

ODYSSEY ORACLE

THE POWER OF DRAMA



For a moment I felt like I was Lady Macbeth.



We found our true voices from within.

We joined our classmates, tutors, teachers, and Odyssey alumni in a huge circle.

In this Oracle . . .

The Power of Drama	1,19
Why Read <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> ?	12
Creative Corner	17

Photos in this issue by Hedi Rudd, Laurie Greenberg, Keith Meyer, and others.





The fact that nobody in class made fun of me made me feel better about myself.

The drama experience really brought us closer.



We all could have won an Oscar for effort!

On January 22 and 29 Dr. Baron Kelly attended our class to teach us a few things. Our class read different scenes from *A Raisin in the Sun*, we acted out lines from *Macbeth*, and we did some pretty weird voice exercises. Baron worked with us on expanding our mouths open more saying words by using the vowels. It felt weird at first but made sense at the end to why we were actually doing it.

I ended up working with Baron one-on-one. He helped me expand my voice louder and coached me not to be afraid to read aloud in class. I always knew I could be loud because I am the loudest person in my home beside my daughter, but being coached by Baron helped me come out of my shell a little in class. He also taught me to really use the endings to words; for example, expanding words ending with “ing.” I am going to try to always remember that. I feel that the two classes



Baron attended and also the coaching helped me in a way that I am now comfortable reading aloud, and I will continue working on it. (**Amber McCarley**)

I found Mr. Baron and the two weeks we spent with him gold, a priceless treasure.

We found our true voices from within during these sessions, and for me my courage. We did exercises that sharpened our wit and challenged our minds to create in us another identity. It helped me to forget about all the trials that were going on in my present and took me to a time when honor and valor meant much, where magic wasn't a myth. The language of love was displayed in words.

I enjoyed how I learned how to channel my life force to project power in my voice, which is helping me now in sermons I give. I appreciated every bit of those sessions. I was truly inspired. (**Nafisa Davis**)

During the recent coaching sessions with Baron Kelly, we went through numerous activities and exercises that forced us out of our own comfort zones. We did an activity the first day where he would throw you the ball. The catch (pun intended) was not to catch the ball and throw it back to Baron; it was to catch his energy through the ball and toss that same back to him. It took a few times (four), but he finally let me off. I think he was feeling my energy.

We also acted out some lines from *A Raisin in the Sun* and Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Everyone at some point was urged to get up and show those acting chops. A lot of people brought more to the table than they even knew they had. People were memorizing, moving, talking like actual amateur actors. I

don't think anyone can forget the improv scenes and the closing act put on by Mr. Christopher Bester. I'll never watch Maury the same again.

Thank you Baron, my fine black brother, for introducing my classmates and me to ourselves. Not only did you help us find our voices but you helped us find confidence. . . . I believe what you do does volumes for everyone, even if they don't show it right away. You can see it in the way they carry themselves. I can only dream to have such an effect on people in the future. (**Shiquille Ward**)

We had a wonderful time eating and talking, also catching up a bit with each other. We did a lot of voice exercises with each other, like breathing the right way, tongue twisters to get us to understand how important it is to pronounce our words. I learned that I actually like acting and performing. It's a great way to extra-size your mind. The beauty in it is you're allowed to be in character but also be yourself. Baron really helped me find the right tone when I am up speaking in front of people.

I really felt like I kind of found where I stand as far as speaking up goes when I'm in front of a big crowd. It was hard for me, and I tried to make it seem like it wasn't. I was very nervous in the class and I didn't like to speak up, but Baron changed that. He opened my mind up, and I found courage to



believe in what I do. It was a once-in-a-life experience, a very good experience that I will never forget.

Baron showed me that pronouncing my grammar was very important. I am thankful to be taught. I will always remember those two nights. It was wonderful to see the class bring so much energy and for all of us to get in front, do lines, and act out certain characters. But I will never forget the improv that we had going. It was off the chain.

(**Christopher Bester**)



I can remember having to act as if I was a character and understanding what mood they were in and saying it the correct way. I learned that truly I still do get a little nervous and chilled in the inside when I am reading something unfamiliar to a crowd. I hate that. Yes, it changed me. It showed me this other voice and this person I have inside of me.

Pretending to be someone else felt pretty good because it felt for a moment I was in a whole new peaceful no-worries world. I will remember no matter how much I hate reading things like scripts, because it's someone else's emotions, I still have that part of energy in me that is able to stand up and hold my nerves together and get the job done.

(Toshiana Northington)

I really enjoyed the class with Baron. Oh boy, was I scared! I could not stop laughing at how we were acting. When we all stood in a circle and threw the ball around, it was fun. Who knew we had the voice of singers, actors, and actresses? We all laughed together, and I am a true believer that laughter brings you happiness and peace of mind. Seeing so many people feeling good was the best feeling ever. At those moments, we didn't care about anything but what we were doing. I really feel that out of all classes, that was my all-time favorite one. Doing *A Raisin in the Sun* was so funny to me that I had to stop at my line to laugh. Me being Mama was a great part of the play to me. I am a mother 24/7 365 days a year, but not to a son. My son Walter (played by Shiquille) at the time had to laugh and just

smile also. Even the COO from the Urban League (Keetra Burnette) joined in for a long time and enjoyed herself. **(Latrice White)**

I am still very sad that I missed the first class. I was happy to be a part of the second. We did a few exercises to break us out of ourselves. . . . We were still a bit taken aback with the "Simon says" game we played. He got us excited to do more, though. Everybody wanted to say their lines from *Macbeth*, and I have to say we all could have won an Oscar for effort! It was a great night filled with lasting memories, and I'm glad I didn't miss it. **(Simone Lawrence)**

I found the first night with Baron to be jam packed with energy from familiar and unfamiliar faces. It was a bit intimidating walking in at first, but he quickly got everyone comfortable. We got warmed up by passing a ball around saying our names. He also gave us exercises to use with our mouths to help us with speech. He worked with us on how to breathe from the diaphragm to help our voices project. We then worked on lines from *A Raisin in the Sun*, which was so energetic and exciting. I wasn't able to be here for the

second night but did get a chance to speak with him over the phone [when he was in Emily's office] and found this to be just as helpful. He is a calm and patient teacher. **(Alisha Taylor)**

We did throwing the ball and saying our name. When we threw the ball, we had to make our voice carry with the ball. Baron went around the room saying different things, and we had to repeat what he



said and how he said it. I learned that I like doing drama and would like to do it more often. I learned that it's OK to mess up or stumble over your words. People do it all the time. Try to relax, clear your mind, and start again. Yes, I do feel the two evenings changed me. It showed me that I could do improv. I stumbled a couple of times, but Baron was so reassuring that I was comfortable to keep going. I really liked the part when we put our backs against each other doing *Raisin in the Sun*. Doing improv showed me I have more in me than I thought. **(Mallory Carter)**

We did vocal exercises to help us with pronunciation. We also did energy exercises which made us aware of word sound power. I learned that acting can be another form of expressing oneself and it can also help with the release of tension or stress. The two evenings of drama made me feel like we were all becoming closer. I also noticed that some of our more introspective peers became more outspoken and confident.

I was really impressed with Dr. Kelly's humility. He was not afraid to be perceived as foolish, which certainly helped me to relax and participate.

It is rare to meet an African-American man who has attained his degree of success and experience his genuine sincerity and humility. I salute him for somehow maintaining his connectedness to those of us who still struggle. I want him to know that his lessons were not only physical or verbal; they were spiritual. I am hoping that he will help us design similar experiences for our youth in the near future. **(Robert James)**



I really enjoyed the drama coaching and acting classes we participated in the last two weeks with Baron Kelly. Acting out the scenes from *A Raisin in the Sun* was challenging and intimidating, but the coaching exercises with Baron beforehand really helped. Loosening up was different but fun, and the tongue twisters and rhymes gave all of us a little more confidence and energy when acting out our scenes. We all supported each acting team, and I was really surprised by some of my classmates who really brought it. I enjoyed the part of Mama with Lucia and Jamie. They were both awesome, and we had a good response to our scene from everyone.

Shakespeare was a little more challenging for me. Maybe it was the language, but I could not memorize all the lines to save my life. Many of my classmates did and were really good, inspiring in their scenes. What I liked about it most was that again everyone was supportive and not judgmental. Everyone encouraged each one to continue, even if they forgot a line or needed to

start over. I was so happy for Nyagoa, Latrice, and Milli. They all did so well, and I was inspired. "Ashanti" I believe is the Yoruba word Baron used for the feeling in the room that night. We had so many happy funny moments that night, even though many of us, including myself, came in the door with our boulders of life on our shoulders. I ended that evening feeling uplifted and happy thanks to Baron and my classmates. **(Starr Miles)**

In our last two classes, I learned how to breathe and how to pace myself into another scene. I've learned that by believing in myself I can be anyone I want to be. I just have to project, and my character will stand out more.

I've also learned to push myself during my sessions with

Baron. His technique with our backs to each other pushing him as I read and vice versa showed me to have control of my voice.

The classes have changed me such as how I should prepare for public speaking and how to approach an interview. It showed me how to be more confident in my own skin as a person. I now know how to approach public speaking and know that I am in control.

I will always remember Baron's "chello" exercise and our class improv. (**Janet Shelton**) I would just love to say "Chello!" The "chello" exercise was by far the best and newest exercise. I learned that it's OK to be silly sometimes. I often feel like I am too bubbly. Baron taught me that it is OK to be a little outrageous. I enjoyed working with Michael for *Raisin in the Sun* and Kunga for *Macbeth*. I absolutely loved our improv. I wish it could've lasted longer. It was funny but also raw and real. (**Charlienne Cotto**)

The last two classes were the most scary classes I have taken. [In China] I received a traditional education. Before getting into



college, I never had a chance like American students to talk in front of other students. We did not have tell-and-show. I hate to participate in role play and drama.

Although I still did not really like the two

classes, Baron taught me how to read the play. I participated in one of the coaching sessions. He taught me how to think, act, and speak as an actor. I did not catch on too much. However, I did better in class when I read part of the play. (**Milli Lau**)

I remember embracing the moment with folks who were, like me, scared—fearing people, fearing obstacles, etc. . . . I was uplifted to hear and understand by input/reassurance that my voice still worked. I'll always remember watching folks in class like small turtles adjusting to the land from water, slowly peeking out to gain comfort. (**LaTrease Hibbler**)

The first day after Baron introduced himself we did our first exercise. We threw a ball around. The purpose was to throw the ball with the same energy with your voice. We then did a breathing exercise. Personally, on the first day I don't think I did well. My nerves kicked in, and I wouldn't stop giggling. However, I thought the techniques were important, so I practiced them before the class while I was on the bus.

Baron taught me to overcome my fear. I have a severe case of public speaking fear (standing in front of people). I start giggling, my hands shake, and I sweat. The fact that nobody in class made fun of me made me feel better about myself. The techniques made me feel more confident. By the second class I was calmer and I didn't giggle or shake. I will carry the techniques with me forever. **(Zeynab Ahmed)**



In the last two weeks with Baron Kelly, I've seen a lot of growth in some of my fellow classmates. People who I've heard say hardly a word in five months exploded out of their comfort zone and acted in a way I didn't think they were capable of. I of course was one of them as well. I've seen a lot of growth since then in this class. The drama experience really brought us closer. **(Kunga Chokten)**

I can say that I'm not an out loud speaking person, but the exercises we did helped. The exercises were like feeling the vibrations through your body, making sounds louder and weaker, reciting lines from *Raisin in the Sun* and *Macbeth*. He got me to speak up and not be so nervous. **(Jaquan Fleming)**

Our class was honored when Baron Kelly came to class to coach us with different techniques to help us control our breathing. He also taught the class how to project our voices. Some of his methods seemed useless at first. After a while, the class got really into it.

The next day, I met with Baron for speaking lessons. During my session, I learned to give complete sentences when I recite from

something. I also gained confidence in myself for my job interview. He told me to believe in myself and to practice the breathing techniques he taught us before my interview for a new job. I took the lessons I learned and applied them to everyday life, like handling stressful situations. I'll never forget this experience. **(Michael Martin)**

When Emily told us that our classes with Baron could turn out to be our favorite, I was not fully convinced. But as soon as we started the exercises and the whole class started getting involved while laughing, I started to see how it might be a favorite. The tossing of the ball exercise was what broke the ice for me. When I tossed the ball and opened my mouth to say my name, my voice faltered (mind you, I was sick), and the class busted out laughing. It was all in good fun and really helped me loosen up.

The next day, I visited Baron for some one-on-one coaching. Within minutes, Baron had me screaming my lines in an office! I was afraid people might hear me, but I kept on. Baron also explained my Shakespeare lines to me

and let me know what my character's motivation was. Baron made playing Lady Macbeth so natural, even though I am normally a kind person. When I was saying lines, for a moment I felt like I was Lady Macbeth. I think that the one-on-one coaching really brought something out in me. In class when we had to perform, I used what I learned from Baron and was very pleased with my performance.

Experiencing the "one on one" coaching with Baron helped me be more confident about speaking in front of others and to not be so self-conscious about myself. My experience has really helped with my nerves when speaking in front of people. I have been trying to challenge myself ever since. My goal is to keep pushing myself to the point of auditioning for a part in a play. **(Nyagosa Hoth)**

It was a great experience for all of us as a class and as individuals. We did many exercises. I remember the one where we tried to control our breathing and manage the way our voices came out. We passed around a ball and had to say our name, which helped us learn how to project ourselves and the sound of our voices with confidence. We learned to be connected to our voices when we said our names out loud.



We also memorized some lines from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and acted in front of the whole class. It was quite an experience. I was nervous but had a great time and learned a lot.

Baron started acting funny, saying "Chello" and having us all imitate his "Chello" expressions. This was so funny and made everyone laugh. I think this helped all of us feel comfortable about being silly sometimes and just to enjoy the moment.

This was a wonderful experience over all. Baron definitely impacted each and every individual in his own special way. **(Vanessa Lopes Maia)**



The first week with Baron was so interesting as he was teaching us the basics of discovering our voices. We had a ball, and he was standing right in the middle throwing the ball at each one of us. We had to throw the ball back to him while sending our voices to him. We did this by saying our names. He never took low, hesitant voices. He would make us repeat until he was satisfied.



most of the time in the center, directing us to do various exercises. The first exercise was to catch a ball. Baron would say his name as he threw the ball to each person, clearly stating his name and sending his energy along with it. We were asked to throw it back to him in the same manner. If we were shy, we repeated the exercise. It was a helpful exercise that I went home and immediately taught to my sons. It broke the ice in the group during

Next we got breathing and relaxing techniques. Then we were broken into groups to go and rehearse different parts of *A Raisin in the Sun*. I did the part of Ruth in the scene where Beneatha ended up being smacked by Mama up to the part where Ruth fainted. Everybody did their parts brilliantly.

The next week, still on voice coaching, was amazing. I cracked up the whole time when Baron was going round making us say "Chello." He made us imitate all the gestures he made. This warmed up everybody for the *Macbeth* play that we were going to recite. We were all fired up, and everything was exciting all the way to the end.

To cap it all off, we ended up with an impromptu, improvised play that always featured two people. The improv was so flawless and kept everyone laughing so hard. It took twists and turns, so no one really could predict what was going to come next. (**Lucia Chikowero**)

We joined our classmates, tutors, teachers, and Odyssey alumni in a huge circle in a large classroom at the Urban League. Baron spent

the exercise but also in a permanent sense. Finally, we were hearing voices and we were only beginning. We did some sounds and vibrating exercises that relieved nerves. We took turns performing in groups of two or three the lines from *A Raisin in the Sun*. I was Beneatha proclaiming that I am responsible for my success, and God has nothing to do with it. In fact, "There is no blasted God!" This had Mama (a.k.a. Starr) furious, and then I got slapped! Not really, but you wouldn't have known it if you saw our acting.

The following week, I worked with Baron in Emily's office, practicing my lines as Lady Macbeth. I recited the lines at least 30 times



with Baron. I spent time telling Baron about myself as well. It helped me be more confident with my voice, more direct and assertive in communication with others.

In the next class, people were ready for an exciting night, practicing and getting one-one-one help from Baron. He is an energetic man with a BIG presence, which rubbed off on others. I went first to perform my lines that I had memorized. I was nervous and tripped a bit on my lines, so I started again and got it right. In the end we did some Improv. Christopher killed it when he concluded the performance with a take on Maury or Jerry Springer saying "You are not the father!" The room exploded in laughter.

After the time with Baron, I began volunteering at Olbrich Botanical Gardens, a favorite place of mine, where I'd like to be a gardener someday. I went in for orientation with new confidence and assertiveness. I begin teaching students tomorrow about the rainforest. I'm not sure I would have gotten the opportunity to teach without Baron's help. Baron's training makes me believe that I will

do a great job! **(Jamie Hanson)**

For two weeks we did many exercises with Baron. Those exercises were to try and get us out of our box and open up a little, which consisted in us making funny noises, making weird faces, doing some acting, and having fun. I learned that I can get out of my box and do a lot, but I also learned that doing drama is not as easy as it looks, at least not if you don't like people staring at you. It takes a lot of courage to do what actors do and to make it all believable on top of that. **(Kelli Green)**

I really enjoyed our time with Baron. I was so nervous to perform in front of the whole class and especially in front of Baron. Once I got up and tried, I felt better and proud of myself. I loved the exercise when we had to imitate Baron with the funny sounds and movements. We got to see everybody step out of their element. It was also hilarious. I had so much fun learning to find my voice. My favorite part was getting to see everyone's character come alive. Sometimes the more shy students in our class don't break out of their shell, but Baron helped them do that. **(Isis Bernard)**



WHY READ *A RAISIN IN THE SUN* TODAY?

Students were asked to write letters to an 18-year-old African American friend named Joe from Chicago who has never read A Raisin in the Sun and thinks this play from the 1950s has nothing to say to him about his life today. Here are excerpts from students' letters:

Dear Joe,

I've heard you have no interest in reading the classic play *A Raisin in the Sun*. Although it's a story from the 1950s, there are a lot of very important issues that we deal with in today's day and age. Joe, remember when you were younger, you told me some of your hopes and dreams? Do you recall the time when you said, "I can't wait until I have enough money so I can move out of the ghetto?" Remember those things you said you would do with all that money? The story is about a lump sum of money and what a family could use it for. This story is about all that and much, much more. What about reading about how the Younger family handled racial inequality? Joe, you know better than I do that you can't go to certain parts of Chicago without being racially profiled. **(Michael Martin)**

The theme of the play is racial discrimination and how it restricts people's lives and dreams. Throughout the book, we can see how skin color influences the life of the Younger family. . . . Do you believe that a black president is a symbol of racism having been removed in our country? Do you really think that housing discrimination does not exist now? This play includes themes about personal identity, family relationships, generation gaps, race relations, and the American dream. **(Milli Lau)**

This play has all types of moods such as suspense, drama, struggle, family, racism, and betrayal. The first time I had to read this book, I didn't want to read it. I thought the same as you that this play was too old fashioned. That was 22 years ago. This time I really got into it and have read it four times. All I can say is it gave me a real eye opener to where we come from and where we are going. **(Derick McCray)**

I too first thought this was too old a play to help me understand now, but I found it hit me where it hurts. It also helped me to understand my mother, brother, and even my own children's point of views. Give it a try. I guarantee that you won't want to put it down. **(Nafisa Davis)**

I would like for you to imagine for a moment what it would be like if you did not have the freedom to choose where you lived, or if you



could not peacefully walk down the street to your home without being physically attacked and called racial slurs. What if you had dogs sicced on you, had things thrown from a moving car at you, had graphic graffiti sprayed on your property, or had crowds of angry, racist people outside your door each day you came and went? What if you knew the experience of feeling like you're sinking in quicksand within a large sinkhole with no branches of hope to grab onto, wanting to experience what a higher education brings—knowledge, travel, adventure, opportunity, respect, and being able to use skills in a field where you could help both our own race and fellow mankind? **(Starr Miles)**

There are many lessons about family, sibling rivalry, and even how a black man feels. I know you will understand how Walter Jr. feels because we have talked about some of the same things. There is a woman just like your grandma, and even Walter's sister reminds me of your Aunt Pam. Oh, and before I forget, there is this business about racial restrictive covenants I learned about from the play. I guess our whole neighborhood became a ghetto because these covenants would not allow us to move into "better" neighborhoods! I said "became" because in the 1950s our community was called "Bronzeville," and we had many doctors, lawyers, and businessmen living right on the "low end." Man, this play has made me do research on our neighborhood. **(Robert James)**



Mama's desire to get her family into a house in a better neighborhood isn't much different from families today trying to leave the subsidized housing projects and move to safer places. Like Walter, young men every day are willing to do anything for money and land themselves in disastrous situations. Ruth is so down about her current living predicament that she contemplates having an abortion. We all know that with all the unplanned pregnancies, people are faced with making a choice between abortions or bringing a child into a world of poverty. **(Alisha Taylor)**

A Raisin in the Sun is part of African American history. It was the first play written by an African American to be produced on Broadway. But that is not the only reason you should read it. The author, Lorraine Hansberry, takes a story about a family fighting over an inheritance and makes it so much more than that. The Youngers really represent what black people have to struggle with from day to day. **(Nyagoo Hoth)**

Young man, in order for you to understand your future you must understand your past. Before you can move forward as a black man, you must first understand what it is to be a black man. Lorraine Hansberry, the author of this well-known play, is a Chicago native. Although she was raised with a middle class status, she and her family were still victims of segregation. Joe, the transformation in this story is just simply amazing. Maybe it will help you find your place not only as a man but as a black man. **(Janet Shelton)**

I had the same exact thoughts when we first got the book. I thought, "What's the point of reading a 1950s play?" But one day I decided to pick it up and read at least the first couple of pages. Believe me when I say it was the most interesting play I have ever read. Beneatha is a strong woman that is extremely ambitious. In our world today, women clearly are treated differently than they were in the 1950s, but we still need women that differentiate themselves from the status quo. **(Zeynab Ahmed)**

This book can make you realize that you're not the only one that goes through hard times or that has a dysfunctional, disrespectful family. I related to the part of the book when Lena was telling Walter that Ruth was pregnant and was thinking about getting rid of the baby because of poverty. There are some people

now that are getting rid of their kids because they are already in poverty and don't want to make the struggle worse than what it already is. **(Toshiana Northington)**

I didn't want to read the book myself. I even looked up the summary on Wikipedia. But I opened it and read it, and it was worth every minute. It is a part of our history, a story that holds truth to every generation of people. There are books in this world that we as people need stored in our memory, stories that will make a difference in our thoughts as African Americans. *A Raisin in the Sun* is one of them. **(Simone Lawrence)**

This book will teach you a lot about poverty and the different emotions that come along with it. In this book you will see a lot of family problems, with everyone fighting over the money that came from the passed away father's insurance. They all want different things with the money. The moral of the story is money is the root of all evil and can make a family start to fall apart. **(Christopher Bester)**

Not only did this book blow my mind away but it also opened my eyes to new insights in regards to the housing situation in Chicago. This book transcends time. Hard work, honest work, respect, love, education, morals, segregation, persistence, and standing up for

your values are all covered in this book. What I liked most was the positive portrayal of the family involved. As we can all agree, there is no home without some disagreements. What is important is how they rose when they fell. They did not burn down the house because a snake had found its way into it. **(Lucia Chikowero)**





It wasn't long ago that African Americans living in Chicago were faced with the serious threat of being bombed and losing everything they owned simply for moving into a neighborhood of white folks. We've come a long way, some might say, yet we've still got a long way to go. You are a young man as of yet. One day you will be a father, husband, or businessman. Knowing what African Americans have experienced and still experience today, it is important to feed yourself with the stories of struggle that have liberated you to the place you are now. America will be a better place with a collective consciousness of the people who live here, that we are all created equally and deserve love, kindness, and respect. (**Jamie Hanson**)

I would consider *A Raisin in the Sun* a turning point in America. I don't want to give too much away, but it addresses many issues that were important during the 1950s, such as race and the role of women and men. Walter

Younger's character stuck out to me most. I think you would somewhat relate to him. He believes that money will solve all problems. The play really revolves around him. Mama, the caring character, reminds me of my grandmother. (**Amber McCarley**)

It's about an African American family that's trying to make something of themselves and have a better life. It gives you insight on how children should treat and talk to their parents. You will learn how much communication brings a family together. One of the most memorable parts of the play to me is the day Walter Lee got his manhood back. He stood up and spoke like a man, acted like one. (**Mallory Carter**)

Growing up like we have, we've certainly been through and witnessed what most of us would see as the absolute bottom: "hell in the hood." You would think that no one would ever want to be here, let alone read or write

about it. Well, someone did and people listened. *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry is us in a nutshell, from the shabby, decrepit housing projects to the terrible tyranny of the high powered high society white men. You will find lines throughout the play that you might hear from your own mama or brother or younger sister; it just really hits home, Joe. **(Shiquille Ward)**

Joe, they grow up in a two-bedroom apartment like us, but we had more people in ours. We had two to three people sleeping in a room and also wanted a way out. They always wanted more for their family than what they had and knew there was a better way. Walter reminds me of you so much: a hustler and fast talker. He's always coming up with ideas to become rich. At the end of the day, family sticks together, no matter what. **(Latrice White)**

The play speaks greatly of overcoming your obstacles and poverty. It channels the dream coming out of slavery through obtaining education and home ownership, leaving the ghetto way of life. **(Charllienne Cotto)**

I would advise you, no I would urge you, to

read the play because as you read it your mind lets you compare it to your own life. Walter feels misunderstood but tries no matter what to keep his dreams alive. Travis is innocent compared to our childhoods. Mama smacks Beneatha to hold down her convictions of her faith. We both know somebody like these characters. **(Jaquan Fleming)**

You will be able to take away some knowledgeable ideas to help you in your own life, such as how Ruth is always able to stay positive considering her living and family situation or how Walter is able to have such a drive to own his own business instead of selling drugs and getting easy money to help take care of his family. Everyone can relate to this play in some way, whether it's not having the money to do what you want when you want, or having to wake up every morning doing something you don't enjoy for a job, or having to share a home with the cockroaches that live with you because you can't afford to stay anywhere else, or even having money to do something with but not sure what. You can and will learn so much from the different characters because each of them has something to bring to the table. **(Kelli Green)**



CREATIVE CORNER

I Am

By Robert James

I am a prisoner of your ignorance.
 I am O.J. I am Mike Tyson. I am Jack Johnson.
 I am a deadbeat dad. I am a drug dealer.
 I am lazy. I am a pimp. I am a thief.
 I am dependent on a woman for my survival.
 I am a phallic symbol forever chasing Vanna White.

I am angry that I am your fears;

I am your guilt,

I am what you made me.

I am Odysseus.

I am Hannibal Barca.

I am Marcus Garvey.

I am Malcolm X.

I am George Jackson.

I am Huey.

I am Mandinkan. I am Sioux.

I am not in awe of you.

I am jazz, I am the blues,

I am hip-hop, I am the news.

I am everything you wanted me to be.

Now tell me,

Who is the real me?



I am a River

By Tracker Dunn

I am a river
 Flowing toward the unknown
 Though I may be split and turned aside
 I will not stop my journey
 Joining together with others I am strong
 I will not stop until I succeed

I Am Light
By Nafisa Davis



I am a light of the living God
 I am all I will ever be
 I am the illumination in
 dark places that gives sight
 and clears spaces

I am a light
 a sparkle in the midst of a heavy storm
 that will show you the way to escape
 when the mist tries to close you in till
 it chokes you and makes you sin

I am a light
 that germinates you to an embryo
 that grows, flows, though others
 don't want to see it.

I am light and light is me

Who I am
By Lucia Chikowero

I am the mother of those ferocious little cubs
 That look with great anticipation,
 Hoping to be directed and inspired by me.
 Everything they know and everything they do came from me.
 I love, protect and nurture.
 I patrol to assert and maintain control over my territory.
 I am quick to attack and defend,
 Yet I coexist with other predators.
 When it comes to my offspring, I am invincible.
 Hunting is my business, tearing up is my trademark,
 I defy terrain and seasons.
 I have cubs to feed, protect and shield.
 I am a tigress.





