

A stage with three spotlights and a microphone stand. The spotlights are illuminated, casting a red glow. A microphone stand is visible in the center of the stage.

# Exploring Contemporary Canadian Voices

the spoken word

# Clifton Joseph



- Award-winning poet, journalist and broadcaster.
- Founding member of the Dub poetry movement in Canada.
- Performed extensively in North America, Britain and the Caribbean.
- Author of a book of poems, *Metropolitan Blues*, an album of poetry and music, *Oral Trans/missions*, and the video, *Pimps*.
- His poems have been included in numerous audio and written anthologies.



# Before Viewing

Clifton Joseph

Before viewing *Slo Mo*:

- Have you been to a party where violence occurred?
- What happened?
- How did you feel about the incident? What did you do, if anything?



# Background

Clifton Joseph

- Dub Poetry is a form of performance poetry of West Indian origin.
- Dub poetry is predominantly concerned with politics and social justice, commonly voiced through a commentary on current events (thus sharing these elements with Dancehall and “Conscious” or “Roots” [reggae](#) music).
- Toronto has the second highest concentration of Dub Poets, preceded by Jamaica, and followed by England
  - ▶ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dub\\_poetry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dub_poetry)
- [Clifton Joseph](#), member of the Dub Poets’ Collective.



# View *Slo Mo*

5 minutes, 5 seconds  
Mature Content



# After Viewing

Clifton Joseph

After viewing *Slo Mo*:

- What would you do if you were in a similar situation?
- What reason did Joseph give for not going to the police when his friend Slo Mo was killed?
- What is your perception of police in your community?
- Whose fault do you think it is that young black people don't trust authority enough to talk to them about the violent death of a friend at a party? Defend your position.
- How is this example of dub poetry different from the poems you have studied so far?
- What are the characteristics of dub poetry?
- What techniques does Joseph use to enhance his performance?



# Activities

Clifton Joseph

- WRITE a poem, short story, or journal entry about what you would have done and how you would have reacted to being at a party where there was a shooting. Perform it.
- WRITE a journal entry responding to the poem (e.g., the poem's style, aspects of the performance, the story).
- DO a newspaper or online media study on young black people living in a big city nearby (or your community), or about gun violence, or police brutality. Report on your findings, including a comparison of what you found versus what Clifton talked about. Have circumstances changed since he wrote the poem? Write a concluding statement that explains your point of view.





# Before Viewing

Clifton Joseph

Before viewing *I Remember Back Home*:

- What do you remember most about being a child in your neighbourhood?



View /  
*Remember Back  
Home*

3 minutes, 45 seconds



# After Viewing

Clifton Joseph

After viewing *I Remember Back Home*

- Name five or more things that Joseph remembered from back home.
- What do you think it would have been like to grow up where he did?
- How did you think his childhood experiences affected him later in life?
- What parts of home do you think he wants to get better?
- What parts of your home or neighbourhood would you like to see 'get better'?



# Activities

Clifton Joseph

- WRITE a poem or short story about a neighbourhood you lived in or are living in. What did you like and dislike about it? What was good, and what could have improved? Would you have changed anything?
- WRITE a poem, imagining (or remembering) you left your home a long time ago. Begin with “I remember back home.” Repeat this refrain during the poem. Perform your piece, using some of Joseph’s techniques.
- WRITE a diary entry, or a group of diary entries spread out over time (e.g., in old home; on boat or plane; arriving in Canada; starting new life in Canada, getting first job), from the perspective of a new immigrant coming to Canada. Write from your own experience or imagine someone else’s. Talk about the hopes for a life in Canada, as well as thoughts and memories of home.



View *Interview*  
*with Clifton*  
*Joseph*

9 minutes, 54 seconds



# After Viewing

Clifton Joseph

After viewing *Interview with Clifton Joseph*:

- What do some people do differently as dub poets when they are performing?
- Name some things that Clifton did himself.
- What do you think about this kind of poetry?
- What is the difference, according to Clifton, between hip-hop and dub?
- What are dub's defining characteristics?
- What made Joseph most angry about the Toronto neighbourhood where he grew up?



- WRITE and perform a dub-like piece, either individually or in groups.
- REVIEW the characteristics of Dub Poetry.
- CHECK out the [Dub Poets Collective](#).



# Credits

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