



One Maryland One Book is a statewide community reading program for teens and adults. This summer, people in communities across the state will read the same book: *Song Yet Sung* by James McBride.

Students who complete the program requirements will receive a certificate and will be encouraged to note their participation in the program on their college applications.

For more information, contact [Ms. Little](#).

Program Requirements:

1. Read the book– it is available in paperback, large print, and CD through Montgomery County Public Libraries.
2. Write a 2-3 page, double spaced response to one of the prompts (see below).
3. Write 5 questions that could be used to stimulate book group discussion.
4. Turn the paper and questions in to the Library Media Center on the **first day of school**.
5. Join us for book group discussions on Thursday, September 10 in the Library Media Center from 2:30-4:00 p.m. Refreshments will be served.

Writing Prompts:

When writing a response to ONE of the prompts below, be sure to include examples from the book and cite them with page number references.

1. Based on Liz's visions of the future, what statement is McBride making about African Americans today? Do you sense that he is cynical or optimistic? Do you agree or disagree with his assessment?
2. Attempt to decipher the Code by analyzing examples of it from the book. What was its purpose? Based on what you can infer from the book, to what extent did it serve its purpose?

3. Why does McBride develop characters so completely, providing details of their thinking and behavior, only to kill them off? Using at least two examples from the book, analyze the messages he is trying to communicate through such violent deaths.
4. Conduct research on Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad. Locate references to “Moses” and the “Gospel train” in the book and explain what they reveal about how individuals escaped slavery in the 1850s.
5. In the second half of the book, there are many references to “Faith.” Discuss the significance of faith to characters in the book, using both white and black characters as examples.
6. Throughout the book, Liz refuses passage to the North, and freedom, via the Underground Railroad. Despite her visions of the future, she stated that there is no freedom for blacks, anywhere, ever. Later she says “I’m free here” to explain why she won’t go North. What do you suppose she meant by each statement?

Sample Book Discussion Questions:

Penguin Reading Guide:

http://us.penguinroup.com/static/rguides/us/song_yet_sung.html

About.com: http://bestsellers.about.com/od/bookclubquestions/a/song_yet_sung_q.htm

***Song Yet Sung* Review:**

Set in pre–Civil War Maryland, “Liz Spocott, a beautiful young runaway slave, suffers a nasty head wound just before being nabbed by a posse of slave catchers. She falls into a coma, and, when she awakes, she can see the future—from the near-future to Martin Luther King to hip-hop—in her dreams. Liz’s visions help her and her fellow slaves escape, but soon there are new dangers on her trail... . Kidnappings, gunfights and chases ensue as Liz drifts in and out of her visions, which serve as a thoughtful meditation on the nature of freedom and offer sharp social commentary on contemporary America.” - Publishers Weekly (09/24/2009)

Opportunities to Learn More:

1. Walk the Underground Railroad Experience Tour– in Sandy Spring, MD ; http://www.mc-mncppc.org/parks/ppsd/parktrails/trails_MAPS/Rural_legacy.shtm
2. Visit Uncle Tom’s Cabin, Old Georgetown Rd., Bethesda
3. Check out the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History, Baltimore; <http://www.africanamericanculture.org>
4. Go to the National Great Blacks in Wax Museum, Baltimore; <http://www.ngbiwm.com/>