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K-12 Performing Arts Series

GLENIS REDMOND: Telling Stories Through Poetry

March 30 - April 27, 2022



Telling Stories

with
Glenis Redmond





photo: Mary A. Brown

From the Poet

In these poems that I am sharing with you, I tell you how I became a poet. You will note how poetry has strengthened my connection to self, family, others, and my South Carolina heritage. As a poet, I write to uplift the people who have poured into me. Hence, the label "tributary poet." I act as a body of water pouring into the community by honoring others. I write especially about my mother and my grandmother—women as they inspired me not with poems, but the creative ways they cared for our family and others.

My father was a pianist. His work as play-by-ear musician inspires me too. You will find all of these traditions in my poems.

I work metaphorically with broad sturdy yards of cloth, tending to the warp and weft of race, womanhood, class, place, toil, legacy, and artistry—with the African American traditions such as quilting, soul food, gospel, and blues music.

For a long time, I did not understand how important my birthplace of South Carolina was to me until I moved back as an adult many years later. Then, everywhere I looked, I found rich history to uplift through poetry such as the enslaved potter-poet David Drake and Clayton "Peg Leg" Bates the one-legged tap dancer.

I am so glad that poetry gives me a lens to focus and reflect on my personal and collective history. I also write beyond those confines, too, because ultimately poets are inspired by universal themes such as loss, growth, and love. I take solace in nature.

In this study guide you will meet the people and places that have carried me to the shores of poetry. I hope these poems will be both mirrors and windows of inspiration to you and your students to tell their own stories.

Yours-n-Verse,

—Glenis Redmond

***My job is not to make people poets,
but help people find the poetry in
their lives.***

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Meet Glenis Redmond

Glenis Redmond is performance poet, a Kennedy Center Teaching Artist, and a Cave Canem alumni. She is the author of three books of poetry: *Backbone* (Underground Epics, 2000), *Under the Sun* (Main Street Rag, 2002), and *What My Hand Say* (Press 53, 2016). She will have three more books published in 2022: *Listening Skin* (Four Way Books), *Three Harriets & Others* (Finishing Line Press), and *Praise Songs for Dave the Potter*, Art by Jonathan Green (University of Georgia Press). She is presently

working on her seventh collection, *Port Cities: Portals of the Second (Domestic) Middle Passage*, in which she focuses on port cities and how they influenced her poetic travels. The port of Charleston speaks the loudest, as this was her enslaved ancestors' point of entry. The Trans-Atlantic Middle Passage history is most known, but in this work, she investigates the Second (Domestic Slave Trade) Middle Passage—how her people journeyed to the Upstate of South Carolina, where they were forced to settle and continue to reside.

In 2020 Glenis received the highest arts award in her home state of South Carolina, the Governor's Award. In the spring of 2022, she was inducted into South Carolina Academy of Authors. Glenis was born on Shaw AFB in Sumter, South Carolina. She presently resides in Greenville, South Carolina. She is Bi-Carolinian as she lived in Asheville, North Carolina for seventeen years and was part of the poetry scene in the 90's. She was the Southern Fried Slam Individual Champion twice, and top-ten Individual finalist (twice) for the National Slam. Glenis was awarded the WNC Best Poet through the Mountain Xpress so many times she was placed in the Hall of Fame. She is a North Carolina Literary Fellowship recipient and helped to create the first Writer-in-Residence program at the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site in Flat Rock, North Carolina.

Glenis spent almost three decades touring the country as a poet and teaching artist. As a Kennedy Center Teaching Artist, for seventeen years, she has created and facilitated poetry workshops for school districts across the country. Since 2014, she has served as the mentor poet for the National Student Poets Program through Scholastic Art and Writing Awards. In the past she has prepared these exceptional youth poets to read at the Library of Congress, the Department of Education, and for First Lady Michelle Obama at The White House. Her poetry has been showcased on NPR and PBS and has been most recently published in *Orion Magazine*, *storySouth*, and *The New York Times*, as well as numerous literary journals.

Mama's Magic

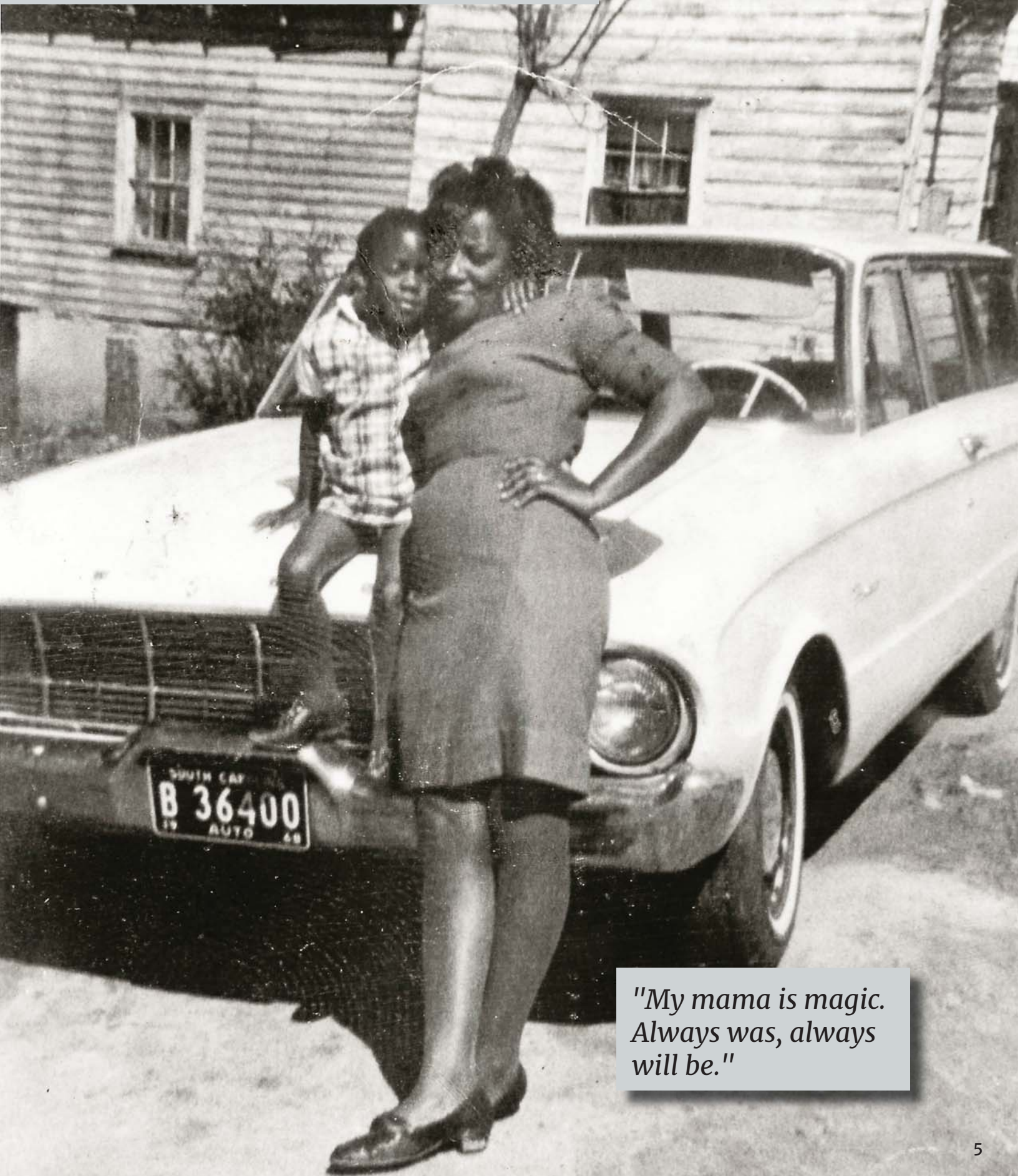
My mama is magic.
Always was and always will be.
There is one phrase that constantly bubbled
from the lips of her five children,
“My mama can do it.”
We thought my mama knew everything.
Believed she did, as if she were born full grown
from the Encyclopedia of Britannica.
I could tell you stories
of how she transformed
a run-down paint peeled shack
into a home.
How she heated us with tin tub baths
from a kettle on the stove.
Poured it over in there like an elixir.
My mama is protection
like those quilts her mother used to make.
She tucked us in with cut out history all around us.
We found we could walk anywhere in this world
and not feel alone.
My mama never whispered the shame of poverty
in our ears.
She taught us to dance to our own shadows.
“Pay no attention to those grand parties
on the other side of the tracks.
Make your own music,” she’d say
as she walked,
she cleaned
the sagging floorboards of that place.
“You’ll get there.”
“You’ll get there.”
Her broom seemed to say with every wisp.
We were my mama’s favorite recipe.
She whipped us up in a big brown bowl
supported by her big brown arms.
We were homemade children.
Stitched together with homemade love.
We didn’t get everything we ever wanted
but we lacked for nothing.
We looked at the stars in my mama’s eyes
They told us we owned the world.
We walked like kings and queens
even on midnight trips to the outhouse.
We were under her spell.
My mama didn’t study at no
Harvard or Yale.



*Glenis and her
mama, Jeanette
Redmond*

The things she knew
you couldn’t learn in no book!
Like...
How to make your life sing like
sweet potato pie sweetness
out of an open window.
How to make anybody feel at home.
How at just the right moment be silent
and with her eyes say,
“Everything’s gonna be alright, chile,
everything is gonna be alright.”
How she tended to all our sickness.
How she raised our spirits.
How she kept flowers
living on our sagging porch
in the midst of family chaos.
My mama raised children like
it was her business in life.
Put us on her hip and kept moving,
keeping that house Pine-Sol clean.
Yeah, my mama is magic.
Always was and always will be.
Her magic?
How to stay steady and sure
in this fast-paced world.
Now when people look at me
with my head held high
my back erect
and look at me with that...
“Who does she think she is?”
I just keep on
walking
with the
assurance inside.
I am Black Magic!
I am Jeanette Redmond’s child.

Poetry Origin Story



*"My mama is magic.
Always was, always
will be."*

My father was in the military, so during my childhood my family moved from place to place. The libraries on all the different bases we inhabited were important to me. I was voracious as a reader at the early age of five years old.

Pilot's License

For Library McChord AFB 62nd Airlift Wing

I was five when I got my wings.
I was five when I learned how to fly.

I practice with slopes, curls, and glides
and just when I was ready to soar—

my mama marched me right through the library door.
I signed right on the dotted line.

*I believe reading is a precursor to writing.
No one ever told me that I was on the path
of becoming a poet, but I believe with each
book I read, I was studying the craft of
poetry.*

Nerds Rule

I'm a word nerd.
I'm a book geek.
I'm a reading freak.

One day the universe will be mine,
understanding MC2 like Einstein.

Do you want to be large and in charge?
Then get yourself a library card.



Metaphor

Metaphor is a way of using a word or idea to represent something else that is completely different. For example, when you say "the field sparkled under a blanket of snow," it's obvious that there's not an actual blanket on top of the field. But calling the snow a blanket helps you imagine what the snow looks like. It also makes the description a lot more interesting!

What is the metaphor that Glenis uses in "Pilot's License"? Can you identify some of the metaphors she uses in her other poems?

Self-Portrait: Bard in the Making

I heard Jackie Earley's poem "1,968 Winters" in the fifth grade in Aviano, Italy at Aviano Elementary during a black history program. It was an introduction to a piece of literature that reflected who I was in both cadence, speech, and attitude. It acted as a mirror, and I could see myself for the first time. I am sure that this poem made me a poet.

When I was in the 5th grade
I was the biggest tomboy
always in t-shirt and jeans
Baseball cap turned sideways
complete with ashy elbows
and skinned knees
and a mouth full of bubblegum
I made popping and blowing bubbles
into an art form.

I was the Princess of the Playground
Ruled at Prison ball, Handball and Tether ball
I could pummel, small catch and throw.
I was the fastest sprinter in the school.
I could stop on a dime,
and give you nine cents change.
In other words, I worried my mother.
She wanted me in matching outfits.
Legs crossed and voice ladylike quiet,
But I was olly olly oxen free loud.

At nine, I heard my first poem
At a Black History Program
Yolanda Walker recited
Jackie Earley's poem, "1,968 Winters."

Her voice, a red rubber ball
She threw over the heads
Of all the other kids
To me on the last row
Sitting crisscross applesauce
The words hit with a thud
In the center of my chest.



"My father did not say I ran as fast as the wind, but that I passed two people who did."



Listen to Jackie Earley perform her poem, "1,968 Winters," written during the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960's:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3kBLAXlWiTw>

At Woodmont Junior High School in Ms. Sergeant's English class, she assigned her students to write in journals. I never stopped writing.

Lifeline

For Mrs. Roberta Sargent Allen

My pen still flows
from your English class.
My yellow spiral bound journal
(That I still have to this day)
became my tell-all best friend.
You couldn't have known
behind my recitation of Wordsworth
that I wandered as lonely as a cloud.
You couldn't have guessed
how those fifteen minutes of free write
every morning became a safe space,
the place where I felt most free.
You couldn't have known
how I used poetry as a shield
to duck and dodge the bullets
of my alcohol-fueled father.
Not many people knew
at Woodmont Junior Senior High School
that I had always been a lover of words
and that I had an insatiable appetite for books,
which did not always translate

into diagraming sentences
or writing the perfect paper,
but my imagination was always
just about to peak from behind those dark clouds.
How could anyone have known that
I eclipsed myself
with my agility as a sprinter
and desire to be a Solid Gold dancer?
I had as many moves
as my father had moods.
You couldn't have known
how shell-shocked I was from tiptoeing
around the minefields of my home.
You couldn't have known
that your command of write
would empower me to exercise my voice
and that your extended hand
put a poet's pen in mine.
You couldn't have known
you were handing me a tool
to save and make my life.



"I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud"

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.



—William Wordsworth

Read the full poem:

<https://poets.org/poem/i-wandered-lonely-cloud>

Discuss:

- What are some of the problems and challenges Glenis talks about in this poem? How did reading and writing help and protect her?
- Do you have a special interest or hobby—or perhaps a friend, family member, or teacher—that you can turn to when you're feeling sad, scared, or stressed out?

Tribute Poems

*Alex Haley, the author of Roots, wrote:
"Find the good and praise it," and I have
been writing praise poems for the people,
places, experiences around me ever since.*



PRAISE POETRY

Glenis Redmond is known for writing and performing PRAISE POETRY—poetry that pays tribute, whether to a family member, a people, a hero, a god, or even oneself.

Praise poetry can be found in many cultures, going back hundreds, if not thousands of years. It is most closely associated with the West African tradition of oral poetry. These poems are created so that the young people in the tribe know who they are, who their ancestors are, why they are loved, and what special gifts they bring to the tribe and the world. In Africa, praise poetry has served as a form of oral documentation. Professional poets carry and recall the narratives detailing the history of the people, the great leaders, and their outstanding achievements. The poems are sung or chanted, sometimes to the accompaniment of music or drumming.

The Praises of Lobengula, Son of Matshobana

The owner of many books, son of Matshobana,
Where did you disappear to, Black Rod
That beats cattle and men?
You, the big elephant of the forests,
Whereas other elephants leave a trail,
You do not leave even the smallest trail.
You, the lion of the forests!
Whereas other lions can be tracked,
But this one of the Khumalo
Moved across without leaving a scent.
You who are as big as the earth, you are big news.
You refused to be captured by foreigners
You chose to die a free man
Your grave shall be known by your ancestors only,
you who are as big as the earth!

—Ndebele praise poem (Zimbabwe)

Praise to the Mother of Jamaican Art

She was the nameless woman who created
images of her children sold away from her.
She suspended her wood babies from a rope
round her neck, before she ate she fed them.
Touched bits of pounded yam and plantains
to sealed lips, always urged them to sip water.
She carved them of wormwood, teeth and
nails
her first tools, later she wielded a blunt blade.
Her spit cleaned faces and limbs; the pitch oil
of her skin burnished them. When
woodworms
bored into their bellies she warmed castor oil
they purged. She learned her art by breaking
hard rockstones. She did not sign her work.

—Lorna Goodison (Jamaica)
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Praise Poem

I am a crystal diamond—
You have to dig a lot to get me from
the ground,
but also
I'm 5-foot-3 mountain, tall, strong,
and
Almost impossible to take down.
I stand like no other on the earth.
My DNA is 100% Hispanic and proud.
I flow from a small country called
Honduras,
But from my bird's-eye view I see it
as
A huge place where I first opened my
eyes and saw the world.
My last name Rivera is like a river that
Keeps on flowing through
the rocks and not stopping.
I'm like an eagle that sees this world
as a huge place—
That just keeps on flying through the
sky.

—Jhony Rivera, New Brunswick, NJ

Ode

She is a pool of gleam.
She is a seed, the rain.
She is a prairie of idea,
the harvest of motion.
She is rosewater
in a sandstone bowl.
She is the refugee, the tarp
of tent, the flame of fugue.
She is the arms of mothers,
a ribbon in a porcelain moon.
She is a lioness and loneliness,
the newborn swathed in pink.
She is earth yellow, jade,
aquamarine. She is the sea—
el mar, la mer, il mare, samandar.
She is a threshold, an arch,
a minaret. She is every headscarf—
magenta, celeste, amethyst.
She is majestic, magnifique.
She is a luminous lagoon.
She is our hands, our pen.
Malala.

—Judith Terzi
From Malala: Poems for Malala Yousafzai, ed. by
Joseph Hutchison & Andrea L. Watson, FutureCycle
Press, 2015.
Used with permission.

Song of Solomon

How beautiful are your feet in sandals,
o prince's daughter!
The curves of your hips are like jewels,
The work of the hands of an artist.
Your navel is like a round goblet
That never lacks mixed wine;
Your belly is like a heap of wheat
Fenced about with lilies.

—The Bible

My mother and grandmothers made quilts by hand from bits and pieces of worn-out clothing and home goods. From these cast offs they created their own make-do patterns of beauty. In turn, I reach out with my own hands with poetry and empowering words to encourage others in the community to write. I hope to give others what the women of my family gave me.

Story

Some hate the stories I tell,
say Don't go back
as if my mouth
is connected to their hearts.

My head bowed,
my eyes intent on the stitch,
not busy with blame —
I work the pieces,

render the trade I learned
at my mother's & my grandmother's
hand.

We call it make somethin
out of nothin.

This story is a useful thing,
a cane I lean on.
It guides me clear,
helps me stand.



Glenis, her mother, and daughters Amber and Celeste

Discuss:

- What are some of your family stories? Who told them to you?
- Who is the storyteller in your family?
- How do your family stories affect how you think about yourself?
- Why do you think it's important to keep family stories alive?
- Besides stories, what are some other traditions that have been passed down in your family—for example: food, sayings, crafts, games, or superstitions.

Capturing Stories

Interview the elders in your family (parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.). Use these questions to guide the conversation:

- Did you have a nickname growing up?
- What type of work have you done?
- What are your places to go in New Brunswick?
- Name 3 things you like about New Brunswick
- What are your strengths, gifts and talents
- What are some of your favorite words?
- If you could tell anything to your younger self what would it be?

She

Staring into Katie Latimore's eyes
I go straight into heaven,
rest in a blueness not here on earth.
With her I feel a certain mercy
I have never known.
She who grew hollyhocks, hibiscus, hydrangeas
and drew every stray cat in the county.
She who when not pickin' cotton,
grew vegetables in her yard,
fished in her spare time.
Rachel's daughter,
her mother born a slave,
bore sixteen children.
She in those desperate
dangerous times
held aspirations beyond the third grade
but never made it to that one-room schoolhouse.
Her knowledge was of another understanding,.....
a candle lit by the Almighty.
When I am wise I sit there and study her blue flame.
She smoked her Winston 100's,
inhaled a little,
letting the ash grow
until it fell like withered dreams beneath her feet.
She drank her Coca-Cola like medicine,
loved her potatoes sweet.
She made me thru my mother
thru and thru 'til
I am what I am
which is why even now,
I have a penchant for all things old;
never been particular about the new.
It is why I gave birth to two incredibly old women.
I called them the Delaney sisters.
They came that way.
It is their spirit not their age.
She, my mother's mother, I am not calling a saint
but is there anybody living who would want to walk in her shoes?
She has earned the glory of these words,
any respite they might bring.
She with her jet black ambition
tied to her hands,
her running feet
running thru cane fields,

continued —>



Katie Latimore

Discuss:

- The poem reveals a lot about Katie Latimore. What kind of person do you think she was? Can you identify three things that she was good at? Three things she liked?
- The color blue is mentioned several times in the poem. Circle all the instances you can find. What do you think the color blue represents?
- Why do you think Glenis chose the title "She" for this poem? Why didn't she call it "Katie Latimore" or "Grandma," or something else?

cotton fields
 always somebody else's
 sharecropped land.
 She deserves to run,
 fight, do battle no more.
 Lay it all down by the riverside.
 But she is in the nursing home
 with a fire, a rage burning bright.
 I know because sometimes,
 she won't let no white hand touch her.
 When I leave there, She whispers,
 "Loves everybody, Chile,
 no matter how black,
 how blue,
 how brown,
 or how white,
 loves everybody."
 For in those times
 she was running water
 clear, clean in that ingrown South
 where revolution never happened,
 not even now.
 She was
 IS the point of my inspiration,
 showing me the revolution
 is in staying alive.
 I don't know what happened to her
 101 years of living in the south.
 I only know
 She is closer to God
 than anyone I have ever known.
 Coming from a shattered past,
 imagine heartache after heartache,
 outlasting the death of almost everyone,
 lasting 101 years of living.
 What are we gonna say
 to that black woman?
 We gonna look around pretend she not there?
 What we gonna say to 101 years
 of having no monuments erected in her name?
 The only thing resurrected daily was the struggle and the
 fight.
 What we gonna say to all those years of living?
 If we want to be well,
 we sit down and listen
 with more than our ears.



Four generations: Glenis and her mother, grandmother, and daughters



Fifth generation: Glenis' grandchildren, Paisley and Julian

PERSONA POEMS

If you look at all the poems in this study guide, you will see that they are all written in the first person (from the point of view of the writer). You can tell by the use of pronouns such as I, my, me, and mine. In all of the poems so far, the "I" is Glenis speaking, whether she is talking about herself, her family, her teacher, a library card, a rubber ball, etc.

In the following three poems, however, the "I" is not Glenis, but three people from history: Harriet Tubman, David Drake, and Peg Leg Bates. Using her imagination, Glenis brings these people to life through the poem.

The literary term for writing in another voice is **persona poem**. The word *persona* comes from the Latin word for mask. In a persona poem, it's as if the poet is putting on a mask and speaking in the voice of another person, a place, an object, or even an idea. Writing in persona requires the poet to walk in someone else's shoes; to see the world from the perspective of the poem's subject.

How to Write a Persona Poem

1. Find a person to write about by making a list of family members, contemporary leaders, and people in history.
2. Choose the person most compelling to you on the list.
3. Create lists specific to the chosen person. Brainstorm, research, and dream. The more ideas to choose from when writing the poem, the greater potential for creative resonance.
4. Obtain quotes. If it is a family member, make a list of quotes from that person, for example. If there are no quotes for this person, use your imagination to make up two or three. You can look at *Every One of My Names*, *Praise Dave*, and *I'm Fly* for examples of how this can be done.
5. Pay attention to the world of the character. Include those observations in the poem.
6. Write in the time, region, and era of the person. Use dialect or colloquial speech if appropriate.
7. Locate and incorporate the mood, tone, and feeling of the person.
8. Tell highlights and lowlights of the person's story. Remember that it is not necessary to tell the whole story.

When your persona poem is finished, read it to your classmates, then discuss what impressions they got about your person from the poem.



Challenge yourself by writing a persona poem in the voice of an **OBJECT**. The poem below is a great example.

Mirror

I am silver and exact. I have no preconceptions.
Whatever I see I swallow immediately
Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike.
I am not cruel, only truthful,
The eye of a little god, four-cornered.
Most of the time I meditate on the opposite
wall.
It is pink, with speckles. I have looked at it so
long
I think it is part of my heart. But it flickers.
Faces and darkness separate us over and over.

—Sylvia Plath

Read the full poem:

<https://allpoetry.com/poem/8498499-Mirror-by-Sylvia-Plath>



Every One of My Names

For Harriet Tubman

Every one of my names, I earned.
'Cept de first: Araminta Ross.
Given to me at birth.
Didn't take too much to it.
Sounds like a flower standing in a field.
Araminta. Araminta.
Got God's covering.
I keep de prayer and music from it.
For short dey say Minty.
I like how dat sing.
Got more of my sting.
I stood up to massa no matter
who was wronged
he head-butted me
into dreams and visions.

Took Tubman from my man.
My husband left me,
cause I wouldn't stay put.
He wanted me rooted
to de cabin.
Lawd knows I loved him,
but I was meant for more.
I belong to de many.

Dey calls me: Harriet.
I took Harriet from my mama.
Her love circle around me
like my wrap around my head
like my shawl hug my shoulders.
Dey call me brave, 'cause I wrap
my long arms around my peoples.

Dis how I stand: rooted and ready for
battle.
Dis is how I love—fitted for fight.
My face is not fixed on pleasing—
what good is a smile in war?
I busy in battle.

Called me Conductor too
'cause I head dis foot train
with hounds at my bloody feet.
I still runs.
I runs and I runs.
I told Fredrick Douglass once
I ain't never lost a passenger.
I know which way is North
with my ear to God's mouth.

General too dey call me,
'cause I at de head,
where no woman suppose to be,
but I out smart every slaver's hunt.
Fear for what?
Once I break chains.
De minds be next.
No matter what dey call me—
my mind is locked and loaded on a
mission.
If dey even thinkin about turnin back,
I point pistol to head.
Say, A dead negroes tells no tale.
Dis de way my spirit rise up.
My fire be both a curse and a blessin.
Dis fire burns—never snuffed out.

Dey call me Moses—
"Mah people mus' go free."
Dey whisper me Spy too,
when dey speak of me
'cause I got my hand
in so many plots.

Dey give me names so many
mannish—
In a long dress
by God's grace I go
wid dese able hands
to answer every call
all woman.



HARRIET TUBMAN

Born around 1820, Harriet Tubman was an escaped enslaved woman who became a "conductor" on the Underground Railroad. Over the course of ten years, she made 19 trips into the South and led over 300 enslaved people to freedom. This incredible woman was also a nurse, a Union spy, and an advocate for women's right to vote.

Discuss:

- What do you know about Harriet Tubman?
- What are all of the names that Harriet mentions in the poem?
- Do you have any nicknames or other names people call you? What are they?
- Compare the the way Glenis portrays Harriet Tubman to the way she talks about her grandmother. How are they alike? How are they different?

Praise Dave

First time I see a jar rise up,
I be midwifed into life.
Understood how these pots and I be kin
– dismissed to what's under foot.
I learned to turn and turn –
people the world with pots.
I pour my need into the knead
until forty thousand around me crowd,
but everything I love, I lose
so I want what I mold to hold.
Even my empty pots
be full. One say:
I wonder where is all my relations
Friendship to all – and every nation.
There are lanterns in my words –
every story got another story.
Some call me Dave the slave, if that's all they
got,
I say leave the rhymes to me.
When people look at me, a slave be
the first excuse they use not to see me.
I say praise me. It won't fall on deaf ears.
I catch praise like most people catch naps.
I am a 6-foot vessel of anything, but ordinary
a one of a kind with a Carolina shine.
I stepped out of the rows of cotton
to master the potter's wheel.
I take the wind out of can't.
with my mark, I make a mark.
I sign my name Dave.
I don't write slave.
See if my pots and me spin history.
See if we hold hold hold.



Today Dave's pots are highly valued by museums and collectors. In 2021, this pot sold at auction for over 1.5 million dollars!

David Drake

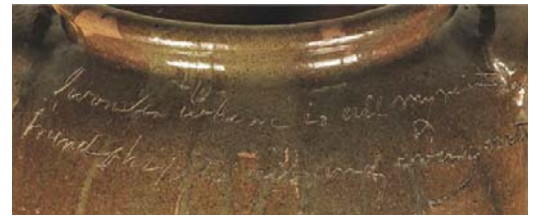
David Drake, better known as “Dave the Potter,” was a remarkable man—a talented potter and poet who also happened to be enslaved. Because he was a slave, he did not receive credit or recognition for his achievements during his lifetime. Dave lives on today through his enormous stoneware pots, many of which he signed and dated and inscribed with his couplets (two-line rhyming poems).

Much of what we know about Dave comes from the family and business records of his owners. He was born around 1801 and lived most of his life in and around Edgefield, South Carolina. His first owner, Harvey Drake, was the nephew of Abner Landrum, who owned a pottery factory where Dave went to work. Landrum also published a newspaper, which is where Dave may have learned to read and write—in spite of South Carolina's harsh laws forbidding slaves to do so. It took a special kind of courage for Dave to write his name and poetry on his pots for any and all to see.

At some point in his life, Dave lost his leg in an accident. Unable to operate the foot treadle (a pedal used to turn the potter's wheel), he teamed up with another slave, Henry, whose arms were crippled but whose legs were strong enough to drive the wheel.

It is estimated that Dave made 40,000 pots in his career. While many of them have survived, fewer than 40 of his "poem jars" still exist. Dave's pots are notable not only for their inscriptions, but also for their huge size—some big enough to hold as much as 40 gallons of liquid. They are among the largest pots ever made by hand in the U.S.

Dave's last signed pot is dated 1862. He was freed after the Civil War, but there is no record of whether he produced any more pots. He died sometime in the 1870s.



Praise Dave!

Have your class create a group artwork, such as a mural or sculpture, about David Drake. Start by having each person write a rhyming couplet (two-line poem) about Dave, and then write or print them out. Along with the couplets, you can incorporate pictures, drawings, text, and other elements into your artwork.

"Life means, do the best you can with what you've got, with all your mind and heart. You can do anything in this world if you want to do it bad enough."

—Peg Leg Bates

I'm Fly

For Clayton "Peg Leg" Bates

Some people got two good feet
and still don't know what to do.
My smoothness makes the argument
for just one. My other leg be long gone
sacrificed to the cotton gin god.
They pinned my mangled mess down
to the kitchen table. Made me suffer more
under the hand of an unsterilized knife
with only a cotton bit to bare the pain.
I got up and spit out that terrible taste
of Jim Crow and pity. Spun my mama's guilt
and worry into a dance that twists past
the neighbors' prayer, gossip and stares
of how he gonna make do with just one leg?
I strap on my dreams with tux, tails and
flair.

Turn can't into can without losing time
not even in my mind. This Fountain Inn son
done good, I knock beats on wood.
I'm a worldwide showstopper all right.
Shout rings around all those two-footers.
I'm the master of my own fate,
when the world cut me at the thigh
I don't shuffle off in misery,
I get up on my one good leg and fly.

Watch Glenis' favorite Peg Leg Bates video:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=hayM4B7hcBQ

PEG LEG BATES

Legendary tap dancer Clayton "Peg Leg" Bates was born in 1907 in Fountain Inn, South Carolina. His mother was a sharecropper and housecleaner. Clayton began dancing on the street for pennies and nickels when he was five years old. At 12, while working in a cotton mill, his left leg became caught and mangled in the cotton gin. As a poor black person in the segregated South, he could not go to a hospital; his leg was amputated on the kitchen table at his home.

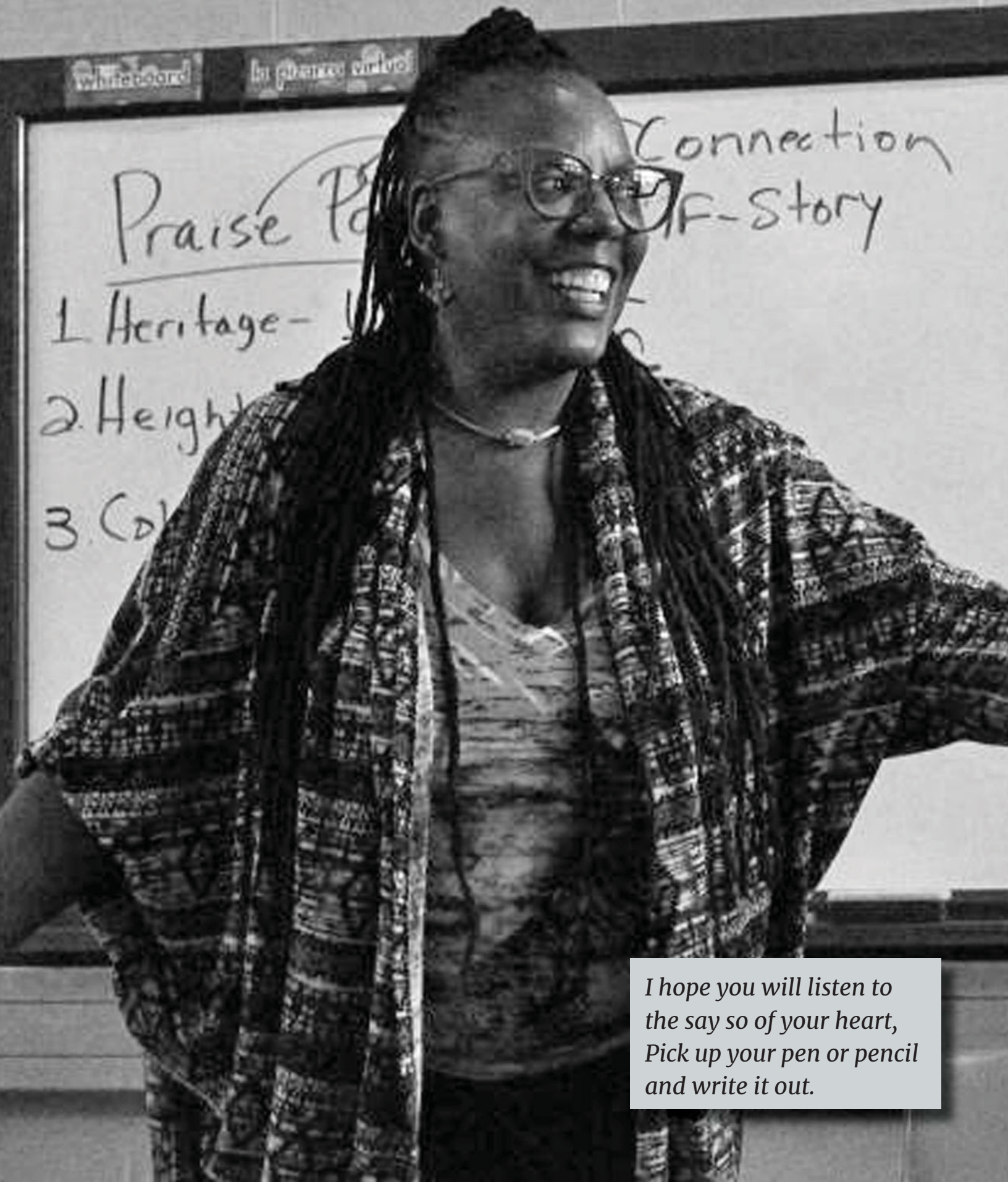
Returning home after World War I, his uncle Wit made him his first peg leg. Clayton quickly taught himself to dance on his artificial leg, and was performing in Broadway shows by the time he was 20. He became renowned for a move called the Jet Plane: a huge leap, with a perfect landing on his wooden leg. Soon an international sensation, Peg Leg Bates gave two command performances before the King & Queen of England, and appeared on The Ed Sullivan Show 22 times.

In 1951 he and his wife opened the Peg Leg Bates Country Club in New York's Catskill Mountains, the largest black-owned-and-operated resort in the country. Throughout the rest of his life, he continued to perform and teach for children, senior citizens, and people with disabilities. He worked in many segregated schools in the South, among them Fountain Inn Negro High School, where he taught both of Glenis Redmond's parents. Peg Leg Bates died in 1998, at the age of 91, in Fountain Inn— just a mile-and-a-half from the place where he lost his leg.



Statue of Peg Leg Bates in his hometown of Fountain Inn, SC

Teaching Artist



*I hope you will listen to
the say so of your heart,
Pick up your pen or pencil
and write it out.*

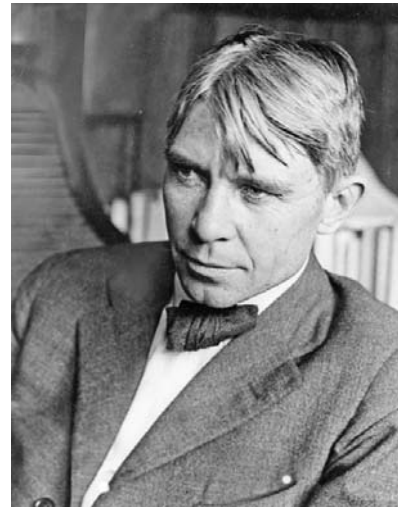
Poet of the People

We learned "Fog" in English Class
and how it moved on little cat feet,
a tenderness crept across me then
touching a place, I could not name.
When our teacher recited "Chicago"
The Big Shoulders of that city held me
lifting me up above Piedmont, South Carolina
allowing me to see the town with new eyes.
and though we never field tripped to Flat Rock,
that 60 minute minutes north to his home
my compass found it later, The Carl Sandburg Home,
Connemara alive with books, trails, music and yes goats.
I found a haven,
a house perched on poetry's solid foundation,
a sacred dwelling filled
with the remnants of Carl and Lilian's' love.
On a boulder off to myself, I found the man still there
plucking that fierce instrument, his heart,
a tall mountain singing a much-needed song.
On this mountaintop the cat leapt from the mist
into my pen inking a blue flame lighting a way
that caught hold.

For the last two decades of his life, Carl Sandburg, along with his wife Lilian and their children, lived at Connemara, in Flat Rock, North Carolina. It later became the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, where Glenis helped create the Writer-in-Residence program.

To find out more about the site, visit their webpage:

<https://www.nps.gov/carl>



Carl Sandburg

Carl Sandburg (1878–1967) was an American poet, biographer, lecturer, journalist, folksinger, and political activist. He is best known today for his poems and for his six-volume biography of Abraham Lincoln.

Sandburg's poetry celebrated the heart of America: the farms, industry, landscape, culture, and most importantly, the American people. When he died in 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson said that "Carl Sandburg was more than the voice of America, more than the poet of its strength and genius. He was America."

Carl Sandburg on Poetry:

"Poetry is a pack-sack of invisible keepsakes."

"Poetry is a sky dark with a wild-duck migration."

"Poetry is the opening and closing of a door, leaving those who look through to guess about what is seen during a moment."

Why Poetry?

Because poetry is the mouth that speaks
when all other mouths are silent.
Because poetry asks you to pay attention
to be an antenna and to listen with your whole self.
Poetry because the shy girl in the back of the class
needs a microphone.
Because poetry puts out a hand especially
to those who have fallen through the cracks.
Poetry waits for them to catch hold
to the golden thread. Then everything they needed to
say flowers:
tranquil blue, outrageous orange and righteous red.

Because daydreamers become readers and imagination
leaders
fluent in metaphors—spinning amongst the stars.
They become Big Dipper tippers
letting the magic pour into pencil and pen.
Then onto the page and onto the stage.
Poetry illuminates the dark.
Gives power to face fears, battle bullies and take a stand.
It's been written, the pen is mightier than the sword.

Poetry is a time travel machine going forward to the
future,
blasting back to the past or being still in the present
in the be here and now.
Because students lift up and gain an eagle's eye view,
they become dot connectors, puzzle masters piecing
how head meets heart.
They learn to put ear to ground and strengthen their
voice. Voices.
They stand grand in knowing and flowing with their own
story.
Poetry bids them: write it out.
Poetry beckons, an open door.
grants permission not to have all the answers,
but to press on asking questions
and to stay true to the quest.
Explore and implore.

Why Poetry?

Because nature says so:
with sun and sunflowers
plants and planets
rocks and flowers
moon and meteor showers.
Because history,
Because language arts,
Because drama,
Because geography,
Because creativity
Because Beauty and Struggle
Because the geometry of together
Because sometimes we circle back to alone
Because all of the reasons
Because no reasons at all—just because.
Because of every silence and celebration.
Because poetry pushes us into
our deepest and highest most creative selves.
Because in poems our voices boom
as we write. Speak.
Show up, Bloom!

Anaphora Say: uh-NAH-for-uh

This poem features a technique called **anaphora**, where successive lines begin with the same words—anything from a single word to an entire phrase. The repetition emphasizes the phrase and creates a rhythm that can make a poem or speech more memorable.

Can you identify the anaphora in the poem?
What are the repeated words or phrases?

Write a poem using anaphora. For your repeating word or phrase, you can use one of the prompts below, or choose your own.

- Because...
- I believe...
- I remember...
- If I could change the world...

READY, SET, WRITE!

When Glenis Redmond writes a new poem, it doesn't just magically appear. She has a process that she uses to work out her ideas and then put them into creative, powerful language. Glenis developed the following exercises to help students get their creative juices flowing and begin to think like poets. Here are the basic steps:



1 CHOOSE YOUR TOPIC

The writing process begins with generating ideas. Immerse yourself in the subject matter by reading, taking a field trip, or interviewing someone who knows about your topic. You can also create a visual art project based on your subject to get the creative juices flowing. Then share what you've learned through "show and tell" with your class.

2 BRAINSTORM YOUR WORDS

Brainstorm answers to the questions below. Each answer should be only one word. Write your answers down to create a word list. (This can also be done as a group activity, with each person in the group contributing one answer to each question.) This is not the place for comparing or critiquing; you want ideas to flow!

- What is your favorite animal?
- Not including animals, what is your favorite thing in nature?
- What is your favorite gem?
- What is your favorite food?
- What is your favorite toy or game? (Do not include video games.)

3 APPLY POETIC TECHNIQUES

- Use texture-color, imagery, and sounds to provide depth in your poem.
- Create layers by pairing two words from your brainstorming exercises that might not normally be used together yet resonate poetically.
- Use metaphor and simile, which are both forms of comparison. (Metaphor uses "is," while simile uses "like" or "as.")
- Use a variety of interesting word choices: for example, abstract nouns (such as feelings or ideas), concrete nouns (anything you can actually see), verbs, and descriptive words (such as colors). Try to make your word choices as precise as possible.

4 KEEP REVISING!

Don't settle for the very first thing you put down on paper. Go back and re-read your poem again and again—aloud, if possible. Working in small groups with your classmates, give each other feedback, keeping the comments constructive. Don't be afraid to get rid of any words, sentences, or ideas that just don't seem to be working. As you read, ask yourself: Will your poem make sense to the people who are hearing it? Will it captivate their ears and their imaginations? Keep revising your poem until it says exactly what you want it to express. Read your finished poem to the rest of the class.

RESOURCES

BY GLENIS REDMOND

Backbone. Underground Epics Publishing, 2000.

Listening Skin. Four Way Books, 2022

The Three Harriets and Others. Finishing Line Press, 2022. Poems honoring Harriet Tubman and other groundbreaking African American women.

Under the Sun. Main Street Rag, 2008.

What My Hand Say. Press 53, 2016.

POETRY AND WRITING

In the Palm of Your Hand: The Poet's Portable Workshop, by Steve Kowit. Tilbury House Publishers, 2003.

Leaf and Bone: African Praise-Poems, edited by Judith Gleason. Viking Adult, 1980.

The Poet's Companion: A Guide to the Pleasures of Writing Poetry, by Kim Addonizio and Dorianne Laux. W. W. Norton & Company, 1997.

The Practice of Poetry: Writing Exercises From Poets Who Teach, edited by Robin Behn and Chase Twichell. Collins, 1992.

Word Warriors: 35 Women Leaders in the Spoken Word Revolution, edited by Alix Olson. Seal Press, 2007.

DAVID DRAKE

Carolina Clay: The Life and Legend of the Slave Potter Dave, by Leonard Todd. W. W. Norton & Company, 2008. Grade 9 and above.

Dave the Potter: Artist, Poet, Slave, by Laban Carrick Hill, illustrated by Bryan Collier. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2010. Grades K-4.

Etched in Clay: The Life of Dave, Enslaved Potter and Poet, written and illustrated by Andrea Cheng. Lee & Low Books, 2013. Grades 4-6. A biography in verse.

Praise Songs for Dave the Potter, by Glenis Redmond, illustrated by Jonathan Green. University of Georgia Press, 2022

GLENIS' POETRY READING LIST

Black Out Loud: an Anthology of Modern Poems by Black Americans, edited by Arnold Adoff. Atheneum, 1970.

The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou. Random House, 1994.

Conjure Blues, by Jaki Shelton Green. Carolina Wren Press, 1996.

Loose Woman: Poems, by Sandra Cisneros. Vintage, 1995.

M-A-C-N-O-L-I-A, by A. Van Jordan. W.W. Norton & Company, 2005.

Original Fire: Selected and New Poems, by Louise Erdrich. Harper Perennial, 2004.

Rise, by A. Van Jordan. Tia Chucha Press, 2001.

Too Black, Too Strong, by Benjamin Zephaniah. Bloodaxe Books, 2011.

Vice: New and Selected Poems, by Ai. W.W. Norton & Company, 2000.

WEBSITES

Glenis Redmond: poems, poetry resources, poetry forums, and more. Includes a lesson plan for writing persona poems.

www.glenisredmond.com

Everypoet

Everypoet.com

Poetry Foundation

www.poetryfoundation.org

Poetry Out Loud

www.poetryoutloud.org

Poetry Portal

www.poetryportal.org

APPlause!

K-12 Performing Arts Series

Enriching lives, sparking imaginations, and inspiring a love of learning through the arts!

Arts education and outreach programming at Appalachian is committed to connecting university arts resources to a diverse audience of community arts patrons, teachers and learners in the campus community, and in the public, private and home school network across our region. In doing so, the series strives to broaden and deepen arts experiences for audiences of all ages, while ensuring access to the arts for young audiences, building future audiences for the arts, and inspiring a love of learning through the arts.

Every season, affordable music, dance, film, and theatre events are offered to students and their teachers from K-12 classrooms across the region. Students experience everything from high-energy acrobatics and Appalachian music to international dance and literary classics brought to life through theatrical productions. In recent seasons, more than 8,000 students across our region have attended APPlause Series events.

This academic year, the APPlause! Series will be completely virtual and completely free, offering compelling programming to connect to K-12 classrooms, thanks in large part to generous donors who believe in supplying educators with arts programming that will spark creativity and inspire a love of learning.

Thank You to Our Sponsors!

The APPlause! 2021-22 season has been generously supported by a grant from the
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