

Up Above My Head I Hear Music: Using the Form of Blues Songs to Make Poems

Writing the Community Lesson Plan

Teaching Artist: Lisa O'Neill

Theme: Blues songs

Pedagogical Goals:

- Students think about form and remaking existing form into a poem
- Think about repetition, metaphor, imagery

| Activity | Est. time |
|---|-----------|
| <p>CONTEXT: Talk about Blues Song as a Form and Sister Rosetta Tharpe specifically: foundress of rock and roll as form.</p> <p>Talk about song lyrics (posted at the end of this lesson). What do they often do that is like poetry? Repetition, rhyme, rhythm, express emotion, specific word choice etc.</p> <p>Watch a video of Sister Rosetta Tharpe singing “Up Above My Head” What do you notice?</p> <p>Students often notice the repetition of Up Above My Head. They will often talk about the repetition, use of metaphor (is she really hearing music or what does she mean by this?)</p> | 20 mins. |
| <p>Brainstorm some examples completing the following statements:</p> <p>Up Above ____, I hear (can also use see/taste/touch/smell) Down Below _____, I hear Over the _____, I hear Under the _____, I hear Deep in my heart, I hear _____</p> <p>There are many ways to invite students to create poems from here. When I did it, I had students do at least two stanzas repeating Up Above and one of the others and then using all the senses (I hear/I see/I taste/I touch/I smell).</p> | 30 mins |
| <p>Time to share with the group</p> <p>Closing of the class</p> | 10 mins. |

Lyrics:

Up above my head, I hear music in the air
Up above my head, I hear music in the air
Up above my head, I hear music in the air
I really do believe, I really do believe there's a Heaven somewhere

[Verse 1]

Up above my head, I hear singin' in the air
Up above my head, I hear singin' in the air
Up above my head, I hear singin' in the air
I really do believe, I really do believe there's a Heaven somewhere

[Verse 2]

Up above my head, I hear shoutin' in the air
Up above my head, I hear shoutin' in the air
Up above my head, I hear shoutin' in the air
I really do believe, I really do believe there's a Heaven somewhere

[Verse 3]

All in my home, I hear music in the air
All in my home, I hear music in the air
Up above my head, I hear music in the air
I really do believe, I really do believe there's a Heaven somewhere

[Chorus]

Up above my head, I hear music in the air
Up above my head, I hear music in the air
Up above my head, I hear music in the air
I really do believe, I really do believe there's a Heaven somewhere
Up above my head, I hear music in the air
Up above my head, I hear music in the air
Up above my head, I hear music in the air
I really do believe, I really do believe there's a Heaven somewhere