

PBS Lesson Series

ELA, Grade 7, Lesson 18

Teacher Packet

Gist

Structure

Language

Theme

Calling Dreams

by Georgia Douglas Johnson

The right to make my dreams come true
I ask, nay, I demand of life,
Nor shall fate's deadly contraband
Impede my steps, nor countermand.

Too long my heart against the ground
Has beat the dusty years around,
And now, at length, I rise, I wake!
And stride into the morning break!

The right to make my dreams come true
I ask, nay, I demand of life,

Gist

1st couplet: speaker wants dreams to come true

Structure

- Unrhymed first couplet – focuses reader on central idea

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2nd: dangerous fate can't stop her

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4th: she is awakening and walking into morning

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- the importance of following dreams
- how determination can help people overcome obstacles

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Language

- “Contraband . . . countermand” - negative qualities of the forces that try and hold the speaker back
- “heart against the ground . . . beat the dusty years” - speaker oppressed and struggled for “years”
- “I wake” – ready to face the day
- “stride” – purposeful
- “morning break” – a brand new day, full of hope and possibility

Independent practice:

How does Georgia Douglas Johnson use structure and language to develop a theme in “Calling Dreams?”