

## **Raymond Antrobus**

in conversation with Colin Grant

**COLIN GRANT:** I've come to the House of St Barnabas, in Soho, to meet Raymond Antrobus. He's won many awards including the Ted Hughes Award, the Rathbones Folio [Prize] – which is a rare thing – and other awards. You are in your thirties now, and I know from talking to you that, in a sense, that a lot of your work that you do is kind of a 'voyage of discovery'.

**RAYMOND ANTROBUS:** Yes.

**CG:** I'm wondering if we can travel back to you as a teenager. I know that your mother, Rosemary, or Rose, was very clear that, you know, she recognised your talent early on and steered towards poetry, didn't she? Is that right?

**RA:** Yes, she did. She did it in an almost unconscious way because I think what she was doing was showing me poems, and poets, and books by poets. Not necessarily in a way to say, 'You could be a poet', but more to say, 'This is something worth your time. This is something worth reading and knowing about.' So, I actually think she was quite surprised that I actually pursued poetry. I mean, I've had so many jobs since leaving school and they were all kind of, you know, odd jobs, zero-hour contracts: lifeguard, courier, I was a receptionist at a

hotel for a bit. There were so many things. In this time, I was writing and I was reading, and I always had a notebook. And it wasn't really until I discovered slam poetry, performance poetry, and the open mic scene which, again, my mum was aware of: as a kid, she had taken me to protests, I had seen people like Adrian Mitchell perform, she'd met Adrian Henry and the Liverpool Poets as well, she knew of them and their works. Her favourite poet was William Blake. She knows a lot about William Blake and had so many stories. So, when we're walking around Peckham, she's able to look at a tree and say, 'William Blake probably saw an angel there.' Or walking across Westminster Bridge and talking about, 'Oh William Blake would have been looking at all the rich people walking across this bridge and then thinking about the children being put into mines,' and all those kinds of things. So it just was the fabric of my learning, of my home life, of my family life. The language that I think I got from her, and from poetry, is that – it's a family language, it's a love language. She obviously has her own independent interest and appreciation of poetry outside of me, but yeah, yeah.

**CG:** One of the lovely poems, and there are so many great poems in collection – congratulations, by the way...

**RA:** Thank you.

**CG:** ... is 'Her taste', which is kind of like a list, isn't it, of things that relate to your mother?

**RA:** Yeah. So, before the book was published, I had to read her all of her poems which are explicitly all about her, and that was one that was particularly hard to read to her. I was particularly nervous about reading it to her, and when I read it, I remember she sat in her kitchen and looking out the window. She was just kind

of like, 'Hmm... Okay, alright.' Because I think she understands now that, you know, I'm now going to have my own version of things, my own memory of things and it's going to show up in my work; and that's... in some ways you have to respect someone else's memory, or take on something. And that's not easy, that's hard. I totally appreciate that and that's something that we've spoken about openly.

**CG:** Well, it's true, isn't it? The Jamaicans say: 'There are no facts. There are only versions.'

**RA:** [Laughs]

**CG:** Whilst I might challenge the first part, I think the second part is true.

**RA:** Yeah.

**CG:** And we often put ourselves in the position of being the hero of our story...

**RA:** Right.

**CG:** ... and we are invested in that. It's tricky isn't it, when you are writing stories that have some biography, because a lot of your work has a biographical element?

**RA:** Yeah.

**CG:** And you said there that you showed the poems to your mother beforehand. So, that's an integral part of getting the work published...

**RA:** Oh, yeah.

**CG:** ...for you, or was it some sort of necessity or was it just emotionally necessary for you to do that?

**RA:** Everything. All of them. I didn't want to put anything out that my mother would feel embarrassed by. At the same time, I wanted to put something out which was integral again to the memory. So, if she had a problem with that certain thing, it just wouldn't end up in the book; or I would take it out and revise it later on.

I don't know, I think I wanted to write this book though, about my mum, because I didn't get to write *The Perseverance* until my dad had passed away. And there were so many questions and conversations and ideas that came up since *The Perseverance* came out and the responses I got from other people about him and about some impressions that they got from my dad, or reading about my dad... I was just left with so many things that I was like, 'Ah I would have loved to kick it with him and have this conversation now'. So, then I thought, 'Well, I don't want to write about my mother when she's not here'. I want to write about her while she is still here and we can have these conversations and, you know, the kind of parent-child relationship is – like most relationships ought to – they exist in a continuum. And I'm about to be a dad myself so it's put me in a bit of a different mind frame. It's funny. I think that even looking at this book, *All the Names Given* now, it's just in a particular time, because I had written it a year

ago before the pandemic even kind of happened. I've started writing and revising through the pandemic. But it's funny... like books really are an encapsulation of a time, you know. Even already, it's hardly out the door, the book, and I'm already like... feeling like it's behind me. And I'm already on to the next thing and writing in a different way, in a new way, I feel now, actually.

**CG:** Well, I think you travel both forward and back. And what intrigues me a lot about your work and you as a human being, is sometimes I find it difficult to locate you through your 'voice'. And I know that there's a poem of yours on the curriculum called 'Jamaican British', so I can locate you as a Jamaican-British person, and through your 'voice', I locate you as 'London', North London.

**RA:** Yeah.

**CG:** When I read a poem like 'Bredrin', I see that there must have been a time when you were, for more for one of a better phrase, 'street'...

**RA:** [Laughs]

**CG:**... than you are now. Is that true, or not?

**RA:** Yeah, I mean, I can't claim any kind of gangster thing.

**CG:** No, I don't mean that. I just think that. I mean, I was brought up this idea of social mobilisation through education.

**RA:** Right, right.

**CG:** And by 'street' I mean, working class, as well. I'm working-class, but I'm not clearly working-class *now*.

**RA:** Right, yes.

**CG:** And I think what's great about you is that you were able to travel back to that period, in poems like 'Bredrin', but show that there's still a connection, because I think sometimes when you're a writer, and you move from one class to another, you leave your class behind.

**RA:** Totally. And that's what I'm saying that, you know, 'identity' generally exists on a continuum. And I think, you know, it was really, when I started teaching, that I started getting a real different perspective on my past, and my upbringing, because I was given the responsibility of teaching these young people, mainly [in] Hackney in East London, and just recognising myself in them, and them looking back at me, and some of them not even recognising that I could be from where they're from. You know, that was a real trip to me, and then even listening to their home lives, and how many of them don't even leave the street that they're born on. And I think that that is generally something that... probably my biggest privilege is being able to travel from young. My mum, she makes jewellery and she travelled all over, collecting things, she's like a collector, and then she'll come back to London and make necklaces and hair slides and she'll sell them at Camden Market and then Camden Passage and then sometimes at jumble sales and stuff like that. So... and I was just following her around and I

think that, as well as having a family in Jamaica, that I was visiting every summer, I just had such a different perspective than, I'd say, a lot of my peers in Hackney growing up. So, I think that already made me a little bit different. Even though I was around people and got involved in usual young mischief stuff, you know.

**CG:** Can we hear that poem, 'Bredrin'? It kind of speaks to this evolution of yourself.

**RA:** Yeah. And this is a fun one to read.

### **Bredrin**

I was twelve / you were sixteen / boy-friendin' my older sister / Bredrin,  
my music Roots Manueva'ed you / *this is sick, Bredrin!*

You taught me to rev road / I crashed / your Moped ended.  
You dusted me down / *what's the damage mi Bredrin?*

An older boy at school missiled his shoe at me / Bredrin  
you front-lined the gate / despite your foot in a cast / *test him!*

Boy'ed him up by his hood / *to rass, don't fuck wit' me Bredrin.*  
Then Mr. Drinkwater thought you called him a *bread bin.*

When your three year old son swore at me / I got vex. No blessin' /  
You said *nuh tell me how to raise me yout / you're in my yard/ Bredrin*

Years later / the water still bitter / I summon Braithwaite /  
*time / is short / and life / is short / and breath / is short / Bredrin.*

**CG:** That's lovely. Thank you. Yeah, so that speaks to this continuance and the continuation. Yeah, recognition of roots.

**RA:** Yeah. And it's funny, you know, even by writing a poem like that I was really self-conscious about reading that poem, because I'm like, people weren't gonna recognise me as that no more, you know, so, I don't know...

**CG:** But, it's there anyway.

**RA:** Yeah, exactly. Is not a kind of performance. It is like, it is part of me. So, I should say maybe it is a performance, but it's maybe like, I don't know, a conscious one, a grounded one. It's not a 'performance' of something that I'm not.

**CG:** Yeah. Well, it sort of speaks also, or is echoed in the poem, 'And That', no doubt.

**RA:** Yeah, yeah.

**CG:** And there's, I mean, a lot of your poems maybe laugh out loud. Because I recognise some of the cheekiness.

**RA:** Yeah. [Laughs]

**CG:** And some of the dislocation between one group and another one another.

**RA:** Right.

**CG:** And the idea that you're vegan now; you don't eat chicken.

**RA:** [Laughs]

**CG:** [Laughs] That really resonated with me.

**RA:** [Laughs] Yeah, because things like that are kind of understood as statements – like political statements or class statements – that comes in and out of the book, and I'm still trying to navigate that... how to talk about class. How do I talk about the fact that my dad came from social housing, very much like a 'working man', a mechanic, painter, decorator, smoker, drinker, gambler, all of that stuff, and yet enjoyed, in a Jamaican context, he was still middle class? You know, it wasn't really until he come to London, and finds himself in this working-class context. So, there were books that my dad had. You know we were talking about poetry, my dad had Andrew Salkey's epic poem ['Jamaica'] on his shelf. He obviously loved Bob Marley, and at one point was practicing in Rastafarianism. And my mum often kind of says, 'Don't talk about your dad as a Rasta man, because he tried to do it, but he didn't stick to it. He wasn't an *honest* Rasta man.' You know, mum, how few of them are 'honest Rasta men'?... [Laughs] You know what I mean.

**CG:** I was intrigued by what you're saying about your dad because, I think he's a bit younger than my parents, but my mum grew up in Jamaica, learned poetry

through being taught poetry by rote, so all the Romantic poets, Shelley, Wordsworth, Keats, she can recite 'Gunga Din'...

**RA:** [Laughs]

**CG:** Now, she'll be cleaning the house on a Saturday morning reciting Kipling's 'Gunga Din' – also Louise Bennett, obviously.

**RA:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**CG:** And there's something, isn't there, about that? That, that generation had a kind of poetry in them.

**RA:** Yes.

**CG:** Through what they were *schooled*.

**RA:** Yeah.

**CG:** And what's curious is that a lot of the poetry – apart from Miss Lou and one or two others like Andrew Salkey – a lot of it was just British poetry.

**RA:** Oh, no. Absolutely. My dad was the same. He could recite Yeats, he could recite Coleridge, Wordsworth... they were just kind of beaten into them, though, in a quite violent way, you know, given the kind of corporal punishment and this

kind of thing. So, there's such a tension between, you know, these romantic poets, which are literally *forced* into these Caribbean children, you know. I think it's a fascinating thing to think and talk about and through. And this is it, these are the kind of conversations I wish I could have with my dad, you know. I even had a reference to that in one poem in *The Perseverance*; I talk about Wordsworth and Coleridge rhythms that wouldn't save him. I still dream about my dad, I still have conversations with him. And he's just laughing at all of this.

**CG:** What kind of conversations are you having? Give us some insight into that.

**RA:** I mean, he's talking about, you know, he's...

**CG:** I mean, you're having a good conversation with him through this collection, as well.

**RA:** Yeah, yeah.

**CG:** I don't know whether you see him as I do as a kind of very striking presence still; maybe a ghostly presence, but, but it's still a presence throughout, isn't it?

**RA:** Yeah, he is. He is. Even my relationship with his ghost is on a continuum, you know. That's what's interesting. So, I don't want to pin anything down. But like, all the names given, like, I guess, you know, what you say about ghosts is interesting, because the poetry, I've tried to write it on the page, in a way, that is, it's aware of the space between the words, it's aware of the sound and the atmospheres that are outside and between and through the poems. I've used, I

suppose, the sense of 'hearing' of sound as a way to try and think, non-linear and laterally, just to kind of get people engaging with the wordless memory, or the wordless feeling, that comes from being someone who has a diasporic memory and imagination and feeling.

**CG:** Can we hear how you conjure your father?

**RA:** Yeah. So one of the first poems in the book is called 'The Acceptance'. And I wrote this right after *The Perseverance* had kind of done really well and my dad started coming to me in dreams.

### **The Acceptance**

Dad's house stands again, four years  
after being demolished. I walk in.  
He lies in bed, licks his rolling paper,  
and when I ask *Where have you been?*  
*We buried you.* He says *I know,*

*I know.* I lean into his smoke, tell him  
I went back to Jamaica. *I met your brothers.*  
*Losing you made me need them.* He says  
something I don't hear. *What?* Moving lips,  
no sound. I shake my head. He frowns.

Disappears. I wake in the hotel room,  
heart drumming. I get up slowly, the floor  
is wet. I wade into the bathroom,  
my father standing by the sink, all the taps  
running. He laughs and takes

my hand, squeezes, his ring  
digs into my flesh. I open my eyes again.

I'm by a river, a shimmering sheet  
of green marble. Red ants crawl up  
an oak tree's flaking bark. My hands

are cold mud. I follow the tall grass  
by the riverbank, the song, my deaf Orisha  
of music, Oshun, in brass bracelets and earrings,  
bathes my father in a white dress. I wave. *Hey!*  
She keeps singing. The dress turns the river

gold and there's my father surfacing.  
He holds a white and green drum. I watch him  
climb out the water, drip towards Oshun.  
They embrace. My father beats his drum.  
With shining hands, she signs: *Welcome.*

**CG:** Thank you, very much.

**RA:** Yeah, so I'm also part of something called the Cave Canem Fellowship. That meant that once a year I was going to Pittsburgh and I was meeting other black poets from the diaspora, and we would spend a week in Pittsburgh University writing poems – five poems every, you know, every day we're writing poems, and then we're having seminars, and we're talking through them and sharing them and it's just kind of a space where we don't have to think about, I suppose, our 'blackness' as something that we need to defend, or is any kind of one-dimension thing; it's a place about understanding it and speaking through it, and just being *humans*, you know, really. I've never felt that kind of liberation before. I feel very self-conscious in England, because I feel England doesn't have the 'language' to talk about... to talk about... having multiple identities. And I'll say *England*, because I think Ireland does, because it has to, you know, it's a different kind of thing there, but still in a different way. And you know, 'whiteness' is what it is. But I think that being in a place like the Cave Canem retreat, I couldn't have

written a poem like 'The Acceptance' because it was meeting Chris Abani, who himself is a Nigerian-English priest, who asked me, 'Where's your mother in your work? What part of England is she from? What do you know about Antrobus, as your mother's name?' It was him that was planting all these seeds are really, the entire book was a germination of his questions. So, Chris Abani, kind of seeing that and understanding that because Chris Abani was born in Nigeria, and then grew up in England, and then went to the States and, and so he's someone who just knows how to move gracefully between his identities. I never feel like he reduces or, yeah, reduces one side of himself. I mean, my perception of him is like, this is a man who knows how to live fully, despite his multitudes and complexities and histories and languages. And I was inspired by him, and he's become a bit of a mentor figure for me. I showed him these poems, and, you know, he wrote me a really moving letter about them; when I got that letter from him, I thought, okay, yes, I'm on to a good thing. I think the book could speak, could be in the world.

**CG:** So, I think it's a great book. I'm really pleased and delighted, and it made me smile all the way through reading. And I had so many connections as well, because I'm a big admirer of Claude Mackay.

**RA:** Oh, yes...

**CG:** And in comes a reference to Claude Mackay...

**RA:** [Laughs]

**CG:** And I wonder what he means to you – and that story that George Bernard Shaw story, if you could remind listeners what that's about – and what that means to you, coming decades, almost a century after Claude McKay?

**RA:** Oh, man, I *love* getting to have this conversation with you, because it's a niche thing. Not many people know... he's not really a very well-read poet, and that's an injustice – he ought to be! I think he was a great poet. How did I come to him? He was a poet that both my parents would speak about. I actually had a poster of one of his poems on the wall, 'If We Must Die'. You know, his famous sonnet, which was quoted by Winston Churchill, and that was always something that my mum would say, you know, and that was a way that she had to talk about him, 'Oh Claude Mackay was this poet who Winston Churchill...'

**CG:** Well, he wrote that poem, didn't he, when he was a Pullman porter? There's a lot of racial hostility, if you will, people being beaten, up sometimes killed.

**RA:** Yeah. Wicked!

**CG:** And it was a defiance, wasn't it?

**RA:** Absolutely!

**CG:** If we must die, we'll put our backs to the wall, and we'll go down fighting.

**RA:** Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Backs to the wall, dying but fighting back. Absolutely. So, what does that poem mean to me? And well, I should say first, that I've read everything by Claude McKay. Well, I was really drawn to his poetry and then started reading his novels. And I think he has one of the most fascinating autobiographies I've ever read. You know, and he's writing this in the 1920s. That people are in there as well. Gertrude Stein is in there. Paul Robeson is in there. Like these are like his peers, Langston Hughes is in there. And it's so funny, like, he's not even particularly impressed with any of them. You know, he's just...

**CG:** What do you think he would have felt? What do you think he *really* felt when George Bernard Shaw suggested he might try being a boxer?

**RA:**[Laughs] So, when I read that it stuck with me, because about four years ago, I was on a writing retreat, and I had shared some of my poems with one of the participants on this writing retreat. And he, yeah, I mean, he was an English white guy, you know; we were getting on, but then he read my poems and he said to me, 'You should be an athlete. Why are you a poet? What are you doing?' He started this whole thing about... and I was like, 'How is that you're just not responding to my poems, man.' So, and then instantly, I remember, this is *exactly* what happened to Claude McKay. So that stayed with me, and I wanted to write about that. But I suppose I never wanted to write about it directly. So, I wanted to write about the history, you know, if you look back in time, this happening to a man in the 1920s – and by George Bernard Shaw, nonetheless. You know...

**CG:**Can we hear the Claude McKay poem?

**RA:** So, this is, this is the quote from George Bernard Shaw:

**Claude McKay**

*It must be tragic for a sensitive Negro to be a poet.  
Why didn't you choose pugilism instead of poetry  
for a profession? — George Bernard Shaw*

Let me keep my fists  
in my pocket, fidget  
my ink, let me stumble

to my corner, take my stall,  
see who squeezes  
my back, grips my face.

Look, the floor.  
Is that my blood?  
My tooth? My island?

So, the unsaid influencer, this is actually more than anyone as much as Claude McKay, is actually Langston Hughes. I am really drawn to how Langston Hughes, towards the end of his career, he was just writing haikus, all of these really short lyric poems. I was revisiting Langston Hughes at that time. And when I look at this poem, I realised oh, yeah, okay. Yeah, this is this is also bringing in that kind of Langston lyric.

**CG:** When I read it, I thought, Oh, Claude McKay's your cornerman. [Laughs].

**RA:** [Laughs] Yeah, let's go. Let's go. Let's go write the gymnastic lyric... the boxer. Yeah, yeah.

**CG:** And taking chances as well, taking risks. And that's one of the things I really appreciate with your poetry is the risk you take. But also, I think you've got just a great ear. And I wonder what importance it's for you in constructing the poems to begin to hear the sound that you want to place centrally in the poem, do you know what I mean? I think you've got a very good ear for the vernacular for the nation language and those lines they 'sing' all the way through.

**RA:** Yeah, I mean, I'm invested and interested in the multitude of 'voice': which means the 'inner voice', which means the 'page voice', which means the 'spoken voice', and how each of them are their own kind of entity, their own kind of way of being and, poetry, I think, is a channel for me to try and fuse them all together, because I really do – you're right – I really do write with my ear. I really can't make a poem 'sing' or work if I can't move through the sound of it. I've written poems which, I'm like, 'Conceptually this works, but it doesn't speak, or it doesn't sing'. One thing that's been interesting about how different the process of writing *All the Names Given* is compared to *The Perseverance*, is this feels like a book which generally was written with a lot less 'noise' around me. Because, again, revising during the pandemic, but also, I didn't really get many opportunities to read these poems in front of an audience, which meant I was writing this with a slightly different 'ear', or a different 'mentality', or different 'space' to what *The Perseverance* was. And when I look at the two books now, I think that *The Perseverance* was such a heavily voice-driven, as in a spoken voice-driven book. And I think that this book is probably a bit more of an inner voice-driven book, the context of the theme that, you know, that's where the pandemic comes into that space, too. Because it wasn't easy to write new poems through the pandemic, you know.

**CG:** I mean, your mother's very present throughout the book. And we get a very strong sense of her being a working woman, and you've been the child hoping

that she gets more sales at Camden Market and that's clear in the poem you're about to read, I think.

**RA:**

### **Arose**

My father called my mother *Rose* for short.  
Once I asked him how it ever worked out  
between them. *The sex*, he smirked, *the sex*  
*was that good*. I was twelve, and betrayed. But  
I'd seen him in my mother's garden that  
summer, growing sunflowers. I'd seen him  
paint all the walls in her house and my mother  
chose the colour. I'd seen him bend by  
my mother's bicycle, mend her tires, rock  
his head to a record she was playing and ask her  
if he could borrow it. I'd seen the way  
he walked down the street grinning with  
new music. Once I'd seen him stand behind  
my mother's market stall when a woman held  
up a necklace my mother made, and ask him  
how much it was, and he turned to my mother,  
said *Rose?* And he said it like something in him  
grew towards the light.

**CG:** I love that evolution and I love that sense that your father can grow because of your mother's presence, your mother's affection, your mother just *doing*. I

wonder how much you are sustained, or need to be sustained, through humour. When I was reading, as I said earlier, your work and there were several times when I just started laughing. And I can give you some examples: When Tabitha says something like, 'That's some kind of nigger shit.'

**RA:** Yeah, yeah.

**CG:** [Laughs] And there's another line where you're listening... the line is, it's about an award, I think.

**RA:** Yeah, yeah.

**CG:** Best internal monologue, while drying dishes.

**RA:** Yeah [Laughs].

**CG:** Wow. That sort of line that will keep you going as a writer, because you can laugh your head off when you're writing.

**RA:** [Laughs] Ah, man, you got it, you got it... I think we share a sensibility and I think it comes from our Jamaicaness. I don't know, man, I think those are the kind of things that my dad would also find amusing. Because it's important to me that ... it's not... again, like poems have to be held lightly. It was Caroline Bird who told me this, 'Hold it lightly'. And when you hold it lightly, you don't know where you're gonna end up, and you get opportunities, or ways into other

registers, other ideas. And I'm generally not... like that really is who I think I am, like, even some of my jokes are inappropriate, so I just keep them to myself. And sometimes I think, 'Oh, my dad would have found that hilarious', including that line, 'That's some nigga shit'. I cried, I died laughing, wishing my dad could read this, you know? [Laughs]

**CG:** [Laughs] I want to read it to my kids. One of the key things you've done in this book, sort of visually, is spoken to in the poem, 'Closed Captions'. And in that, I'm going to quote you some lines here, you talk about the 'sound of being pushed out of myself.' And then you go on to say, 'Reader, this is the place I tried to take you and I closed them' – meaning your eyes.

**RA:** Yeah.

**CG:** Can you expand on that? What are you saying to us with 'Closed Captions'?

**RA:** So, the 'Closed Captions' is, again, an invitation to a reader to consider, in one level, the kind of language of accessibility. So, during the lockdown, I started binge-watching loads of TV and films, and I'm not actually a big consumer of films and TV, but I had the captions on everything. And after a few months of this, I started to feel guilt. Like, this isn't really accumulating to anything. And then I thought I need to engage with this artistically. I mean, I just kept coming back to the captions and then I remembered this deaf sound artist called Christine Sun Kim, who's now become a friend. I saw an art exhibition of hers in about 2015, called 'Closer Captions'; there was two, in fact, and they were both about rewriting captions from films and getting deaf people to rewrite them in ways that they understand them. And they were so lyrical, and loose, and fun. And that

just stayed with me. And I suddenly realised, Oh, this can be a device, if I could maybe write a long caption poem that comes in and out of an assembly of poems, which are speaking to and through time, then – which is Christine Sun Kim’s question, ‘Can time itself be a sound?’ – you know, so it leads into that lateral idea. And so that’s the last – kind of – provocation of the book, you know, ‘Reader, this is the place I tried to take you and I closed them’. It was that Edgar Allan Poe idea – I think it was Edgar Allan Poe who talks about the derangement of the senses – and so many poets have hinted at this, even some emotional scientists have said, ‘We’re being lied to, we have more than five senses’. If you combine different senses, and we start to think and feel and speak in the language of synaesthesia, we are then unlocking a whole new world, and language and vocabulary of emotion, of sense, of being alive. And so I was also trying to lean into that, in a way which was open, but grounded in this kind of philosophy, and align with, again, the work of people like Christine Sun Kim. Yeah. So this being a place that I take a reader or want to take or try to take is that; it’s an invitation into the investigation to think about time and sound, non-linear time, in a different way.

**CG:** And you’ve represented that architecturally in the book as well, haven’t you?

**RA:** Yeah, Yeah. So rather than having sections like you do in certain poetry collections, I just wove captions into the book so they kind of punctuate sections differently. So it is, again, like any book I write is gonna exist under the tagline ‘An investigation of missing sound.’ That’s my life’s work ‘Investigation of missing sound.’

**CG:** All praise to you!

**RA:** [Laughs].

**CG:** I think your mother should *love* this book.

**RA:** I hope so...

**CG:** She should *adore* this book.

**RA:** I hope so. I hope so. Yeah, it's my book for her.

**CG:** Yeah... 'My book for her' – that's a good way to finish. So, Raymond Antrobus, thank you very much for talking to me and WritersMosaic and well done with this book which is going to fly, I'm sure. Everyone's going to want to buy it. They *ought* to buy it and it sounds like the next one is already on its way.

**RA:** Yeah. Thank you, Colin. I appreciate you.

A recording of this interview can be found at **writersmosaic.org.uk**

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