

## Could you be a poet?

### Adding colour and emotion

As a novice writer, reading poetry can be really daunting. You might think: 'I could never do this.'

My fellow mentor on the Townhill project, poet Rhian Edwards, has some really good tips for breaking down a poem into different steps.

In this workshop, she's encouraging the group to use colour, taste and texture to help describe feelings, and she gets some really powerful results.

Rhian Edwards: So the exercise I want to set you now, I want you to use an emotion, but I want you to give that emotion a smell. I want you to give it a sound, and I want you to give it a texture and I also want you to give it a visual kind of quality as well.

So this is my example. See if you can guess what the emotion's about.

It rusts my blood,  
Cadavers my skin,  
Sweating a smile,  
A jaundice-licked grin.

Hid, curled and foetal,  
Eyes sealed to blind...  
Die me a death,  
To deprive me of sense  
Maim me or sleep me  
Let the horror be silenced.

So it's depression, but also...

Participant: Is it fear?

Rhian: Fear. Yeah.

Benjamin Zephaniah: You could give this a go. It doesn't have to be a long poem. Just start with a few lines and see where it gets you.

First participant: Green-eyed bile-yellow knots  
Pulling ever tighter in my insides  
Shallowed breath whimpering  
Sharply snarling simpering  
A cat about to pounce  
A baby bird and fluffy mouse...

Second participant: A breath I wipe away  
A breath from my own mouth as my head hangs back  
I wipe my face and he pads away.

Rhian Edwards: Lovely

Benjamin Zephaniah: For some people, reading their poems out loud can be terrifying. For me, reading words that I've written is the most rewarding part.

"Dis poetry is like a riddim dat drops..."