

# EARTH TO EXETER

A COLLABORATIVE POEM BROUGHT TOGETHER FROM 'MESSAGES SENT TO THE OCEAN' BY THE PUBLIC AT *WE ARE THE OCEAN* COP28 CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE LEGACY EVENT, PRINCESSHAY, EXETER, JUNE 25TH, 2024

Before encampments, a quayside and canal,  
the river flowed free – a lifeline from moor  
to coast where salmon still leap, dragonflies buzz  
and migrating geese land. Now, unexpected  
downpours flush rainbows of pollutants  
through estuary to Ocean, where fish flounder  
and turtles lie trapped beneath boats dumping nets.  
Dolphins dive deep to find cooler water, whales  
cry for their kin.

Communities awash with memories  
of swimming in clean waves wish they could  
undo the mess. Our children, empty seashells  
pressed to their ears ask those who have power:  
*'Don't you love our planet, our oceans, our rivers?'*  
Scientists know how to repair, restore and replenish,  
there's still time.

\*The name "Exe" is thought to stem from the Latin take on the Brittonic word 'isca.' This translates either as 'water' or 'abounding in fish'. West Country Rivers Trust

We Are the Ocean is a collection of poems in English and Arabic weaving the voices of +400 children aged 10-13 years in the UK and UAE who connected across the ocean through science, stories, art and action for our one ocean as part the University of Exeter We Are the Possible international programme to create a healthier, greener and more equitable future for all.

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