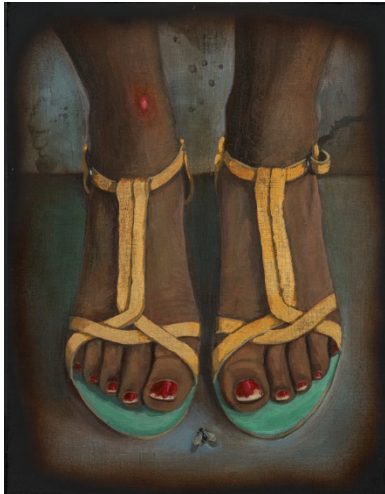


## Close Study: Close Viewing

### Renée Stout

**Artist:** [Renée Stout](#) (b. 1958, Junction City, KS)

**Work:** *the streets of used to be*, from a series of five preparatory paintings, 2009; Acrylic on paper, gold leaf, colored pencil, spray paint, collage, and mixed media; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Renée Stout



**About the Artwork:** For their collaborative artist's book *the streets of used to be*, Carol A. Beane and Renée Stout used the streets of their hometown, Washington, D.C., as inspiration. The work consists of six pairs of Beane's poems and Stout's images, each printed on an individual page slipped into a pocket of an accordion-folded cover crafted from handmade paper.

**Target grade range:** 6-8

**DPCS Curricular Unit:** Everyday DC

**DPCS Curricular Arc:** Interaction/Other

**DPCS Curricular Theme:** Community and Viewpoint

Note: Annotation is a key feature of Close Study, ensuring that students are engaged in the process of evidence gathering. Annotation can take a range of forms across grade levels and disciplines. Annotation can provide assessment information as to each student's depth of comprehension. Additionally, it can be a useful tool for launching critical discussions. Encourage students to annotate this work physically or virtually.

#### Round 1

Type of Question: General Understanding/Responses

Sample Question: **If this artwork is the middle of a story, what might happen before? What might be about to happen?\***

Guidance: The goal of this conversation is to generate a range of student responses to the work. There is no wrong answer, but rather the idea is to open the conversation and create an

Adapted from DCPS's "Close Study: A Critical Process" and "Close Study: Close Viewing" documents.

\*The Beginning, Middle, End thinking routine was developed by Project Zero, a research center at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (<http://www.pz.harvard.edu/resources/beginning-middle-end>)

environment in which students see the value of both their own opinion and the possible range of opinions.

## Round 2

Type of Question: Key Details

Sample Question: **If you were to divide this image in half, would it be symmetrical? How do the two halves match? In what ways do they differ?**

Guidance: The conversation should focus on gathering evidence from the image; formal and technical evidence, as well as evidence based on the imagery. Student responses should include discussion of specific visual aspects of the work. You may ask guiding questions such as, **“What does the background tell you about the setting?”** Or **“How does the artist use color to draw attention to certain details?”** pushing students to focus on the visual aspects of the work and how they might begin to support the responses discussed in Round 1.

## Round 3

Type of Question: Structure

Sample Question: **What did you notice first when looking at this image? What elements helped move your eyes around the artwork?**

Guidance: This discussion should focus more specifically on how the structure of the work is supporting the students' interpretations of the work. This conversation might be around compositional strategies, the use of evocative visual designs, or the inclusion of distinct features.

## Round 4

Type of Question: Intent/Inferences

Sample Question: **Renée Stout created this work to illustrate a poem written by Carol A. Beane. After reading the poem, consider the picture again. What do you notice? How do the words and image relate to one another?**

Guidance: Unlike the intentional omission of information in other rounds, prior to asking students to respond to this question, the teacher should provide some context for the work. This context should come in the form of another visual work. The nature of the context should promote the goals of the overall lesson or unit. This work might be:

- Another work by the same artist
- A work that serves a similar purpose in a more familiar context
- Another work from the same school, movement, or genre

#### Possible Contextual Works:

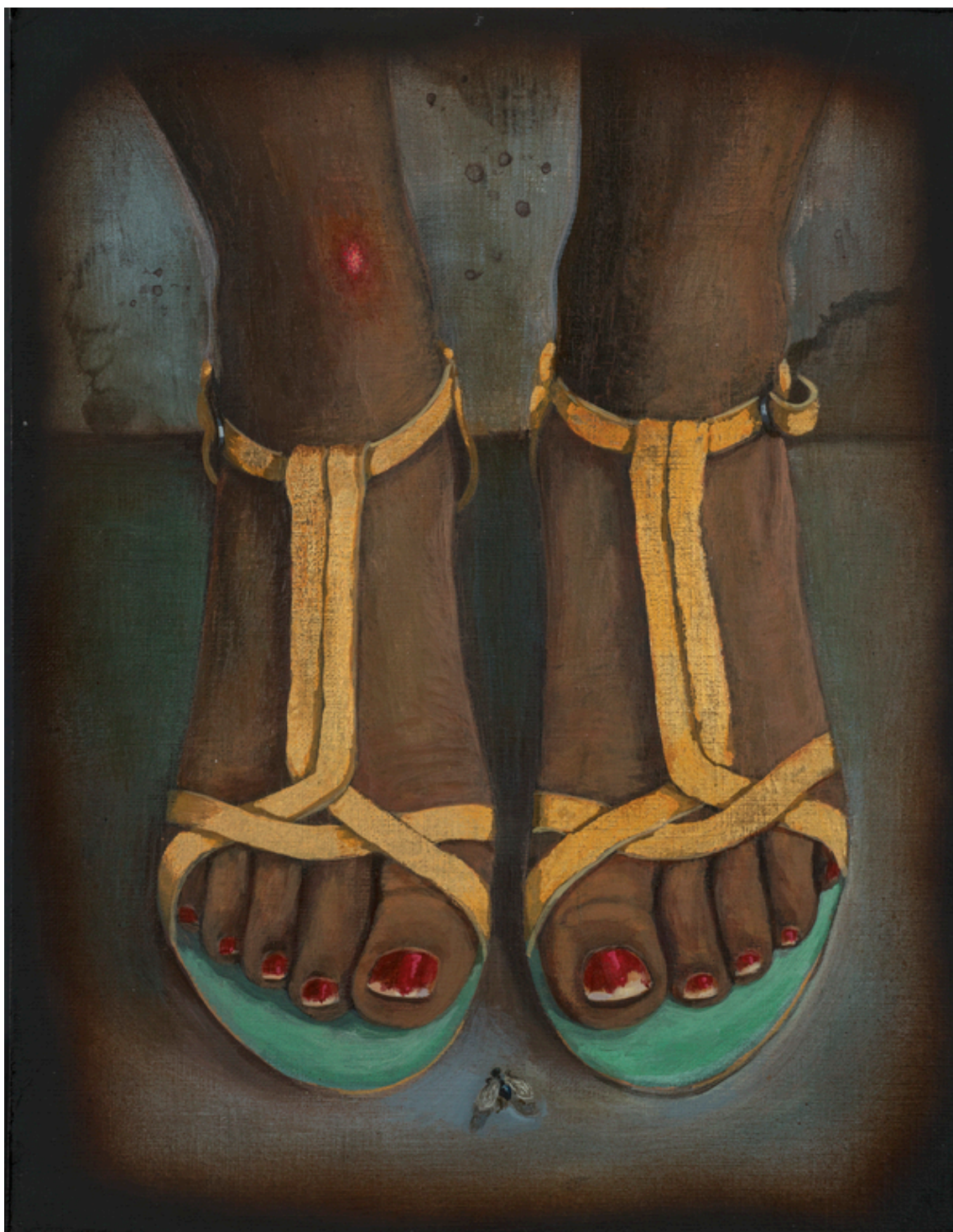
- A page from Carol A. Beane and Renée Stout, *the streets of used to be*, 2009; Edition of 125; Archival pigment prints on Hahnemüle William Turner 310 paper; Folder: letterpress on abaca-cotton handmade paper with glassine; 12 x 7 1/2 in.
- Carol A. Beane and Renée Stout, *the streets of used to be*, 2009; Edition of 125; Archival pigment prints on Hahnemüle William Turner 310 paper; Folder: letterpress on abaca-cotton handmade paper with glassine; 12 x 7 1/2 in. Images from <https://shop.nmwa.org/>
- Renée Stout, *Seven Windows*, 1996; Iris prints on paper, 10 x 12 in.; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Museum purchase: United States Department of Education Fund; © Renée Stout
- Elizabeth Catlett, *Singing Their Songs*, 1992; Lithograph on paper, 22 3/4 x 18 3/4 in.; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Purchased with funds donated in memory of Florence Davis by her family, friends, and the Women's Committee of the National Museum of Women in the Arts

#### Round 5

Type of Question: Opinion/Application

Sample question: **If you were to collaborate with a classmate to create a work of art, a) what components would you include (e.g. words, images, audio, video), b) would each of you be in charge of a specific component or would you share responsibility for each part, and c) how would you ensure your individual talents would come together to create one cohesive finished product?**

Guidance: This round is asking students to internalize the knowledge and information built in the previous rounds by using the concepts generated to visualize a work that applies to a personal goal of communication. The direction of this question is directly related to the broader thematic goal of the lesson or unit.



Renée Stout, *the streets of used to be*, from a series of five preparatory paintings, 2009; Acrylic on paper, gold leaf, colored pencil, spray paint, collage, and mixed media; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Renée Stout



she used to sleep  
with her back to the dawn;  
she used to sleep on a grate,  
red high-heeled shoes neatly together at the head of  
her cardboard-box-when-she-could-get-it bed;  
she was a brown skinned woman,  
the color of cloves,  
thin as a winter's day.

she used to wait for the bus;  
gilded sandals of fine italian leather  
over her shoulder, or by her side;  
she would lean on a post  
and wave all the buses by.

she grew thinner than stillness  
on a razor's edge;  
she grew brighter than pain;  
and when her bones got too weak  
to bear the weight of flesh  
grown meager and sad  
and heavy beyond belief,  
she put on her red high-heeled shoes  
and  
she  
walked  
away



A page from Carol A. Beane and Renée Stout, *the streets of used to be*, 2009; Edition of 125; Archival pigment prints on Hahnemüle William Turner 310 paper; Folder: letterpress on abaca-cotton handmade paper with glassine; 12 x 7 1/2 in.



Carol A. Beane and Renée Stout, *the streets of used to be*, 2009; Edition of 125; Archival pigment prints on Hahnemüle William Turner 310 paper; Folder: letterpress on abaca-cotton handmade paper with glassine; 12 x 7 1/2 in. Images from <https://shop.nmwa.org/>





Renée Stout, *Seven Windows*, 1996; Iris prints on paper, 10 x 12 in.; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Museum purchase: United States Department of Education Fund; © Renée Stout



### For My People

For my people everywhere singing their slave songs  
repeatedly: their dirges and their ditties and their blues  
and jubilees, praying their prayers nightly to an  
unknown god, bending their knees humbly to an  
unseen power;

—Margaret Walker

Elizabeth Catlett, *Singing Their Songs*, 1992; Lithograph on paper, 22 3/4 x 18 3/4 in.; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Purchased with funds donated in memory of Florence Davis by her family, friends, and the Women's Committee of the National Museum of Women in the Arts

Excerpt from "For My People" Margaret Walker from *For My People*. Yale University Press, 1942. Full poem:

<https://www.loc.gov/programs/poetry-and-literature/audio-recordings/poetry-of-america/item/poetry-00001014/nikky-finney-margaret-walker/>