

ACTIVITY GUIDE

Shá Cage and E.G. Bailey – Multidisciplinary Artists:

Writing/Essay/Journal

Shá Cage and E.G. Bailey use Spoken Word to inspire young people. By presenting stories that are often overlooked, they encourage students to celebrate their own ability to persevere, be resilient, take risks and collaborate to solve problems. In her piece “Great Granny,” Shá describes in words and gestures her grandmother’s stretch marks. By calling them *history lines*, she turns a negative into a positive. In Chinese, the word for crisis shares a character with the word for opportunity. In Japanese, a famous poem says:

My barn has burned down
Now
I can see the moon. (Masahide 1657 – 1723)

You may have heard someone say, “When life gives you lemons, make lemonade.” Think about your own story. Write about a difficult time you have had and describe what you learned from it. Write with compassion for yourself as you describe what happened and how it all worked out.



Activity

Now write a Spoken Word piece to perform. Follow up on what you wrote by showing the beauty there is in growth and change. Make sure that it illuminates an emotion, follows a pattern, and has clear images and precise choice of words. First try to find the music within the words and then add other music to enhance the mood.

Here are two suggestions to help you begin:

1. Write a **BioPoem**. Begin with "I am (your name)." Then choose some of the following phrase starters for the rest of the lines: "Who likes...", "Who loves...", "Who feels...", "Who needs...", "Who gives...", "Who fears...", "Who hates...", "Who dreams of...", "Who wonders...", "Who hears...", "Who sees...", "Who worries about...", "Who believes...", "Who would like to see...", etc. End with "I am (your name)."
2. Write a **List Poem**. Begin each line with the same phrase and then put a twist in the ending lines that captures how you feel. Some beginnings that work are: "I remember...", "I wonder...", "I would change...", "I'll make you happy by...", "I believe in...", "I treasure...", "I know I can...", "I'm afraid I can't...", etc. Be sure to use your piece as a true expression of your own unique story.

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