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.
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
The Rose That Grew from Concrete
by Tupac Shakur

[Tupac Shakur]
You try to plant somethin in the concrete, y'knowwhatimean?
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'knowwhatimean?
All the trouble to survive and make good out of the dirty,
nasty
y'knowwahatimean 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

[speaking]
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

[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.
Sometimes I Cry
by Tupac Shakur

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