

## Twin Town Poetry Collection

Nina Lewis / June 7, 2018 June 8, 2018 / Droitwich, European Twin Town Poetry Exchange, Nina Lewis, Poetry



(<https://worcestershirepoetlaureateninalewis.wordpress.com/2018/06/07/twin-town-poetry-collection/n9-droitwich-sign/>)





(<https://worcestershirepoetlaureateninalewis.wordpress.com/2018/06/07/twin-town-poetry-collection/picture-twin-towns/>)

Shortly after the beginning of my Laureateship (July 2017) I attempted a Twin Town Project between my Hometown and Gronau, Germany. By February despite the hard work of Janet King and Sabine Damaske it was still in planning\* so I turned my attention to the next Worcestershire Town Droitwich, Twinned with Voiron and discovered I knew the then Chair, Mike Nott. Mike was able to link me up with Madeleine Silvestri who provided some French poet contacts and I took it from there.

By April I matched 4 poets in France and UK into pairs and the poetry exchange began. I had originally planned to take part but we had more local interest than poets. During the Twin Town Project due to unforeseen circumstances there were some concerns over deadlines, so I stepped in.

The poets were asked to write and share a poem about the town, next they were invited to use something from that poem, a line/phrase/word, an essence, idea or image and create a new poem in response.

I wanted the poems to appear in English and French to build the first Worcestershire Poet Laureate Bi-Lingual Poetry Project. One of the poets on the UK team is Portuguese, so I asked him to translate his poetry too.

Although I did well in French at school and used to struggle in France because people thought I was French and used to talk to me at great speed, until I explained and then was able to converse happily in French, it was a long time ago.

I was able to translate communication via tech available for such things, however I decided from experience, that translating poetry was the job for a French speaker. So I asked my good friend Nathalie Brooker to do us the honour. Huge gratitude.

In the age of Brexit, this project and the International links of the Twinning Associations seem all the more poignant.

My thanks go to Mike Nott, Madeleine Silvestri, Nathalie Brooker and all the poets taking part.

\*As for the Gronau Project, it may happen Post-Laureateship. Fingers crossed.