

# The Mississippi Poetry Podcast Supplement

## Ep. 6: Charlie Braxton

**1. Listen (12 minutes).** Play *The Mississippi Poetry Podcast w/ Charlie Braxton*

**2. Write (10-25 minutes, as time allows)**

Materials Needed:

notebook, pen/pencil

Writing Exercise: Be Bold

In his podcast interview, Charlie Braxton advises poets to “be bold, be fearless.” This exercise is designed to help participants use a bold poetic voice, and to articulate what they value or don’t. Participants will write a 10-20 line poem comprised mainly or entirely of declarative sentences that adhere to this basic structure and idea:

I reject \_\_\_\_\_.

I choose \_\_\_\_\_.

Participants should feel free to modify these phrases into more surprising, metaphorical ones, like:

I crumple up \_\_\_\_\_.

I sleep next to \_\_\_\_\_.

I wrap myself in \_\_\_\_\_.

I cut away \_\_\_\_\_.

etc.

Participants can choose to be literal in their responses (“I reject cruelty”), or metaphorical (“I wrap myself in the songs of my grandmother,” “I sleep next to ten thousand orange tulips”). Encourage participants to follow their own creativity and imagination wherever it leads, and to be bold in their claims and assertions!

**3. Share (5-10 minutes)**

If time and comfort levels allow, invite participants to share their poems!

**Related Materials:**

*Embers Among the Ashes* (book by Charlie Braxton):

[amazon.com/Embers-Among-Ashes-Poems-Manner/dp/0983652716](https://www.amazon.com/Embers-Among-Ashes-Poems-Manner/dp/0983652716)

Toni Morrison (Wikipedia): [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toni\\_Morrison](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toni_Morrison)

Haiku (from the Academy of American Poets glossary): [poets.org/glossary/haiku](https://poets.org/glossary/haiku)



## **Songs That Are Sacred and Pure**

(for Toni Morrison)

--Charlie Braxton

we live/  
in a con/strict/  
space/ a place/ where/  
there is/  
more love/  
for the wicked/  
than/ there is/  
rest/ for the weary  
and yet/  
we/ do sing/  
we/do shout  
we/ do chant  
and when/  
our tongues/ are tied  
with the pain/ that is  
tethered to/ the  
deep souls/ of our ancestors  
we/do hum  
we/do moan  
and groan  
our work/songs  
that are/  
as yet/ untitled  
we/ do this  
black/magic/music  
to ensure/ that  
the circle remains/unbroken  
and that  
the memories/ of  
our beloveds /  
remain /sacred  
and pure