

Raymond Antrobus – Full Biography

Raymond Antrobus MBE FRSL is a British Jamaican poet, educator, and writer born in Hackney, London, to an English mother and Jamaican father. Diagnosed as deaf at age six, his work explores themes of sound, language, identity, and memory.

He is the author of several poetry collections, including *Shapes & Disfigurements* (2012), *To Sweeten Bitter* (2017), *The Perseverance* (2018), *All The Names Given* (2021), and *Signs, Music* (2024). His poems have been published in *The New Yorker*, *The Guardian*, *Granta*, *Poetry Foundation*, *Lit Hub*, *London Review of Books*, *The Poetry Review*, and *The Deaf Poets Society*.

In 2019, Antrobus became the first poet to win the Rathbones Folio Prize for best work of literature in any genre. His accolades include the Ted Hughes Award, Lucille Clifton Legacy Award, PBS Winter Choice, Sunday Times Young Writer of the Year Award, Somerset Maugham Award, and *The Guardian* Poetry Book of the Year 2018. He has also been shortlisted for the Griffin Prize, T.S. Eliot Prize, and Forward Prize. In 2018, he received the Geoffrey Dearmer Prize for his poem "Sound Machine."

His poems "*Jamaican British*," "*The Perseverance*," and "*Happy Birthday Moon*" were added to the UK's GCSE syllabus in 2019 and 2021.

Antrobus holds fellowships from Cave Canem, Civitella Ranieri, Complete Works 3, Jerwood Compton, and the Royal Society of Literature. He is among the first recipients of an MA in Spoken Word education from Goldsmiths University.

A founding member of Chill Pill and the Keats House Poets Forum, Antrobus served as an ambassador for The Poetry School and Arts Emergency and he was a board member for English PEN. Currently, he advocates for D/deaf charities, including Deaf Kidz International and the National Deaf Children's Society.

Expanding into children's literature, his debut picture book *Can Bears Ski?* (2021), illustrated by Polly Dunbar, was selected as an Ezra Jack Keats honouree winner in 2021 and included in the Read For Empathy (primary) Collection Award in 2022. His second picture book, *Terrible Horses* (2024), illustrated by Ken Wilson-Max, received a *Kirkus* starred review.

In 2025, Antrobus debuted his first art installation at the Barbican as part of the exhibition 'Feel The Sound.'

In March 2021, Antrobus hosted his first BBC Radio 4 documentary, *Inventions In Sounds*, produced by Falling Tree Productions, which won Best Documentary at the 2021 Third Coast International Audio Festival.

He has performed at festivals such as Glastonbury, Latitude, and BOCAS, and at universities including Oxford, Goldsmiths, and Cambridge. In 2020, he completed residencies at Warwick University, University of East Anglia, and Swansea University. In 2021, he performed at the Paralympic Homecoming ceremony at Wembley Stadium.

Antrobus has won numerous poetry slams, including the Farrago International Slam (2010), The Canterbury Slam (2013), and was joint winner at the Open Calabash Slam (2016). His work has appeared on BBC 2, BBC Radio 3, BBC Radio 4, Channel 4, *The Big Issue*, *The Jamaica Gleaner*, *The Guardian*, and TEDxEastEnd.

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