



PRESTWICK HOUSE

# Activity Pack

## THE ROSE THAT GREW FROM CONCRETE

BY TUPAC AMARU SHAKUR



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Item No. 302309

Written by Sondra Y. Abel

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**To Our Children****Using Art**

**Objective:** Expressing oneself through art

**Activity**

The dedication outlines the ways parents can help their children grow. According to the passage, parents need to encourage their children to express themselves creatively. "So we say to our children, draw, paint, write, act, sing, dance, think, express, and be free to dream always..."

What are your dreams and goals? Do not simply write down the answer in a paragraph; instead, use a different form, such as by writing a poem, song, or short story to express your desires creatively in about one page.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Acknowledgements

### Making a Collage

**Objective:** Thinking about “family”

#### Activity

In the acknowledgements on page xi, Shakur’s mother writes:

“Sekyiwa, Wonderful Woman! Sweet Child! Courageous Mother and Sister! Thank you for walking this earth with me! Nzingha and Malik, we continue to try to be better at preparing you for this world and this world for you! Create, love, and laugh! Gloria Jean and family, my sister who has been our rock for over fifty years—we are the only children of Rosa Belle and Walter Williams Jr. I know they are smiling because we remember our duty to family. Outlawz. Our Baltimore family. Our Lumberton family...”

Although Afeni Shakur mentions actual relatives, she also mentions others she calls family. When someone says the word “family,” most of us think of our parents and siblings first. However, there are many people not related to us whom we consider to be “family.”

Think of all the people you are so close to that you would consider family (for example: friends, team members, co-workers, members of your congregation, etc.). Make a collage that represents your entire family. You may wish to separate people based on groups or put everyone together. You can use magazine clippings, photos, and/or sentimental objects or memorabilia to make your collage. Be creative! Then, write a few sentences that describe why you chose these people.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Preface****Exploring Feelings****Objective:** Evaluating emotions**Activity**

According to the poem in the preface, it is important to celebrate life despite whether you are happy or sad. By celebrating all emotions, "Only then will we be free to/Feel!"

What do you think this passage means? Do you agree with what the author is saying? Why or why not? In what ways do you celebrate life and your emotions? Do your emotions interfere with your ability to celebrate? (For example, is it possible to still enjoy life when you are unhappy? Why or why not?) How could you celebrate when you are sad? Answer these questions in a few paragraphs.

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### **Section 1: The Rose That grew From Concrete**

This first section of poetry focuses on various aspects of Tupac's personal life; in fact, the first poem is autobiographical. As you read these works, pay particular attention to the following motifs:

- the use of body parts (ear, heart, eye, soul, and voice)
- the quest for success, respect, acceptance, and peace
- life in poverty
- murder and violence
- parental neglect
- feelings towards God and spirituality (e.g., "soul")

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**“In the Depths of Solitude”****Researching “Purdah”****Objective:** Examining the cultural practice of “purdah”**Activity**

Look back at the first possible definition for “solitude” in the previous activity—the definition is “social isolation,” and one synonym for that term is “purdah.” Purdah is a Middle Eastern cultural practice that prevents women from being seen by men who are not close relatives, such as husbands, fathers, or sons. Although the extent of and reasons for the practice varies across regions, in many areas, when women leave the home, they wear garments to cover their bodies. In some societies, women also cover their heads and faces to the point that their eyes are not visible.

Using the library, Internet, or both, research the following aspects about purdah:

- What laws (religious and/or political) require women to perform this practice?
- What consequences exist for not performing purdah?
- Where do women practice purdah? How do the practices vary among regions?
- What garments are used in the practice? How do the garments vary from the ones worn in the home?
- What is the purpose of purdah? How and why did it start?
- When do women practice purdah?
- How does the practice affect women socially, economically, and emotionally?
- Why might women choose to practice purdah if it weren't required? How is it encouraged?
- How have individuals and/or organizations rebelled against the practice?
- How might women in the U.S. react if the government tried to impose a form of purdah?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“The Eternal Lament”****Writing Lament****Objective:** Creating a romantic scene**Activity**

In “The Eternal Lament,” Shakur says that, although he seeks affection, he is not a great romantic. What do you think of when you think of romance? Pretend you are a writer and you want to include a romantic scene in your story. Choose to write a romantic scene on one of the following events:

- first date
- marriage proposal
- anniversary
- wedding
- other

Make sure there is some brief character development in your story, such as personality traits, physical description, etc., so that your audience can picture the characters. Your short story should also have a clear setting; therefore, be sure to include the following elements:

- location
- weather
- action
- mood

Be creative! However, be sure to keep your piece, which should be approximately one to two pages long, appropriate for the classroom.

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“God”****Editorial****Objective:** Writing an editorial**Activity**

Tupac discusses his feelings about God in this poem—according to him, God has been his friend, provider, and counselor. In fact, God is the only being whom Tupac would give “unconditional love” to. Because this poem deals with God, do you think it should be taught or addressed in public schools? Since 1940, several Supreme Court rulings have declared various religious matters, such as prayer, in public schools to be unconstitutional. Here is a brief list of some cases:

**1940:** (*Minnersville vs. Gobitis*) Schools may require students to salute the flag and say the pledge of allegiance even if it violates their religious beliefs. (This was overturned three years later in *West Virginia State Board of Education vs. Barnette*.)

**1948:** (*McCullum vs. Board of Education*) Religious instruction is unconstitutional.

**1962:** (*Engel vs. Vitale*) School prayer is banned.

**1963:** (*Epperson vs. Arkansas*) The state cannot ban the teaching of evolution.

**1980:** (*Stone vs. Graham*) The Ten Commandments cannot be posted in school.

**1985:** (*Wallace vs. Jaffree*) Observing a “moment of silence” has a religious purpose; therefore, it is unconstitutional.

**1992:** (*Lee vs. Weisman*) Prayer at graduation ceremonies is unconstitutional.

An editorial is an article in which people voice their opinions about a controversial matter. Choose a case and write an editorial to a local newspaper on whether you agree or disagree with the ruling and why. Be sure to support your opinion with facts, details, and examples.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 2: Nothing Can Come Between Us

This section focuses on relationships with friends and loved ones; in fact, many poems are dedicated to people who played an important role in Tupac's life. While most of the poems focus on the positive aspects of relationships, a few of the poems deal with the complications of love. While reading these works, look for the following motifs:

### positive aspects:

- lack of monetary desire
- unity and loyalty
- unconditional love
- spirit and strength
- joy
- forgiveness
- permanence

### negative aspects:

- secrecy and lies
- heartache
- divorce
- pain
- adultery
- unity versus separation

Also look at the ways in which Shakur uses the following:

- elements of weather (sunshine, storms, rain, earthquakes, etc.)
- allusions to Cupid
- "Genesis" (beginnings of relationships) and the results

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**“If There Be Pain...”****Asking for Help****Objective:** Knowing your support system**Activity**

In the poem, Shakur promises a friend that no matter what problems he or she has, he will always be there.

Depending on what happens in a person's life, we consult different people during our times of need. Not everyone will be able to relate to the same problem we are experiencing. Look at the following list of problems you might encounter. Next to each situation, list at least two people you could consult and briefly explain why that person would be helpful. You may mention strangers as well, such as consulting a hotline or seeking a therapist.

- academic difficulties
- fight with your best friend
- fight with an enemy
- death of a loved one
- breakup
- divorce in the family
- feeling lonely
- worried about the future