

Teachers Notes

Who is a writer? 'In trouble' by Vivian Usherwood

Lesson aims:

Students build and develop vocabulary to discuss poetic forms.

Students challenge preconceptions about who a writer can be

Lesson objectives:

Students discuss the poem 'In trouble' by Vivian Usherwood. Focus should be on identifying, describing and commenting on:

Repetition
Rhyme
Refrain
Emotion
Short lines

Students work together to produce a group poem and an individual poem using at least one of the poetic forms identified during the session.

Starter activity:

Students should work in groups of 3 or 4 and on an A3 piece of paper build a profile of a writer.

Resources

Whiteboard

A3 Paper

Pens

Paper

Highlighters

Copy of Vivian Usherwood's 'In trouble', 1972

Picture of Vivian Usherwood and pictures of other young Centerprise writers

To find out more about Centerprise young writers visit:

<https://www.ahackneyautobiography.org.uk/stories/hackney-writers>

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Starter Activity

Students should start building a basic profile of a writer.

Activity 1:

Don't share images of Vivian and other Centerprise writers (below) or background about Vivian until the end of the reading and discussion.

Background: Vivian Usherwood was born in Jamaica and went to Hackney Downs School (now Mossbourne Academy). His poems were published in 1972 by Centerprise when he was just 12. He was described as 'bouncy' and his teachers would calm him down by asking him to sit near a window and write a poem. Vivian's poetry collection sold over 10,000 copies and became a recommended text on the English syllabus. He died aged 21 in a house fire.

Activity 2:

Read the poem '**In trouble**' to the class before getting students to read and discuss it again in pairs.

With the question: what makes it a poem? See if they can spot repetition, rhyme, refrain and emotion.

Activity 3:

Get all students to write down two things they have got into trouble for. Each item goes on a separate piece of paper. They should choose a refrain of their choice (e.g. 'I get the blame') and arrange the papers around the wall to make a group poem. The students can then write their own individual poems. Students should use try to use one or more of the following:

Repetition

Rhyme

Refrain

Emotion

Short lines

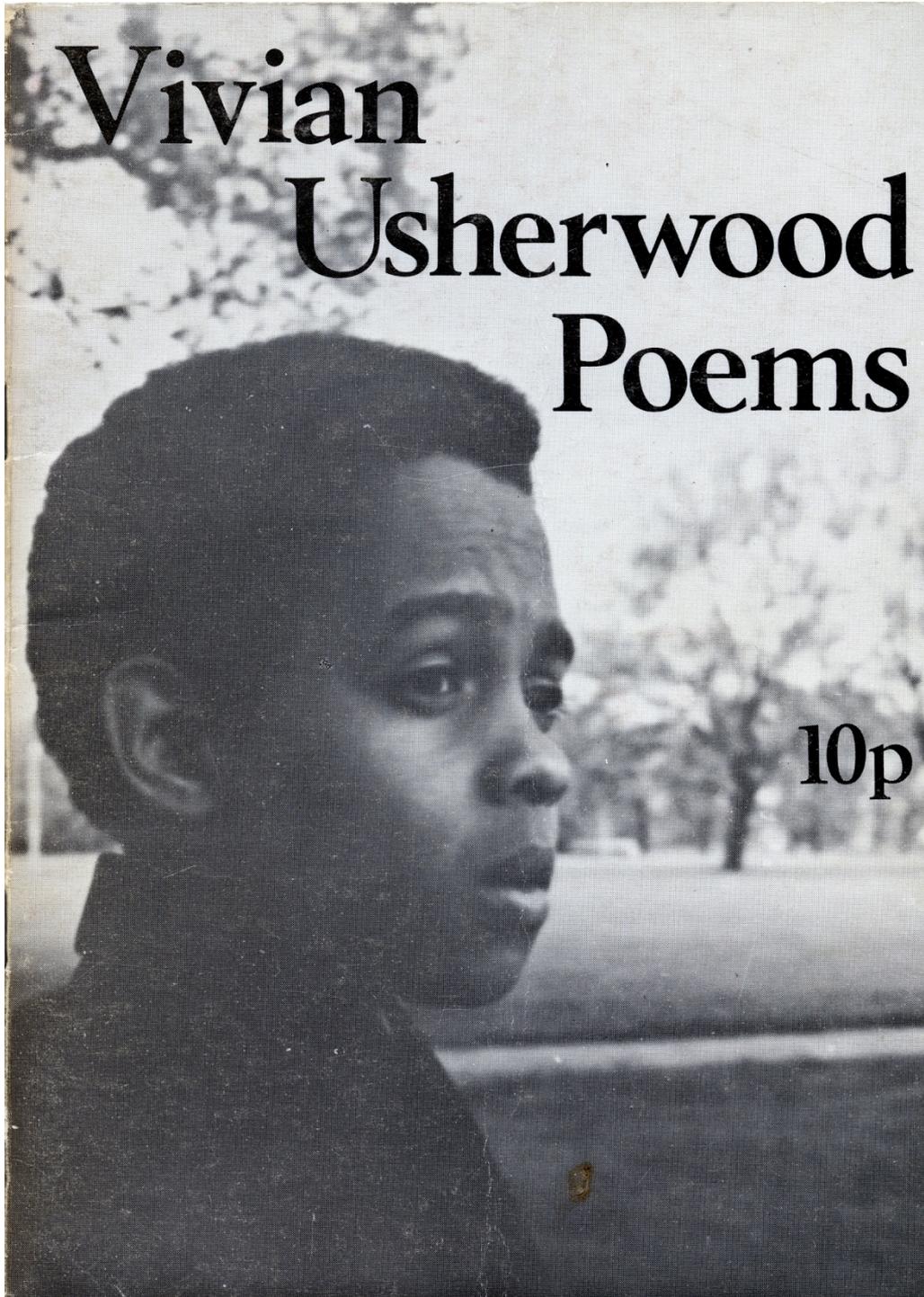
Encourage students to read their work to a partner or the whole class and get feedback.

Plenary:

Recap and evaluate the session through a set of questions and written responses:

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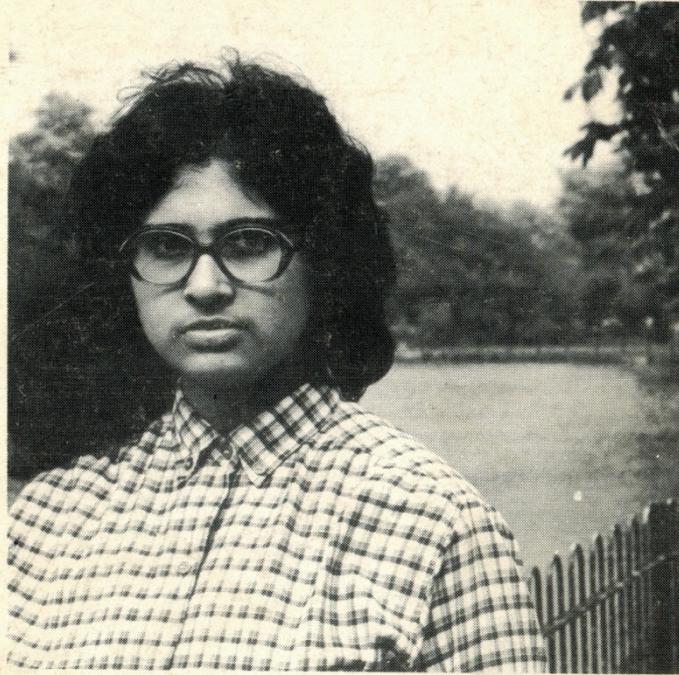
Vivian Usherwood picture, 1972 © Neil Martinson



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Back cover of Savitri Hensman's Flood at the Door, 1979 © Centerprise Trust



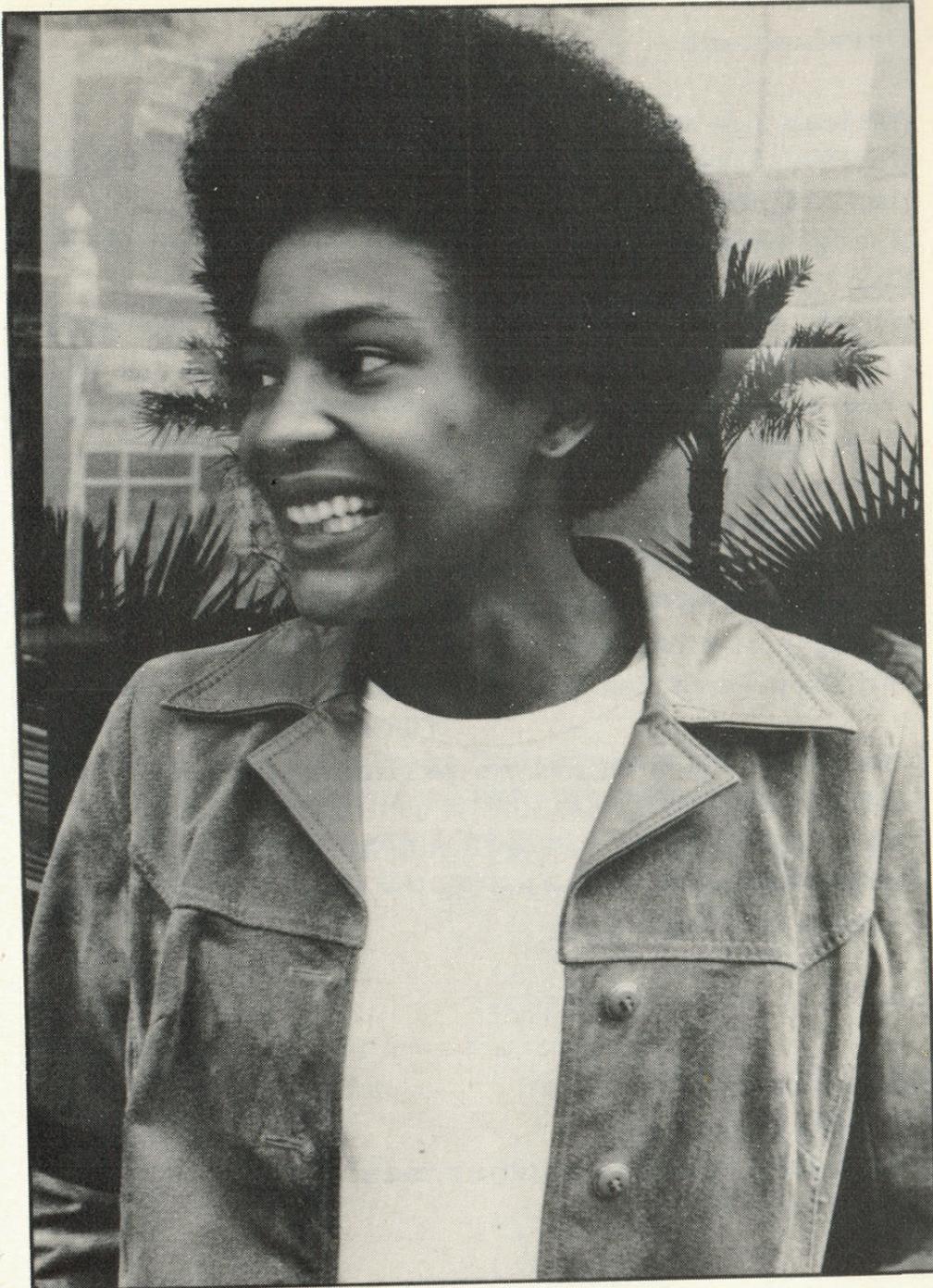
This collection of poetry and pictures is by two people who are still at school. Yet it reflects many of the serious issues in our present society, like racism, or survival in cities, as well as its complexities.

The poems are powerful images of life today in varying moods, some angry, others lyrical or with a surrealist sense of fun. Savi, who wrote the poems, won the Hackney Poetry Competition in 1976. Sarah, who did the illustrations, studied for 'A' Level Art in one year on her own, and is at present studying science.

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Eveline Marius, 1982 © Centerprise Young Photographers' Group



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Centerprise young writers, 1982 © Centerprise Young Photographers' Group

