

The Future Sings

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Grade Level: Middle-High School

Time Frame: 60 - 80 minutes

Objective: Students will draw inspiration from Angel Dominguez’s “What Does the Future Sing to You in Dreams?”—as well as an unpublished audio version—to write their own poetry using repetition.

Prior Knowledge and Skills: Grade level reading and comprehension

Required Materials: Paper, pencil, “What Does the Future Sing to You in Dreams?” poem and VOCA reading by Angel Dominguez (provided below)

Literary Model: “What Does the Future Sing to You in Dreams?” by Angel Dominguez

Sequence of Activities:

Welcome and Introduction (10 minutes)

The teaching artist can use this time to introduce themselves, what inspires them to write poetry, and perhaps even share some writing of their own. Students can also introduce themselves. In addition to sharing their names, students can answer/share their response to the following (or another fun question the teaching artist invents):

*Tell me about your dreams and aspirations!
Imagine a world without limits, what would you be? Who would you be?*

Following introductions, facilitate a relaxed, informal, low stakes discussion on the following questions, reminding students there is no such thing as a “right/wrong” answer. We’re sharing our opinions, in so far as we are comfortable to do so.

*Do you like poetry, why or why not?
What makes a poem a poem?*

Literary Model (10 minutes)

Sometimes, poetry is best experienced through listening. Poets often give readings where they share their work aloud with an audience. In fact, some poets are also performers, and hearing them read their poetry is quite a different experience from reading it silently to yourself. I love to hear poets read, so I’ve chosen one of my favorite

audio files to share with you. First, listen to the link (without reading the poem). Listen to it twice if you like it. Then, read the poem itself (below the link).

A little bit of background info about the poet: *Angel Dominguez is a Latinx poet and artist of Yucatec Maya descent. They were born in Hollywood, California, and raised in Van Nuys by their immigrant family.*

<https://voca.arizona.edu/track/id/69874>

What Does the Future Sing to You in Dreams?

The Future sings,

Still Here.

The Future sings,

All the Demons are Dead.

The Future sings,

Cloud-net full of trees.

The Future sings,

I remember you, dearest one.

The Future sings,

There is still Poetry.

The Future sings,

We Never Gave Up.

The Future sings,

You Never Gave Up.

The Future sings,

and sings and sings and sings

long into the night of eternity.

Questions for Discussion (10 minutes)

- Repetition is frequently used in songs, and poetry has a lot in common with song lyrics. Repetition can convey a sense of passion or emphasis, to remind us of something the poet thinks is important, and it can also give the poem a rhythm or beat. In a way, this poem is a song. Where did you hear repetition? How did this repetition make you feel? What was your reaction?
- Notice that the title is a question: “What Does the Future Sing to You in Dreams.” Why do you think the Dominguez chose to make the title a question?
- Let’s do a fun exercise together! Imagine changing the word “dreams” in the title. Where else might the future sing? For example, the future sings in mountains, or the future sings in the kitchen. We’re changing the title a bit. Let’s brainstorm ideas out loud, freely, together. (The facilitator can write student ideas as a list on the board).

The Future Sings in _____
The Future Sings in _____
The Future Sings in _____

Individual Writing (15-30 minutes)

Below are two prompts. Use one or both, depending on student interest and time.

Prompt 1:

Write a poem inspired by Angel Dominguez.

Use one of the titles from our collaborative brainstorm exercise above, “The Future Sings in _____.” Now write a list about what the future sings to you. What does the future have to say? Some of the things you write might be abstract or surreal, dreamy and magical. Some of the things you write might be more concrete and real world. It’s up to you where to take this!

Here's an outline to help you:

Title: The Future Sings in _____

The future sings _____

The future sings _____

The future sings _____

The future sings _____

The future sings _____

The future sings _____

Prompt 2:

Now let's change the word "sings" and imagine the future doing other things. Here's an outline below. The title is your choice entirely:

Title: _____

The future whispers _____

The future screams _____

The future eats _____

The future wants _____

The future remembers _____

The future _____

The future _____

Illustration (15-20 minutes)

Illustrate yourself in the future or illustrate the future itself as if it were a person singing. Think about using the entire page. What might you draw in the background? What might be coming out of the edges?

Optional Sharing

If time allows, students can practice reading their poems aloud. Some students might like to explore the performative aspect of a reading, considering which words to emphasize or whether they want to incorporate body language/movements. They could also use this opportunity to think about line breaks: how they might space or split lines differently to indicate how they want the poem to be read aloud.