

Learning political poetry writing - taught by an angry ...

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An old friend of mine, the poet Steve Pottinger, [put this on his Substack yesterday](#), and I reproduce it here with his permission:

If you've been following my Substack for more than a couple of minutes, you'll be well aware that I'm fairly engaged, politically, and not afraid of speaking out when I feel there's something that needs saying. Mostly – but not always – I do this when I can express my feelings in a reasonably articulate way, even if that's been preceded by a string of days where I've done little more than wander round the house muttering
***** **** about [insert right-wing politician of choice here]

I write poetry about the world because the world fascinates me (how could it not?) and I write political poetry because politics is, first and foremost, about people. It's about how we, as a society, decide how we structure our communities. It's about who we help, how we do it, and what happens to people who get left behind. It's about you. It's about me. It's about connection, it's about justice, it's about humanity (and a whole lot more besides, but I'm sure you get the picture).

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Right now [poet waves a languid arm at the binfire which is much of modern life] poets who write about politics certainly aren't short of subject matter. But – if you've been itching to put pen to paper – how do you begin to write political poetry? How do you write *good* political poetry? Why bother writing it at all? Does it change anything? Are there pitfalls to avoid? Are there clichés to tiptoe carefully around? Must you wear a hairshirt while writing it? And where can you send it once it's done?

So many questions. So many reasons not to pick up the pen. So let's change that.

I'll be running a poetry workshop on Zoom at 11 am on Sunday, March 1st. We'll be looking at what political poetry is and how writing it can be hugely empowering. Yes, I

used the 'e' word. I've shocked myself. But writing poetry about what's going on in the world can be a vital step in reminding yourself that you have a voice, that you've got something to say, that change/resistance/imagining a better world *is* indeed possible.

If you fancy coming along to this workshop, drop me a line. If you've got friends who might want to take part, tell them to get in touch. It'll be a PAYF event because I don't want anyone to be excluded because they're skint, and any money raised will go to Freedom From Torture, who'll do far more good with it than I can.

And now, back to wandering round the house, muttering about politicians.

I suspect this workshop will be really good.

You can message Steve [via his Substack here](#).

And this is Steve, at his best in my opinion, albeit a few years ago now:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U_KG6BqiyPs?si=BdU0f3I8kliub4QA