# LAND AND IDENTITY

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**Category:** Language and Society

The British press has been full of stories about immigration, recently. Depending on the newspaper you read, you may have discovered that immigrants threaten the social fabric of the UK or that they bring nothing but economic and cultural benefits. However, you would have struggled to find much about the way in which moving from one culture to another can have on the immigrant.

This song by Gilles Servat captures this side of things wonderfully. It is written from the perspective of a Breton going to live in Paris, but its significance is far wider than that. As someone who is interested in minority languages, I find verse four particularly moving.

I apologise in advance that my translation doesn't really capture the power of the song. Feel free to correct it in the comments!

http://youtu.be/VO4FWiMu34k

Est-ce par espÃ©rance
Ou est-ce par dÃ©sespoir
Tu as quittÃ© ta terre
Pour travailler ici

Maintenant tu dÃ©couvres
Dans tes soirs de solitude
Sous le regard des autres
Que tu es diffÃ©rent

Refrain
Il est lÃ , lÃ , il est en toi, en toi, le pays
Et tu dis, cÂ´est sur, je reviendrai,
LÃ -bas, si je peux,
Oui

Tu Ã©coutes des musiques
Et des chansons de lÃ -bas
Coeur serrÃ© tu les chantes
Sur ton lit dans le noir

La langue de ta mÃ¨re
Elle ne tÂ´intÃ©ressait pas
Maintenant tu veux lÂ´apprendre
Tu nÂ´as plus honte de toi

Refrain

Dans un bar tu retrouves
DÂ´autres enfants de lÃ -bas

Vous faites dans vos rÃªves
Un pays plus beau quÂ´il nÂ´est.

Refrain

*Was it hope, or was it despair, that made you leave your homeland, to come and find work here?*

*And now, in the lonely evenings and the glances of others, you discover that you are different.*

Chorus: *It is there, there inside you; there is your land. And you tell yourself that one day, you will go back if you can. Yes.*

*You listen to your music, the songs from back home. Lying on your bed, a lump in your throat, you sing them to yourself.*

*The language your mother taught you; you didn't care about it. Now you want to learn to speak it; no longer ashamed of who you are.*

Chorus

*In a bar you meet up with some folks from back there. In conversation you recreate a land better than reality.*

Chorus

If the video doesn't show up, you can find the link here. If you liked the song, it comes from the albumÂ Zenith, which is ridiculously expensive on Amazon.