



A Program of InsideOut Literary Arts

Workshop Title: That Song

Level: Novice Writers, Middle School

Duration: **1 hrs**

(15 mins) Check in:

- What genres of music do you listen to? Aim to think of at least 4 different genres

(10 mins) Resource Building:

- List
 - 2 of your favorite songs & the place that song reminds you of.
 - A favorite Lyric from any song.
 - Make a list of places where you feel most like yourself.
- Text or talk to 5 people & ask them what their favorite song is. Have them give you one lyric from that song.
 - Make sure to write this down too!!

(10 mins) Example poem:

- "The Recital" - Imani Davis
 - <https://www.muzzlemagazine.com/imani-davis.html>
 - Discussion
 - What did you learn about the speaker of this poem? How do you know?
 - Where does this poem take place? Why is that place important?
 - How is the song important to this poem?

(15 mins) Prompt:

- If you were to re-write this poem, what song/place would you use? Write a poem that uses your favorite song as a theme in your poem. Use what you wrote during Resource Building to start your writing.

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Online Sharing Options

- (10 mins) allow 2 - 3 students to share their work
- (10 mins) create share-groups of 3 or 4 students. Students should share work among themselves privately (email, google drive, text, etc.)
- (10 mins) allow all students to share 1 - 3 lines from their writing. Speed is key!

EXAMPLE WORK

The Recital by Imani Davis

with lyrics from "One, Two Step" by Ciara and Missy Elliot

Baby Phat coat a feather-stuffed
fist around my shoulders, I shuffle
onto the playground ready to
fight. I've clawed months of mornings
out of my mother's calendar to reach
today: my official tryout for the Cool
Black Girls of 4th grade.
Legend has it their gossip turns
to gloss on they lips. Legend has it they can
suspend you with a look. The glitter-clique
has a simple audition: memorize Missy and Ciara's slick
anthem for us and spit it like I got beef
with the devil himself. My first
lesson in what ferocity means to girls
with our sunset skin. I wouldn't call it courage,
what nudges my hand-me-down Nikes
anxious across the blacktop. Instead, I name it
what we name the wolf's instinct to bind to its pack.
This beat is automatic.
Who can call us prey
when we fang like this?
Side-eyes so box-cutter sharp

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no white boy has talked to Saniyah in months.
Supersonic, hypnotic Everybody at recess know
she lying about having a knife. But there are some truths
you don't let off the leash. Like how our mothers send us
to school without popping the bubblegum
dream that any of this will protect us.
That there isn't a world of things that want us
dead that we can't even pronounce yet. But I'm here,
in the midst of this black girl blood recital,
hoping to make the cut for safety. Deja don't
think I got what it takes. Asks why I don't have
the mandatory crush on Usher. And all I can think
of is the way her eyes catch the light. Here I was
thinking this club, this little swingset secret, was for black girls
that love black girls for life. That wanted to hold
a hand just as soft as theirs and know every good
shade of forever. I tell Deja I would follow her lip gloss
anywhere if she'd let me. But there are certain truths
you don't let off the leash. Deja suck her teeth.
Tells me her mom said princesses don't
marry each other and I become the swingset beneath her.
Hold her every afternoon until she decides
she's outgrown that kind of freedom.
It don't take long for my chances
of friendship to rust in the rain between us.
When I tell this story, I always say
I pushed her off the swings.

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