

Nastasiya.

By Fiona Clark

So glad you could attend this interview,

Mrser... Sorry, can't pronounce your name...

Call me Nastasiya, please (it means 'reborn').

You came with family, yes, from the Ukraine?

My husband, daughter, son (in a small boat,

On ink-black waters, opening their jaws).

And have you found somewhere to live in town?

We have good place (At home, the daffodils

Dance in the wind, near yellow-painted doors).

Teaching assistant's an important job....

This I can do (directing a museum ,

I've lectured on our artefacts and all

About Ukraine-now I'd like to give a talk...)

But in a school, your broken English might-

Not hold me back, I will learn language, quick

(My poems, published now in several books,

I speak some Polish- and good Russian, too-

But won't : the words would wither on my lips).

Some of the children here have " mental health"...

I will look after them (Just like my own,

Woken at night from tortured dreams, of shells,

Exploding missiles, ripping lives to shreds-

Among the rubble, there's my father's hand....)

We uphold Christian values at this school-

I'm Catholic ; I see your cross and pray-

(My tears must tell you, this is my soul's home).

Er...thank you , Mrs...Er. We'll let you know.