

Selamawit Baraki  
ELAI 990, CRN 21761  
Prof. Satrom  
11/07/23  
Digital Story Script Revision

### Harriet Tubman: Digital Story Script

My name is Selamawit Baraki. I am originally from Ethiopia. I visited the exhibition “Reckoning: Protest, Resilience, Defiance” at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture on Oct. 17, 2023. According to the museum’s website, “*Reckoning* is a testament to how artists and photographers have used their voice to pay tribute to those we have lost, lifting up names such as Eric Garner, George Floyd, and Breonna Taylor at demonstrations and in communities online.” A work of art from this exhibition that I found particularly meaningful was Harriet Tubman’s quilt, which was made by Bisa Butler.

The title of the artwork is “I Go to Prepare a Place for You” by Bisa Butler. It is a quilt portraying Harriet Tubman. The artist is Bisa Butler, and the artwork was created in 2021. Bisa Butler was born in Orange, New Jersey. When Bisa was young, she used to watch her mother and grandmother sew clothing. She started to learn how to sew from the leftover clothing that she found from the designs her mother and grandmother gave her. Bisa became pregnant just as she was graduating from Howard University, where she had studied painting. She could not handle the smell of the paint since she was pregnant, so quilting became better for her. I believe Bisa Butler made this work of art because Harriet Tubman inspired her, and she wanted to inspire others. Harriet Tubman was known for escaping slavery and freeing other slaves. In the quilt, the colors, lines, and shapes tell many stories of Harriet Tubman's life. For example, Bisa Butler used cool blue to indicate how Harriet Tubman had to blend in and escape detection, and she placed the sunflowers in the background because she wanted to acknowledge Harriet Tubman's reliance. The

yellow fabric with red birds is a sign of freedom, and the stripes on the skirt show the field of crops Tubman labored in. This work of art represents very intense emotions of courage, faith in God, and belief in herself.

This work of art resonates with me during this time of my life because I live with my older brother Kiros, who is 32 years old, and he is currently dealing with severe depression. My brother's sickness has affected me. I go to work and stress about how he is doing because with depression I never know what can happen. Ever since we came to America, we have seen hardship and success together and we shared those moments. Whether it is difficult times or not, we went through them together. When he became ill in April 2023, I felt alone and scared because we used to do everything together. When he became depressed, he wouldn't go outside the house and wouldn't talk to me at times; it made me feel alone and scared and afraid of what would happen. He was always the one motivating and supporting and guiding me. Since my parents are in Ethiopia, I am the main caregiver. It has been exceedingly difficult for me. This quilt depicts bravery, courage, and Harriet Tubman's belief in God. It is the courage that Harriet Tubman had in 1849, when she escaped from slavery alone, and found freedom in Philadelphia. She used disguises; she walked, rode horses, and drove wagons; sailed on boats; and rode on railways. She, against all odds, overcame slavery and escaped. This work of art taught me that against all odds I must overcome any hardship and conquer my fears. Instead of focusing on the problem, I learned to focus on the solution. For example, Kiros is very smart. He is the reason I majored in computer science. His two passions are coding and going outdoors. Since he has been sick, he has not been outdoors much, which had me worried, but then I started viciously attacking my fears when I started looking at Harriet Tubman's quilt and understanding the details of the dress. What it meant changed me. It did something within me, it is as if it changed me from within by giving me a new perspective

on how to handle my brother's depression. Every day like Harriet Tubman, I plan and strategize my day. What can I do? What can I say to help my brother feel better? Harriet Tubman did not just attack her goals; she planned, strategized, sought help and analyzed her situation. She planned everything from who she was going to be the next day to how she was going to survive and work. So, I planned to help my brother. I created to-do lists for every day. I started buying him coding books and showing him pictures of nature, and I even decided to major in computer science. I was always afraid, but I finally faced my fears. I want to show my brother that he can also go to Montgomery College and study computer science and follow his dream of becoming a developer. He has been feeling better ever since I changed my action, just like the colors in the dress have meaning. I learned from Bisa Butler how to be very detailed-oriented just like she is detailed in her quilt. I became forceful like Harriet Tubman and attacked my goals with ambition.

To conclude, this work of art is important to me because it is giving me the hope that my brother will feel better soon. I have also learned about the power of God's work in Harriet Tubman's life and how miracles can happen in my life as well. It has also given me the courage and the motivation that I need to keep believing in God and have courage to carry my brother until he feels better.