

## Focus: Poetry as Archaeology

*Archaeology is the study of the distant past - aspects of civilization and culture that lie beneath the surface. Poetry can act in a similar way and help us explore what stories lie beneath our surface both for ourselves and for our audience.*

### Warm Up (3 min):

Make a list of 10 experiences you've had that have had an impact on you/shaped who you are.

ex: growing up in NYC, getting my heart broken for the first time, spending summers in Aruba, my parents getting divorced, the first time i performed a poem in front of an audience, catching fireflies on summer nights, seeing my father for the first time in 10 years, driving around with my friends late at night because we were bored

### Read/Watch "Daddy" by Sifaara Freeman

- Discuss lines/phrases that stand out
- Discuss the use of layers and process of unpacking the poem engages
- Discuss the subject matter of mental illness, stigma and stereotypes

### Writing prompt:

Using your experiences, explore and unpack what stories lie beneath your skin that no one can see simply by looking at you. Use the repetition of "Under my heart," and "And under that is," to begin each line or new stanza and to dig deeper. Be descriptive of each "artifact" uncovered.

*Under my shirt is my skin,  
Under my skin is my heart,  
And under my heart is...*

Example:

Under my heart is my little brother, who used to follow me around the neighborhood like a lost little puppy and who I tried to lose like a bad cold,

And under that is my hood, where kids would play in the streets til the street lights came on or our moms would yell at us to get home

And under that is Crazy Kevin who would do anything we dared him to, like jumping his bike over a car, and under that is bumps, bruises, broken bones and trips to the hospital,

And under that is kevin's mom in the emergency room rocking and crying, wondering if her baby boy was going to come home that night