

Do you have to listen to Dylan Thomas?

Poetry is word music

Hannah Ellis:

Everybody that I've spoken to who describes their first time of discovering Dylan Thomas's work, they all have heard it.

Whenever they've heard it for the first time they've not forgotten it and it's been a lifelong love, really, of Dylan Thomas following that first experience.

Griff Rhys Jones:

I only knew myself what a brilliant and great poet he was when I was asked once to read 'Do not go gentle into that good night'.

When you stand up on stage and you have to read it out you start to realise the internal rhythms and the structures of the poem by reading it aloud, which perhaps on the page you don't see. And as you do that you think, 'Gracious! This is an extremely complex piece of mitre'.

And that if you follow the mitre, the sense of the poem becomes absolutely crystal clear.

Andrew Davies:

Well I think you can't appreciate him unless you hear it, and hear the sound and hear it again and again. Because he is one of those poets like Yeats and Donne and so on, where the sound of the words is just so crucial.

Because what he's saying is just, things like, we get born, we live and we die – and isn't it wonderful, and isn't it tragic?

That is about all he's got to say but he says it in so many different ways and so powerfully and so movingly that he's, I think, quite easy to latch on to.