



ISBN: 9781460759806

Notes by: Barbara Braxton

Date of Publication: September 2020

The Great Realisation

By Tomos Roberts and Nomoco

Summary

A post-pandemic bedtime tale that has captured the hearts of millions.

First performed in response to the Coronavirus pandemic, Tomos Roberts' inspiring poem, with its message of hope and resilience, has been viewed over 60 million times and translated into over 20 languages worldwide.

From simple acts of kindness, to the creativity within us all, *The Great Realisation* is a celebration of the many things that have brought us together at a time of crisis. It captures, with magical resonance, the thoughts and feelings of millions worldwide as we adapt to a new way of life, cast aside old habits and reflect on what truly matters to us. It is a story for all readers, young or old, who dare to dream of a fairer, kinder, more loving world.

Key Learning Outcomes

ACELY1698, ACELY1701, ACELY1704, ACELA1501, ACELA1504, ACELT1608, ACELT1610, ACELT1795, ACELT1798

Key Concepts

Sustainability, The environment, Resilience, Equality, Change

Recommended Ages: 4+

These notes may be reproduced free of charge for use and study within schools but they may not be reproduced (either in whole or in part) and offered for commercial sale.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Before Reading

Texts in context

Read the poem to the students, without showing them the book or illustrations, and have them jot down or draw any response they might have: its meaning, things that resonate, words or phrases, questions, and maybe an explanation of the title.

Language for Interaction

Tomos Roberts, the author, describes the poem as a 'bedtime story for a time of change' written during lockdown in the UK for his seven-year-old brother and sister. Share this version of Roberts reciting the poem with his siblings:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nw5KQMXDiM4>

Again, have students record their responses by adding them to their original list. Discuss how this version enriches and enhances their understanding and appreciation of the poem you read, including the meaning of the title.

- How does this version differ in presentation from the version read aloud by your teacher?
- How do the social roles and relationships between Roberts and his siblings influence his message, his choice of words, the mood, the delivery and its impact?

During Reading

Share the picture book version with students, reading it through without comment or commentary but at a pace that allows them to absorb the illustrations that have been added to the words.

After Reading

Examining literature

Again, ask students to add to their original response with any new insights and discuss how this version further enriches and enhances their understanding of the message that Roberts was trying to portray.

- How has the addition of Nomoco's illustrations contributed to their understanding of and appreciation for the words?
- Have the illustrations challenged or changed their perceptions of the meaning of the poem?
- How do Nomoco's images compare with those they were building in their mind's eye?
- Is there a particular image that sums up the before and after perspectives that resonates? Why?
- Did the use of different fonts for Roberts and his brother portray their relationship as effectively as the spoken version? Why?

These notes may be reproduced free of charge for use and study within schools but they may not be reproduced (either in whole or in part) and offered for commercial sale.

- Would the poem have the same impact if the interaction between Roberts and his siblings was removed? Why?

Responding to literature

- How does Roberts portray the world before lockdown?
 - Does he paint a positive or negative picture?
 - What are some of the key issues he identifies?
 - How does he portray the world after lockdown?
 - How does his choice of language techniques and vocabulary demonstrate his perspective?
 - What are some of the most interesting phrases he used?
 - What does he mean by 'hindsight's 2020'?

Even though Roberts is talking to his siblings in the present about the here and now, he has also projected himself into the not-so-distant future to predict the sort of world that might follow this experience.

- How might a reader in the future (who did not experience the pandemic and its effects) interpret the poem?
- How well does it reflect the current situation?

Explore how works like this can convey details or information about a particular social, cultural and historical context, and how it offers greater insight into a situation than a record of facts and figures.

Ask students to share their experiences of lockdown: the things they did, the things they valued, the things they missed.

- How has the experience changed the way their family lives and interacts now?
- How does their experience confirm or contradict that of Roberts?
- If they were to write of their lives before and after, would it be an optimistic or pessimistic account? Why?
- What might they tell their children about this world-changing event?
- Which world would they prefer to live in – the comfortable known of the old or the uncertain unknown of the future?

Explore the meaning of the saying, 'Better the devil you know than the devil you don't' and consider how it applies to this situation.

Interpreting, Analysing, Evaluating

Explain that authors write for a purpose – to persuade, inform, entertain or reflect –and that purpose determines its format, structure, and vocabulary.

- What was the purpose of Roberts' writing?
- Was he writing to persuade, inform, entertain or reflect?
- What was the core message Roberts wanted his brother, sister and the wider audience to take away from interacting with his poem?
- How did each version (poem, video, picture book) convey that purpose so it was clear and effective?

- Were there any key words, phrases or other language devices that enhanced meaning or shaped reaction?
- What is the meaning of the title?
- Which version did the students prefer? Why?
- If this were written as a narrative would it have had the same impact?

Using terms such as 'pollution levels after Covid-19 lockdown,' search the Internet for articles on the topic and select one or two that meet the needs and abilities of your students.

Compare the purpose, format, structure and vocabulary of the article with that of the poem.

- Is the article's purpose to persuade, inform, entertain or reflect?
- How does its purpose influence the style of writing, the choice of vocabulary and its structure?
- How might the purpose change the audience who reads it and their response to it?

Creating literature

In his poem, Roberts urges his brother:

'So lie down and dream of tomorrow
and all the things that we can do.
And who knows, if you dream hard enough,
maybe some of them will come true.'

- What do the students dream of their tomorrow looking like?
- What can they do to help shape that?

Literature and Context

'The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new.'

This quotation is from a character in Dan Millman's 1980 book *Way of the Peaceful Warrior*. *The Great Realisation* mirrors its message.

To enable students to 'build the new' have them choose an issue that needs addressing which resonates with them and investigate its cause as well as a possible solution. Using a format of their choice – speech, story, song, poem or article – share their perspective to the class, focusing on the appropriate literary style as well as the content. Encourage them to develop a plan that will allow them to 'think globally but act locally' so that they feel empowered to sustain their selected change and to contribute to a better world.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR

Tomos Roberts (Tomfoolery) is a spoken word poet, performer and filmmaker, born in New Zealand and brought up in London. He launched his YouTube platform on 22 March 2020 and, just five weeks later, uploaded a performance of 'The Great Realisation', featuring a cameo from his seven-year-old brother. The video has since been viewed over 60 million times. Tomos has been interviewed on *This Morning*, by Phillip Schofield and Holly Willoughby, and his story has been reported all over the world, including in *The Daily Mail* and *The Washington Post*. Celebrities including Jennifer Aniston, Drew Barrymore, Khloe Kardashian and Jake Gyllenhaal have praised his heartfelt work. Tomos lives in London.

Nomoco is a Japanese artist and illustrator, whose joyful artwork has been publishing and exhibited all over the globe. Nature and sound are key inspirations for her work, which is realised in a range of different media, including inks, silkscreen and lithography. Nomoco is the illustrator of *Once Upon a Raindrop*, written by James Carter, which was nominated for the Kate Greenaway Medal 2020 as well as being shortlisted for the UKLA Award 2020, Information Books category. She has produced artwork for clients as varied as the Royal Schools of Music, *The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, Moschino, Marc Jacobs and Pocko. She lives in Tokyo.