The song “Roses” written by Kanye West was composed during the time when Kanye’s grandmother had a near death experience, influencing the lyrics in the song. It follows along his experience in dealing with his grandmother’s critical health since health inequalities affect her receiving care. He expresses his frustration with this healthcare system and mentions how wealthier or more recognizable/influential individuals receive better and priority treatment, and thus questions if his grandmothers condition would improve if she had more money or status. Throughout the song, he feels helpless, but finds comfort in the unity of his family and refers to themselves as the “Roses”, a metaphor to love and remembrance through their hardships.

I decided on this as my text since I believe that its content strongly correlates with the health inequality concept I have learnt so far in class. In the first verse, he mentions that “the best medicine go to people that’s paid”, pointing out that stronger medicine is usually reserved for those with money, and questions the fairness of the medical system. He uses the example of Magic Johnson, a wealthy former NBA star who is known for his long survival after being diagnosed with HIV, suggesting that if you are wealthy, like Magic, you have access to the best treatments for even the deadliest diseases. After this, he mentions “And all the broke motherf\_ckers passed away”, highlighting his frustration with the healthcare system and how usually, individuals from lower-class backgrounds (who he refers to as “broke” in this text) often suffer or die due to inadequate health care. Another line, “You telling me if my grandma's in the NBA, Right now, she'd be okay?” is to point out the contrast of fates between individuals like Magic, who are wealthy and can afford better healthcare, compared to poorer individuals, like his grandmother, who have limited access to make a statement about health inequality and how social class has a significant impact on an individual’s chance of survival.

Furthermore, health inequality is a significant issue in today’s society as it shows the broader systematic disparities in access to resources, as wealth and class affect not only an individual’s chance of receiving quality care but also their life expectancy. Similarly, an example in Domhoff’s that proves the disconnect between the public opinion (the bottom 90%) and the preferences of the corporate elite (the top 10%), is the mention the majority of the public “believe that the government should provide more support for health” (Gilens 2012, Page and Shapiro 1992, Page and Jacobs 2009, Page and Gilens 2017), contrasting with the elites preference to prioritize their economic interests instead. The public advocates for policies that could reduce health inequalities but those in power do not prioritize such issues, perpetuating the system that benefits the wealth whilst continuously hurting individuals like Kanye’s grandmother. This is the disconnect that Kanye criticizes in his song, and his lyrics relate to the public’s opinion to reduce disparities to allow equal access to healthcare regardless of wealth.

<https://genius.com/Kanye-west-roses-lyrics>