**Kaleidoscope**

The little time we have to call our own
be filled with gardening, feeding chickens,
mending clothes, and music making: shaking
stones in a basket, clapping hands, stomping
feet. Sometimes a banjo or fiddle be
played, or hollowed-out tree drum and washboard.
But lo, the singing! Piecing shouts here to
Bible stories there, interweaving tunes
and hollers, sing up a frenzy of
song! Be a kaleidoscope of sound: Joy.

**Writing Practice - Extended Metaphor**

A patchwork quilt serves as an extended metaphor for this entire collection of poetry. Each poem is named for a traditional quilt block pattern and explores that subject in relation to slavery. Then, when all taken together, the quilt metaphor allows us to understand even more about slavery, the way a whole quilt is greater than its separate blocks.

- Read aloud “Kaleidoscope.” If you have a kaleidoscope, pass it around for students to look through. Ask you students: What is a kaleidoscope? What does it do? What parts of this poem make up the kaleidoscope?

- Re-read the poem titles in this book, and have your students choose one that especially appeals to them (or any one of hundreds more quilt block names that you can find online and in quilt books).

- Brainstorm all of the ways the name of the block fits into the lives of your students. For example, “Birds in the Air” might yield: *migrating geese flying over the neighborhood; hummingbirds at the feeder, seagulls at the beach last summer, ducks flying down to the pond, pigeons on the roof.* List 20, 30, or 40 more ideas about birds before beginning to write.

- Next, write together, a poem comparing how birds and their actions are like something else. What two things to compare is the hard part. Start simply: *The honk of the geese is like the recess bell.*

- Now that you have the beginnings of a comparison, how else are geese and all their ways like children at recess? *The honk of the geese is like the recess bell / calling the children to gather in line.* Now keep going with this one before asking students to write one in pairs.

- The poems in *I Lay My Stitches Down* are serious, but you can get quite silly when working with metaphors!

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