



A Special Education Curriculum Guide: Dealing with Death, Depression and Suicide Using Poetry

Curriculum Unit 89.02.02

by Laura Batson

“Black males are twice as likely to die of homicide as white males, and four times as likely as women, white or black.

Ninety-five percent of murdered black males between fifteen and thirty-four years of age are killed by black males.

Although blacks make up six percent of Connecticut’s population, they account for thirty-three percent of all AIDS cases.”¹

Over the past four years, I have taught approximately ninety children. Of these ninety children, seventy-five have lost a close member of their family in their short life span. When I started looking at children who had recently been placed in special education, I began seeing a pattern of recent death or suicide in these children’s lives.

For the past four years, I have worked primarily with Socially Emotionally Maladjusted children ranging from kindergarten through eighth grade. My first year of teaching in 1987 was a terrible experience in which I felt isolated and ineffective as a teacher. It was during my first year of teaching that I was disturbed by the students’ reactions and references to death. My classroom was originally an art room which was much too large, full of stored materials, and did not have any windows. We cleaned up the side playground for our use every day, often finding it littered with needles, broken glass and human waste. There was a small sheltered area where, one sunny spring morning, my class and I came across a dead man in his early twenties with a needle sticking out of his arm. I was literally sick to my stomach and my students were shocked at my reaction. I was shaken for many months and will never forget these eight year olds looking up at me, upset because I was, not because of the dead body. Two of my older students even identified the body for me. Welcome to the inner city of New Haven, I thought to myself. I was not so naive as to believe that inner city kids didn’t have to be tough in order to protect themselves from the environment, but I was shocked at how internalized this shell was.

I remember a November morning in my classroom during 1987. The school was just buzzing with laughter and excitement. Many of the students had attended a rap concert at the New Haven Coliseum the night before. The excitement was caused by a young New Haven boy who was stabbed by a youth from Hartford. The

incident was gang related. My class, and many other students, had the attitude, "Kill or be killed". I remember spending the majority of the morning talking to my class about it because I was so upset at the way they were treating the incident. It was during this time that I began to realize that I needed to find better ways to discuss and counsel my students concerning death, depression, and suicide. The violence and hatred, as well as their death wishes for each other, that I observed among classmates was so intense that I was determined to soften these harsh emotions of self-protection and teach the children to experience and express their feelings appropriately. I began taking courses at Southern Connecticut State University to help me understand their feelings as well as my own. These courses gave me the confidence to begin talking to my class about issues that I was unable to discuss previously. While contemplating a topic for the poetry seminar, I came across many poems dealing with aspects of depression, death, and suicide. I decided that this would be an excellent chance to combine an academic unit with affective education, giving my students a better understanding of their own emotions as well as poetry.

I believe that many of our special education students are placed into special education because of unresolved feelings that manifest themselves as socially unacceptable behavior. Over the past two years, I have found myself working with some of the most disturbed children in the school system. Unfortunately, the children that are entering middle school appear to have more complex problems and require many more specialized services. More and more referrals are made to special education each year. Children that I have taught over the years seem very unhappy and do not look towards the future with much hope and happiness. I recently polled my class, asking them where they thought they would be in ten years. Eighty percent replied they thought they would be dead or in jail. The other twenty percent said they would be rich and famous. It is close to impossible for them to express long term goals or daily goals that are realistic. Many of my students come from extreme poverty with families involved daily in drugs and alcohol. As they grow older, many find failure in school. It is very difficult to ask an eighth grader who reads below a second grade level to read aloud. Many begin to become more truant and are eventually coerced into selling drugs. When they do get caught, many are probationed back to school. Many come back angry, hostile, negative, bored, and ready to argue and fight with anyone who asks them to do something.

The American Psychiatric Association lists the following criteria for a major depressive episode ² :

1. A loss of interest or pleasure in the usual activities, which is evidenced in the symptoms of being sad, blue, hopeless, or irritable.
2. Changes in appetite and/or weight patterns.
3. Sleeping patterns are altered.
4. Psycho-motor agitation will increase; that is, fidgety, restless behaviors.
5. There is a loss of energy; a listlessness.
6. Self-reproach or excessive or inappropriate guilt may be apparent. (The child blames him/herself for everything that goes wrong in his or her world.)
7. The child may be unable to concentrate and a drop in performance may occur.
8. There may be recurrent thoughts of death and suicide.

In my experience children often exhibit these symptoms because of a separation in their lives. This may occur when a parent leaves, if there is a divorce, if a boyfriend or girlfriend leaves, or even if a pet dies or is missing. The American Psychiatric Association specifies that four or more of the given symptoms must be present for at least two weeks before the child can be classified as depressed. Many professionals still believe that children under the age of ten cannot become depressed. There has been little published concerning long-term studies of depressed children. Determining if childhood depression is merely a transient state is almost impossible. It is difficult to determine how long the depressive episode may last. One must consider the possibility that depressed children grow up to be depressed adolescents and then depressed adults. Children who mask their depression may develop symptoms similar to those with a specific learning disorder or attention deficit disorder. Symptoms such as loss of concentration, hyperactivity, poor academic performance, and distractibility are common to both disorders. Teachers should look at the age and grade level at which the diagnosis for special education is made. If school records indicate good academic performance in past school years, this may suggest depression rather than a learning disorder.

Rosenthal and Rosenthal (1984) worked with sixteen suicidal preschoolers, from ages 2.5 to 5 years. These researchers found that the suicidal preschoolers have a higher rate of running away and non suicidal aggression directed toward themselves than other preschoolers. They also had more depressive symptoms and less pain and crying after injury. In addition, suicidal children were more likely to be victims of child abuse or neglect and were more likely not to be wanted by their parents. They exhibited more feelings of abandonment and despair. They wanted desperately to change their painful lives by changing their unhappy family lives.

Death touches our lives not only when close friends or relations die, but constantly through dramatic portrayals and news reports in the mass media. Technology now has the potential to make us all instantaneous survivors. Recently, the media has focused national attention on issues of mortality and bereavement. Similar reactions occurred in the wake of the space shuttle Challenger disaster in 1986.

Bereavement comes from a root word meaning shorn off or torn away, as if something has suddenly been yanked away. Bereavement should be viewed not as a violent action but as a change that is cyclical and natural, a normal event in human experiences.

“Bereavement can be defined simply as the event of loss. Grief is a person’s emotional response to the event of loss. Like bereavement, grief has usually been thought of in negative terms—heartbreak, anguish, distress, suffering—a burdensome emotional state. Yet grief can be considered as the total emotional response to loss.

Mourning is the process of incorporating the experience of loss into our ongoing lives. This process deals with the questions: How does one carry on? Mourning is also the outward acknowledgment of loss. ³

Nearly all parents wish to spare their children the pain of bereavement. Sometimes grand attempts are made to shield the child and minimize the effects of loss when it occurs in a child’s life. I have known parents to buy a replacement pet for their child when the family pet dies. A more constructive and healthy approach when such loss occurs would be to help the child explore his or her feelings about death and develop an understanding of death that is appropriate for his or her ability to comprehend.

Children often protect themselves by selectively forgetting details of the death, such as the medical apparatus in the hospital. They may also reconstruct the details of the reality in a more desirable and comfortable way. The forgotten details allow the child to think about the experience without being overwhelmed with painful

memories. No matter how the child deals with the loss, *adults should allow the experience and not discount the child's feelings by telling the child not to think that way.*

Children often experience guilt when dealing with a loss. They feel that there must have been some way they could have prevented the death. Parents and other professionals should remember four guidelines in sharing information with children. The first is to recognize that children's reactions and methods of coping with loss may differ from one child to another. Parents and teachers must acknowledge and accept the child's feelings. Secondly, the adults should answer the child's questions honestly and directly. Thirdly, religious beliefs should be explained to the child, stressing what "beliefs" are. The last and most important guideline for helping children cope with a crisis is a willingness to listen without judgment.

Publishers have brought out an increasing number of children's books on death so that adults have the opportunity to explore the subject of death and dying with their children. Unfortunately, many parents use these books only after a death has occurred. In my opinion, they should be read to the child before any trauma occurs, so the child will be better prepared to cope with it at the time.

Suicide is the most difficult situation to deal with for children, as it is for the general population. Many suicides are covered up as being accidental deaths. Eventually the truth usually comes out and adults spend millions of dollars in therapy trying to understand their feelings. How a person dies affects a survivor's grief. Suicide is the hardest fact for most children to accept. They find it difficult to believe that someone has willingly chosen to end his or her life. If someone close to me was in such pain that he or she chose suicide, how could I not see any signs? Could I have done something to prevent it?

Children develop their own concepts of death whether the topic is considered taboo by parents or not. It seems to me that children want to learn about everything that touches their lives. Suicide is one of the factors of life that need to be addressed since it is a frightening act that children may have to deal with in themselves or peers. Many of my students often say they wish they were dead. The focus in discussing suicide should be on the behavior that leads to the feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, and depression. It is important to emphasize other methods of dealing with one's problems and feelings and to discuss the idea that there are sources of help through the school and community. Teachers and society as well should teach that seeking help with problems is a sign of strength and not weakness. Many people solve problems when they learn to ask for help. People need to become more aware when others are asking for help.

Teachers have options in the strategies of presenting this unit. I feel that my students have done very well with oral reading, so I have available in my classroom many books of poetry. Students had to pick a poem that would be read during oral reading time. The student would give his own impression of what the poet is trying to say. I would then encourage other students to give their impressions, thoughts, and comments. I usually would pick out a couple of poems to read each day to the students, emphasizing tone and some dramatic quality to the poem. Teachers also have the option of reproducing a poem for the students to discuss. This is what I plan on doing with the poems I have selected for this unit. This unit should be done at least three times per week for approximately a month and a half. At times certain subjects must be omitted to fit poetry into a busy schedule of academics. I have sacrificed English in the past to do poetry.

Before attempting this unit. I strongly suggest that teachers do some reading even if the teacher feels very comfortable with his own feelings toward death. One opinion that I have is that a child really has inborn, natural feelings towards death and society twists death into something clouded with secrecy and guilt. The funerals that I remember attending as a child were filled with adults whispering. Many of the adults that I recall projected an attitude of protection towards the children from the reality of death and grief. A simple

example of this protectiveness is when a parent will buy a replacement pet right away after a family pet dies. The child should deal with his loss instead of being led to believe that when something or somebody dies it can be replaced.

Preparing a class for this kind of unit requires practice with open discussions. My class and I do things like read the newspaper together, read plays, read subjective material on values, alcohol, and drugs. Respect for each other's opinions is strongly stressed during my discussions. This trains students to listen to others opinions. By the end of this past school year, my students were constantly discussing topics such as homosexuality, marriage, death, shootings, and community problems.

Oral reading is an important part of this group process. I insisted that each student read at least a paragraph during this oral reading time. In my situation, I had to give daily grades which I explained included effort, tone, and audibility. Many of my students went from three days to two weeks of straight F's before they began to make an effort. By the end of the year, I had students volunteering to read next. Grades were still used as I found them very motivating for this group. For approximately a month, I posted the grades and gave the person with the most A's an award at the end of the month. My students' reading levels ranged from second grade to eleventh grade and this is where respect for each other came into play. My expectations for each student were different. Some students only had to get through one paragraph while my good readers would read half a page. Many of my students improved their reading grade levels by as much as two years which I believe had much to do with this oral reading approach.

Next school year, I plan on having poetry books in my classroom and allowing students to choose poems to read aloud to the class. I will read one or two aloud each day. Three times a week, I will reproduce poems dealing with death, depression, and suicide, followed by a lesson on recognizing signs in themselves and others. Halfway through the curriculum, teachers and students may write poems together or separately. To get my class started, we wrote a few poems together using feeling words. My class particularly liked the exercise in which each student would add a line to the poem. The first writing assignment I gave to my class was the "I Wish ..." poem. Students had to complete the line "I wish ..." ten times. I then checked and circled misspelled words which they would have to edit and correct using a dictionary. They would then rewrite and their works would be displayed in the classroom. One idea that I would like to use next year is to get a notebook for each student in which they could keep their own poetry and other language art works throughout the year.

It is very important for teachers to be direct and honest with students, trying very hard not to be judgmental. I had students who enjoyed getting morbid and nasty when we first started discussing sensitive issues such as death and suicide. I would point out that occasionally when students are embarrassed and insecure that they often will make rude comments and that maybe they were afraid of expressing true feelings. This would usually calm the discussion down. For one student, I had to bring his mother in and discuss the problem her son was having during discussions, with him present at the conference. His mother explained that he had just lost an uncle who he had been very close to, a fact he was unable to share with the class. He later told me that if he talked about it in class, he might have cried, which would have been very embarrassing for him.

The book that I recommend to teachers who want to discuss issues such as death, depression, suicide, and terminal illness would be Elisabeth Kubler Ross' book, *On Death and Dying*. Two other excellent books are *The Last Dance* by Lynne and Strickland DeSpelder and *Depression and Suicide in Children and Adolescents* by Phillip G. Patros and Tonia Shamoo. These books are an excellent reference and explain children's behavior and mode of thinking when dealing with death, depression, and suicide in a way that is concrete and easy to

understand.

Objectives for this unit

Students will:

1. become better readers of poetry.
2. develop analytical skills when reading poetry.
3. improve their reading comprehension skills.
4. recognize and express signs of depression.
5. develop an understanding of grief, mourning, and bereavement.
6. better understand their emotions when dealing with losses.
7. understand their feelings on death and dying.
8. examine the emotions and feelings they have had at funerals of family and friends.
9. gain a better respect for life and living.
10. gain an understanding that the way a person lives their life will play an important role in their death.

Activities

Two field trips that could be quite beneficial to students' experience are to a crematory and a funeral home. Both that I visited with my class had programs designed for group tours to help people gain a better understanding of their own feelings regarding death. In turn, this helps the student deal with future funeral plans he or she may have to make as well as dealing better with the concept of death.

In the New Haven area, the Evergreen Cemetery and Beecher and Bennett Funeral Home in Hamden both have excellent programs which include a tour of the facilities and a discussion of services. Costs of funerals including caskets and urns are presented. Beecher and Bennett talk about the subject of death with respect and dignity and answer questions honestly and openly. Teachers should consider the maturity of their class and feel comfortable themselves visiting these places. I was amazed at how much I learned when I visited the funeral home and crematory. Both of our tour guides allowed for people not to visit certain locations in the facility if they did not feel comfortable doing so. I also feel that teachers should telephone or write parents a letter explaining where you are going and why. Ironically, visiting these places makes a person consider his or her own funeral as well as how a person wants to live his or her own life. For example, I could picture my funeral at age 85. Then I thought about long-term goals and where I might be during my old age. I feel that

students will have the same experience. I feel comfortable enough to take students as young as sixth grade on these field trips. The sixth graders I find are the most curious and ask the most questions on these field trips. I feel that these trips are best done while discussing death but it could also be done at the beginning as an opening to the curriculum. I advise using Evergreen Cemetery and Beecher and Bennett Funeral Home for the field trips as they do have planned presentations. Their addresses are as follows:

Evergreen Cemetery Association

92 Winthrop Avenue

New Haven, CT 06519

Patsy Santoro—Superintendent

Office—624-5505

Crematory—865-5802

Beecher and Bennett Funeral Services

2300 Whitney Avenue Hamden, CT

288-0800

Lesson # 1—Vocabulary

Objective Students will become comfortable with language dealing with death and depression. Students will gain a common language for use during discussions.

Students will look up the following words in the dictionary and write a good definition that they can understand. After this is done, students and teachers will discuss definitions and teachers will write a definition that will be posted in the classroom throughout the curriculum. The teacher can write these definitions on the board or on oak-tag so that teacher and students can refer to throughout the unit. Students should be told what the unit is about, explaining objectives stated earlier. I believe that students are entitled to know why they are doing something and that expectations are fulfilled more successfully when students are aware of what the teacher's expectations are.

Depression

Death

Masked

Insomnia

Recurrent

Prevention

Mood

Hopelessness

Suicide
Withdrawal
Anxiety
Attempt
Acceptance
Intervention
Guilt

Lesson # 2—Depression

Objective Students will be able to recognize symptoms and signs of depression within certain poems. Students will recall personal experiences as well as depressive symptoms in others through discussion and written work.

Teacher should list characteristics of depression on board and discuss with students prior to lesson. It should be stressed to students that everyone experiences these feelings from time to time and that this is a normal part of living day to day. A person can be labeled “depressed” by a doctor if these symptoms occur at the same time for a long period of time.

DEPRESSION

1. Loss of interest in pleasures.
2. Changes in appetite—overeating / undereating.
3. Sudden increase or decrease of weight.
4. Change of sleeping patterns.
5. Hyperactivity or restlessness.

6. Feeling of excessive guilt.
7. Inability to concentrate.
8. Recurrent thoughts of death or suicide.

For this lesson, I have chosen two poems written by Langston Hughes. The titles are “Mother to Son” and “Still Here”. These poems can be found in many Langston Hughes poetry books. They should be reproduced for each student. The teacher should read aloud to students so as to give the feeling of struggle that Langston Hughes portrays. Many children are familiar with Langston Hughes and his poems are very simple and concrete.

The poem “Still Here” deals with how Langston has been battered and his dreams and hopes gone with the wind. The world tries to make him stop laughing and loving but he is still here. “Mother to Son” is a very famous poem in which the mother tries to encourage hope in her son to keep going. My favorite line in the poem is “life for me ain’t been no crystal stair”.

Discussion

Comprehension questions.

“Still Here”—Langston Hughes

- A. Who or what has scarred the poet?
- B. What has the enemy tried to do to the poet?
- C. What are some things that could make a person stop laughing and living?
- D. What does the poet say to make you think he will keep trying?
- E. Even though he says he doesn’t care, do you think he really does?
- F. When people say “I don’t care”, what do you think they are really saying?

“Mother to Son”—Langston Hughes

- A. What does the mother compare life to?
- B. What obstacles are on the stairs?
- C. Do you think the mother is a strong person? What makes you think this?
- D. Has your mother, father, or grandparents ever given you advice? What was it?
- E. Do you feel that older people can give young people advice? Why?
- F. Do young people have a respectful attitude toward older people?
- G. How do you think this attitude makes older people feel?
- H. Have you ever felt that people don't listen to you? How does that make you feel?

Teachers should be able to sense when the group is getting restless and allow conversation to take off in different directions if feelings or emotions are being discussed. The teacher can always draw the discussion back to the poems. I have planned to spend two weeks on death and two weeks on suicide. I was surprised at how many poems I found dealing with each topic, but found it hard to choose poems that were easy and concrete enough for the middle school special education students to comprehend. I hope to spur an interest in poetry and not create a power struggle in my classroom in which students try to persuade me not to do the poetry unit. Teachers must be careful not to pry if students only offer a little information. I have heard students accuse teachers of being nosy and wanting to know everyone's business.

These questions may be used as an exercise for other poems dealing with depression. The teacher should ditto questions for students.

- A. Have you ever felt like sleeping forever?
- B. What happened to make you feel that way?
- C. What did you do to shake that feeling?
- D. Have you ever felt very guilty for something you had no control over?
- E. What was it?
- F. Have you ever had a problem where it was almost impossible to think of anything else? How did you solve it?
- G. Do you know anyone who always feels that life is unfair?
- H. Are they fun people to be around? Why?
- I. When you feel down, what are some things you do?
- J. Do you know people who use drugs and alcohol because they are unhappy?
- K. What can they do instead of using drugs and alcohol?

Lesson # 3—Death

Objective Students will identify grief expressed by the poet and express how the poet is dealing with it. Students will also examine death in their community as well as experiences in their own personal lives.

For this section, I have chosen poems titled “Poem” by Langston Hughes and “Sonnet For My Father” by Donald Justice. Before reading poems about death, I would discuss death with students in a group. This, I feel, is the appropriate place for the field trips to the crematory and funeral home. The wealth of knowledge that was given to us first hand by the professionals at both the funeral home and crematory who deal directly with the bodies and the families, gave us an excellent basis for discussion. The terms that students should be aware of were discussed in lesson one.

“Sonnet For My Father” by Donald Justice expressed how he remembers struggling for his father’s hand at the time of his death. He continues on realizing that as long as he is alive, his father still lives on within the son. The poet expresses a feeling of uneasiness being around his father while he was dying and ends the poem on a more spiritual note filled with hope.

The second poem by Langston Hughes is called simply “Poem”, which talks about his friend going away and how he loved his friend. This poem expresses grief in a concrete and simple way. It expresses loss felt when a person dies or leaves.

Children must discuss the concept of unfinished business. A good example is relatives that have a disagreement and take that disagreement to their graves. The survivor is left to deal with the guilt of unspoken words. Students should be aware that this doesn’t have to be if they are truthful about their feelings with family and loved ones.

Ditto for students concerning death

- A. Do you feel uncomfortable around a dying person?
- B. How do you think you should treat someone who is dying?
- C. How old do you think you will be when you die?
- D. Have you ever felt guilty when someone died? If so, why?
- E. What is one memory that is a nice memory of someone who died that was close to you?
- F. Is it okay to think about someone who is dead?
- G. How can someone remember someone who has died?
- H. Have you ever had any bad experiences at a funeral home?
- I. How is a funeral for a young person different from a funeral for an old person?
- J. Describe a funeral you have been to.

Lesson # 4—Suicide

Objectives Students will gain awareness of suicidal symptoms and will understand that they can make a difference by speaking out if they are aware of someone who may try suicide.

Suicide is a touchy subject and should be discussed with students carefully. Students need background on what they can do to help someone who wants to kill himself. The most important thing to be stressed is that when a friend says that they want to die, you have to tell an adult. Many students feel that this is betraying a friendship, but have the students try to imagine how it would feel if they did kill himself. Also point out that their friend is crying for help. The will to live is very strong, which is why many people attempt to kill themselves with sleeping pills which usually allow enough time for someone to find them. In the book, *Depression and Suicide in Children and Adolescents*, by Patros and Shamoo, they suggest school prevention programs rather than intervention programs after a suicide occurs.

Points to stress—Ditto for students

- A. An attempt is an incomplete suicide.
- B. Once a person makes an attempt, they will most likely try again.
- C. Drug abuse, alcohol abuse, and overeating can indirectly be a form of suicide.
- D. Severe behavior and personality changes may be seen by friends and family.
- E. The suicidal person may also give away their favorite things to friends saying they don't want or need them anymore.
- F. Person may show signs of hopelessness, fear, helplessness, depression, and run away from home or problems.
- G. If a person talks about death and how they would kill themselves, this person is at serious risk of suicide.
- H. If confronted with a person trying to commit suicide, they should keep the person talking by asking questions without telling them what to do. Get help as quickly as possible.

The poems I have chosen to use for this lesson are "The Suicide" by Mark Strand and "Poem for a Suicide" by George Economy. The first poem talks about the poet jumping from a building and all the people in the office building want to save him. He tells them to throw him a stone but instead they throw him a rope. This is a suicide attempt in which he describes the wind slowing him down. The end of the poem talks about him walking and talking. The second poem talks about the doctors not letting the poet see her after the suicide. He explains that the doctors only know why she died but not how she came to killing herself. He tries to explain to the audience that she turned to the world first and when she didn't find anything, she turned to herself but

found only pain and sorrow.

Discussion Questions—Teacher Directed

“The Suicide”—Mark Strand

- A. Have you ever taken a risk like jumping off a bridge or something high?
- B. Why do you think people do that?
- C. Do you know people that take chances with their lives? How?
- D. Is there someone at school you could talk to if you knew someone wanted to kill himself?
- E. What would be some of your reasons for not getting involved?

“Poem for a Suicide”—George Economou

- A. Who do you think she was in the poem?
- B. Why do you think they wouldn’t let the poet see the body?
- C. What is one reason you think people kill themselves?
- D. Have you ever heard people say “I wish I was dead”? Why do you think they would say that?
- E. Does society hide suicides? How?

Poems for Discussion on Depression

Emily Dickinson

The Last Night That She Lived

nikki giovanni

poem for a black boy

intellectualism

word poem

dreams

Langston Hughes

Brothers

*Still Here

American Heartbreak

Fire

Late Last Night

Morning After

Beale St.

Island

Dreams

Troubled Women

Hope

* Mother to Son

Ennui

Stars

The Dream Keeper

Dream Variation

As I Grew Older

The Negro Color

Marge Piercy

Erasure

A Just Anger

Richard Shelton

Disintegration

* Used in lesson plans. Copies available in Institute office.

Poems for Discussion on Death

Langston Hughes

As Befits A Man

Border Line

End

Drum

Dreams

Alabama Earth

Desire

Demand

* Poem

David Ignatow

Bothering Me At Last

Donald Justice

* Sonnets for my Father

Morton Marcus

There are Days Now

Marge Piercy

Visiting a dead man on a summer day

Richard Shelton

Disintegration

Letter to a Dead Father

Edward Lucie Smith

The Lesson

* Used in lesson plans. Copies available in Institute office.

Poems for Discussion on Suicide

African poem

The Sorrows of Death

George Economou

* Poem for a Suicide

nikki giovanni

alone

Langston Hughes

Suicides Note

Curriculum Unit 89.02.02

Juliet

Life So Fine

Dorothy Parker

Resume

Mark Strand

* The Suicide

* Used in lesson plans. Copies available in Institute office.

Notes

1. Ann Dallas. "Black Mortality: Blacks Face Greater risk of Death at an Early Age". New Haven Register, Monday, April 3, 1989.
2. Phillip G. Patros and Tonia K. Shamoo. *Depression and Suicide in Children and Adolescents. Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 1989, p. 14.
3. Lynne DeSpelder and Albert Lee Strickland. *The Last Dance: Encountering Death and Dying* . Mountain View, CA.: Mayfield Publishing Co., 1987, p. 207.

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“Grandmother When Your Child Died” by John Neet George

Doob, Leonard W., ed. *The Crocodile Hugs Me: African Poems* . New York: Walker and Co., 1967.

“The Sorrows of Death”

Gill, Brendan, ed. *The Protable Dorothy Parker* . Viking Penguin, 1926.

“Resume”

giovanni, nikki. *ego tripping and other poems for young people* .

“alone”

“poem for black boys”

“intellectualism”

“word poem”

“dreams”

“the funeral of m l k jr.”

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“Alabama Earth”

“Dreams”

“Troubled Women”

“Hope”

“Mother to Son”

“Ennui”

“Stars”

“The Dream Keeper”

“Dream Variation”

“Dreams”

“As I Grew Older”

“Color”

“The Negro”

“Brothers”

“Suicides Note”

“Island”

“Still Here”

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“As Befits a Man”

“End”

“Drum”

“Desire”

“Demand”

“Dead In There”

“American Heartbreak”

“Fire”

“Late Last Night”

“Juliet”

“Life Is Fine”

“Bad Luck Card”

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