

Call for submissions

Charity zine for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers

Deadline November 10th

“A Stranger is Just a Friend We Haven’t Met Yet”

Messages of welcome and resistance

Project ethos

Today, thousands descended on the UK's capital in hatred, within a summer of xenophobic violence. They call it patriotism, but embarrass our country with vandalism, celebrity cults, vicious abuse, and cowering behind closed borders. They are betraying us. Our island has always been nourished by hospitality, by being open to change and relationships. Islands are crossing places in the sea. We have a role and identity as islanders to uphold. We dishonour our heritage and our ocean by denying arrivals to our shores. Coasts are a gift that let us take in new life. That comes with the responsibility to give safety. We are a nation of harbours and lighthouses. “A Stranger is Just a Friend We Haven’t Met Yet” will gather messages of welcome for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, sharing kindness, joy, and protest against brutality. It hopes to tell our friends that they deserve a home with us and xenophobes that they don’t speak for us.

Who can submit?

Anyone with love to share! Current, new or former UK residents sharing support, welcome, solidarity, and compassion. People with personal or family experience of migration with words of hope, wisdom, protest, and understanding. This zine is aimed at the UK, but is a general message of love in the face of hate. If you’d like to contribute

from or share in another country, you're welcome to. You do not have to be a creative practitioner to add your voice.

What can I submit?

- Poetry and prose poetry
- Visual art in any medium, as long as it can be digitally shared
- Short fiction
- Reflections
- Articles
- QR codes or short links to audio or video files
- Any other ideas? Have a go!
- Max 1k words. No min.

You can also send in letters expressing support or welcome. These can be as simple or as creative as you like! Even just a short, greeting card style message is great. If you aren't feeling creative or have limited time, it would be lovely to receive these to get as many positive messages into the collection as possible!

Prompts to explore

- What do you wish for people coming to your home country?
- What does welcome and hospitality mean to you?
- What does change, migration and motion mean to you?
- Do you have experiences of migration or (any kind of) refuge to share in hope or solidarity?
- Why do you disavow xenophobia?
- What good things come from meeting new people?
- How can we hold connection and humanity sacred in violent times?
- Your own ideas!

How will it work?

“A Stranger is Just a Friend We Haven’t Met Yet” will be published digitally with a pay-what-you-will system. All money raised will go to the UK charities [Refugee Action](#) and the [RNLI](#). Migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers will be invited to download the zine free, and I hope to work with charities to explore delivering zines to the people they work with. Since any money raised is for charity, contributors will not be paid, but will receive a free digital copy.

I'm open to collab! If you have ideas about how this zine could be used to spread welcome or resist xenophobia, please get in touch. Share your copy for free any way you like to get its message further, be it with local organisations, friends, or community spaces. The aim is messaging over money, hence free sharing, but where you can, please also encourage supporting these charities. If you would like to explore a print run in your area or organisation, get in touch. Full timeline and distribution plans will be shared ongoing.

Submission info

“A Stranger is Just a Friend We Haven’t Met Yet”

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Submissions and questions to selinashawstories@gmail.com

Please include the name you would like your piece to be included under or if you wish to be anonymous. Please be mindful I am slow on emails, but will reply. If you need a quick response, head over to my ig @shawberrytart and drop a comment.