**My Night in the Planetarium** tells a story from when Innosanto Nagara was 7 years old. At that time he lived in Indonesia which is a country made up of thousands of islands of various sizes in the Pacific Ocean.

In this book, we learn that Innosanto Nagara's father was a poet, playwright and actor who led a theater troupe, which is a group of actors who work together to perform plays. The stories this theater troupe performed had layers of meanings and audiences could "read between the lines" to understand that the plays were really criticizing the leaders of Indonesia who were in power at that time.

People across the world and across time have not always agreed with their leaders. When people disagree with the people who are in power, their leaders, it is not always safe to speak out directly. So, there is a long history of people creating art, such as plays, dances, paintings, sculptures and songs that have messages meant to make people think and to increase awareness of an issue the artists care about, and, often, to criticize whatever is the current situation at that time.

**You can create art for a cause too.** Here are some examples of art, music and other projects that artists have created to make us think and to inspire us to try to make our world a better place for all people:

**Songs:**
- Stevie Wonder - *Living For The City*
- Bob Marley And The Wailers - *Get Up Stand Up*

**ART & Community Based Projects:**

*Photo by Jgo1906 of the Project Row Houses in Houston, Texas (Creative Commons License)*
To learn more, visit: [https://projectrowhouses.org/](https://projectrowhouses.org/)

*Photo by Duncan Rawlinson (8/25/2018) of sculpture "All Power to All People" by Hank Willis Thomas. (CC BY-NC 2.0)*
**My Night in the Planetarium** by Innosanto Nagara, 2016, Triangle Square Imprint, Seven Stories Publishers, New York, NY.

**Dance:** Seattle-based Northwest Tap Connection dances for social justice  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s_hgprdySgg

**Kids doing Art:**  
Molly of Denali | Awesome Alaskan Kids: Arts and Activism | PBS KIDS:  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C1wAlNqJY_Y

What is important to you? How might you express your ideas through the arts? Are you inspired to dance? Maybe to make a puppet play? How about writing a poem?

We can also learn from Innosanto Nagara's book about what it was like to grow up in another part of the world. "Inno," as he likes to be called, was just 7 years old during the events in this story. At that time he was living with his parents in a big city called Jakarta on the Indonesian island called Java. That city had has an arts center in the middle of a big park. Below is a picture of the planetarium in the park where he and his mom spent the night. Also, there's a picture of the three-wheeled scooter-taxi's called "bajaj" that Inno's father rode to a hiding place when the soldiers came for him and his acting troupe.

Inno shares with us that when he wasn’t in school or participating in one of his father’s plays, he was learning traditional Balinese dance. This form of dance has been performed for hundreds of years. To learn the movements, with very precise gestures, body placement, and facial expressions, takes many years of practice. Below are some pictures of Balinese child dancers and links for videos of a performance and a practice session. Around the world, there are many forms of dance that take many years of intense training to master. **Write about what skills you want to learn or that you are already learning!!**

Here's a link for a performance of traditional Balinese dance. Listen to the special music provided by a "gamelan" orchestra, and notice how the dancer controls and isolates the movements in so many different parts of her body and even her face. Each movement has a meaning.  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v4C7T0-G7Ho&list=RDv4C7T0-

This short clip shows children practicing traditional Balinese dance:  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxQJqKHkeIQ