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National Museum of African American History and Culture

The Literary Corner: Vernon February's Life and Works (side a)

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WEBVTT

00:00:08.000 --> 00:00:31.000

[music]

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<i>Brooks B. Robinson</i>: The literary corner black writers of the world, a series of analyses and interpretations of black world literature.

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Today an experience in African-Caribbean poetry with Edward Brathwaite. In addition to being a poet, Brathwaite is a literary historian.

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He has to his credit a trilogy, including Rights of Passage, Masks, and Islands, a literary history, the Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, and a second trilogy, including Other Exiles, Black and Blue, and Mother Poem.

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Brathwaite is the reader in history at the University of the West Indies, Mona and Kingston, Jamaica.

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In this interview, Brathwaite begins at the beginning.

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[music]

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<i>Edward Brathwaite</i>: Like most writers, most poets, I started very early. You can say I started writing hymns-

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<i>Brooks B. Robinson</i>: Mhm

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<i>Edward Brathwaite</i>: -that kind of background because I was brought up in a Methodist church with my, you know, my mother's people, and that was the only model I had at the time from the age of 9, 10, 11, 12.

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And then I went into that romantic kind of poetry based upon John Keats and the English models.

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<i>Brooks B. Robinson</i>: Mhm

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<i>Edward Brathwaite</i>: But I--I began seriously writing on the eve of my departure from my home island of Barbados when I was going on a

scholarship to the University of Cambridge. I won a Barbados scholarship, you know?

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<i>Brooks B. Robinson</i>: Right.

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<i>Edward Brathwaite</i>: And the experience, the trauma, of having leave home um created this sudden desire on my part to really get to grips with my landscape and I remember very much that our island is very small...



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