Spoken Word Poetry: Day One

Why Perform Poetry Worksheet?

Danez Smith: Alternate Names For Black Boys

1. smoke above the burning bush
2. arch nemesis of summer night
3. first son of soil
4. coal awaiting spark & wind
5. guilty until proven dead
6. oil heavy starlight
7. monster until proven ghost
8. gone
9. phoenix who forgets to un-ash
10. going, going, gone
11. gods of shovels & black veils
12. what once passed for kindling
13. fireworks at dawn
14. brilliant, shadow hued coral
15. (I thought to leave this blank
   but who am I to name us nothing?)
16. prayer who learned to bite & sprint
17. a mother's joy & clutched breath

Amanda Gorman’s Mantra

https://www.ted.com/talks/amanda_gorman_using_your_voice_is_a_political_choice?language=en

“I am the daughter of black writers who descended from freedom fighters. Who broke their chains and changed the world. They call me.”

Additional Materials

Further reading on the piece performed by students at Success Academy, directed by Sentell Harper:
https://www.successacademies.org/education-blog-post/alternative-names-for-black-boys/

“I also wanted to tell the boys, my boys, through the words of the piece, that they are a gift. That they matter. Their voice matters. Their talent matters. Their intelligence matters. And what better way to share that gift than theater. My hope for all that see this performance is that they truly understand our black young men have so much to offer. Then together we can stage a change.” Sentell Harper

Danez Smith’s Podcast VS
https://www.poetryfoundation.org/podcasts/series/142241/vs-podcast
DAY ONE ASSIGNMENT

WRITE A LIST POEM USING:

1. Amanda Gorman’s two questions as inspiration:
   - Who’s Shoulders do you stand on?
   - What do you stand for?
2. Danez Smith’s LIST POEM format.