

DEAR EMPOWERING SONG,

I want to take this moment to thank you for this experience. You have instilled in me the confidence to explore on my artistic curiosity and with that confidence it has invigorated my sense of creativity that lived deep within me. Through this journey " you " have given me courage to let down walls, which allowed me to enjoy discovering something new about myself. In fact, there have been moments of uncertainty about my creative ability, but through this course it has helped me find the courage to express, and discover my own uniqueness. Since we've been introduced you've giving me reason to continue the process of discovering my true self. You fueled and encouraged my desire to look deeper within, too find my creative talent. You challenged me through the callings of your "SONG" and let me envision my testimony through my artistry. Through all the interactive settings, you gave me the ability to see, feel and engage in music, art, storytelling and theater in a whole new way. You, influenced confidence through meditating, singing, engaging in theater, creating visual art, and all the discussions and writings about different topics. All these sources of exploring and discovering is what lead me to believe in my own uniqueness. It has also allowed me a chance to become a fan of not only my own work, but everyone else's who occupied this space, also. Ashhuman beings, we become our own worst critics, and that alone plants seeds of doubt in our finished work. But through the attentiveness of the empowering song

and the patients of the many people in it's community, the empowering song did what it is designed to do. It opened new pathways and helped me develop a stronger interaction with my community, in which enabled me with new ways of expressing myself through art, spoken word and poetry. That helped me find my own voice and inspired me to keep creating music. It also gave me a greater understanding of how to communicate and convey messages through art, music, dance, and storytelling from different perspectives and cultures. YOU, facilitated an atmosphere of human bonding through music, which began to rehumanize us as incarcerated individuals. We sang and looked each other in the eye's despite the differences between us. You educated the class with a plethora of history on different genres of art that surrounds us on a daily basis as well as showing us its capabilities of transforming one's understanding of what the EMPOWERING SONG'S PURPOSE IS. You brought to us the semester's theme " ONE SKY, MANY DESTINY'S " and it was " YOU " who allowed me to see beyond the clouds of my own understanding. You gave me more reasons to search for the answers of why every individual who lived under " ONE SKY " couldn't bare the same fruits or have the same opportunities. The empowering song made a metaphorical connection to equate the sky as a symbol of the unlimited opportunities any individual could have. But for some, those opportunities were harder to achieve, when you couldn't see beyond the clouds of living in a world struck by poverty. Although, the sky has a panoramic view of the world, as kids we didn't have that innate ability or the fortitude to see the world from the ground level of our surroundings. But as you get older, your views of the world expand

as well as your perspectives and perceptions. Through that growth you continue to learn and understand the intricacies of all the possibilities of what's under " ONE SKY ". However, sometimes we have to take the initiative to look outside of ourselves and ask, are we taken advantage of the things that are readily available to us? Rather than us making excuses to what's not available. To put it in context in part with " MANY DESTINY'S " i had to look deep and long at the decisions I've made in the past, which ultimately changed the course of my life, and sent me on a path of destruction by my choices. I never wanted to let my past define what my future could look like. So today, I sit with a new profound approach to change that narrative by making better choices. Whether that has the potential to open new doors or me just equipping my intellectual capacity so I'm able to comprehend all the complexities of an unjust world. So for me, staying abreast with the information that I need can be the determining factor to change my future and ultimately my destiny. It wasn't until I took this class that I had a chance to look outside of being incarcerated. But it all started by making a choice of wanting to live the meaning of " sky's the limit " . Which I want to reiterate a part of the piece by (coleman 102) to highlight what this course embodies as well as the impact it has on it's students and some of the the things we had to endure over the period of this semester. " The empowering song approach did such a remarkable job of rehumanizing incarcerated persons that the course became a threat to the traditional culture of institutionalized oppression and dehumanization. This course began to be scrutinized by the prison administration and staff

more aggressively than any other course offered. The prison began to interfere with the course by limiting what the professors could bring in, what they can accept from us as homework, and what they could return to us as graded material. Now this example gives us the understanding of why this program gets frowned upon the most and why the system wants control over anything that could cause us to understand our human value. The empowering song approach was pulling emotions and substance out of us, that held the potential to create an awareness of our depth of isolation and oppression, and that carried with it a potential spark that could ignite activism. In spite of the prison administrations power to threaten, harass, inconvenience, and even bar the professors and guest from entering the prison, the empowering song method continued to flourish, and bring-- through that old negro soul of music healing, activism, and change, into an environment of oppression, repression, and inhumanity. So I wanna thank "YOU" again the empowering song for the humility that you bring to every class and the approach that evry person should not be judged by his or her worst decision and,for the people you introduced us to willing to love us and let us into their hearts without such judgement. My heart will forever be filled with gratitude and appreaciation for your altruistic sincerity.

SINCERELY,

YOUR STUDENT...

I LOVE YOU LIKE I LOVE MY SON
I MISS YOU LIKE I MISS MY MOM'S
I NEED YOU LIKE I NEED THE LORD
I REALLY MISS YOU BAD...

Baby I know you've sacrificed
And you're tired of all the strife
That I've caused in your life
Since you became my wife
Please babe understand
That I'm not perfect I'm just a man
But for you girl I'll do all I can
To be the man you need...

CAUSE I LOVE YOU...2x

A yo dawg whats the deal
I know this thug life aint got the same appeal
When they got us locked up behind the steal
Still we gots to keep it real
Dawg I know life brings pain
And it seems sometimes we live in vain
But keep your head up cause after the rain
The sun will shine again...

CAUSE I LOVE YOU...2x

Where livin in the last days
My lifes passin fast babe
From livin the fast ways
I'll get my shit right one day
To all my homies I know you know
What its like to sit and wish for miracles
To get your people out the ghetto
And live life to take it slow
But really though...

CAUSE I LOVE YOU...2x

I LOVE YOU

When I stress what I feel to you
They're more than just words to me
Like when I tell you how I feel inside
I keep it real cause I'm still a " G "
I do those things those dudes don't do
Cause real is what real does
Thats why I'm always forgiving you
Regardless of what we've been through

GIRL I LOVE YOU,
YOU KNOW THAT I TRY TO
KEEP THINGS RIGHT WITH YOU
SO THERS NOTHING I WON'T DO
TO PROVE,I LOVE YOU
YOU KNOW THAT I WANT TO
KEEP YOU BESIDE ME
SO IN TIME YOU'LL SEE

THAT I LOVE YOU... I LOVE YOU... I LOVE YOU...

I refuse to control you or make you
Ride with me cause another bid will break you
Lord knows I'll never fosake you
Baby for us to fight you know that it takes two
I'll let my next move be my best move
This aint checkers its chess and baby you know the rules
I know you hear what people say
But you know the truth
And if you can't rock with that
Then do what you gotta do...

CAUSE GIRL I LOVE YOU...