

Switzerland: Regi Claire (poem by Valeria Melchiorretto)  
Poetry 2012: The Written World, BBC Radio Scotland, 28 July 2012

This is my original introduction, which was censored by the BBC due to its 'political' content:

Grüezi mitenand! I haiss Regi Claire, bi miteme Schott verhüroted und wohn sit achzeh  
Johr z'Edinburg.

Hello! My name is Regi Claire; I'm married to a Scotsman and have been living in  
Edinburgh for eighteen years. I'm a novelist and short story writer and am delighted to be  
reading a poem by Valeria Melchiorretto, a Swiss poet who lives in Britain and writes in  
English like myself.

What I love about Switzerland is its people power. We are a truly direct democracy with  
referenda and initiatives. We can vote on anything: on working hours, VAT, speed limits,  
military jets, new hospitals, schools, roads, opening hours of local shops – just anything!  
There's a real sense of being involved in making our own laws, our own community, our  
country.

Whenever I go back, I'm amazed how diverse, vibrant and creative Switzerland is. We  
have 26 regions called *cantons* and four national languages: Swiss German, French,  
Italian and Romansch.

But I do have to mention a cliché: I never leave Switzerland without a stash of my  
favourite Lindor chocolate.

Valeria Melchiorretto's poem 'From the Intestines of a Mystical Dog' talks about a Swiss  
watch in a wonderfully original, quite unusual way – a real testament to creative  
Switzerland.