Form as Political Resistance:

The Verse Novel and the Education of the Young Poet

A Lecture by Dr. Krystal Howard

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“In this talk, I examine the education of the young poet depicted in recently published verse novels marketed to young people, including Jacqueline Woodson’s Brown Girl Dreaming (2014) and Kwame Alexander’s Booked (2016). Each of these texts advocates for the value of stylistic imitation via the depiction of children who write influence or erasure poems and engages directly with the relationship between artistic creation and an artist’s environment. The influence and erasure poems within these verse novels reflect sociocultural concerns and follow the long-standing tradition in children’s literature of using texts as pedagogical tools that model behavior (and more specifically, in this case, writing behavior) for young readers.”