies beneath our feet.
She strokes the faint mark on my ringless finger.

We smile at each other, marvel at how far we've come.
Step together into the 8th day, make our way
downstairs to the tinker of kitchens,
order the fresh zinger juice with extra ginger.

We sit opposite each other, the older I cradling
the creative hands of the younger – gaze with elation.
On this new day of laughter, exchanging hearts
in the museum of ourselves, we feast on our life.

Hafsah Aneela Bashir