



# Essential Words: LTAB Online 2020

## Lesson plans and writing prompts for teens



## Roses in the Concrete

by Bayan Founas

DURATION: 1.5 hours  
GRADE LEVEL: High School  
WRITING LEVEL: ALL

FOCUS: mental health  
EXAMPLE POEM  
[The Rose That Grew from Concrete](#)  
by Tupac Shakur

### Check in | 15 minutes

**Why do we write? What effect do we hope our words have on ourselves? And on listeners?**

- Silently journal for 5 minutes
- Share what you wrote with a partner for 5 minutes
- Share whole class for 5 minutes

### Resource Building | 15 minutes

Discuss the importance of taking care of ourselves mentally.

#### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What are signs of negative or poor mental health?
- How do we take care of ourselves mentally?

### Close Reading | 20 minutes

READ | **“The Rose That Grew from Concrete” & “Sometimes I Cry” by Tupac Shakur**

#### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- How does the first poem reflect how Tupac feels about himself? What about the second one?
- How is the tone different in the two poems?
- How do you relate to the poems?

LISTEN | [Dedication by Nipsey Hussle, YouTube](#)

#### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- How does his rap reflect how Nipsey feels about himself?
- How do you relate?
- Compare and contrast Tupac and Nipsey’s poems.



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### Writing Prompt | 20 minutes

List 2 steps you can take to grow through the concrete (small or big). **Write about why you chose these steps and how you will make it happen.**

OR **Write about the ways you are a rose in the concrete.**

### Share Out | 15 minutes



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### The Rose That Grew from Concrete by Tupac Shakur

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[Tupac Shakur]

You try to plant somethin in the concrete, y'knowhatlmean?  
If it GROW, and the and the rose petal got all kind of  
scratches and marks, you not gon' say, "Damn, look at  
all the scratches and marks on the rose that grew from  
concrete"

You gon' be like, "Damn! A rose grew from the concrete?!"  
Same thing with me, y'knahmean? I grew out of all of this  
Instead of sayin, "Damn, he did this, he did this,"  
just be like, "DAMN! He grew out of that? He came out of  
that?"

That's what they should say, y'knowhatlmean?  
All the trouble to survive and make good out of the dirty,  
nasty  
y'knowhahatlmean unbelievable lifestyle they gave me  
I'm just tryin to make somethin..

[Nikki Giovanni]

When no one even cared  
The rose it grew from concrete  
Keepin all these dreams  
Provin nature's laws wrong  
It learned how to walk without havin feet  
It came from concrete

[spoken part]

Did you hear about the rose that grew from a crack in the  
concrete?  
Provin nature's laws wrong it learned how to walk without  
havin feet  
Funny it seems but, by keepin its dreams  
it, learned to breathe FRESH air  
Long live the rose that grew from concrete

when no one else even cared  
No one else even cared..  
The rose that grew from concrete

[spoken part]

Did you hear..  
Did you hear about the rose that grew from a crack in the  
concrete?  
Provin nature's laws wrong  
It learned to walk without having feet  
Funny it seems but by keeping its dreams  
it learned to breathe FRESH air  
Long live the rose that grew from concrete  
when no one else, even cared

[Nikki Giovanni]

Keepin all these dreams  
Provin nature's laws wrong  
It learned how to walk without havin feet (to breathe the  
fresh air)  
It came from concrete (to breathe the fresh air)  
(to breathe the fresh air, to breathe the fresh air)

[Tupac Shakur]

You see you wouldn't ask why the rose that grew from the  
concrete  
had damaged petals. On the contrary, we would all  
celebrate its  
tenacity. We would all love it's will to reach the sun.  
Well, we are the rose - this is the concrete - and these are  
my damaged petals. Don't ask me why, thank God nigga,  
ask me how!  
Hahahaha.

[The Rose that Grew from Concrete by Tupac Shakur, Lyrics on Demand](#)



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### Sometimes I Cry by Tupac Shakur

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Sometimes when I'm alone  
I cry because I'm on my own  
All the tears I cry are bitter and warm  
They flow with life, and take no form  
Ah the world moves fast  
and it would rather pass you on by  
than to stop and see what makes you cry  
It's painful, so sad, sometimes I cry

But no one really cares  
To ask why, why, why

Well I cry because my heart is torn  
I find it hard to carry on  
And if I had an ear to confide in  
I would cry amongst my treasured friends  
A-but who do you know that stops that long  
to help another carry on  
Ah the world moves fast  
and it would rather pass you on by  
than to stop and see what makes you cry  
It's painful, so sad, sometimes I cry

And no one really cares  
To ask why, why, why

[Sometimes I Cry by Tupac Shakur, Lyrics](#)