

Could you be a poet?

The magic of poetry

Benjamin Zephaniah:

I grew up thinking that poetry was something that dead, white males did. Something for the elite. But that was because of the way that poetry was presented to me.

When I started having ideas about poetry and plays, I started to say: "I could do that". But people around me said, "Benjamin, that's nice, but you've got to be a painter and decorator." But hey, I proved them wrong.

Words are my way of expressing myself. A way of looking at my life. I write poetry to tell somebody that I'm annoyed, to tell somebody that I love them. I've written about dinosaurs, I've written poetry about my mother and I write to make people sit up and listen.

[Benjamin Zephaniah performs on stage]

"Dis poetry is like a riddim dat drops
De tongue brings a riddim dat shoots like a shot
Dis poetry is designed fe rantin
Dance hall style, big mouth chanting..."

A very special community project in Swansea took the work of Dylan Thomas and tried to inspire people to write.

Over a six-week period, the people of Townhill grew to love the work of Dylan Thomas and they put pen to paper themselves.

Some of the work they produced was incredible, even though many had never written before.

Not so long ago people were saying about me: "Lock him up and throw away the key. He's a waste of space."

You see, we all have a story to tell and, interestingly, the poorer people, the people who live on estates, the people who have suffered, and people who have had broken relationships – those are the people that have the most interesting stories.

So get writing. I think you can do it. Do you?