

THE TRAIL OF INSPIRATION

Written by

Jonathan Thompson



The professor addresses an entire group of students.

HISTORY PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

The Wanderer, a slave ship, was that means of diaspora for over 400 captive Africans, taken from their homeland against their will, to be bought and sold as property and to be treated as such.

Jonathan looks up from the face vessel.

JONATHAN

How did they move past that? Being isolated from their homeland?

HISTORY PROFESSOR

I don't think there is a "moving past that." It's (an impossible)--

JONATHAN

(over)

I mean... Just wasn't it scary - y'know being separated from - from other people and everything that they grew up with?

HISTORY PROFESSOR

Oh of course it was scary. I couldn't imagine the horrors they experienced.

(a pause, then)

But they found a way to hold on to their past - to their culture - to their roots. They crafted face vessels, jugs, cups - that one right there next to you.

Jonathan looks back at the face vessel, this time with awe.

HISTORY PROFESSOR (O.S) (CONT'D)

It's because of their traditions that allow us to appreciate the shared artistic and aesthetic principles that they brought from their homeland.

CUT TO:

EXT. SKY - DAY

Dave the Bird falls faster as time stretches on. He quickly finds the strength to break free of the sludge.

His wings burst out instantly and he begins to fly. The trail of ooze still follows his movement.

SUPER: "CHAPTER 2: Tradition"

BACK TO:

INT. ART EXHIBIT - CONTINUOUS

Jonathan looks back up from the vessel once more.

JONATHAN

Where did you say The Wanderer ended up again?

HISTORY PROFESSOR

Old Edgefield... South Carolina.

INT. JONATHAN'S HOUSE - DAY

QUICK CUTS:

-Jonathan zips up his bag.

INT/EXT. AIRPORT - LATER

QUICK CUTS:

-Jonathan shows his passport.

-The plane takes off.

-Jonathan nears the exit to the airport and notices a sign that reads: "Who Were the Black Potters of Edgefield? Join us for a conversation this Saturday at 12pm!"

INT. AMPHITHEATER - NOON

Jonathan sits in the middle of the room. All he sees and hears are talking heads.

SCHOLAR 1

...which allowed them to combine their craftsmanship with their traditions. Some of these ancestral traditions included ornate decorative motifs, unique glazing techniques...

## SCHOLAR 2

...pass on their craft is how traditions are created, but the presence of a community makes those traditions into a culture. Even in vastly more extreme conditions...

## SCHOLAR 3

...other African-American potters contributed significantly to Edgefield's ceramic traditions. While their names might be lost, their craftsmanship has left an important mark on history.

Some more time passes, then Jonathan starts to tune back in.

## SCHOLAR 4

...Especially one potter named Dave. And he wasn't just a potter, he was also a poet. He inscribed poems on the back of his works in a time where literacy was illegal for enslaved people. He laid out a trail of inspiration and inspired many to come.

Jonathan leans back in his seat, intrigued.

CUT TO:

EXT. SKY - DAY

Several hundred people can see Dave the Bird from the sidewalks below. He is not as high as the clouds anymore.

One man on the ground looks up in wonder and quickly draws a portrait of Dave the Bird soaring through the sky. The people around him smile at his artwork.

The oozing trail once again follows Dave the Bird's every move. This time Dave the Bird starts to drift. He moves around in the air, using the oozing trail as his ink. Now, using the sky as his canvas, Dave the Bird spells out:

"CHAPTER 3: The Trail of Inspiration"

BACK TO:

INT. AMPHITHEATER - LATER

The people in the audience walk out the building as the scholars begin to pack up. Jonathan skips the exit, and heads straight towards SCHOLAR 4.

JONATHAN

Hi, it's a pleasure to meet you. My name's Jonathan Thompson. I loved your words about Dave and I was wondering if I could ask you some questions about him if you have the time.

Scholar 4 looks up at Jonathan. She studies him for a moment.

SCHOLAR 4

Sure kid, ask away.

Scholar 4 slumps back in her chair as the other scholars take off. A huge grin sweeps across Jonathan's face.

JONATHAN

Thank you so much! I was hoping you could shed some light on as to why Dave started inscribing poems into his pottery? You said it was illegal, what was his goal?

SCHOLAR 4

Well, I mean we don't know for one-hundred percent certain because we weren't in the guys brain...

Jonathan chuckles.

SCHOLAR 4 (CONT'D)

...but it was most likely an act of defiance on his part.

(whispering)

Which is why we like him so much.

(normal)

In his role as both a potter and a poet he was able to foster small acts of rebellion against the institution of slavery. While they might not have made a super large impact on slavery as a whole, Dave certainly understood the weight of his mutiny.

Jonathan eagerly writes her words in his comically small notepad. Scholar 4 notices this.



