

In Wales, wanting to be Italian

Is there a name for that thing
you do when you are young?
There must be a word for it in some language,
probably German, or if not just
5 asking to be made up, something like
Fremdlandischgehörenlust or perhaps
Einzumandererslandgehörenwunsch.

What is it called, living in Glasgow,
dying to be French, dying to shrug and pout
10 and make yourself understood
without saying a word?

Have you ever felt like that, being
in Bombay, wanting to declare,
like Freddy Mercury, that you are
15 from somewhere like Zanzibar?

What is it called? Being sixteen
in Wales, longing to be Italian,
to be able to say aloud,
without embarrassment, *Bella! Bella!*
20 lounge by a Vespa with a cigarette
hanging out of your mouth, and wear
impossibly pointed shoes?

Imtiaz Dharker (2014)

