

# Edinburgh Makar delights councillors with new poetry



The Scottish Capital's new poet, the Edinburgh Makar, revealed her latest work on Thursday at a meeting of the City of Edinburgh Council within the City Chambers

[Christine De Luca](#), who in May became the fourth writer to take up the prestigious 'Poet Laureate for Edinburgh' post, recited new poem *'Through The Traffic of Tongues'* for the first time.

The poem includes snippets from poems from Edinburgh's three previous Makars, and has been commissioned by the [Edinburgh City of Literature Trust](#) to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Capital becoming the world's first UNESCO City of Literature.

There are now seven Cities with this designation, with Kraków in Poland the most recent entry in 2013. Edinburgh's Lord Provost, Councillor Donald Wilson, has been visiting Kraków this week with the Edinburgh City of Literature Trust in order to underline and reinforce the strong links between the two cities, as a Partner City and sister City of Literature.

Edinburgh's Depute Lord Provost Councillor Deidre Brock, who chaired today's Council meeting, said: "We are delighted to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Edinburgh's designation as the world's first UNESCO City of Literature with the reading of Christine's wonderful new poem, which really captures how literature has shaped and continues to influence the Capital and our fellow Cities of Literature."



The new poem will be available to from today at the [City of](#)

[Literature website.](#)

### ***Through the Traffic of Tongues***

*A poem from Edinburgh Makar Christine De Luca to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Edinburgh's designation as a UNESCO City of Literature*

*Ten years we've had of trafficking,  
of keeping borders open through words,  
through discerning conversation,*

*the hospitality of books. Seven citadels  
of literature, all fostered from a dream;  
seven hills and heavens, cities of possibilities.*

*Edinburgh: first to light up with literature,  
spelled out its heritage and future. That night  
in Paris was a consummation, a delight.*

*We passed the flame to Melbourne:  
an ancient meeting place of sign and symbol,  
built on gold, a rush of writing, a wealth.*

*Then Iowa City made the cut; told the world  
it had made the sentence behave  
and misbehave, recast our myths.*

*Dublin followed with its Book of Kells,  
its four Nobel literary laureates  
and a daft Bloomsday every June.*

*Reykjavik was standing in the wings,  
holding its ancient tongue; weighing  
its Edda and Saga, its poetic forms.*

*But Julian of Norwich was stirring in her grave.  
Across 600 years we still need the solace of words  
that tell us that all shall indeed be well.*

*Kraków is the seventh hill, the seventh dream:  
its word hordes, bulging libraries, its bookshops;  
the deep lines on its literary face.*

*All outward-looking places, all generous,  
all built on the topography of words.*

*Open the book, read, translate, pass on the gift.*

## The 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the City of Literature



This year is not only the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Edinburgh being designated the world's first City of Literature; it is also the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of Sir Walter Scott's novel Waverley. To celebrate, the City of Literature has been

filling Waverley Railway Station with words of wisdom from Scott.

There are seven Cities of Literature in total – Edinburgh, Melbourne, Iowa, Dublin, Reykjavik, Norwich and Krakow.

### The Edinburgh Makar role

The [Edinburgh Makar](#) is a civic post instituted in 2002 by the City of Edinburgh Council. The writer is selected and nominated by representatives of the Scottish Poetry Library, Scottish PEN, The Saltire Society, Edinburgh City of Literature Trust and the Council.

The meaning of the Scots word Makar stresses the role of the poet or author as a skilled and versatile worker in the craft of writing. Edinburgh has always been a literary city, and to celebrate the importance of writers in the Capital the Council continues to show its commitment to the promotion of writers and literary projects, which enhance Edinburgh's international reputation, including the post of the Edinburgh Makar.

### Previous Makars

Stewart Conn, 2002-2005

Valerie Gillies, 2005-2008

Ron Butlin, 2008-2014