

A Caribbean Writer in Hackney

Starter activity

Discussion:

- Class discussion: What is a poem? Do you know the names of any poets?
- How do poets get their message across? [Poets often use adjectives, metaphors, rhyme, rhythm, repetition to express feelings and ideas about their reality, like song writers].
- Can you think of an adjective to describe yourself?
- Can you think of a metaphor to describe yourself?
- Can you think of a simile to describe yourself?
- Can you think of a rhyme to describe yourself?

Activity 1: Reading and Note taking

Read '**Down in the ghetto**'.

- Who can spot repetition first?
- Who can spot a metaphor first?
- Who can spot an adjective first?
- Who can spot a refrain first?

Now read the poem again in pairs and make notes on the following:

- What is the poem about?
- How does Eveline get her message across?
- Underline/highlight any particular words or phrases that stand out for you.
- What do you think 'Frontline' and 'ghetto' means?
- Who is 'the Cowboy'?

Activity 2: Listening and Archive Exploration

- Study the picture of Eveline Marius and listen to the archive recording of Marius reading 'Down in the ghetto'.
- Look at the definition Frontline in the 1980s Hackney on the white-board and the pictures. Is it positive or negative? Do people still use the term 'Frontline'? If so, has the meaning changed?
- What role does Frontline play in the poem?
- Has your opinion about the poem changed since looking at these sources? How?
- Can you guess where Eveline is from her writing or from her voice?

Activity 3: Role Play

In groups

- Divide the poem into segments of 2 lines each. Each person acts out their lines as mime or with their own words, to perform the Frontline. Repeating the last two lines together at the end.

Activity 4: Writing

- Write your own poem or about 'singing the same old song.'
- Read your work with another student or pair. Can they see what meaning you are trying to get across in your poem? Can they spot poetic forms like refrains, metaphors and adjectives in your poem?

Activity 5 Plenary

- What have you learned about poetry and poets?
- What did you find most difficult?
- What did you find most engaging?
- What new vocabulary have you learned? List a minimum 2 examples of vocabulary.
- Do you think you will be able to tackle poetry topics in the future?

