

## LESSON PLAN TITLE: Buried in My Heart

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**Writer-in-Residence:** Hannah Webster (Translated by Wafaa Mustafa)

**Grade Level:** 6th-12th

**Model Works Used:** Little Father, by Li-Young Lee

**Literary Learning objective(s):** Students will be able to identify what an elegy is and draw a picture to help them better understand images in a poem

**Themes:** Grief, Elegy, Imagery

**MDE/SEL Standards:** Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words. identifying emotions, exploring perspective.

**Materials Needed:** Poem and Worksheet. Art supplies.

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### Pre-Discussion

A lot of us have experienced loss in our lives. We have lost family and friends, homes, countries, pets, precious objects. Poetry has a tool for honoring these losses called an elegy. An elegy is a poem or song written to honor someone dead or lost. Right now is a hard time for a lot of us—and those losses might be on our minds. Poems can be a way to make space for feelings of grief or the mixed emotions loss brings, and to honor something or someone important to you.

Take a moment to think and talk with a family member about the losses you have experienced that you might want to honor with a poem. What do you remember?

### Model Poem Discussion

Read Little Father by Li-Young Lee.

In the final stanza, Lee imagines that his father is inside his heart. Can you draw the images from Lee's final stanza in the heart worksheet (see attached).

- How does drawing help you better understand how Lee felt about his father?
- What emotions is he expressing in that stanza?
- What do you think their relationship was like? Why do you think that?

## Prewriting

Think about something, someplace, or someone who you have lost. Imagine they are housed in your heart. Draw your own version of what that looks like in the second heart.

## Writing Prompt

Write your own Elegy for something or someone you have lost. You can write it using your own refrain on a different piece of paper, or use the sentence stems on the worksheet.

## Share / Reflect

How does drawing help you better understand your emotions? What did you learn?

What is something that you could do with this poem to honor the person/place/thing you have lost? You could share it with someone else who will understand your feelings, put it in a memory box, or find another way to send it into the world. Share your ideas here:

## Supplemental Materials

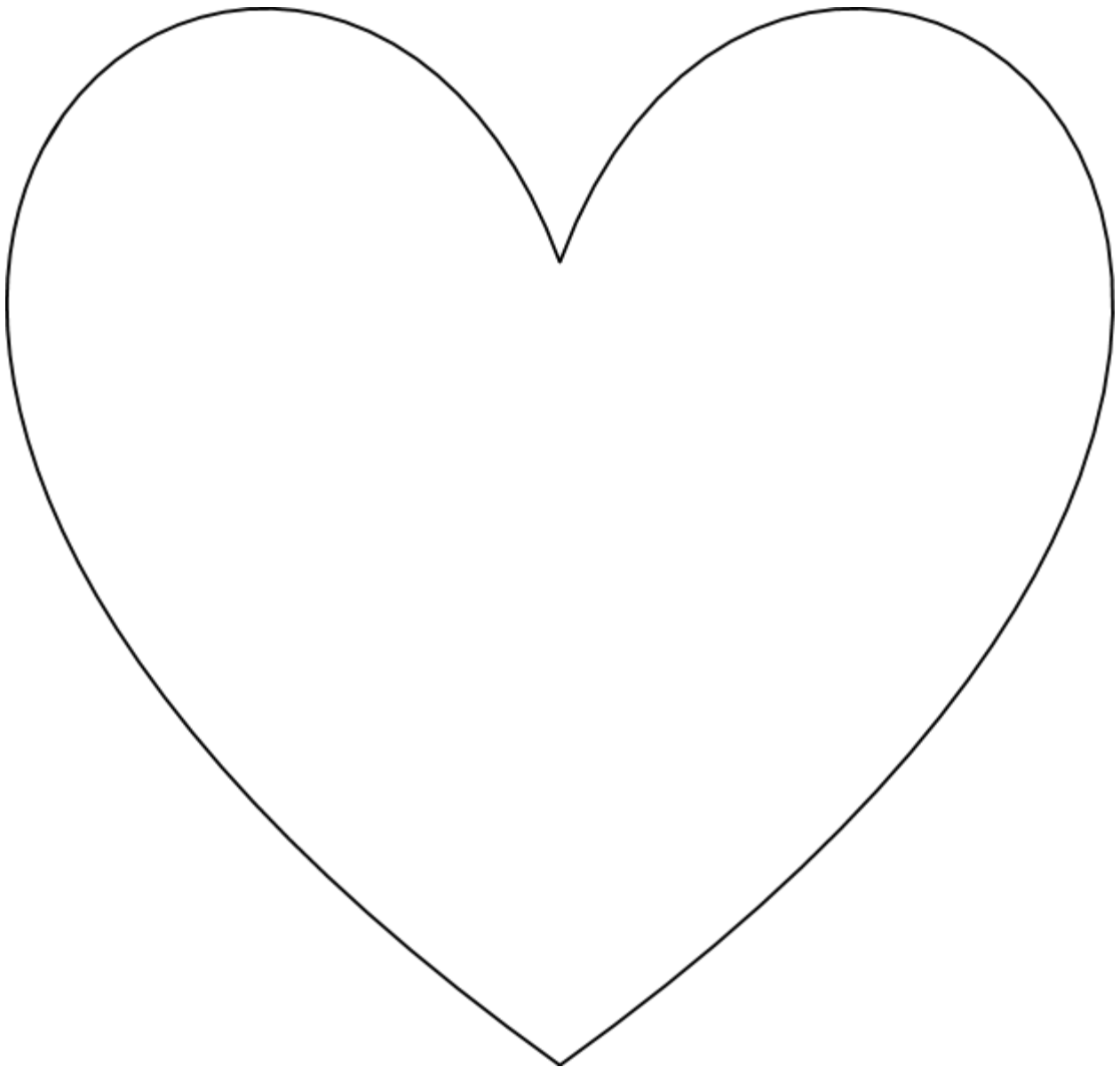
Worksheet and poem attached.

## Check/Highlight all that apply

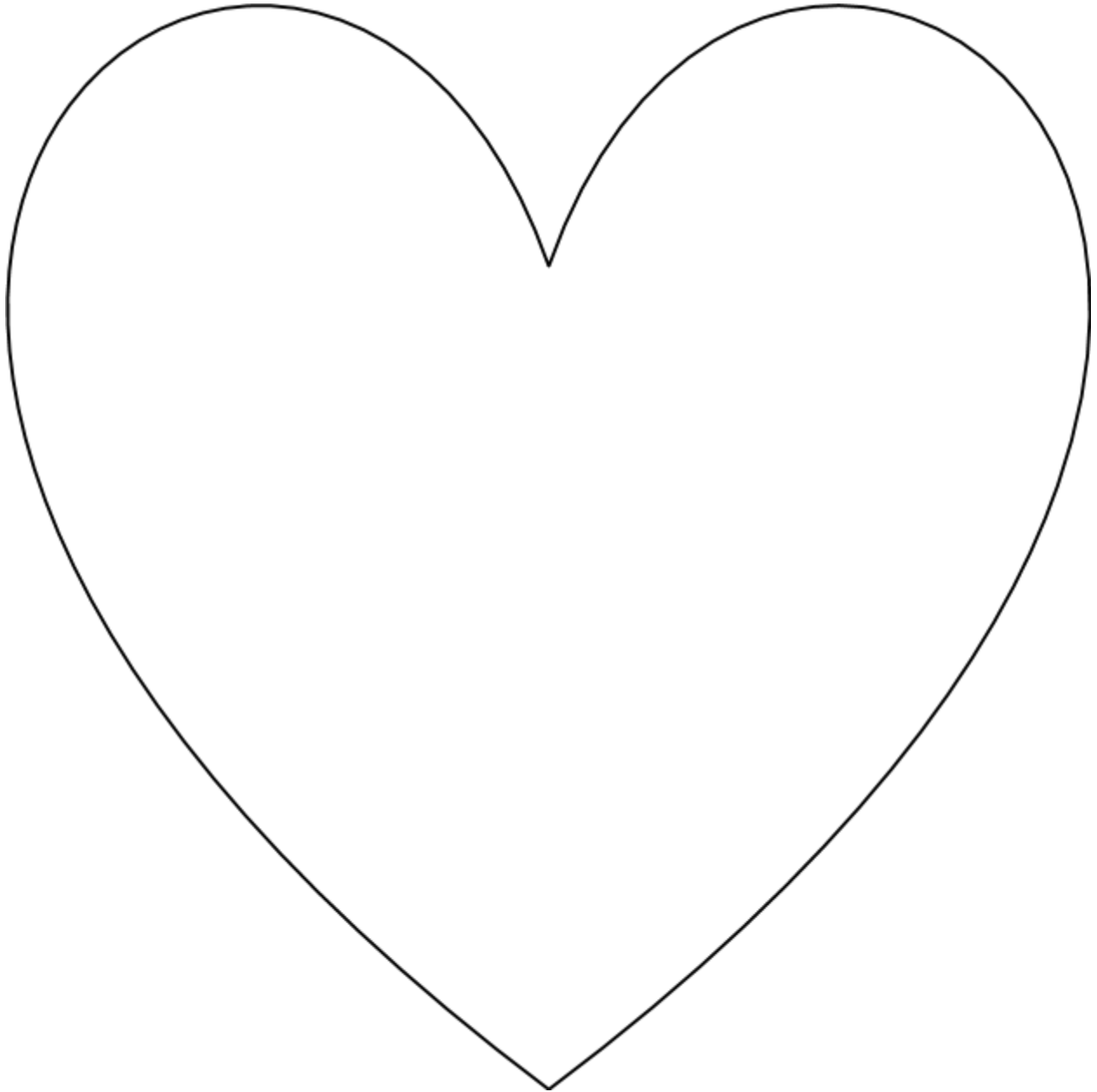
- Text by a contemporary/diverse author
- Translated text
- Visual Thinking Strategies
- Close reading or other analysis
- At least one step of the writing process
- Planning & Reflection Strategy
- New device, concept or theme
- Social-Emotional Learning
  - Self-Management
  - Social Awareness
  - Relationship Skills

- Responsible-Decision Making
- Self-Awareness

In the final stanza Lee imagines that his father is inside his heart. Can you draw the images from Lee's final stanza in the heart above.



Think about something, someplace, or someone who you have lost. Imagine they are housed in your heart. Draw your own version of what that looks like in the heart.



**Little Father**

By Li-Young Lee

I buried my father in the sky.  
Since then, the birds  
clean and comb him every morning and pull the blanket up to his chin  
every night.

I buried my father underground.  
Since then, my ladders only climb down,  
and all the earth has become a house whose rooms are the hours,  
whose doors stand open at evening, receiving  
guest after guest.  
Sometimes I see past them  
to the tables spread for a wedding feast.

I buried my father in my heart.  
Now he grows in me, my strange son, my little root who won't drink milk,  
little pale foot sunk in unheard-of night, little clock spring newly wet  
in the fire, little grape, parent to the future wine, a son the fruit of his  
own son,  
little father I ransom with my life.