African American spirituals, especially those created in the days of slavery, often used metaphors to hide the meaning of the songs. Imagine the reaction of a master upon hearing a group of bonded persons singing “I’m going to run away”. To prevent this from happening, many spirituals were “coded”. TASK: After hearing the songs Steal Away to Jesus (in the Midnight Hour), Wade in the Water, Swing Low Sweet Chariot, and Daniel, and then referring to the lyrics sheet of the songs, complete the section below. In some cases you have been given the metaphor. You should write what you think it means. In other cases you have been given a meaning. In those cases write a short section of the lyrics that would match the given meaning. If the song is NOT given on the sheet, you also must tell which song the metaphor is from.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| METAPHOR | SELECTION | MEANING |
| WADIN’ IN THE WATER |  |  |
|  | WADE IN THE WATER | GOD WILL PUNISH THE SLAVEHOLDER |
|  | DANIEL | ENSLAVED PERSONS |
| A BAND OF ANGELS COMIN’ AFTER ME | SWING LOW SWEET CHARIOT |  |
| IF YOU GET THERE BEFORE I DO | WADE IN THE WATER |  |
|  | SWING LOW SWEET CHARIOT | SLAVE STATE/FREE STATE BORDER |
|  | SWING LOW SWEET CHARIOT | IF YOU GET FREEDOM FIRST |
| HEAVEN | SWING LOW SWEET CHARIOT |  |
| THE CHILDREN THAT MOSES LED | WADE IN THE WATER |  |
|  | DANIEL | ENSLAVED ON A PLANTATION |
|  |  | COME SOUTH INTO SLAVE TERRITORY |
| SLIP AND SLIDE THE STREET |  |  |
| THE WATER WAS A LITTLE BUT COLD, IT CHILLED MY NATURAL BODY… |  |  |
| PUT ON YOUR WABASH SHOES |  |  |
| STILL MY SOUL FEELS HEAVEN BOUND |  | I WILL BE FREE |
|  |  |  |

KEY

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|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| METAPHOR | SELECTION | MEANING |
| WADIN’ IN THE WATER | WADE IN THE WATER | ESCAPE |
| GOD’S GONNA TROUBLE THE WATER | WADE IN THE WATER | GOD WILL PUNISH THE SLAVEHOLDER |
| DANIEL | DANIEL | ENSLAVED PERSONS |
| A BAND OF ANGELS COMIN’ AFTER ME | SWING LOW SWEET CHARIOT | UNDERGROUND RAILROAD COMING TO ASSIST ESCAPE |
| IF YOU GET THERE BEFORE I DO | WADE IN THE WATER | IF YOU GET FREEDOM FIRST |
| JORDAN (river) | SWING LOW SWEET CHARIOT | SLAVE STATE/FREE STATE BORDER |
| IF YOU GET TO HEAVEN BEFORE I DO | SWING LOW SWEET CHARIOT | IF YOU GET FREEDOM FIRST |
| HEAVEN | SWING LOW SWEET CHARIOT | FREEDOM |
| THE CHILDREN THAT MOSES LED | WADE IN THE WATER | ENSLAVED PERSONS |
| LIVIN’ ON BORROWED LAND | DANIEL | ENSLAVED ON A PLANTATION |
| SWING DOWN LOW | SWING LOW, SWEET CHARIOT. | COME SOUTH INTO SLAVE TERRITORY |
| SLIP AND SLIDE THE STREETS | DANIEL | ESCAPE |
| THE WATER WAS A LITTLE BUT COLD, IT CHILLED MY NATURAL BODY… | WADE IN THE WATER | ESCAPE IS DIFFICULT AND DANGEROUS |
| PUT ON YOUR WABASH SHOES | DANIEL | ESCAPE |
| STILL MY SOUL FEELS HEAVEN BOUND | SWING LOW SWEET CHARIOT | I WILL BE FREE |
|  |  |  |