

THE PANDEMIC ISSUE



HARTWORKS

Spring 2022

\$10

The Charles Hart Middle School Literary Magazine



l-r: Shamar Brock, Andre Wright, Harmony Taylor

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Cover Photos

Top left, r-l: Ramontae Roberts, Sincere Gray learning remotely

Top center: Jai'Lynn McCall

Top right: Shamar Brock

Middle left, l-r: Patrick Washington, Marlon Cradle

Middle right, l-r: Damon Kee, Nichell Kee, Ebony Johnson, Gregory Edelin, A'Breale Wortham, Maryum Abdullah

Bottom center, l-r: Christina Taylor, Tatiana Pierce, Kayla Rosemond, James Tindle

Bill Newlin



This issue of hArtworks is dedicated to long-time volunteer Bill Newlin, in gratitude for his 25+ years of committed service to D.C. Creative Writing Workshop, WritersCorps, and the young writers of Charles Hart Middle School.

Introduction

Welcome to *hArtworks*, the nation's only inner-city public middle school literary magazine!

In 1995, Charles Hart Junior High School became a site for D.C. WritersCorps, which brought professional writers-in-residence to underserved communities. Twenty-seven years later, Charles Hart Middle School houses the D.C. Creative Writing Workshop, the longest-running school-based arts program in Ward 8. Along the way, our students have won hundreds of writing accolades, including more than 200 finalist awards in the Parkmont Poetry Contest; dozens of the In Series' "Finding Gabriela Mistral" poetry awards; numerous Larry Neal Awards; multiple Junior League Teen Poetry awards; the District Lines Poetry on Metro Contest, and the Washington Post KidsPost Poetry Contest. In fact, Hart students have won more local writing awards than any school in Washington, DC, public or private.

The Workshop has hosted such nationally known writers as Bomani Armah, Reginald Dwayne Betts, Derrick Weston Brown, Abbey Chung, Kerry Danner-McDonald, Michele Elliot, Andrew Evans, Jamila Felton, Andy Fogle, Kymone Freeman, Randall Horton, Alan King, Ruby McCann, Marla Melito, and Venus Thrash.

Our students have written nine original updates of classic plays, and produced two original full-length movies. And, through *hArtworks*, thousands of Hart students have become published writers.

We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to our earliest champions, Kenneth Carroll, Principal Lee Epps, and Vice Principal Yvonne Davis, as well as all the teachers who have given our writers weekly class periods for the past 27 years, including: Tameka Brown, Katherine Bucholtz, Craig Davis, Gloria Fergusson, Christy Gill, Shirley Grooms, Carolyn Jackson, Gina McKinney, Mary Johnson, Taelor Majette, Josie Malone, Irma Morgan, Jamie Neel, Kantrell Patrick, and Ethel Rivers.

Special thanks are due for the hard work and dedication of the D.C. Creative Writing Workshop Board of Directors: Abbey Chung, Dr. John Walton Cotman, Dr. Susan Gerson, Brian Gilmore, Helen Hooper, Bernie Horn, Bill Newlin, and Nancy Schwalb.

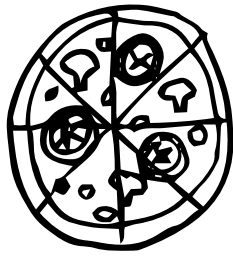
We have many friends who have helped to make *hArtworks* possible, and we would like to express our gratitude to them. Our sincerest thanks go out to the Bainum Family Foundation, the Greater Washington Community Foundation, the Clark-Winchcole Foundation, D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities, Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation, John Edward Fowler Foundation, Corinna Higginson Trust, Horning Family Fund, Lainoff Family Foundation, Cathy and Mark McNeil-Hollinger, Hattie M. Strong Foundation, Holly Syrrakos, Gail Oring and Go! Creative, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Arena Stage, the Shakespeare Theatre, Woolly Mammoth Theater, Jack and Monte, Tollefson and Company Investment Management, our friends at Popeye's on Malcolm X Ave., Barbara Bainum, Fritz Edler, Joseph and Lynn Horning, and Robert Johnson.

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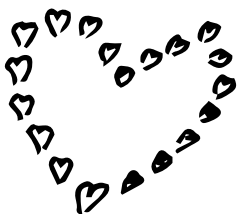
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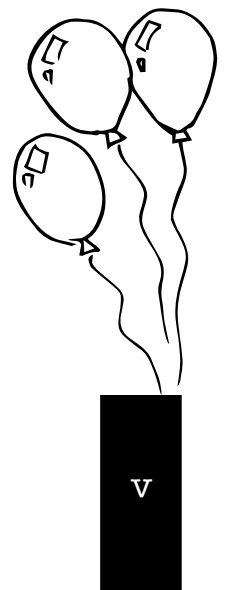
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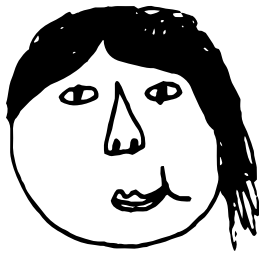
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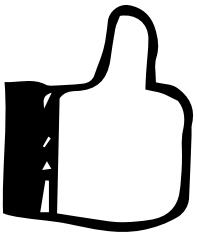
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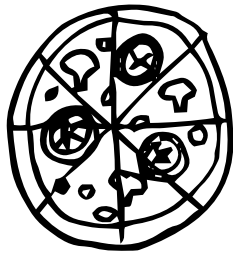
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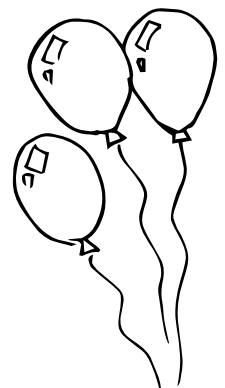
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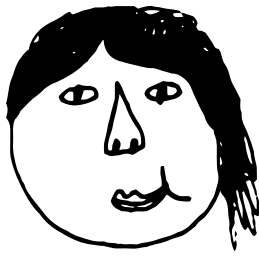
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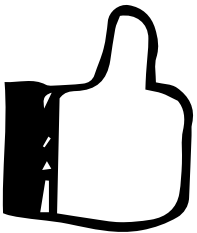
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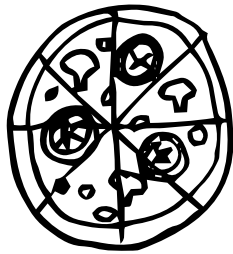
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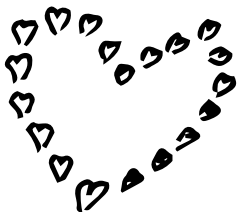
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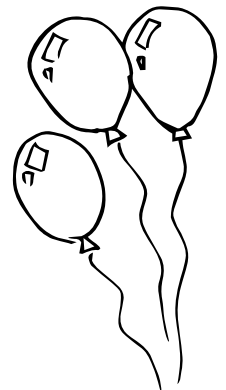
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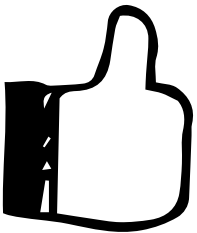
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IDEA







l-r: Kajaé Defoe, Trus' Stevens, Jazzmen Graham

Running, Crying, Magic

Running jaguars jumping
over cracked mirrors
and a pine tree full of blue violets
confess crying emotion;

Careful rivers full of logs escape
a vending machine selling
green and black straws of soda;

Magic nature makes alligators
fall in love with being vegan
and bees fly into the blue mist.

Keron Jenkins



School Sorrows

Been at school for eight hours
It's been full of sorrows
and knowing I have to
do it all again tomorrow

Lunch is bad, sometimes okay
but the food always looks
sorta strange
Teachers hide their gloomy looks
when passing out our school books

School is okay after
the day has been defeated
The next will have more to be beaten

Shaia Holmes



The Blues

I feel like a broken soul
when people of mine have passed away...
When I leave a funeral, I feel shattered;
I will never forget my sorrowful past.

I remember one time
my third brother was walking home;
As he crossed the street something flew his way
It was a car.
I heard the news from my father.
I was shocked, I froze in my seat
It was like I could not move.
I was in the car when I heard the news.

Me and my father drove to the funeral
It was at my church
When we got there, I saw my sisters in the church
My first sister cried when she saw our brother in the casket
She had stains of tears in her eyes
The other one was sorrow
She cried silent tears as I watched her
My father and me walked to the casket
I was...
I was standing there looking at it
It looked like I was about to cry or
I had no emotions
I don't know what kind of feelings

Aisha Hunter



Alana Hill

Writing It Down

Peeping through a telescope at
green birds flying
toward people taking pictures of me and Kevin.
A photograph,
running backwards into white birds,
a magic spell turning me into a frog.
Lions escaping from the zoo toward
firelight turning into a meteor shower
that tumbles onto the square ground.

Marlon Cradle



yes



Home

My architecture is a golden creation
outside, my reflection is fortunate
my unknown tears are overflowing
with a distant destiny
I am pulchritudinous with no regrets
I listen to my harmony as I count the
frets
my mind is in beauty
with my hands in fatality

Brooklynne Brown



Andre Wright

Into the Unknown

I'm tiptoeing into the new year.

I'm stepping on each crease and crack carefully
while slithering around the world's planned fate.
Each trial during last year is an old wound,
still lingering like a burning scent.

Messages and secrets are dancing around me,
causing my sense of intuition to question my ignorance.

As I grow, I find it hard to know
what's being set in stone
when I'm missing the hidden signs.
My knowledge expands with my mind,
and I connect experiences with my soul.

Each year I'm flowing into a new stage.
I wonder what the title is.

Sa'Mirror Chambers



My People

What are the values of the brown skin?
The history is rather perplexing.

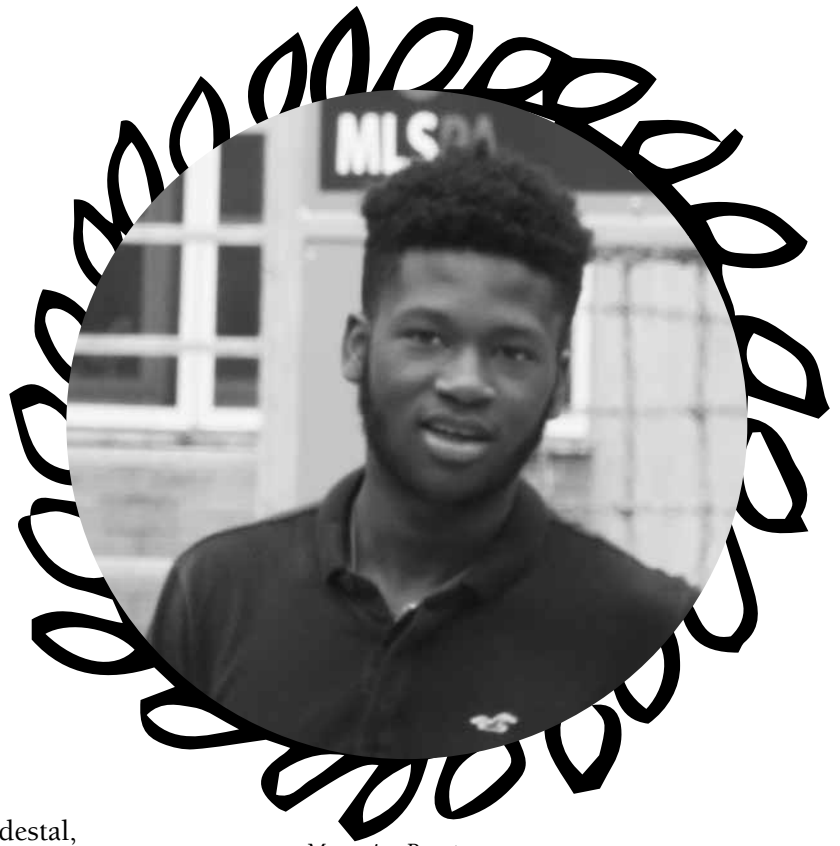
I can't fathom what was once held on a pedestal,
the use of manipulation is still a tool.

Our blindness is timeless,
ignorance is a message with fine print.

Black don't crack, like we're ageless;
the time we'll be accepted is dateless.
Black empowerment is gracious,
White entitlement is contagious;
When will realization save us?

We're carrying politics in our eye sockets,
Most things are lies
because the government doesn't want us to
skyrocket,
they carry secrets in plain lockets,
they play mind games like Bop It.

Sa'Mirror Chambers

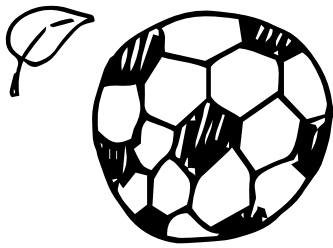


Marquise Proctor

Sign from the streets

I'm from Saratoga
in DC. I catch the bus up there
or my mama takes me.
I grew up around there
and that's my hood.
I step in them trenches and
my kids gonna step in them trenches.
It feels like home.
It tastes like a warm pizza, meaning
I love it there
I'm comfortable
I love the streets.

Te'Rae Dyson



OFUN!



l-r: Andre Wright, Trus' Stevens

Multitaskers

My hands,
you never know what they're thinking of
and sometimes you don't realize
that they do so much.
Some people say
they don't do enough.

I wash my hands
they take in heat
I use my hands
when I eat and brush my teeth.
I use my hands every day
I even used them to write
this poem today.

Shaia Holmes

Dear Streets

I was born and raised in Southeast, a.k.a., Washington DC
I love my hood, Saratoga
I go around there every day, I love it
I represent my hood in my behavior, actions, language
a lot of people get killed in my hood, so tragic
I feel the safest in my hood

RIP to the legend
it's awkward cause it's not the same without him
I wish I noticed my hood in a different way
because how I grew up, it was never like this
so I trusted in all types of ways
Since the legend died
it's been silent, but more killings
I am bracing myself and I tell myself
that my hood got me and I got them

Ever since my newborn sister came in this world
it was nothing but killings, so I listen to lyrics
to get me through the night.
While they're shooting, my heart is so shallow
I hope my grandma get out them trenches.

Te'Rae Dyson





James Joyner

Blizzards

Blizzards, they're beautiful.
 Just the snow falling gives me chills.
 When you get a light touch of snow from a blizzard
 it's like being tagged by barbed wire in a good way.
 Just seeing the frozen air that I breathe,
 Just hearing pure quietness,
 it's like a scar--it'll be there and soon go away.
 I think of it like this: Imagine all the winter animals
 having fun,
 such as a polar bear (if there was a polar bear near me)
 in this beautiful stargazing blizzard
 I would never have noticed
 it's the same color as this flurry of snow.
 I wish there was such a thing as a winter whirlwind,
 Imagine the snow flying, falling,
 just mixing like a blender of ice—
 Oh, blizzards are the best!

Caden Rogers



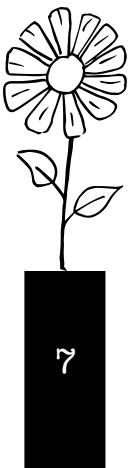
To shatter someone

To shatter someone means to win at heart,
 to break them into infinite pieces;
 Carelessness can be the root of it all.

The conception is a spiral; blue
 white deception is an exploding red.
 To be broken means you get thrown away
 while someone else steps up.

Unless you can wire yourself back together,
 though there will always be a blank
 a spot you forgot to fill,
 a crack that attracts emptiness.

Crystal Rogers



WHY?



Jaquan Jackson

A New Year

The start of year, it just felt like a regular year.
It feels like I have to put things together,
like a jigsaw puzzle.
I have to find the perfect piece to solve my
problems.
I'm proud that I can see the sunrise.
And at nighttime, I get to see the fireflies.

Sa'Niya Mapp

It sounds ever so sweetly

Just breathe.
Listen to the jagged waters
its echoes sounds off
as so, it seems distant
the separation is strange
darkness deceives me and I start to spiral.

Just breathe.
Anchor yourself
think back to a time
a time for creation
a time for change
the moistness in my hair feels dry
it's as if a whirlpool is sucking away
my presence.

When I finally come to,
I open my eyes
it feels as if I stayed up all night
relaxing too much causes me to forget
the waterfall up ahead
Just breathe.

Crystal Rogers





l-r: Shawn McPherson, Elijah Jones

External Differences

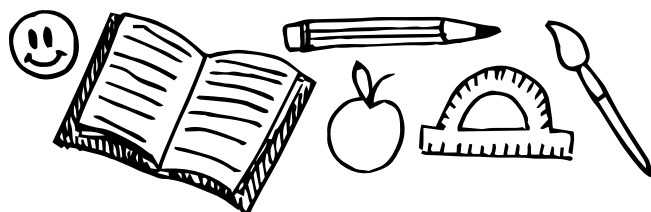
Through high school and college
one thing that doesn't change
is the old and battered building,
the one that holds secrets of the past.
Instead of the same, I choose to be different and free.
Like the eternal flame, I will continue
to burn and echo off the shadows below me.
The flesh on my bones will not rot
but others around me will.
I'll shelter my beauty and cradle my precious
rhythm,
while analyzing and embracing the inevitable:
People do change.

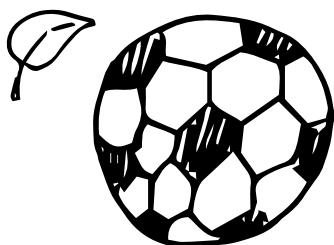
Crystal Rogers

My kind of city

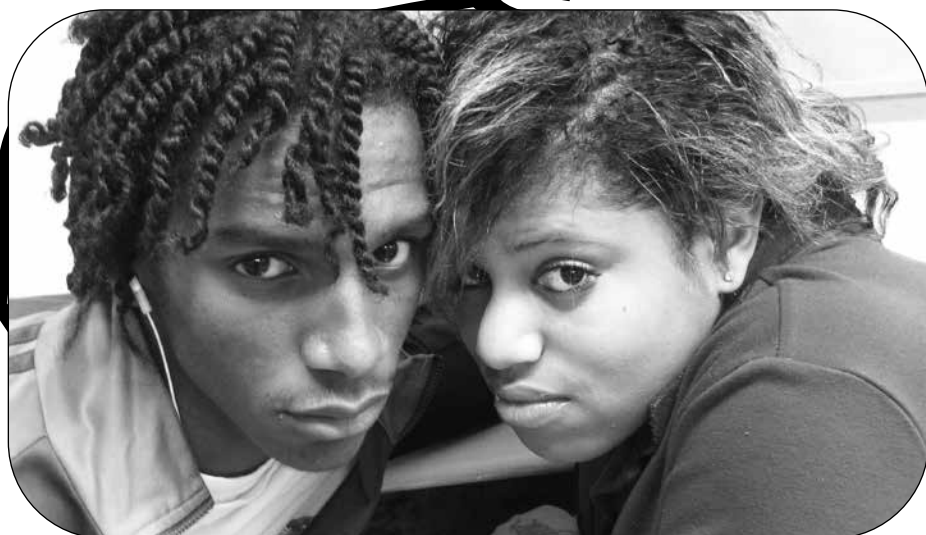
I'm from quietness,
quick and swift, I'd say
The fog that blinds my memory
burns with passion.
What I struggle to remember, finds me.
I have adapted to noise and no effort.
The older I am, the more I understand.
To keep walking forward means
to never look back,
To shut the pitch-black door
that I always seem to check.
It's the older version of monsters under
the bed.

Crystal Rogers





REFUND



l-r: James Tindle, Jessica Carpenter

My Wings

As the world ends, I would forget all boundaries.
My life would be as free as a fresh breeze of air on a heavenly day.
I would free myself from all unfinished work that caused wreckage in my life.
I will no longer be bound to the eternal suffering of exhaustion.
As the world catches on fire, I will still be sitting there
numb, mourning the days of my past life,
praying to be reborn in my next as a butterfly
so I could really be able to spread my wings and fly,
to show my true form, as a caterpillar breaking out of a cocoon.
To be free of worries and stress,
to just be free--not having to maintain a daily life,
being reborn as a butterfly would mean peace and happiness for me;
Imagine being able to fly, as high as I want in the sky
and not having to come down until I'm ready:
This is what I would do as the world is ending.

Jayla McMillian



The Enemy Within

The enemy, there will always be him, that stares at me
as if I am a hideous woman in the midnight fog.
He speaks to me like a tarnished violet in the concrete.
To him, I am nothing, but I look in the mirror,
I stare paralyzed to realize I am everything.
I hold a smile that can light up the faces of millions
as if they have had a glance of sunlight on a beautiful day;
Hair so elegant that it leaves people speechless as I strut past.

Jayla McMillian



Sa'Mirror Chambers

Beings

There will always be light after dark;
 By dark, I don't mean those unfamiliar midnight skies,
 I mean the dark absent-minded, savage people
 who paralyze you when you dare to look their way,
 the people who will influence you, like an addicting fog in the
 sky,
 moving frantically toward you,
 That is what I mean by dark.

The meaning of light,
 I don't mean the elegant sun that shines bright in the glowing
 sky;
 I mean the people who cherish seeing themselves to the next
 day,
 I mean the people who have a light scent of violet to their
 damp skin,
 they forever praise the god that serves them,
 they praise the ground beneath their own two feet.
 This is what I mean by there will always be light after dark.

Jayla McMillian



This Is Me

I feel alone as I sit in this darkness.

I fear I'm breathless, wordless and apart
 from my feelings.

Like I can just disappear in the dark
 and never come out of this wounded space.

I don't know when was the last time
 I saw my mom's magnetic smile.

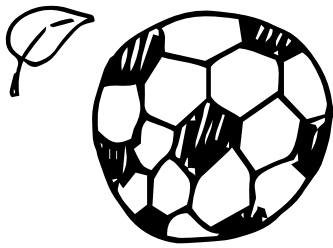
I've realized that I'm floating in the middle
 of the Pacific Ocean,
 struggling to forbid this madness.

It's impossible to overcome this strangeness.
 This is only the beginning.

Tailyn Tripp



WHY?



OFUN!



l-r: Ashley Cooper, Brittany Watkins

Yes!

My yes day
would be like pure sunlight outside.
It would be chaos in the house.
I would go to the beach,
the ocean would be waving, and saying hi.
there would be music playing in the park
and it would be a nice Saturday evening.
Birds would chirp and my body would be filled with
happiness.

Gerome Wood

Into the new

I enter the new year with a boom,
the smoke behind me, drifting like the past year
and the flame rising, as my passion is flying
Work stacking up like my stress
I don't trust my brain; I trust my gut
This year is new

Trus' Stevens

What it feels like

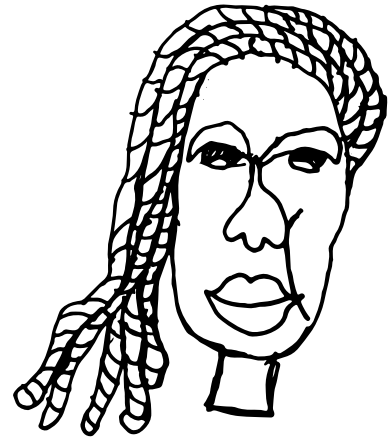
I'm a shadow in the night
a creation in the making
a sun that never sets
a destination that never comes.
The way I think is so unbelievable,
my destiny is just pulling and pulling me away
that I would certainly become defeated.
My heart quivers outside my skin,
a reflection that will never be seen.
Imagine being a stubborn, breathless homebody;
The thought of being that person orbits your mind
day and night, like an endless rope.
The language that I speak is so unknown
perhaps it's a landmark that always marks a mishap.
Eventually, I will give up stop trying and realize
I'm a ticking time bomb that will explode.

Jazzmen Graham





Naeshaun Ford



Abandoned House

As the days go by
the fog, the storms, have gotten worse.
The house I saw across the street,

Big, bulky, crooked,
it was a disaster.
As the house twisted and turned
to look at the people who walked past it
particles would fall off and tear.

Seems like the house was aging
throughout time and time again.
It looks so upsetting and depressing--
Even a storm cloud will go away.

Grace Cox

Vast

I'm the person that don't put on makeup.
I'm the one who stays real.
Analyzing the voices that maintain my freedom can be an awakening.
The history of humanity is like the words in my head:
worried, scared and restless.
The words are getting stronger, more powerful.
I want to fill my head with pleasure
but there's always going to be a bad and good angel on my shoulder.
Whenever they come, my amber alert never goes off.
And humanity never decides
to just cradle down from tragedy
and put the fire out.
That's how the words in my head are.

Jazzmen Graham



WHY?



l-r: Nakia Better, Tylashia Joyner, Maria Watkins

Where I'm From

I'm from DC, where there is a lot of noise
and a lot of people dying.
I'm from the sea which is filled with junk and will die of pollution.
I'm from the planet that is treated like a trashcan.
I'm from the country that is very judgmental.
I'm from a neighborhood with a lot of cookouts and people shooting.
I'm from police who have to deal with people from our neighborhood.
I'm from a man in the sky (some people believe he's real, some people don't
but I do); I'm from him, he put me in this country for a reason, and
I will find out why this is where I'm from.

Trus' Stevens

The Life of Loneliness

Loneliness lives where no one dares to go.
Loneliness stays alone as another clone starts to walk home.
The darkness, the fog that goes around town
makes everyone there feel down.

The vehicles there make people stare
as the glare in the air makes it tear.
It's no wonder that things have disappeared
but reappeared in a low-ranked tier.
The cars broken down, from all around.

Cranks crack and crumble, tinker and tanker
as the town is so sad it's
like a person running out of air in water.
And the life of loneliness gets quieter and quieter.

Grace Cox





l-r: Te'Rae Dyson, Zaniyah Taylor

Complicated Legend

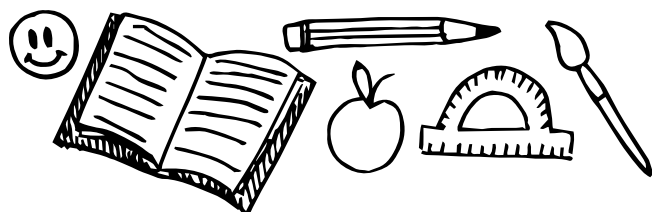
I'm so great that some people call me a legend.
I embrace the warmth of my family.
The sound of my laughter makes each day fresh.
Sometimes I feel so unnoticed that my bones turn tender.
A fragment of me is always full of sorrow.
Sometimes I feel so mystical that I hear violin sounds at night.
Other times, I'm so defiant
I start to suffer in class.

Esson Godbolt

Memories

Some of my bad memories are full of static TV's and regret.
But my good memories are full of sweet things
like brown sugar, sunflowers, and roses.
My forgotten memories are like a submarine;
they go down so far in my brain,
I forget they existed.

Esson Godbolt





l-r: Alan King, Maryum Abdullah, Eric Armstead, A'Breale Wortham, Sharri Barnes, Nichell Kee, Renita Williams

I wrote this

I'm in school, some are not.
 Going home from school, the moonlight
 is visible through the thunderclouds.
 Some people are restless after school, I'm not.
 Humans are beautiful, an octopus is not.
 Some have the pleasure of beauty...
 I don't play sports.
 I'm the one who wrote this out, feeling wonderful.

Marion Prince



Dreams over Nightmares

Every night when I go to sleep
 I hear voices with rhythm.
 When I am awake, I hear voices of joy and laughter.
 Some nights I want to sleep, but I have nightmares that I hurt.
 The nightmares don't want me to do more damage.
 When I wake up angry, I mask that fact all day,
 til I get home.
 There is a tiny little mockingbird in my mind
 that tells me to never do something that's not going to help me.
 I don't drown on failed dreams.
 I'm the one who backflips and floats on them
 until my dreams are completed.

Esson Godbolt



(this is a King)

I was born in DC, where gods are born.
I made this earth.
I'm the flame that will control everything
and if that flame goes out, everybody will have nothing.

I have a legendary fragrance that can't be compared
I have the warmth of a mother that can calm a newborn
baby.

I am the violin that even Adam can't touch,
the violin that is unseen to even God;
The sound of laughter that comes from me
is the sound of lyrics and a tender transparent voice.

I have been fed by a golden spoon, a diamond spoon,
but none of them fit me
I want the most valuable spoon to swallow my hunger.

I'm so smart that even the cryptic is understandable to
me.
I have the birthmark of the mystical beast.

I am the king
Even if I had a king
I would not bow; I would not fall

all hail King Trus'

Trus' Stevens



Chyann Wicker

Here I Am

The stars opened the window for me.
The sunlight shines into her eyes.
The darkness will stay until the universe ends.
Her body will be buried into the sunlight.
I was an unknown person until today.
I'm here to show people what I can do.
I am the leaf in a hurricane.

Tyreese Williams



yes



l-r: Shawn McPherson, ESean Swader.

Sadness

I am sadness
I eat broccoli
I am one of the main forces that cause pain
I am the tear that falls alone.
I am the blade that causes pain
within the souls of hope and happiness.
I am the thing that people can hide
perfectly, behind a smile.

Leondre Johnson

In My Mind

I'm so awesome, when I look in the mirror, I feel hunger.
When I look at these girls, I start stumbling.
I like my chicken strips tender.
I'm so silent.
When I get my job, I hope I'm not unpaid.

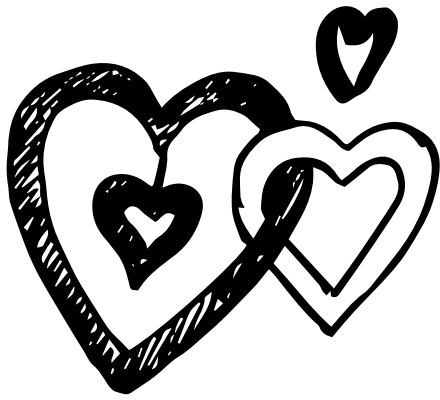
Chase Peterson



Facts of life

The person you love is made of 72.8 percent water.
You can feel so sad without them. My tears
start to turn to rain
it feels like they are far away
it feels like a burden when I can't see them.

Talaya Broadwater



When the world ends

When the world ends,
I will be in yellow armor
it would be precious metal.
When the world ends, I will be in my favorite red hoody
which would be infinite.
On Saturday night, when the world ends,
I will be in a cloud of thoughts
the grass will be so soft,
the flowers will be blooming
I will shake off the ashes falling from the sky
and I will jump into space, kiss the moon,
and fall.
I will be flying in my rocket ship, into space
watching the planets go by,
Destination Mars.
Mars is red, like my hoody
I will be jumping on Mars,
wrecking rocks
I will be the coolest dude ever.

Daniel Tembeng



Aisha Hunter

When the clock strikes

December 31, at 11:59, when the clock strikes 12 o'clock
You look at the clock, and it's morning
It's tragic because people everywhere are shooting
fireworks, firecrackers
guns shooting
Tragic, something like noise
What scares me is all the creepy voices
Leaving toys behind
Bringing my phone with me into the future
Something from the beginning, 2021
My movies, I left them behind
Spin around until I'm dizzy
My family's still in harmony.

Daniel Tembeng



l-r: Jaquan Jackson, KaJae Defoe, Trus' Stevens

When the world ends

When the world ends, won't it be another day?
 Waking up to a shining blur in my eyes
 as I venture into a building, to be churned and kneaded
 til I'm numb and left to serve an apathetic organization
 and a CEO somewhere who flaunts his wealth
 and promises a change he'll never bring.
 Heading home alone after a temporary eternity
 with a goal unfinished and a life
 as something other than a corporate slave to be desired.
 The same as always.
 Is that how the world ends?
 Instead of ending like the past, maybe it could end like a dream?
 I will be collecting crystals and manifesting more joy than ever
 cherishing all my possessions, both material and emotional.
 I will be crying and screaming and venting all my anxieties into a void,
 no soul in sight to tell.
 I will be cheering, embracing and loving everything about me,
 my melanin, my queerness, and my femininity.
 I will be resting in a lavish home that is not my own,
 munching on every snack I like in every corner store and every Giant in sight.
 I will be laughing, raging and flaming as I and the pleasant people play Uno,
 accepting our losses and our victories.
 Oh, to end so beautifully truly is a dream deserving to become reality.
 When the world ends, what should I expect?
 Hope, despair, paradise, or purgatory?





l-r: Naeshaun Ford, Shawn McPherson

Always

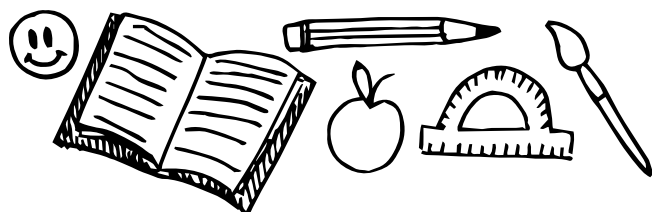
There will always be teachers who do too much.
There will always be friendships that don't last.
There will always be more family than friends.
There will always be bonds that are broken.

Talaya Broadwater

Being Young

It's because you are so old, you can't remember math.
You can't remember your childhood.
I don't need to do taxes, but you do.
You are dull, and you think it's okay to tell us to tell the truth
but you tell other people lies about your life.
Surely, we know things you do not know:
We know history and culture,
yet you don't remember your culture.
We remember the truth about America,
but you just vote for presidents and hope for the best.
Being young means you have lots of memories to make;
Being old means you have too many memories.

Ramontae' Roberts





l-r: Shaia Holmes, Shawn McPherson, Naeshaun Ford, Te'Rae Dyson, Zaniyah Taylor

Tailyn's Voice

My voice is fearful, like a tiger roaring
 It scares me
 It's also spicy like Cajun powder
 My voice is strong, like my human courage
 Today, my voice is loved by many people
 My voice is also immortal
 My voice faces things like thunder
 But most importantly, my voice is me!

Tailyn Tripp



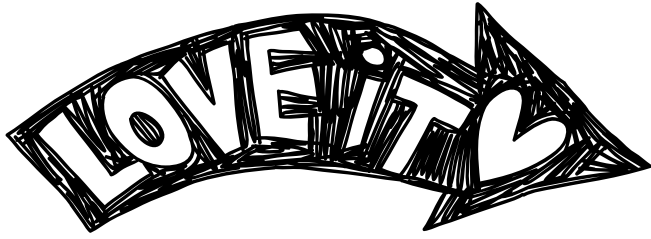
Changed

When the world ends, I will be alone.
 When the world ends, I will be somewhere else.
 Somewhere with no people and it's quiet.

I walked to a place that is abandoned and forgotten by everyone
 I slept on my bed with no blanket
 I only ate nails and drank tears for breakfast
 and I got to have no dessert for my entire life
 until one day, I had hope and the sunshine lit up my entire body;

I did not want to be alone anymore.
 I wanted to be in a place with everyone.
 I had a great breakfast and I will have dessert for the rest of my life.

Ja'veon Brown



I have magic

I don't watch TV;
the TV watches me.
Every time I sleep, the house changes into a new house
and every time I walk, everyone stops what they're
doing.
When I talk, the sun and moon both listen.
When I get money, it turns into diamonds and emeralds.
When I get on the bus,
it's already the end of school.
That was weird.

Ja'veon Brown



Kevin King

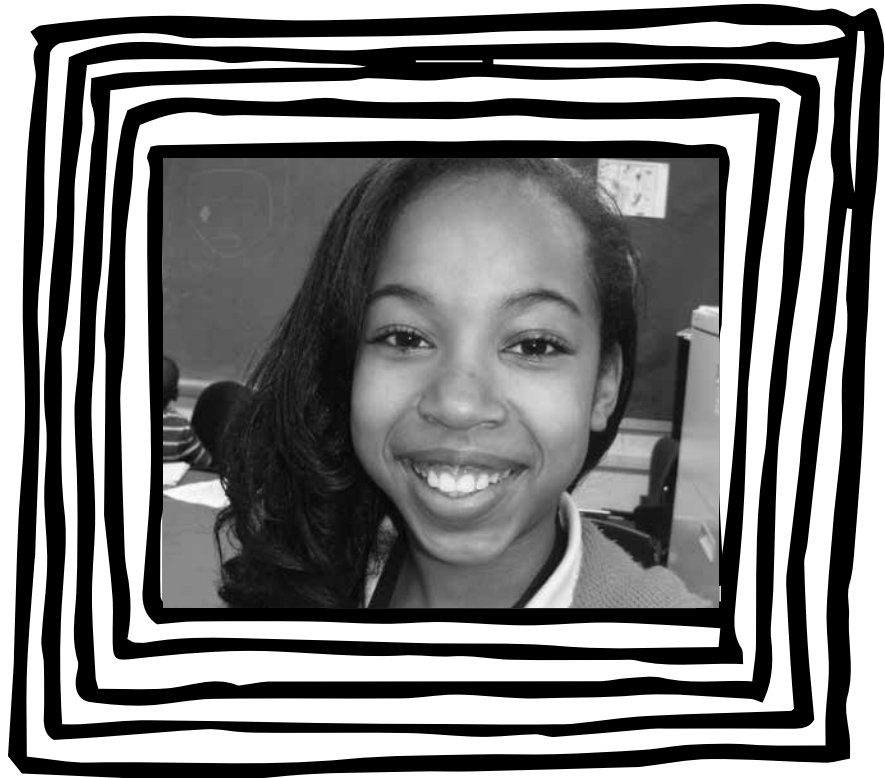
Too Cool

Since in the womb, I've been too cool.
So cool that all flames stop and drool
I'm so fast, I make the heaviest winds cry out loud
Everyone is still searching, I'm discovering
Just by walking in, I make the hardest plastic tender
I'm the brightest thing to ever exist--
Everyone else is transparent.
I stand out so boldly, even my camouflage is striking
I explored the whole world,
Unseen and unknown to everyone
I'm so phosphorescent that everyone is blinded by my glow.

Alana Hill



yes



Kayla Rosemond

Darkness!

Ode to hidden darkness:
I'm frightened of my past
My past was so hard to go through;
It was really scary to watch
someone get shot. It was beneath awkward.
It was very dark at night
and I was hidden to protect myself;
A few years later, I felt like I was haunted,
ghostly,
I was so young.

Te'Rae Dyson



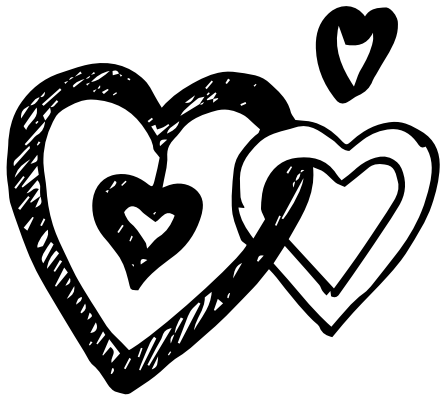
Masterpiece

When I get to be a painter, I'm going to paint a picture
of forgotten keys, locked doors, and doors left open
of battles against bullies in the ring, but fighting fair.

I'll throw in deep colors,
crimson, blue, and yellow
green trees, the red playground,
the slide, the yellow pole.

I'll paint a troubled picture of fights in school
bothering people, red blood in his face,
a swallow of Sprite
for better or worse, and moving on.

Xavier Carson



My voice

My voice sounds shy.
 My voice sounds soft
 and like a giant sloth.
 The children cannot hear my voice
 because I speak silent and very low.
 My voice says hello.
 My voice can roar like a sabertooth cat.
 My voice is important.
 because I need to tell everyone
 my feelings.

Jayvon Johnson

The nightmare teacher

When I become a teacher, my voice will be strict and tough
 no matter what
 so tough that I will be in your nightmare
 and I will challenge them to believe
 then they will not cause troubles
 and I will be fair.
 I'll be a frightful teacher
 I will throw homework at kids like snowballs.

Zynique Thomas



Xavier Carson

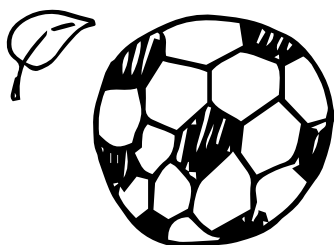
My blues that worry me

I am in shock
 my sadness flows in my blood
 my heartbeat is in Rome
 I can't hold it in forever.
 My blues are bad
 I can't control it
 I am sad, need to fix it
 cry, cry deep, deep down
 I know I am strong.

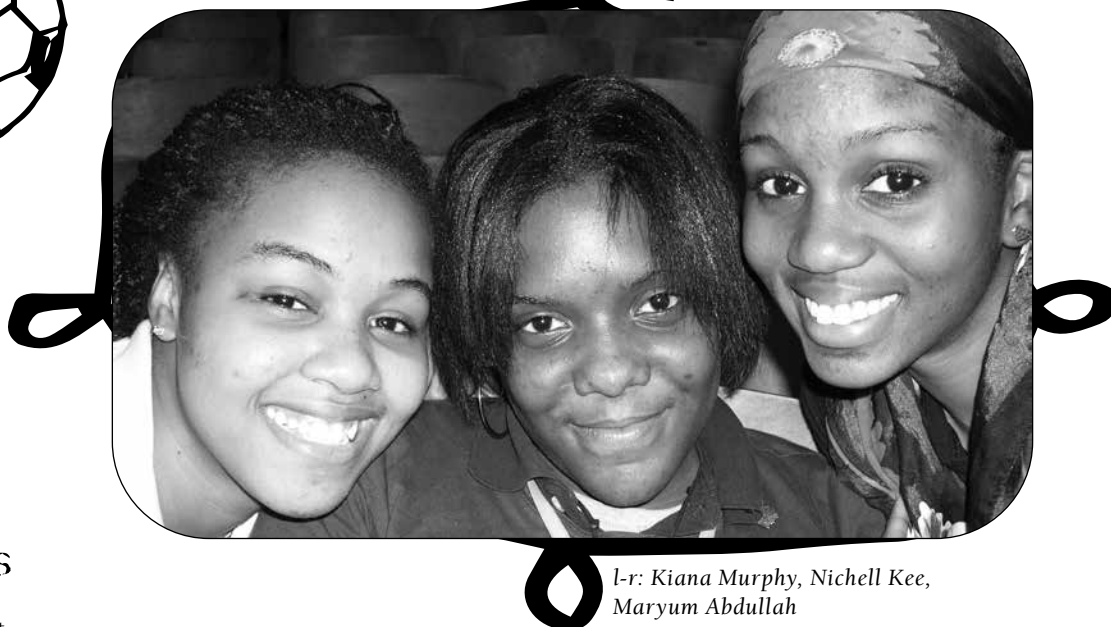
I can fight through my blues
 but they're coming
 and coming
 suddenly I see myself
 drenched in tears
 my sadness I feel.

Gerome Wood





OFUN!



Ode to fireworks

The stars come out at night
and there's magic for the animals
lions, tigers
I am the King
The lion is the king
and I'm the King

I can pet the lion
the glow of the moonlight
lights the night
and fireworks light the sky
I will be in the castle
because I'm the King
my colors are blue and red,
echoing the fireworks

Kevin King



When I am a poet

When I'm a poet, the literature world
will shake with fear
they will jump with blindness,
will battle for knowledge.

The writers will burn with the fire I set
They will crumble beneath my deeds;
The rivers I lay will not be erased,
they will be buried in the ground
like the nightmare in my mind.

Trus' Stevens

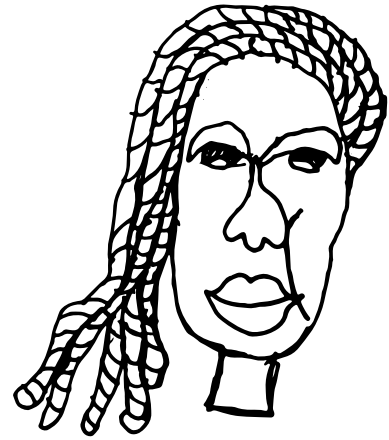
Turning 13

In math, I struggled, mystery questions
but as I'm getting better, I've started smiling
and I need to start paying attention and listen in class.
When we first got back after our long break on virtual
I had forgotten how to do some part of math.
Seventh grade is hard
and so is being 12.
I'm about to turn 13.

Zaniyah Taylor



Zaniyah Taylor



Beginning of a chef

A window of opportunity, endless
 Whatever you ask for, I'll make it
 My store will be gray and crimson
 Apples, tomatoes, strawberries
 When people eat my food
 their nightmares will disappear
 Even if I fail miserably,
 I will do my best to recover
 The landscape will be a garden
 so beautiful, no one will want to eat it
 The smells and tastes will be so amazing
 blindness will be cured.

Ramontae Roberts

A Snack in My Mind

A red photograph of a black picture
 Firelight flickering
 Changes into thirsty water,
 Orange basketballs tumbling in a magic spell
 A video of blue steam rising
 into the grass
 Crackers cracking into a snack!

Kevin King

My eyes

My eyes light up bright when I'm happy.
 I look too good and wise.
 My beauty is so glowing
 it brings sparks into the room
 like flowers when they bloom.
 When I'm mad, my eyes burn through people.
 Beauty lies within my eyes;
 I can't speak of what I have seen.

Zaniyah Taylor



WHY?

yes

My Hood

My hood is ghetto
Kids be outside every day
It's trash everywhere

Justice Matthews

Writing Club

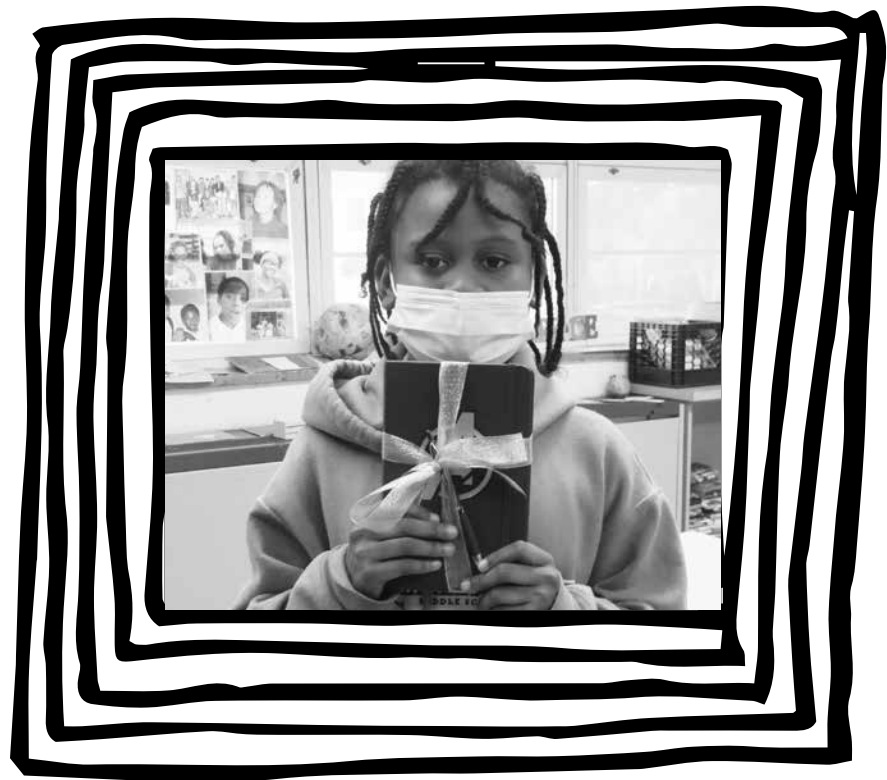
There's people reading
It's really quiet in here
I don't hear a noise

Justice Matthews

Change in the air

It feels cool in spring
Weather starts to get warmer
Flowers start to grow

Justice Matthews



Gavin Wood

Spring Rain

Water falls, drizzling
gusty winds and calm breezes
The sky starts to clear

Shaia Holmes

Trees and Me

Trees are green, tan, grey
I am just one color, so
I am not a tree

Naeshaun Ford

Spring

Spring is the warm air
hitting me with a light breeze
while the flowers bloom

Shaia Holmes

A Sigh of Spring

Sunlight is a sigh
saying we can play outside
like a miracle

Jamylah Summers



Spring Thoughts

Clouds above my head
full of fog; a forest grows
in my brain, overgrown

Aisha Hunter

In My Head

My brain's a forest
wolves are scattered everywhere
but still, there's silence

Aisha Hunter

Storm

The rain comes, and clouds
Streets are flooded, air is chill
Downpour on our fun

Gavin Wood

Spring Weather

Howling wind, cold, wet
Spring rain can cause tornados
Why does rain do that?

Gavin Wood



Xavier Carson

My Voice

My voice is as deep as the ocean
as loud as the thunder
that strikes down my eardrums
as silent as the children playing
I speak with defiance
to block out hateful words
I speak as fast as a bullet train
as big as a mammoth
I speak for eternity
but soon run out of words
as hollow as empty rooms.

Trus' Stevers





Writing Club, mostly writing

Philosophy

You do not have to shadow who you really are.
 It's okay for your soul to be in another orbit.
 Do not throw your creativity away.
 It's okay to be the mystery.
 It's not okay to change yourself for no reason.
 Your presence should be overflowing with golden destiny.
 Your wild soul is like your homeland, you're my space.
 Do not make your destiny suffer and collapse for anyone.
 You are part of history, so live like it.
 Your actions will be ancient in years, or decades.

Esson Godbolt

Spring

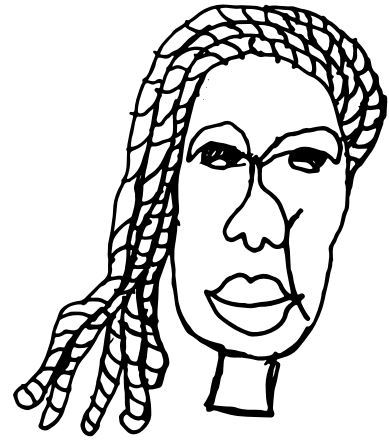
Spring is approaching
 The usual old decaying trees are growing
 The rain may come to say "hey, hey"
 but the flowers and their friends
 stay on their heyday
 Kids run around day and night
 random moms yelling at each child in sight

Alana Hill





Jeremy Jackson



Four-Cornered Room

I'm trapped in a room, stranded inside
All I can do is look in your eyes
I'm going insane, my conscience has flipped
I tried to run, but I always just trip.

This room was so dark, 'til you gave me light
This room, loud like riots in the streets
This room was so loud
'Til you gave me peace.

I feel so free
like dogs off the leash;
I feel so refreshed
like the ocean breeze.

I feel like a plane
so high in the sky
because you gave me wings
and now I can fly.

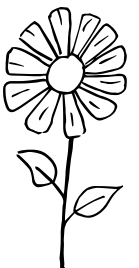
Goodbye dark room
Goodbye all the noise
Goodbye all the pain
I'm leaving you now
I'm flying so high
I can't even touch the ground.

Marquise Proctor

Esson

Tired, sleepy, hungry, (sometimes) nice
son of Donnie, brother of Jalani
lover of family, football, technology
who feels anger, happiness, tired
who finds happiness in football, basketball, cooking,
even though sometimes I get aggressive;
Someone who gives snacks, time, care
who needs food, air, a beating heart
who would like to see France, Europe, Asia;
This is Esson—
I would like to say. live life like it's your last years
—Godbolt.

Esson Godbolt



WHY?



l-r: Maryum Abdullah, Nichell Kee

Locked Inside

A cell phone, full of the deep and darkest secrets
 You should never ever once let anyone keep it
 Photos, files, emails, and more
 Where you usually keep everything stored
 Behind the phone is where people hide
 Their true identity, their life full of lies
 Not everyone is a friend. Just think and pretend:
 “Is this my friend or a crazy old man?”

Alana Hill

Alana

Outspoken, bold, sympathetic, and caring
 Daughter of a bomb, sister of troublemakers
 Lover of poetry, music, kindness;
 Who feels the need to overthink, be confused, satisfied
 Who finds happiness in friends, family, and love.
 Even though sometimes I turn my back against the world,
 Someone who gives love, good advice, and tough love
 Who needs better for my well-being, support, and self-awareness
 Who would like to see my siblings thriving,
 my parents successful,
 and maybe a concert.
 This is Alana—
 The one and only
 —Hill





Philosophy

My gaze is overflowing,
like a running kitchen sink
for if I cannot see, I cannot think.
Walking in an endless fog,
where my destination is
that is a mystery—
I will walk forever in eternal suffering.

And sometimes, I'm deceived by my shadow
I look around and what I see are regrets and darkness
standing hand in hand.

I have no fear, just disappointment;
my courage relieves me, like a cooling ointment.

Marquise Proctor

l-r: Gerome Wood, Shamar Brock

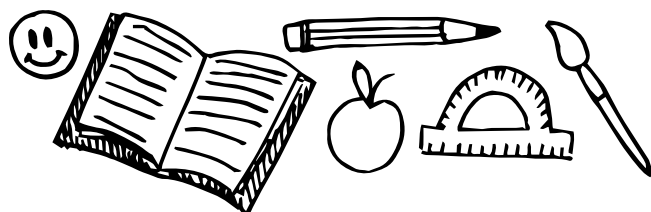
Truth

You do not have to change.
You do not have to suffer, slowly observe your timeline
and pretend you're in the Stone Age
because this lifetime is a mere phase.

You only have to exist, but do not get lost in the mist.
Be aware that you're just a number on a list—
Are you waiting to be picked?

Meanwhile, your last farewell is inevitable,
your proof can turn illegible
the truth you want to know may be terrible.

Sa'Mirror Chambers





l-r: Jai'Lynn McCall, Naujae Price

Life as Math

Life is complex,
I can't seem to find the sequence;
I tried to subtract people from it,
but I've learned my place value
I'm nothing but a pawn.
I need to go back to normal—
no more being formal.
Just start from the base
No more wild goose chase.

Marquise Proctor



My Name

My name is Sa'Mirror, or just a sound that I answer to.
Calling your child a word
is something they have to accept,
Will the meaning precept?

We grow as people and have many different sides.
Some are unknown, some are kept secret,
and others are what give us more names,
more images, more frames.

Your parents shape who you become,
they created the DNA on your thumb,
your life can be a rhythm...
What imprints will you create on your snare drum?

Sa'Mirror Chambers



The drizzling wildfire

Barbed wire filth, hungry eternity.
weeping in silence.
Remember for always, dusty justice
in a bright haze sparkling.

Listen! Thunder marching but truly hidden;
Millions of children ache for the truth, the cause.
Falling leaves, departed and rotten;
A storm above us all.

Grieve not! Camp memories fear
not orphans, but a barefoot struggle.
Your darkness holds a fight for sickness
while you let demons preach forever.

Wounds as golden as my hollow back,
yesterday's empty voices surround miles
of empty rooms.

Never again shall I flame a farewell
for truth has no truth to me.
Candles burn my marching boots;
Nightfall is a not-so-cherished
home to nothingness.

Cloaking felt rain, debris of my soul;
No clouds surpass me
I am godlike in height,
as terrorizing is my thing.

I want to roam this very spot as I like.
People say I'm a destroyer
but I am life too.
I have a right to be me.

Crystal Rogers



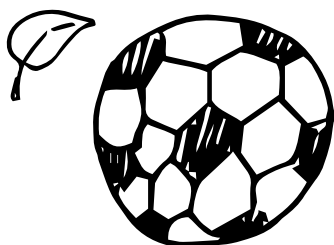
Trus' Stevens

All About Me

Kind, empathetic, passive-aggressive, levelheaded, emotional
Daughter of a volcano, sister of an earthquake,
Lover of video games, chicken Alfredo, the color brown,
Who feels the need to second-guess.

Sa'Mirror Chambers





OFUN!



l-r: Kajuan Centeno, Tatiana Pierce

The Sorrys

I have the blues, a harmony that clashes with a voyage's rhyme.
Far away, a silent but heavy shock vibrates with each heartbeat
The odes the emerge inside me
For realizing what I have to do, I should
Have said this sooner, I'm sorry
I hope you like this brash, silent melody

Trus' Stevens

Sounds and Shapes

The word sweet
sounds like a fresh-baked cake
that just got out of the oven.
The word play
sounds like a fun day at the playground
or in the backyard.
A half of a circle looks like a stage
and a little girl, scared to sing her fave song.
The black line looks like a bunch of ants
marching back to their home after eating.

Trus' Stevens

What it feels like

Being stressed is like being swallowed by
a swallow, a nightmare,
to be uneaten by singing squirrels on a crumbling battlefield,
have your mind broken and need to be cradled back to health.

Trus' Stevens





Jayla McMillian

My chaotic word

The room I'm trapped in
is a room with royal dolphins and gazelles
dancing to the melody of a trumpet,
lilac, the sweet smell at the table
smells like vanilla and chestnut,
a baboon hopping out of a limousine,
a leopard signing a treaty with his cigar,
a floating chameleon,
a jellyfish playing the trumpet,
a ballet in a cake.

The chaos in this room is like my mind
joyful and beautiful, but it's falling apart

Trus' Stevens



My life

I celebrate my voice, resurrected
over and over
in my brain, like a rare piano:
My hair, like a sudden fish, suddenly appears
My fingers feel like a shallow sound
My skin is like a drowsy door
to keep my blood inside, so I won't die.

My family is amazing, like an orange darkness
They help me in tough times, like a strawberry light
My life is like altered candy, a mixture of
hot tamales, sour patch kids, and gummy bears.

Ramontae Roberts



WHY?

yes



Justice Matthews

A beautiful poem

This world is dry and upsetting, depressing
it presses your buttons,
leaving you hopeless with a lowbrow attitude.
It makes you feel worthless and hate everyone and everything,
makes you dislike fun hobbies, and bullies you to be like them;
Hates your creativity, would rather kill you then let you live free and happy,
makes you wanna hurt others like you
They treat you different because you are different.

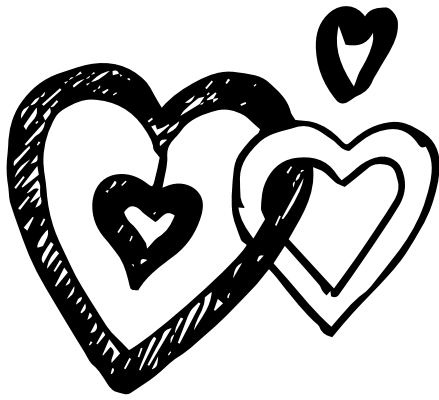
Naeshaun Ford

The ending world



If the world was ending, I would sleep, eat, and play x-box
as if I wanted to go outside
and feel the sunny breeze in the cold outside
and cry, sad because the world is ending
crying until night, and then the sky would go bright
then the stars fall out of the sky.

Zynique Thomas



A song of my feelings

When I was younger, I used to have a nice nurtured nursery
 with a quiet piano, with a beautiful quiet sound.
 The fun night sky feels smooth.
 I have a great grinning smile with soft teeth.
 What I got from the people that made me
 was their face.
 What I got from my father, was my anger.
 What I got from my mom was my mom's smile.
 My dad left me and my mom when I was a baby
 but still we are happy.
 My childhood was free and relaxed
 with a willow memory, a fallen bad past
 and a happy life.
 I'm a free child with my full fallen frustration gone:
 I am myself, and myself only, filled with joy.

Keron Jenkins

Monae Smith

Celebration

My brain is like an invisible tornado
 figuring out problems.
 My friendliness is like a perfect piano.
 My smile is like a favorite song.
 I'm handsome and cool,
 like a frozen fallen fragment of icicle.
 Every time I open the door, they say
 "Thank goodness he's home!"
 I always get pleased, like a happy hollow
 hamburger.

Ja'veon Brown





l-r: Kevin King, Marlon Cradle

Celebrating me!

I'm quiet as a bunny.
I love jumping on trampolines
or on the bed,
flagrantly forever falling.
The greatness is from me,
like having a party, with some streamers,
confetti and balloons, and to wear a party hat
and your best clothes, a black suit
and your bowtie.
Thank you for helping me celebrate!

Daniel Tembeng

Forecast

My weather for today was blizzard
Because I was feeling triggered

My mood for today was darkness
Because I was feeling heartless

My emotion for today was a hurricane
because I was feeling hurt today

Jamylah Summers

Exploding gravity

The universe is tearing apart the planets
and leaves the Earth shattered in pieces.
The sun explodes with hotness almost
like fire, gravity, disaster;
The eclipse was flashed by the sun
after the other planets were destroyed.

Jupiter! Jupiter was destroyed with the dust inside of it
Cracked, shattered, like a vase dropped on the floor.

Aisha Hunter





Sterling Smith

Synaesthesia

A star sounds like a bell or glass breaking.
A circle smells like a pizza.
White moves like a piece of paper when it's made.
A whisper kinda looks like you're kissing someone, but you're not.
The texture of purple feels like a color.
The letter K glows the color pink.
Whenever I look at you, I hear songs.
An animal's howl tastes just like a snack.
Your smile sounds like a bird chirping.
A baby's cry is bright like a light.
Mischievous smells like a fire.
A new idea feels like joy
cause you have a new idea to do something.
When I hear shouting, I can smell fire.
Every time I bite an apple, I can see the middle of it.

Ka'niyah Moore

The moon, the sun

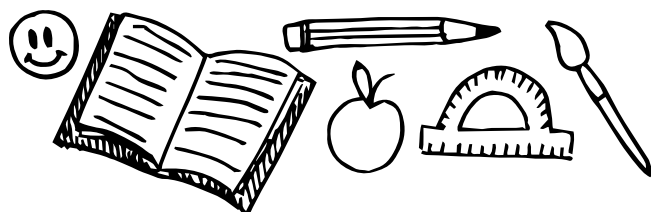
The moon is shining so bright
it fills my face with light

The black cat sitting on the very fence
trying to find his way somewhere

It was so cold at night
I had to wrap a scarf on my cold-blooded neck
and put a comfy coat on me in the night

When the sun rose, I was awakened
when the sun shined on the windows

Aisha Hunter





l-r: Zyneal Jackson, Andre Wright, Bunny Stevenson

Drizzle in spring

Spring is a season where it starts to rain
and the flowers start blooming.
Plants grow like time does.
I'm in my rain boots and a raincoat
to keep myself protected.
There is rain surrounded by me
while I walk to my home.
I finally get home and rest—
By the time I wake up the sun's rising.

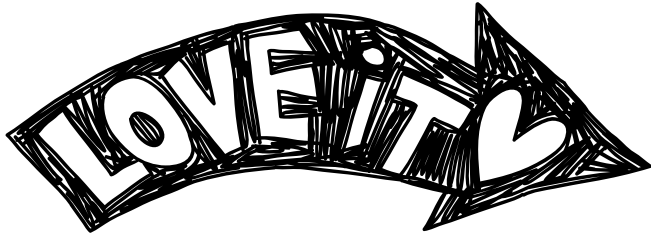
Aisha Hunter



A Clock at School

School's open, as kids walk into class
on the wall, as the sun shines on my face
3 hours for class, as kids look upon me
to see what time it is.
Time goes forward as I tick. Riiing!
Lunch starts, but I'm still there
as I go forward, it's recess and I am everywhere
children playful, playing in recess,
screams of joy and laughter, then Riiing!
Bell rings again, every child goes inside
as the teacher instructs them
3 hours later, it's midnight and I'm still there.

Aisha Hunter



Pretty pencil

Sensitive, intelligent, pretty and bipolar
Daughter of wickedness, sister of style
Lover of food, revenge, money
Who feels the need to seek revenge,
and receive justice and harmony
Who finds happiness in games, music, and
love
Even though sometimes people try to bring
you down,
Some people bring happiness and joy.
(Who needs hatred and abomination
when you can have love?)
Who would like to see the northern lights
This is Jai'Lynn
The one and only
Jai'Lynn McCall

Jai'Lynn McCall



Ogbugwo Okwumabua

My different emotions

My mental is a grieving from the endless fog.
I feel bitterness sprinkling through my cells.
I hear prevailing wind rattling up my spine,
Causing my thoughts to flood and downpour on my heart.
Sometimes the darkest storm cloud hovers over me
and makes me feel small.
But when sunshine is out,
I know it's gonna be a good time.
I see a drizzle of different emotions taking over me.

Jai'Lynn McCall



yes

A New Me

You
not wanting me
was the beginning of me
loving myself.
I was hurt
but not for long;
You took the creativity out of me
and broke it like a crumbly cake.
But I thank you for that
Now I'm a ball of sunshine!

Tailyn Trapp



Tailyn Tripp

The Dungeon under the Gym

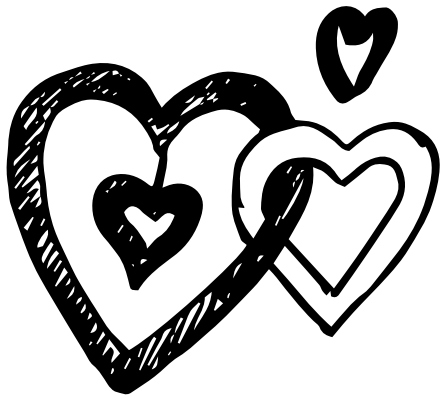
Who knows if there's a dungeon under the gym?
I saw two keyholes in the ground
I felt a wooden plank creak and move
I came back in the night, and shined it into the light.

There it was, my biggest fright
I went down into the dark, there I was
in The Dungeon.

Who was here? Why are they here?
I had questions running through my mind that needed answers.
What was this for? What was its purpose?
How far do I go?

I then explored into the deep.
There I was in the dark, I needed a spark
to show me the way.
I know there is a dungeon under the gym.

Jaquan Jackson



Rattling

The weather is polar
it's been hot, rainy, colder
the prevailing wind is almost endless
the glittering rain shower
the rattling blizzard traveling
throughout a darkening storm

Tailyn Trapp



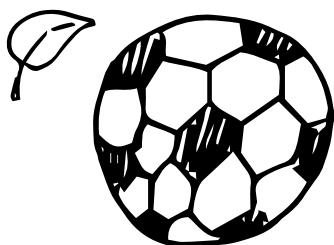
Daniel Tembeng

My Weather

My mental is sunny on some days
I'm skipping through the clouds and
go toward the sun on the horizon
all the way until the moon shows;
I control the weather. I'm raining when I'm down.
I'll cover the world in darkness with rain
as the moon stays up, or I'll cause an eclipse.
But I'll sit on the clouds and watch the moon as the rain hits the ground.
When I'm angry, I'll cry and use tornadoes to take it out,
and jump deep down into the sea,
play with my water dragon.
Last, I'll run on rainbows, and jump to tropical islands
and use my speed to go places into the world.

Jaquan Jackson





OFUN!



What makes me rich

I'm rich in love, I'm rich in positivity
I'm a nice prince, I'm loved by everyone
People love my voice, I'm rich in love.

I'm rich in positivity, I'm rich in being my own person
I'm rich in being friendly, I'm rich in first impressions
I'm rich in positivity.

I'm rich in bravery, I'm rich in being open
I'm rich in knowledge, I'm rich in first times
I'm rich in bravery.

Jaquan Jackson

Ja'veon Brown

Thunderstorms

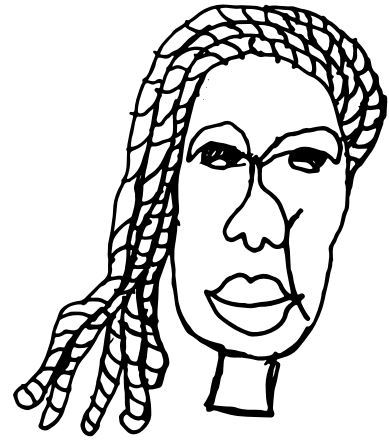
My weather changes very consistently.
It goes from sunny to stormy, high
wind, high pressures
floods, tsunamis, gusty winds, My weather
has no control
Once I'm cool, I always become cold.
My temperature is high,
higher than the clouds, when I'm upset
you don't know what it's about.
My emotions mainly are kept to myself
I want to go screaming and crying for help
If you could see my weather
on top of my head, you'd question if my brain
was in the air.
I'm mainly just a cloud with breezy winds
but when I am asleep, I'm on a cloud
near the sun, knowing I don't wanna wake up
cause that's no fun.

Shaia Holmes





Ramontae Roberts



Listen to yourself

You do not have to listen to everything everyone says.

You don't have to live in a place where you think what everyone says about you is true.

You only have to listen to yourself and what you want to believe.

Tell me about yourself.
Meanwhile, the sun is shining.
Meanwhile, you're still smiling.
Meanwhile, your inner self is still forming.

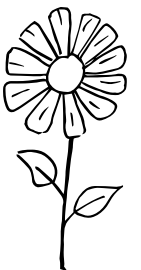
Whoever you are and however many obstacles you've been through, over and over, you still have self conscious thoughts but you are beautiful still.

Shaia Holmes

D.C.

Since I was born in the hospital of GW,
anger in my eyes
as mad as I was
I will ignore people who mask my glory.
Know I am older—
I can see the clouds and the moon,
I look at the clock above
to clear the rage in my darkness.
I feel sick, sick and tired of getting mad
at the people below me.
Around me I see people dying of hunger
and yes, they look ill.
I see so much of bitter people
as I look at the map, I see bad places and
I really hope someone can make this a better place.

Nakia Better



WHY?



l-r: Harmony Taylor, Trus' Stevens, Zaniyah Taylor, Justice Matthews, Te'Rae Dyson

My Spring

When it's spring, I feel bright
 My heart becomes sunshine
 I love the flowers when it's spring
 The colors of spring are nice
 and there are days—not too cold, not too hot—
 just good for me to go out with my family
 and it rains a lot, don't like that part so much,
 But I still like spring. My name is Harmony
 and that's the end!

Harmony Taylor

The Blues

When your shoelace gets stuck in the escalator
 Then you get stuck in the elevator
 They you get chased by an alligator
 That's when you feel like an alien invader.

And you'll go see Star Wars sooner or later
 Then you'll accidentally start a fight with Darth Vader
 That's when you feel like an alien invader.

Life is ticking like a clock
 with everlasting time
 while you're trying so hard
 to make some dumb poem rhyme—
 When you think someone's your friend
 But then they turn into a traitor
 It's okay because
 There's always going to be haters.

Ishmael Perkins





l-r: Shaia Holmes, Tailynn Tripp, Patrick Washington, Shamar Brock

The Dumpster's Poem

Sorry about my smell
 I can't move myself, I can't clean myself out
 I need somebody to clean me
 I have rats inside of me
 They really don't do nothing to me
 but eat my trash and they live in me
 and why I don't get changed?
 Nobody comes in the back of the school.
 I look rusty and green.

Harmony Taylor

Vowels

A is for black ants
 that are strong and tough,
 E is for yellow electricity
 that brightens up this room,
 I is for icy white doves
 that are very peaceful,
 O is for a blue ocean
 that has lots of fish,
 U is for us; U have my word.

Thomas Whitney

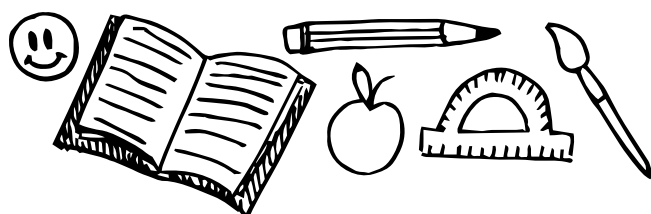
To be without

See me being alone
 See me being hurt
 See me being sad
 The sound of my voice is horrible
 I feel terrified at myself
 I probably killed her after her having me

I feel bad about myself
 I feel my blood boiling
 I know I should be feeling good about myself
 But I can't,
 I can't feel like I didn't do anything wrong
 After she had me
 She had to die

Her ashes are with me
 Her blood is with me
 I can't take pain anymore
 I can't cry anymore because she is always with me
 Missing her is like
 Missing life before my eyes

Cherie Evans





l-r: Rian Hayes, Cherish Carroll, Yasmin Jones, Maryum Abdullah, Anthony Torrence, Tracy Harris

Poetry

Maybe it's because of the people
 It could be because of the world
 People need to believe in themselves
 They probably have lots of goals
 Maybe if I defend this world
 It would kill all the stuff that's troubled in it
 Maybe I should get started
 Cause I have a lot to do.

Monica Reed

My Field

There is a field where I grow nothing but dreams,
 destiny and fate.

Each day I grow something new, even if how much
 I'm growing is overboard.

The fresh smell of cinnamon blows through my field.
 Four straight years my field has won

thanks to the brightness of the sun.
 In my own way

my field is my soul.
 Everything in it is worth pure gold.

Whitney Henry





Darkness

There is a field where I grow loneliness
where there is solitude and no sound
Not a heartbeat around

Every day I grow lonelier and
more sad by the minute where
nobody could go

There is a pain inside ready
to release trying to get out
but keeps beating down on me hard

Can't control its taking over me
the loneliness is getting darkness
Just like it's back every year

try to stop it but can't so
I sell the darkness to get
away from my fears

I close my eyes and think
about what I should do to
stop the loneliness in my life.

Theodore Washington



Trus' Stevens

I Want

I want to always sleep under a spongebob
blanket in heaven. I want never to have
a lonely person in my life. I want to live

life like a cat. I want to outlive a fish and its family,
the lovely sea. I want to speak your name,

I want to wait for you at the mic. I want to fight off those scary
dreams, those weird people. I want to

live off the dreams and wishes. I want to keep my heart alone.

Cherish Carroll



yes

Sadness

There is a field
where I grow only
sadness and sorrow.
It's something
like a prison.

My mind is black
as the night sky.
I see nothing but
darkness and I
think I'm insane.

My darkness is creating
madness and my madness
creates rage. I feel
like I live in a world
of darkness.

Joshua Pannell



Justice Matthews

Going Somewhere

I'm going somewhere
further than across the street.
I'm going somewhere people
said I wouldn't.

I might not be swimming in
money but I will do more than
anyone.

I will take my fellow Americans
from fall and winter and into
spring and summer.

I'm going somewhere and if they try
to stop me first I will still be going
somewhere.

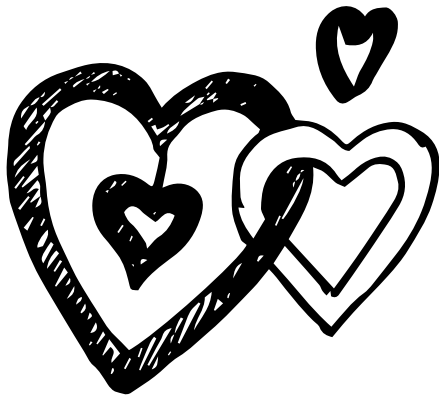
I'm going somewhere and in my foot
steps a new sun will push through
my progress.

Devonte Walker

Angry

I am angry now,
there is nothing you can do
to calm me down.
You can't stop me now.
Time's up, over, blow,
snap back to reality now.
There goes gravity
and the story ends
with happily ever after.
God please the pastor
We 'bout to jump you,
you hurry up, run faster.

Jayon Gray



Crops

There is a field where
I grow humiliation like
things invisible or
just like pain when things
are so complicated just like
life or like the hundred
angels watching over me
like I am in a different
world or day dream like
I don't know where else
I'm supposed to be.

Sandra Pearson

I Just Wanna Be

I just wanna be stronger
than what I am right
now. Not saying that I'm
a failure but I can do better.

Thinking in my own mind
my life could have started
off better, but God chose
the beginning of my path.

My hood is lovely,
except for shootings
and drug dealers, but
I love it in my own way.

I love it by just looking
at the emptiness
in the morning and looking
at the dirtiness before
the cleaners come.

Trevon Jackson



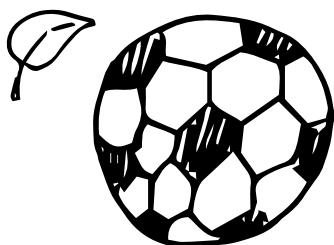
l-r: Te'Rae Dyson, Trus' Stevens

Untitled

I was born in Virginia Beach
I walked barefoot through the sand
Born black in Virginia Beach
Walked barefoot through the sand
But, when I reached the age of three
I left that place for good, said my
daddy fixed toilets, and he smoked
his blacks straight when I left that
Wednesday night he was leaning on
his blue Cadillac. He left her standing
on the yard with the moonlight in her
eyes, and I headed east.
As straight as the blue skies, I've been
to Kansas City and Baltimore City.
I've been to New York too. But nobody
can feel the things that I've been through.

Rian Hayes





OFUN!



My Real Name

My real name is wisdom
with an old soul stuck in an adolescent's body.
Yesterday, my name was unknown,
insecurity about the spectacles
seen in distant nightmares
and some horrible memories.

Tomorrow, my name will be delicate echoes
swimming through your mind.
In the future, my name could be
precious bellowing
under an old willow tree.

Secretly, I know my name is
eyes as beloved
as the roaring deep blue ocean.

Shawntay Kent

*l-r: Parkmont Poetry Contest winners
Trus' Stevens and Xavier Carson*

I Was Born

I was born in the shadow of a new beginning
where there is no right or wrong,
endless roads that lead to nowhere
but a bad dream,
I lived my life in pain and suffering
without friends no one to talk to,
no one to love or be loved by,
alone in a town of nothingness
nothing but empty streets and dark alleys.

I grew up on my own always crying
but you would never know it's like
people are there but not noticing me,
loneliness is what I felt every second
of every minute, of every hour, and day,
endless pain wanting to be loved,
waiting for that day to come growing up
in the darkness of my own head.

Michael Shields



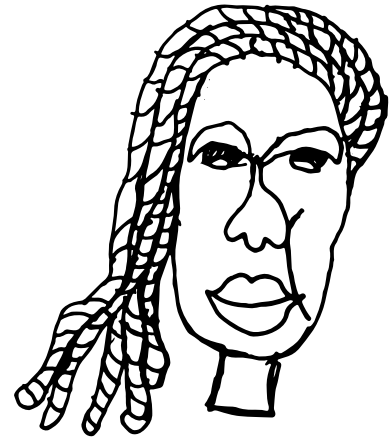


Keron Jenkins

You Told Me

You told me he would talk back.
 You told me I would not mourn anymore,
 he would be loyal.
 You told me I wouldn't be cobwebs
 by the time I see him.
 You told me he would bless me every day.
 You told me it wasn't stupid.
 You told me I would hear footsteps,
 but never doubt him.
 You told me as long as I talk to him
 I would not drown.
 You told me his heart wasn't bottomless,
 Now I don't believe.
 You told me...
 You told me a lot.

Devon Hudson



Hear My Words!

Hear my words on the dark staircase
 with the strength from the lord.
 Hear my words while I'm asleep
 in the ocean. Hear my words with
 flames of fire. Hear my words,
 they are unbelievable,
 while the silence rings in the air.

Hear my words as they are glittering
 in the moonlit clouds
 on the shallow water. Hear my words
 while the distance moves from my heartbeat.
 Hear my words as drowsy
 as the sudden haze that comes before me.
 Hear my words as the soul is
 filled with softness.

Hear my words, calm as can be.
 Hear my words,
 crumbling music in the inspiring vision.
 Hear my words arguing with people.
 Hear my words betray me.
 Hear my words forever and more,
 as I continue to speak.

Jessica Carter



WHY?



l-r: Trus' Stevens, Zaniyah Taylor, Te'Rae Dyson

You told me

You told me that I wouldn't get in trouble
if I told the fat woman that her eggs were too salty.
I felt like I was in a house full of thirsty people.

After the debt I paid,
I felt I had to confess.
I just had to bite my fingernails
because the way my father looked at me
made the mood so intense.

At times I find myself taking small footsteps.
When the angry sisters were yelling at me
I could see venom coming out of their mouths.

Tracy Harris



In Question

This don't go like this:
Say it feels right this time on this
Crash course in a straight line
In the mind of the distant struggle
They fill his head, hope and wonder
Boy says it feels right like this

Turn around and find the high life
Good day to be my answer
Good day to be like this way
Don't it feel right like this?
All the pieces fall to his wish

Guilty by association
In a mind of dust
I cast a wave of tension
over top of broken trust,
the lessons that you taught me
I learned were never true
Now I find myself in question
They point the finger at me again

Luqman Abdullah



l-r: Patrick Washington, Jeremy Jackson

Mystery

Golden sunset
bluegreen handkerchief
shadowy orbit changing.
Our destiny is our homeland
afternoon slowly suffering
perhaps overflowing kindness.
We conquer darkness.

I believe in opening windows
and closing doors.
The unremembered soul I regret
is a mystery—
how she died slowly,
suffering unknown.

I have no handkerchief to blow my nose,
and I hear trumpets blowing,
but I don't see any.

If I speak of my homeland,
it's not because I miss it,
but because I love it so much.

To love in its presence is a mystery.

Anthony Torrence

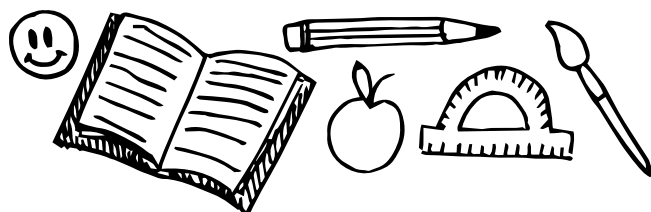
Blue

Blue so fearful, but cold
true sky blue sees so much
personality, style, rhythm too
I really wouldn't want to be blue

Blue sees me, loves me too, blue is
so bold it's like a breeze in the wind, shine like
the sun but still so cold, blue is a lot of things
and much more, so if you like me don't ignore
the true blue color

Frosted profound midnight ice, not water or chill
but blue so right it's my color. Love it so,
it's me, without blue I would be nothing
invisible, see-through.

Walter Jones





l-r: Nikenya Roberts, Nekhi Roberts, Nijaa Roberts, Nequo Roberts

My Scars

I don't want to look back
to see me then
because my scars are
all that's left of my past.

James Tindle



Where I'm From

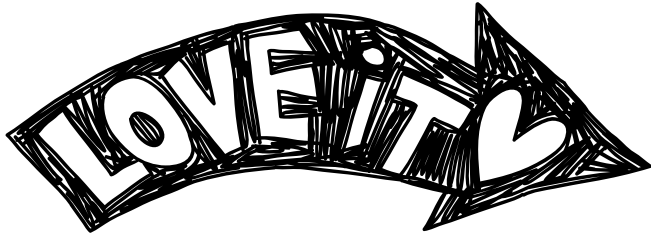
I am from...
The forty cal. bustin 2:30 in morning
Through my window, just barely grazing me
I can feel the heat, yet our
Mayor calls for 24 hour security.

I am from the cracks in the street
Too scared to ever go anywhere,
This side of the road, only place I know
Ain't that what they wanted?

I am from endless rollercoaster scares
Threats where emotion's a stranger;
I am from a place where we have freedom of speech
But they'd rather not listen.

I am from jam and toast in the morning
Was a thing of the past,
A smell of gunpowder and wet cigarettes, sure to last
I am from a hope that was lost
Before I was ever from anywhere

Nefertearia Crawley



My Scratched Interior

An interior of grafitti letters
engraved into my own interior,
Nauseous from rumors
soul deep blemishes
in shades greener than my mood,
Rotting my body from the inside
my velvet core
Scratching, biting, and clawing
my way
through the corner
I sat in to begin with.

James Tindle

Celebration of Destiny and Struggle

In times of joy, I celebrate myself;
I loathe my existence in times of struggle.
My inspiration is divine, God-sent,
and is not of this world.

I laugh at endeavors of discomfort
and harlequins of fear.
I believe that respect can only show respect
to one who is worthy of being respected.
As a reflex, I winced at you
when you requested my trust.

I am not exactly where I want to be in life.
Often, at times, my dreams seem farfetched.
I behold a taller, stronger, smarter, fresher
and more spiritual version of myself.
A self that has been through the sewage battle
of self-hatred and self-hindrance.
I then know that I am destined for greatness.
And I cry, which is my way of celebrating.

James Saunders



James Saunders

Little Lip

the word on the street is
lip stole the bike from the police
but his friend did
and lip just wanted to ride

but I think
the police were wrong to shoot him at all

so the police should have reported the bike stolen
then went from there
they should have just took him to the station

instead of shooting him in the street

Evan Phoenix



yes

Autobiography

When I started writing poetry
It was fun doing poems
For others to read.
Like an iceberg
Floating in the freezing
Ocean faraway,
I was a good writer.
My words were
Infamous,
Bad in their own manner.
Now the transformation
Is complete, the people
Changed me.
This is what I wanted
Back in the past, I
Was cold and lonely, with no friends
Coiled up in a ball of fear.
Now no fear is upon me
No more do my words
Tremble; I am a
Poet.

Damon Kee



l-r: Corey Thompson, Tyjuan Hogan, Darrell Barbour

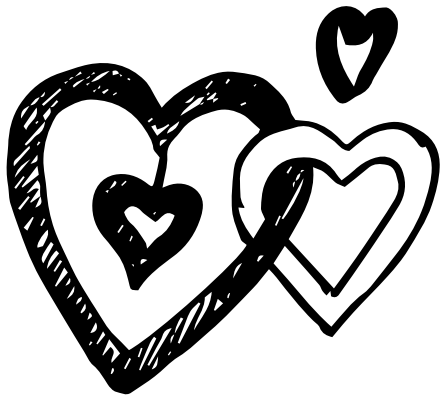
MOON

The moon at night
looks so bright
That's why it fits
just right

The look of it made us all take pictures
This is what it looks like at night
It looks like a round basketball
with stars surrounding it

And sometimes it looks like
it has a face that makes you smile
And I guess that's why
it makes you feel like you got a little hope

Ashley Stevenson



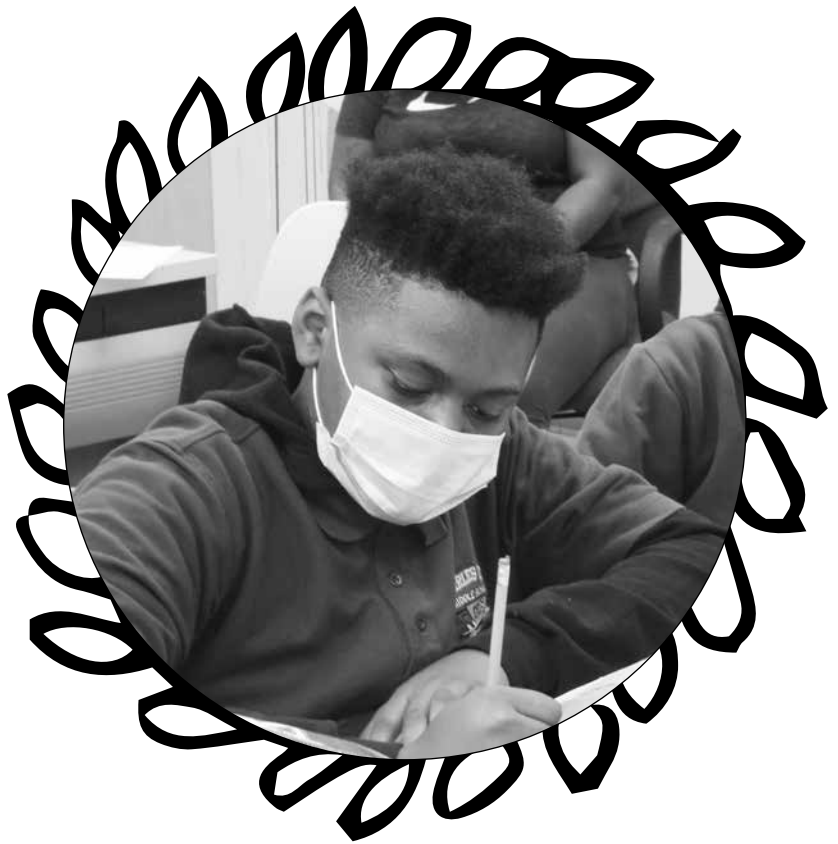
Incomplete

Without a trace
 Leaving behind signals of the unknown
 Forever lost but never forgotten
 Digging within the soul to feel complete
 Feeling left out from the lifeless
 Finding a way to put 2 and 2 together
 Without addition

Trying to let go without subtraction
 Feeling the regroup of more pain
 Than ever
 Leaving without answers
 Is never the option of forgiveness
 Being apart from what's bringing you forward
 Backing into a never-ending reality
 Losing the feelings within yourself
 Pouring into the control of others
 Leaving behind the soul of the forgotten
 Knowing that is you

You are the one within life
 You are the one whose soul is gone
 Whose heart is broken once more
 But in reality...everyone knows
 It's me

Kiana Murphy



Naeshaun Ford

Confused Girl

The confused girl in period 3
 She thinks no one likes her,
 all she does is look around the classroom.

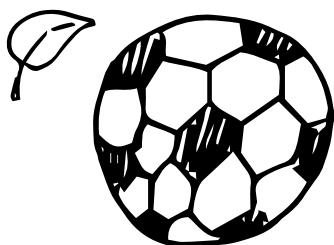
The rough students laugh and point fingers.
 Her sustained heart is being beaten.

The graffiti words written on her forehead:
 "phantom"
 Gunpowder turquoise blood pours down her face.

Stop her hurting somebody.
 So you can't hear me.

I guess it has to be me.

Renita Williams



Urban Renewal

Remember when
that old school
was there? Well
it's gone now.

Remember that
old library that
was over there? It's
not there anymore.

Watching all these
old ancient buildings go down
like the fallen moon
waiting for morning time
a new start on a new beginning.
Hearing the loud echo of the
Great Depression.

Yasmin Jones



l-r: Gerome Wood, Shamar Brock

After the Drowning

Since that day...
I've been the infamous jetsam
of the Anacostia River's toxic depths.
Lying in my pain. Lamenting life.

Insincere sycophant fishes swim around me
constantly in annoying circles.
Taunting me with the keys that unlock the anchors
that keep me submerged.
My only response to this blatant effrontery
has been steadfast silence.
I am filled with silent helium.

I am filled until I begin to float.
The anchors float beneath me.
They're heavy, but the journey to the top
will be worthwhile.

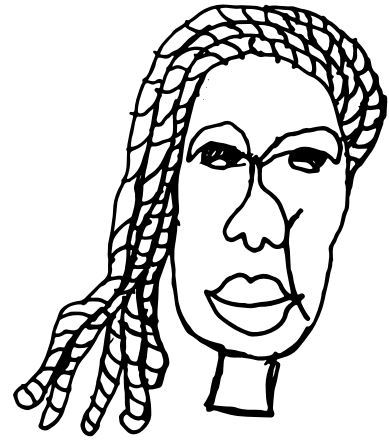
I look down and watch the fishes scatter.
I look up as I approach a translucent horizon.
The light is a strain on my eyes, but I can't blink.
I take a breath to compensate for 6 months of suffocation.

Now I've emerged, emaciated or slim?
I am now the notorious flotsam of the Anacostia
yet a new struggle arises...
How do I get out of this river?

James Saunders



James Joyner



My Life

I'm me and life is life.
 When you mix me and life,
 you get the ghetto...
 As I read, a vivid image should pop in your head
 until you stay away from this life
 My life is a bloody hell
 bent on expanding until it takes over
 I'm afraid of my life
 because my life is me, and I am my life

Jamal Buggs

It will be

It will be me shouting
 and being loud
 It will always be fighting in school
 disturbing the learning process
 It will be broken minds and holy souls
 living in coiled worlds destroying and gnawing
 at psychotic agony of the world
 and it will always be me
 writing, writing, writing

Monae Smith

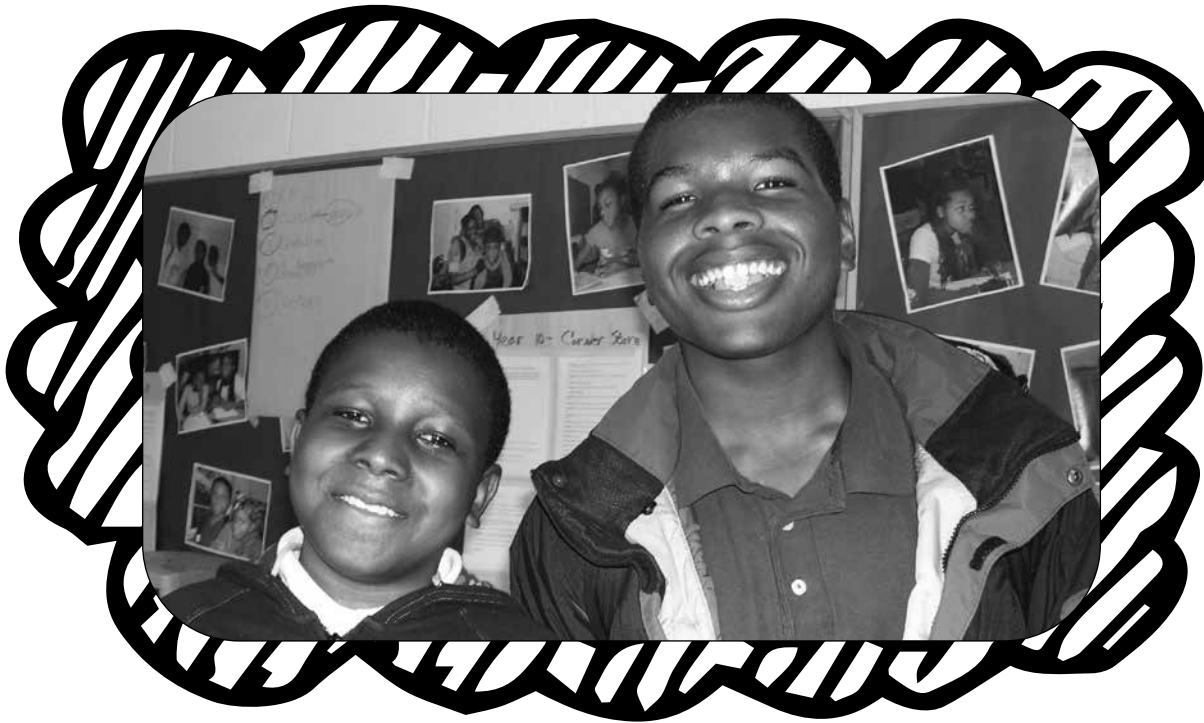
In this cornered room

I'm in the center of rooms
 in a black hole, going to that invisible point
 Imagining a great waterfall
 running into a pool of any and everything
 In that corner, mom and dad
 In that corner, drunkenness on the side,
 T.V. blasting loud
 Shouting in the upper corner
 Pink on the walls, racism on the edge
 Please let's wedge through these cracks
 Sadness on my left, illusions on my right.

Monae Smith



WHY?



l-r: Eric Armstead, Lathan Armstead

Twilight

As vast as the ocean,
Twilight is the archipelago of
emotion
the river of settings
strings along a bridge of images.

It's easy to get lost in the forest
where vocabulary appears brightly;
the compass of numbered pages
guides you along the coast of events,

Leaving you in the city of story,
following the chaptered streets
with many stations of characters
leading up to the points of the
memorial.

Gregory Edelin



In my room

Opening my eyes to find a room
One wall made of a barbed wire
Another of a pierced heart
Another made of a poem
that started writing itself from the start
and the last one a thunderstorm that started
with someone else's tears

In the corner between barbed wire and
a pierced heart is Martin Luther King
Between the pierced heart and the thunderstorm
are orange crayons and a bed to lie on
Between the thunderstorm and the poem
is the feeling of death
that came upon the room when Martin left
Between the poem and the barbed wire,
a rushing waterfall that gets taller every five minutes
These things are here because I created them
I wanted them
I felt them
I dreamt them.

Nichell Kee



l-r: Xavier Carson, Christell Carson, Trus' Stevens, Aniya Stevenson

Holy Destruction

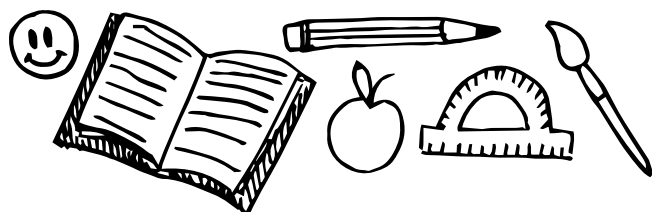
I've watched buildings collapse and seen abandoned complexes fall
Watched the sunset commit murder and seen the life of a young one run away
The wood has split and the craftsmanship—no good anymore
This place is history and will be, because of its destruction
Have you ever seen dry paint drip off the walls
because of hopeless people who don't pray anymore?
Signs of the Gods—worthless to the town
Hades has been growing from the roots since day one
I've seen the pride of a hero hide under a table—die,
Drowning fire and tears of toxic waste
make the blind see the horrors of Ares
One soul survives to die within time
and never walk the lonesome roads of the heavens again

Aaron Brooks

Hometown

Observing my hometown, D.C.
I know it can't suffice,
I cannot cease until I find
much more than the MLK library.
The perfumes of the unks
and cigarettes fill my lungs.
This atmosphere gives me
the inspiration to better myself.
The energy I have will help me
look for something better.
I will shine through
the violence, smoke, and crowdedness
so it won't deprive me
of what I'm entitled to...
Knowledge.

Latia Henson





The Parkmont Poetry Festival

My dream

Catch me from my falling dream
while I'm running from a deadly nightmare
and crawling from the triangle of other people's lives.
Let me stay in the circle of life
while you are screaming to get out.
Let me see the blue sky for the last time
while I'm dreaming of violet dandelions
and pearl crosses.

Edward Marshall

I, Poem

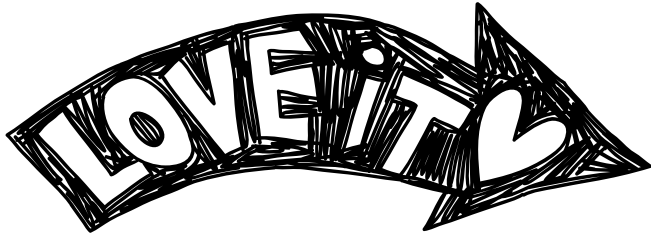
I come from unforgiving heartbeats
I make my home in the distance of softness
I see that the moonlight cries my name
And I wonder if the staircase ever feels in love with the blank
walls.

When I am alone I think about flames of thirsty souls
I imagine that I can see betrayal in every shadow's eyes
Everyday I see the hurricane's winds enter my dark soul
And if I look closely, I can see the poison of forgiveness in love.

A voice inside me says never trust anybody you see in a blue moon
And I want to tell the world that I'm glad to work with a heartbeat
and a pulse to keep
Right now I am bored
But someday I will be wild as a star
So I wish that I could become a famous writer in everybody's eyes
And erase this heart of shame.

A'Breale Wortham





We're the new faces of failure

We're the new faces of failure.
We give potential a bad name, label ourselves illiterate
By haphazardly thinking, staring at the back of books, calling it reading.

The sound of grunge on the back of our footsteps
Memorize lyrics more than we do academics
Gum smacking, the empty head diet
Burning calories of intellect.

We're the new faces of failure.
Not only do we lack wits, we also lack instincts
Life on the streets, leaders of the purely naïve
We don't think, we stink at life experiences.

We take the warning and turn it into an opportunity
But never do we take an opportunity and turn it into something good
We never have us in mind
Self preservation is not in our vocabulary
Do we ever think of the future? No.

We're the new faces of failure.
Where goals and aspirations are myths
And we don't take second chances.

We live for right now and not for tomorrow
Where we all share the dunce cap, and in our heads, empty space
We don't believe life isn't fair, but we do believe results may vary.

We are the new faces of failure.

Maryum Abdullah



Ramontae Roberts



yes

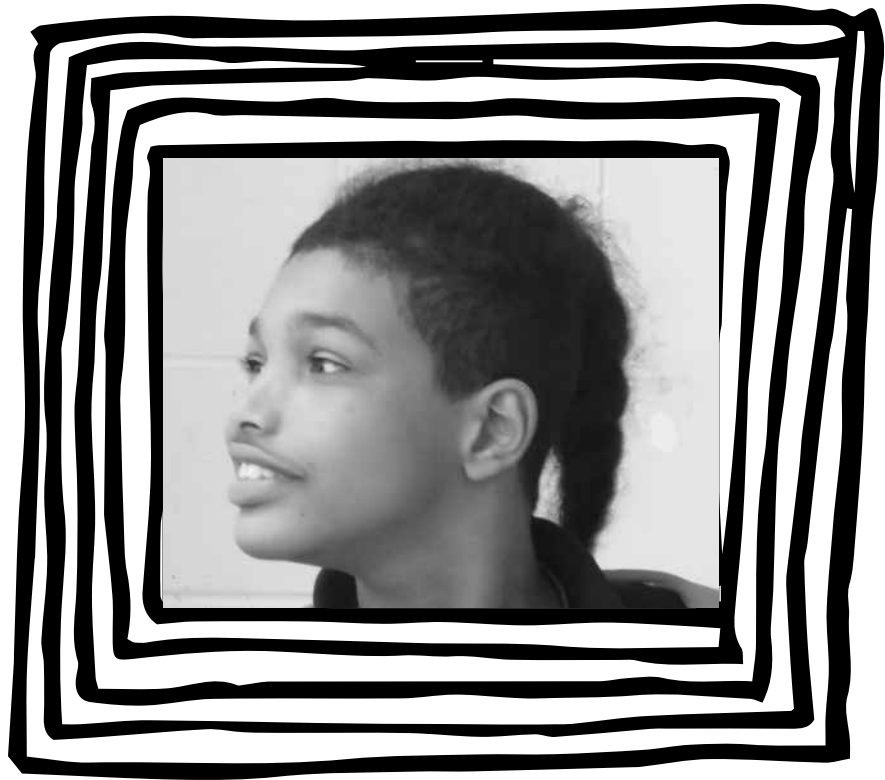
I'm the Book

I'm the book:
the book of success
the book of dreams
the book of unexpected conflict.

I'm the book:
the book that's misunderstood
filled with so much wisdom and creativity;
my words are like pictures
cut up in feelings
thoughts and secrets.

I'm the book:
the book you didn't expect to read
and find that I'm not what my cover let you assume.
I'm a book of surprises
a book of success
a book of unresolved conflict
a book of unknown secrets.

KeeShawn Murphy

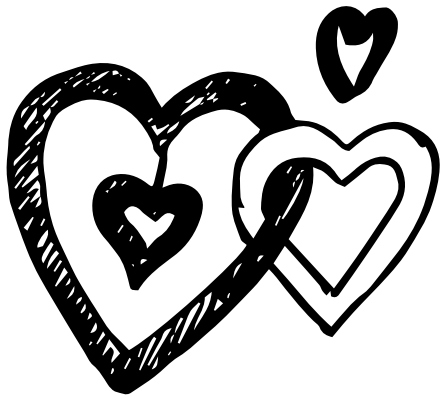


Ramontae Roberts

The Ways of Scaredness

There are scary thoughts and feelings,
Scared, you fear something
that you need to face so you won't be
scared of it anymore.
Your legs shake and you
don't want to go that way
and you turn around.
There is going to be a time
when you face your fear.
You can always be scared
but I know you're going to own up to it.
Scared.

Eric Armstead



I Hate Death

You wanna know why I hate death?
I hate death because it
hurts to look at memories.
I hate it because
it has left my family broken for years.
We used to go to grandma's house every day
now no one keeps in contact.
We never see each other
unless it's a funeral
and that's just a shame.
I hate death because
my cousin Damon is gone
and left behind three young children
and a wife.
Man, it hurts
to lose a life.
I hate death because
it's in my path
and I'm terrified
because I don't know which day
will be my last.
I don't wanna end up murdered
on someone's corner
or worse in a morgue, unidentified,
with my parents never knowing
I died.
At least I can say I tried.
All I see is hatred inside
because death has taken a toll
on my family, without a lick of pride.
R.I.P. to all those who died.

Monae Smith



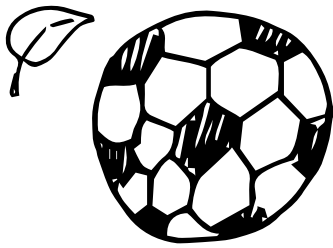
Ja'veon Brown

Reluctance

How tragic it is that reluctance always dances at the edge,
Moving slowly, peeking out ever so slightly
Breath caught in your throat, holding back is your only
decision
No one understanding
Indifference clouding their vision
Frequently reminding you to take the first step forward
You put a foot out, only to go backwards
Stalling the future by just making a run for it
No one ever gets you
They follow two steps behind every one step back
Hovering above you like air
Holding you back by pushing you forward

Nichell Kee





OFUN!

Colorful Truth

Slick, yet
the words slip clumsily
Clumsily, without any instincts;
the mind thinks quickly
Quickly, the words start to flow
somehow, it blows all in one direction

Direction, toward the heart,
through the brain to the mind
Insecurities covered under this entourage
of words

Words, bitter on the tongue
Conscience debating...crossing yellow tape,
death
Death, tried to capture the grimness
but my words weren't quick enough
It's tough enough to lie before blind eyes

Eyes, watched through tears
I feared
to see the lifeless body
laid upon me
but my words weren't quick enough
Sorry for the lies I couldn't tell

Kiana Murphy



l-r: Vasean Brown, Neal Hamilton

How I Learned To Ignore

Ignorance to the level of infinity
My head ready to explode like a grenade
wondering when they are going to run out
of words to say
But they just keep going
My mind feels like it's being scrambled
in a blender
unable to hear myself think
But the intelligence inside my heart
gives me one last gift of an idea...
Ignore ignorance.

Kirk Murphy





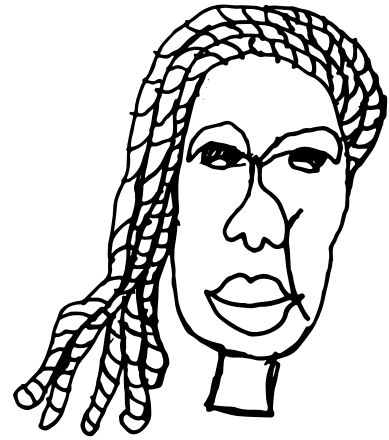
Shawn McPherson

I Sing

I sing of violent Natt, Wanda's son
 who never left the country,
 who never killed,
 because he didn't need a gun.
 Stealing was an option,
 but jail wasn't worth it.

I sing of Natt, with the single gray hair,
 who didn't drink cause he needed to get home.
 He did the wrong things when he was young,
 but had to change his ways because he had a son.

Khalil Jones



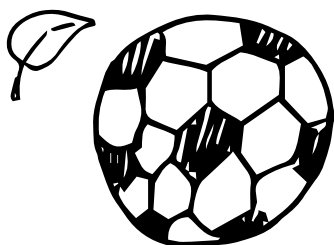
Always

There will always be a mirror to
 darkness
 There will always be strangeness
 buried in the deepest abyss
 There will always be a yard full of
 sweet elegant flowers
 There will always be a hideous enemy
 looking for victims
 There will always be a heart that
 has an unfamiliar rhythm that
 will leave you breathless
 There will always be jealousy that
 leads to brutality
 There will always be sunlight that
 awakes the world
 There will always be an ancient memory
 stuck in my head
 for eternity
 but at the end of the
 day there will always be
 a soul waiting to be free

Janine Green



WHY?



OFUN!

Lost

I was lost at a crossroads
trying to find my own way along
at a dead end.

I guess I needed space to change
what I call a prison into a place.
Grace, I can change myself.
Striving with all my might
to leave this place,
with my last nerve
and my last breath.
I cease to be lost
but instead of just giving up my life
I open my eyes and see the light.

Mark Neal



Alana Hill

Astonishing

1.
How astonishing it is that language can almost mean
dinner plans on Tuesday, but your paramour
had reservations there also and you give a blind
smile, that you would give a co-worker, I know
the layered purple and the smell of expensive yogurt
on your breath, that smells like three after we met
and I smile like a trophy would, stutter over the
word steak, I know her just the same way he
does, just by the sirens flaring, shred to atoms instincts say.

2.
How astonishing it is that language can
almost mean, bad appetite, everything tastes
like spoiled wine and the strong perfume awkward.
She stares from afar, admiring my love's
fist of diamonds that didn't mean much. My tree
I want to say, but instead I just say a prayer over
whatever dish this is.

3.
How astonishing it is that language can almost mean
nothing. I love you keeps the world spinning.

Maryum Abdullah





Shamar Brock

My House

I live happily and go somewhere
and my house is as still as a brick;
Open the door and you see the hall
that echoes when you talk.

Happy-hearted, this house was built
by human hands and the bricks are inside
You find bricks that really hurt.
This house is still standing, and still
the door won't stay fixed
Knock and enter happily—
Your shadow is following you
Come closer and see this beautiful place.

Rise and you will see that you will make a lovely day.
In a corner with mercy covering me,
my life is a fortune, like yours

Danielle Blake



Transparent

My gaze is fresh, pure, and new
Like a brand new day
And a new sunset
I desire the right to worship
I'm a window
(I don't exist)
I am transparent
I am soul and sky

Shambriel Metts

Everything Is Possible

I live in secret and go anywhere that is cool
Some people have dead hearts
but mine is rigid and still going
Mystery is like fortune; it comes at you any time
My tenant is safe in my house
and in its vastness I am strong and smart
My eyes are like broken beams that will never be fixed
My coffin will be cold and dark and everyone will miss me
But to me, everything is possible

Terry Bennett



WHY?



Ogbugwo Okwumabua

Reality

Reality is a life check that
I need now
Reality is a little girl out on the street with no siblings
Reality is a woman who feeds birds
Reality is pen on paper writing a song
Reality is a note to every song I play on my clarinet

Shama Better

Me

I have the power to love
They see me as a flower that gives love and strength
I'm free to move about and shake about
I have freedom
I'm not held up
My uniqueness is so powerful
Everyone knows my joyful smile is bright
Everyone sees that fantasy is not the thing for me
Reality is good, it shows who I really am
I am so brilliant, I am smarter than me

Tierra Thornton

My Name

Myself: my name smells like new growing trees in a forest
My name sounds like a very small beginning and a very loud end
If you were to taste my name, you would taste
a romantic evening on the grass after sunset
You could see my name on a billboard chart or an open business
and you could feel my name
like a soft body just getting out of a warm bath

Shamia House





l-r: Maryum Abdullah, Kajuan Centeno, Nichell Kee, Tyshea Alston, A'Breale Wortham

At the back of progress

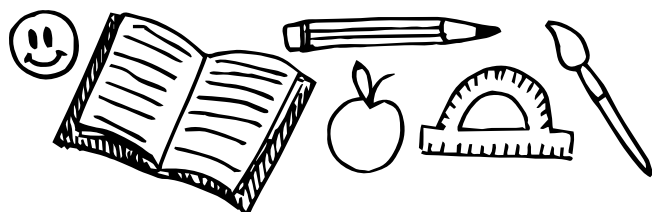
My midnight mazes through curtained cries
Harvest hollow screams like such a sad song
Dream distant dreams that fill your soul
Don't let dark reflected dreams get in your way of life
Descending silence is like a shallow space
Velvet students are like the royal family
This poem is like the altered words in my mind

Markus Johnson

To Be in a Song

To be intertwined with the meticulous melody,
to ebb and flow with the rhythm,
to know it's clearly polyphonic;
To equate the color red with the timbre
because the lyrics burn with such powerful
emotion,
to feel safe in its warm chorus,
to be equally excited to see
the vamp every time it appears,
to share the vision of the song
to have the same desire to touch the listener,
to be beautiful,
to be art,
to be content with myself
and
never want to leave this beautiful place
a song.

James Saunders





l-r: Jaquan Jackson, KaJae Defoe, Trus' Stevens, Jazzmen Graham

blank boy

When I watch him sit there
blank in destruction
as the day goes by
I see deceit in the young boy's eyes

His character is like a shadow
of humiliation
sittin' on the street
bitter, mishandled, so much chaos
insane, he thought

The battle for friends, he lost,
and, broken,
tossed around, tumbling, and full of commotion
but the flame of dignity makes him stand
and everyone realizes he is alive

Kiera Coleman

Non-Conformist

Call me a gothic mohawk, spiked
and gelled to dark, rebellious
perfection.

Call me a hippie guitar, studded
with icons of peace and unity.
Let me drive my freedom-fueled
punchbuggy through your mind
and soul.

Call me an environmentally aware,
bargain shopping, jellybean sandal-wearing,
bird feeding, obsessive compulsive
disorder wielding, animal loving vegan.
Call me the girl wearing flower prints
when they are no longer in.
Call me retro in the 'hood.
Call me the rotten apple that
spoils the bunch.

James Saunders





The walls that created a childhood

Five steps to a journey,
leading to another scenario;
a green door vandalized by
“No Candy” signs for Halloween.

Navy blue couches, squeaky floors,
evolution of the past.
Stairs that go on for an eternity,
left and right,
leading to rooms with different personalities.

Volume that rings, the thoughts of a non-existent childhood,
silence on the other end, tuning out the world
Room number 1

Frustration from a high school deadline,
anger of a video game gone wrong, behind closed doors
Room number 2

Thoughts expressed through a motor that goes on and on,
child finds her way back home.
Another life is born with unborn thoughts,
screaming for satisfaction
Room number 3

Jail cell of secrets,
erupting through the walls,
but somehow the silence is too loud,
sealed within the walls of this sanctuary

Kiana Murphy



Marcus Johnson

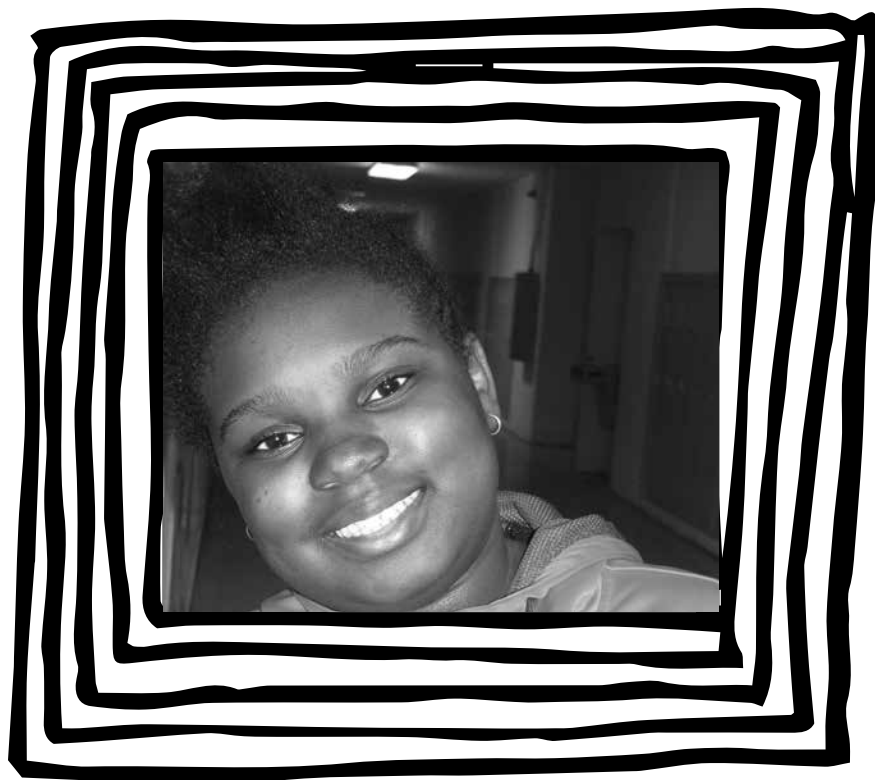


yes

Destruction

I am a cup of death
Filled to the top with hatred
The anger boiling inside of me
Like a kettle of hot water
It rages like a black tornado
Destroying everything in its path
My red hot angry knife
Slices the last bit of light and love
The darkness covers everything
And chokes the life out of life itself
Red and black covers all the earth
With slaughter and murder
Destruction is my name and
That is what I am

Damon Kee



Daisha Wilson

There will always be

Broken glass will always be in my life.
Rain will always be in my life.
The sky will make shapes: people, cars and animals.
There will be memories in my life
And I will always have a life.
I will say grace in my life.
It will get dark in my life.
There will be girls, boys, women, men, and jails.
We will always have storms, and people will die.

Dwight McCrae

Closed Doors

My life in the next dimension is wonderful.
If anyone tries to stop me, I'm unstoppable.
My name is unspoken, you don't know me.
I'm like your shadow you can't touch me.
I'm like fingers that can't turn Double Dutch.
I'm your enemy swimming in the deep blue sea.
I told you that you don't know me.

Natasia Saunders



You Figure It Out

In an ancient time
an unforgotten dream
that scared me
and took my heart
through a dangerous pulse.

Mortal revelation
going through my restless soul
seeing:
that person
that thing
that body.

Wounded dream
in a luxurious fortress
releasing
the tenderness from my mind.

Cruel ember
come from his uprooted heartstrings
struggling asunder like
a withered lantern
in mid-day light.

Monae Smith



Abdull Ali

Grams to You

Girl, don't you wear that short miniskirt
So boys like him can laugh and flirt
You got a man and he goes to church.
No high heels and tank tops will walk out of this house
You won't walk the street with your cleavage hanging out.
75 cents is in your back pocket--
Where's that plaid dress with the lovely locket?
All I'm trying to do is keep you off the streets
I think of you every time my heart beats.

Joseph Hudson



l-r: Zaniyah Taylor, Trus' Stevens

Riff About My Father

Sitting there with fear yelling
at the top of his lungs
Whispers between the walls
Floor shaking
Deep tables slammed with a fist

Standing on the stairs
a little girl
staring at the father
breathing with anger
But as he looks at the sweet sugar chocolate pie
he really sees his baby
white cold ice going down her lips

Antoinette Better



Tears of a Faithful Boyfriend

You live to see them come,
you live to see them go.
Why stress yourself over one
when there are plenty more who want you?

You expect all of the mind games played
and all the acting funny.
Sometimes you feel used,
sometimes you feel fed up.

Some people tell you, you are stupid or dumb
because you break up with somebody.
Then you get back together,
then break up, and get back together.

Some people just don't know what you go through.
Some people say you should not have gone with her,
but it is too hard to let go of somebody you love.
It is like trying to say goodbye to a relative or friend.

Some people cry because they are sad,
some people cry because they are mad
but I don't.
I cry because sometimes I just don't know what to do.

DeAngelo Spann



l-r: A'Breale Wortham, Luqman Abdullah

Who I Think I Am

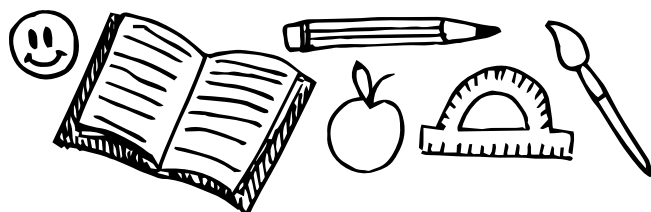
Someone once asked me,
Who do I think I am?
And I thought to myself
I'm the dynasty, the precious stone,
the queen of the throne, the tiger,
the fiercest of them all.
I think there are just two words for me:
precious dynasty.
My parents think I am endlessly drowning in the sea,
secretly blocked from anybody.
The tears really don't mean anything to me,
for I am waiting for the sunshine that tomorrow will bring.
My friends think I will be queen.
My grandmother thinks my name is Fierce Tiger.
My name used to be Quietly Drowning, for Nobody to See.
But my name right now is Precious Dynasty.

Shakia Brockenberry

My World

Graying through the grass
looking at the granite
strewn in the clarity of the sky.
My ancestors floating around me
while I pray for forgiveness.
Kissing my ghostly mother,
watching my bother crying,
lying on the ground, asking for her to come back..
Asking, why her?
It's like my world has come to a stop.

Mariah Moorer





l-r: Shaia Holmes, Naeshaun Ford, Shawn McPherson, Te'Rae Dyson, Zaniyah Taylor, Trinity Dorsey

Empty Glass

A half empty glass is more like love than hate.
 The glass is so empty,
 like a heart that has been used for so long
 that it cannot be used anymore.
 The glass is broken, it cannot be fixed anymore.

Alexis Arrington

Night Falls

As night falls and the world closes
 Tears shatter on faces of pain
 Busy streets are now empty
 Smoky lightning hits the road of light
 Bodies and minds are confused about what to do
 Pink, blue, orange and yellow faded to a smoky gray
 Names, words, sounds turn to zero knowledge
 Time and measure are all the same length
 Pleasure is no fun, it's all about business
 Books and novels are just paper with words that make no sense at all
 So if the world closes, night will fall,
 Tears will shatter on faces of pain.

Britany Austin





Eternal War

I want to steal your voice,
boxed up and packed to ship
so that the words you speak
won't hurt me.

I want to keep your heart
on the shelf
just for backup
in case mine no longer works.

I want to drown your soul
because I have no more space in mine
my soul is full of the tears
cried during the hurricane.

Let me show you the girl who
trembles at the fire burning her hand,
what it feels like to hurt.
Let's see who yearns for the bridge
to quake and crumble and split
and end up broken into the water below.

Let's see who sheds the last tear.

We will know what it feels like to hurt together
only yours will be eternal, like the curved backbone
of the ancestors writhing in prayer.
You will not win.
Fight the eternal war.

Jessica Carpenter



Daiquon Felder

May I go now?

May I go now?
I didn't know if my work was done.
May I go now?
Do you think the time is right?
May I say goodbye to pain-filled days and long sleepless nights?
I've lived my life and done great things, setting examples for
many children.
So can I take that step beyond and set my spirit free?
I didn't want to go at first, so I fought with all my might.
But something drew me to that warm and loving light.
May I go now?

Christian Gilyard



yes



l-r: Reginald Dwayne Betts, Micah Betts

Star Falls

What if all the stars in the sky
just decided to fall?
If all the planets in the universe
turned into little dots?
Galaxies and galaxies
just turn into glitter?
The larger things are,
the smaller they shrink;
smaller and smaller, to a molecule.
But if you're wondering what'll happen to us,
don't worry, we're all just dust.

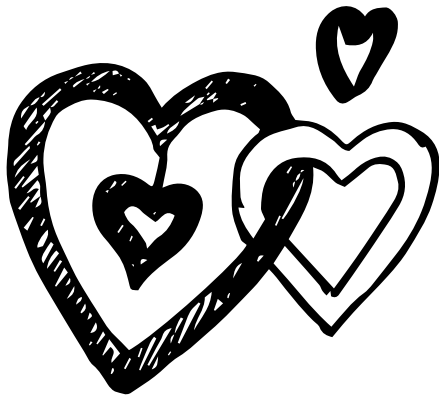
Shaia Holmes



Skyscraper (Space)

I wish I was on top of the skyscraper,
the tippy top,
to touch the moon
and touch the stars.
Stay at the tippy top,
stay in space
nice and quiet.
But why?
Why do I want to stay there?
Probably because of the silence
and the darkness.
I would take my baby brother with me,
sing him a lullaby to sleep,
then I would start floating and fall asleep.
Why do I want to stay on the skyscraper, you ask?
Well maybe I need my...
Space!

Sa'Niya Mapp



Rich!

What makes me rich without money
is my intelligence, because when I don't think
I can do something, I get it right
and it makes me feel thrilled,
like buying a closet full of clothes and shoes.
But intelligence is one thing you can't buy.
You have to pay attention and learn from your mistakes,
but you don't gotta pay to pay attention, so
maybe I'm rich with knowledge.

Amorae Ross



Elijah Jones

Why?

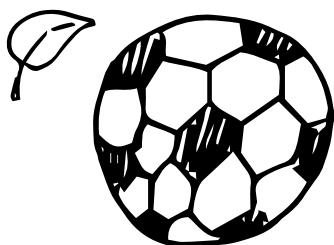
Why am I always tired?
Why am I so mean?
Why do I eat a lot?
Why is it that when someone is getting beat up
nobody helps, but they pull out the camera to record?
Why do people like to record me when I sing?
How was God made?
Does God have parents?
What if the full moon exploded and everyone died?

Amorae Ross

What I'm afraid of

I'm afraid of dying
because I feel that I eat too many sweet things
and too much sodium, and I know that it isn't good for me
but it tastes good, and I play a lot and end up hurting myself a lot
and if I take a handful of junk food,
then I would be hurting myself again.

Amorae Ross



OFUN!



Shaia Holmes

Signs

A face changes, melancholy he loses money,
that sign means he is sad.

A boy was left alone by his friend,
that sign means he is abandoned.

A girl was saved from a car accident,
that sign shows that it was a miracle.

The sunlight glimmers on a plant,
the plant grows each and every day,
that sign would mean that the plant is thriving.

A person that you don't know or can't recognize
is a stranger.

Elijah Jones



Be Yourself

You don't have to be like everyone else.
You don't have to be perfect
for everyone else, because they want you to.
Be you.

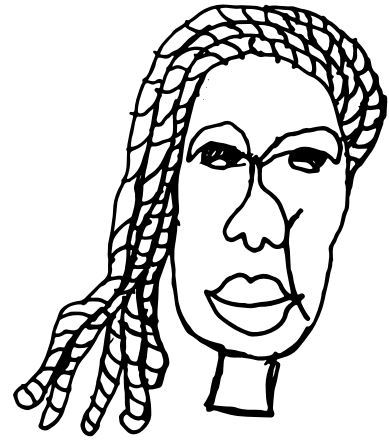
Tell me your secrets, and I'll tell mine.
Meanwhile, people are still being judgmental.
Meanwhile, I'm still there for you.

Whoever you want to be, be it.
Don't let anyone bring down your courage.
Be you.

Sa'Niya Mapp



l-r: Xavier Carson, Christel Carson



The Richness of Shamar

I am rich in love, as if it's Valentine's Day.
The reason that I'm rich in love is that
my family and friends give love to me
and care about me.

I also feel rich in friendship,
because my friends care about me
and will help me if I am going
through a tough time.

The last thing I feel rich in
is appreciation, because when I work
on something challenging,
a goal or assignment,
I get appreciated for completing it.

Shamar Brock

How I found out I was magical

I was sleeping near the chimney,
muttering a peaceful song, when I heard the sound
of the fire drifting away.
Then a damp sense of unhappiness came over me
and I felt my heart stop, and there was just silence,
as my body failed on me and shut down.
But a soft comforting voice asked
"Do you want to be special?"
I was unsure whose voice it was, but I said yes,
I want to be special.
I had to choose what artifact I would carry my music in;
I chose my heart so I would be indestructible,
but then I woke up in a hospital.
I was feeling hungry, and when I wanted pizza, it just appeared,
and that's how I found out I was magical.

Elijah Jones



WHY?



positivity

l-r: Zaniyah Taylor, James Joyner, Te'Rae Dyson, Trus' Stevens

i love myself
there are so many great things about me

i give off good energy and a vibe
i'm always joyful and leaping with happiness.

i love music, music keeps me moving.

every morning as I begin to get ready,
my skin is crystal clear.

i'm always shining during the day
when the wind is blowing,
my hair sways along with the breeze.

Talaya Broadwater



A bottle of flat Sprite

Sitting on this desk
I have memorized the times she comes
8:20 AM, she leaves
3:30 PM, she arrives
every time with a new bottle
but she still leaves me here.

I have gone flat by now
I have collected dust
My space has been cluttered
I can't be drunk now
Can't I be thrown away?

I have a fear;
Being thrown away, it is
It is what's right though
Can I be free of this fear?
Finally... I have been set free into a recycling bin.

I will be reborn!
From what I was;
A flat bottle of Sprite.

Naujae Price



Keron Jenkins

Overthinker

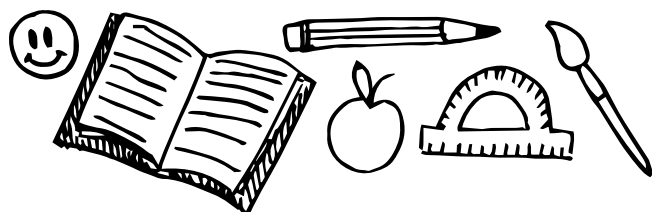
I believe that I overthink sometimes
about love, because my heart is not
physically, mentally, financially
ready for a relationship.
To be honest, I regret even having
boyfriends.
The world wasn't made for us to think about
it.
To think about certain stuff that you know
is true
but you don't want to believe it
because it will hurt like a knife
stabbing you in the back.
My darkness is overflowing me.
I act like it doesn't exist.

Te'Rae Dyson

Mixed-up senses

A star sounds like a baby crying.
A circle smells like water flowing down a hill.
White moves in a circle, like a tire.
A whisper looks like a quiet ghost.
The texture of purple feels like a softball.
The letter S glows the color blue.
Whenever I look at you, I hear a singing bird.
An animal's howl tastes just like a hot wing.
Your smile sounds like a puppy.
A baby's cry is bright, like a shining star.
Mischievous smells like a demon.
A new idea feels like a smarter brain.
When I hear a laugh, I can smell joy.
Every time I bite an apple, I see happiness.

Aisha Hunter





Elijah Jones

Fear

I am afraid of the dark
because there's lots of unseen things
in the darkness.

It's my fear since I was little.
At night, I kept the light on--
I never turned it off.
But luckily, I grew out of it.

Zaniyah Taylor



Stuff about Justice

I am Justice,
nice, smart, loud sometimes, shy,
daughter of a flower and water,
sister of a crybaby,
lover of food, sleep, home
Who feels unhappy, not energetic, tired,
Who finds happiness in school, people, and liars.
(Even though sometimes I get in drama with people,
I still don't care.
I am beefing with nobody.
If you don't like me, then I don't know what to tell you.)
Someone who gives love, kindness (I'm not mean at all), food,
Who needs money, happiness, nobody at all.
Who would like to see a Tik-Tok, a good friend,
nobody in the DMV.
This is Justice, (don't trust people and make a lot of friends
as they're gonna go behind your back
and say something), Matthews.

Justice Matthews



Words

Eternity,
what do you think of?
Eternal friendships?
Or even living eternally...
Is it really possible?

Memories... Memories
So many memories, I have
overflowing my mind
Good ones and some mostly-bad ones
Overall, I cherish them with my life.

Hidden...
I keep them hidden
I hide my feelings
Laugh to cope with my trauma
All while keeping a smile on my face
So everyone on the outside thinks I'm okay
But no one knows I'm hurting inside.

Empty rooms... So many empty--
My mind, my brain, the way I think
It is all just empty rooms.
Reminds me of the back rooms
Can I ever escape these rooms?
Will I ever find a way out?
Hopefully, one day.

Naujae Price



Harmony Taylor

Strange Facts

Dolphins sleep with one eye open
to make sure sharks don't kill them,
so they sleep with their eye open.

If you head-butt a soccer ball,
you lose brain cells.
The ball is big so if you head-butt it
you will lose brain cells.

An average four-year-old
asks 100 questions a day.

Shawn McPherson

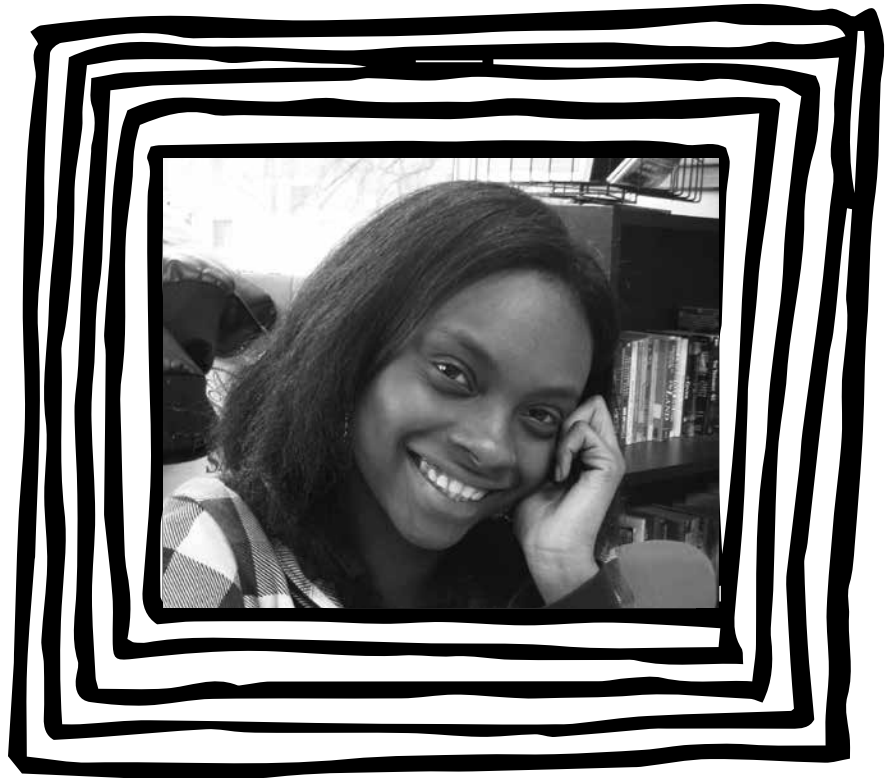


yes

fear of roaches

roaches coming out of sewers,
very sinister looking.
roaches put fear in my body,
tears eagerly coming from my eyes.
I hear roaches sneaking.

Justice Matthews

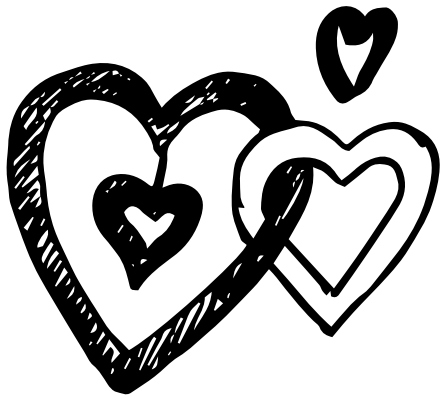


Renita Williams

Philosophy

it is a mystery to others what I regret.
i observe but never forget.
i am told how much wisdom I uphold.
expect the unexpected from me.
i seem to impress unwittingly.
respect in my upbringing ceased to exist.
my maturity was an early arrival.
perhaps my philosophy was too ancient a
grade for unknown voices.
i refuse to suffer under pressure
in the presence of confused individuals.
i broke out of my shell
that I was never in.
i am no longer broken:
Education, Dedication, Declaration, Certification,
Phil-os-ophy.

Chyann Wicker



My real name

My friends call me phantom.
 My real name is laughter.
 Yesterday, my name was forgotten.
 Tomorrow, my name will be silence.
 The cops think my name is secret.
 My parents think my name is beloved.
 Secretly, I know my name is asleep.

Duane White

My family is together

Every weekend the sunlight shining bright
 through my window
 reminds me of my god-uncle.
 My stomach growling in winter
 is like snow fights in my neighborhood.
 My brain creates storms of creative drawings.
 Dancing in the rain with the knowledge
 of perfect water splashing;
 Having a compass for direction.

Kevin King



Te'Rae Dyson

Maybe in the Future

I am trapped in the woods with nowhere to go.
 It's dark, cold and I am scared.
 My heart's beating fast and my adrenaline is running
 and I don't know what to do.
 Out of the darkness comes an anonymous man
 and a light appears.
 We walk towards the light.
 It gets brighter and brighter and now
 we are in a bright room with nothing to be found.
 We walk deeper into the room and we find
 a window. We look through
 and I see another world:
 Flying cars and robots.

Andre Wright





Joseph Hudson



Symphony

I celebrate myself when I'm happy
with music through headphones, guitar,
feeling the drums.
Leaping over big giant rocks,
going to the beach.
I wake up in the morning feeling awesome.

Marlon Cradle

Cold day

When I was a child,
there was a dark blue sky
and snow was everywhere.
Cars were all in snow,
cool snow fragments, floating,
countless,
kids' snow angels,
soothing calm air
scraps of dirty metal everywhere
beautiful ice smells;
watching TV while drinking hot cocoa--
To tell the truth, it was a cool cold day.

Keron Jenkins

Senses

A star sounds like a lullaby
A circle smells like a flower
White moves in a circle
shortcut
A whisper looks like air

Aniya Stevenson





Kirk Murphy

Be Yourself

You don't have to do what people say.
You don't have to be a bully,
just because your life is different.
You don't have to be like everyone else.
You only have to be something you are.
You only have to be you,
and live your life.
You only have to let your dream come true.
Meanwhile people try to make you feel
like you're useless, meanwhile you are getting
bullied,
meanwhile they say mean things about you.
Whoever you are, you are a light to your own
world.
Whatever you want to do, do it your way.
You are your own person.
Do what you want over and over again.
The point is that people might not care about
your things, imaginations, and you,
but that doesn't mean you have to think
what they think.
Be better. Be yourself.

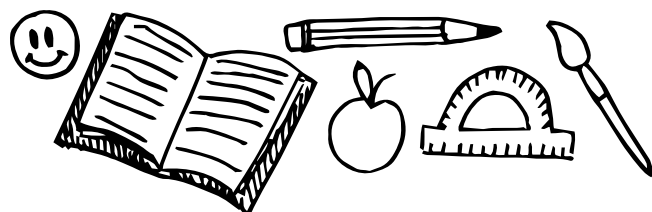
Keron Jenkins

A glimmer of food, like turkey

Brisk running is a sign of the track practice
Paint on the paper makes a sign of bad news, bitterness
Hands together are a sign of praying
In church, outside, they walk around and pray.

Falling down the hill on a bike is not harmless.
Blood is a sign that it might be on purpose.
Boats are far away, like the remote on a TV.
Snitching is a sign of blame,
like when someone hits you.
I prowl the house looking for signs, like an animal.

Xavier Carson





Te'Rae Dyson

Shooting Stars Shining

I like to feel a cool breeze in the summer.
 I see the clouds in the sky looking like angels,
 and I want to rescue people.
 I want to wake up in the morning and jump around.
 I feel crystal-clear, frozen like cool ice.
 When the monsters roar, I want to be bold!

Kyree Bradshaw

My Craziness, Yes Day

I would be playing Roblox for 25 minutes.
 All the dust is coming from an old piano, old toys.
 Modern stuff: the toys, the books, even the devices
 The mirror is unbroken, it says "See it with my eyes!
 Everything will be alive!"
 We go to the beach, it's sunny, the ocean is fresh blue
 I would be swimming in the Great Barrier Reef,
 the fish moving gradually.
 It's the pop music, more likely R&B;
 I would listen to the radio every day.
 I would rather go surfing
 I will be wearing a swimsuit, a Hawaiian shirt, cool sunglasses,
 and I would be riding the waves
 But I'll slip on a banana peel, tumble down the hill,
 and my "Yes" day is ending.

Daniel Tembeng





Life is random

This was in my childhood:
It was raining, and also sunny
A rainbow showed up out of nowhere--
I am telling the truth right now.

Some lemons are bitter
and some jobs are bitter.
I was an unfocused kid back then
There were countless times I hurt myself.

Sometimes life is colorful and sweet
Sometimes it can go bitter and sour,
just like that.

Ramontae Roberts



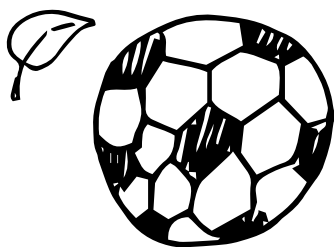
How I See It

Ogbugwo Okwumabua

My gaze is light.
It is my custom to be safe when something is happening.
And sometimes I feel bossy.
And what I see is happiness.
And I'm very good at solving problems when I mess up.
I'm capable of being able to move.
I believe in technology, because it can make the world a much better place.
The world was not made for violence and all of these things.
I have no false information, I am smart.
If I speak of the future, it's not because I know what is going to happen,
but because I want this world to be a better world
with no trash, no destroyed buildings,
everything old is new again.
Everything will be clean, fresh, and a new look.
To love is what is good, and to not harm the Earth.

Daniel-Seth Temberg





OFUN!

The Best Day

I am so happy
that the sky is clear
and bright as the sun--
there are no clouds or rain,
because my day is great!
The sunlight is very mild,
and it's super breezy outside.
I made footprints in the sand
and now I'm getting hungry,
so I run into the house to eat
and my stomach is full of food.
I go back outside to go to the ocean
to see a lot of things.
When sunset hits, we play volleyball
and eat dinner at night.
I talk myself to sleep
and remember what I did earlier.
Best day ever.

Ja'veon Brown



*l-r: Derrick Brown, Tyjuan Hogan,
Lashanda Jones, Abbey Chung*

My Brain

My weather in my brain is basically endless.
It's a mixture of storms, winter, sun
and any other climate that can happen.
When you enter that doorway,
you go into a pile of climate.
There is a mild breeze and a fog
and some hail – I'm talking about the ice rocks,
not what's downstairs.
Snow as sunlight
I would compare my mind to a crucifer
a cross between a dragonfruit and a cucumber.

Ramontae Roberts

Watching videos all day

There is no blizzard inside me.
I'm scattering my thoughts like snow.
Through the doorway that leads to nothing,
in a foreign country I've never traveled to
I use my compass to stay in my house
I'll just watch videos all day and laugh.

Jeremy Jackson





Esean Swader

The Day I Learned to Appreciate Beauty

Oh: kangaroos, sequins, chocolate sodas!
You're really beautiful! Pearls, harmonicas, jujubes,
aspirins, all the stuff they've always talked about.

I have finally realized the beauty
of all of this since the day
I was born in crying
I could see my mom holding me
and my father holding the camera,
then when I learned to walk

I wanted to go outside
to see the butterflies and the flowers,

then I grew older and I understood
that feeling that I had was
happiness.

That is why I always smile
because even in the darkness
I am able to see the lightness of
this beautiful world.

Kajuan Centeno



The rains of madness and happiness

My brain has a brainstorm
with rain, sprinkling rain,
with a little sunlight
and a heavy blizzard,
but the wind is silence.
My heart is filled with red,
cause I have anger issues
and the rain is made out of blood
rattling all over my head
while the voiceless sky
tries to calm me down.

I endlessly walk,
making footprints,
but then when I calm down,
my darkened eyes turn back to
the blue sky with green clouds
and the rain of blood is gone.

The person that calmed me down was
my grandma, from heaven, and God.
I release the fabric of my anger;
now the sky is peaceful.

I can see my family from a distance
through the endless happiness;
Now I'm at peace
my brainstorm is gone, and I'm happy.

Keron Jenkins



WHY?

yes

That's it!

Am I hungry?
What words to use?
Use sunlight, you
Can you spare a scent?
I'm hungry
Maybe a cheeseburger

Renaldo Abney



Tyshea Alston

Myself

My life is a windmill and it fuels
others and provides medicine to others to
heal I preach like a pastor
spreading the truth but I am sorry
for the thunderclap noise that I caused to
make others forget me but this is
me but you're the copycat that looks
through a mirror so bury me, bury me
I am finished with you.

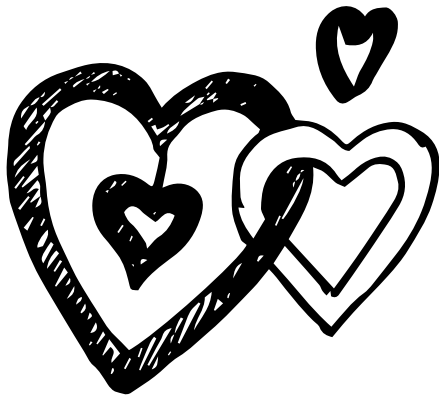
Michael Parker



The Taste of Poetry

Oh poetry,
how sweet and spicy you are
you taste so good
with cheese and beef
the lettuce and melted cheese
that you substitute
by giving yourself away
to my mouth
you are so good
a century could go by
and I'd still taste
you in my mouth
Oh poetry, you are
the toppings on my taco.

William Sanders



To Paint the Portrait of Home

Paint first a house with graffiti.
The words will tell
the city I lived in when I was first born.
This is home.
Paint next something sad,
something happy
You must now go gather
a paint ball gun and hide behind a car.
Then shoot red paint
on the corners of the house.
Your hardest task will be to
demolish the building.
Place all of the pieces of the
house that have paint on them
together. Do not leave out the
smallest pieces. Climb another
house in silence to observe what
you have done. Leave the
remains as it is.
You will know it's good if
the rain doesn't devour
the color. Your shame will
punish you if you destroy your
portrait.

TyJuan Hogan



Kevin King

Who Am I?

I am the President of Distractions
I am like the darkness heading your way
I am fire burning on paper

I am the President of Fighting
I am a person who can knock you
down with one hit.
I am a person who makes you run
around your house screaming for help.
I am the President of Being Mean
I am a person who don't play
I am the person who makes you angry
I am one of the most terrible
people who can be mean just like
your parents.

I am the right President for you
Come join my Presidency and
you will be just like me.
I'm the President
I'm the darkness heading your way.

Tyranae Trowell





l-r: Sa'Mirror Chambers, Andre Wright, Elijah Jones

Gifted Days

What are gifted days?
 When you get something you want
 When you see a billboard with your face on it
 When your birthday comes
 When your room is soundproof
 Some days feel sleepy
 Each one is a gift, no doubt
 Mysteriously placed in your waking hand,
 or set upon your forehead.
 Moments are for you to
 open your eyes.

Ty'Shea Alston

Remember the Time

Remember the time we first met?
 Remember the time we got put out of the room
 because we snored too much?
 Remember my first day of school?
 Remember the time we took our first steps
 toward the front door of the middle school?
 Remember when we used to share stories.
 Remember the time you made me cry?
 Remember the time we were left alone?
 Remember the time we stood up for each other?
 Remember the time you moved away from me?
 I do. But we are still friends, even when you are
 so many miles away.

Aneisha Whitney





l-r: Jaquan Jackson, KaJae Defoe

Poems

A poem needs to be a lazy boy
 no, no, no, no, no,
 it needs to be the blood in your body
 no, no, no, no, no,
 I know, it is a porch,
 everyone sits on it
 no, no, no, no, no
 it is a whisper, telling everyone
 to read it
 no, no, no, no, no
 A poem is a transfer from place to place
 no, no, no, no, no,
 Wait, wait, a poem is everything in the world
 life, death, the future.
 You can be the poem.
 It is rolling around in you right now.
 Just think, when you are in school,
 a poem is a lesson
 to put in your brain.
 Everyone has a piece of poem
 in their brain right now.
 It is in books, school, college,
 and your mind.

Daisha Wilson

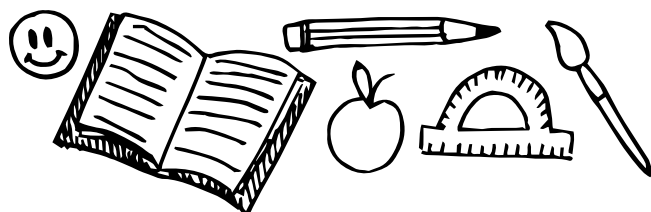
I'm Sorry

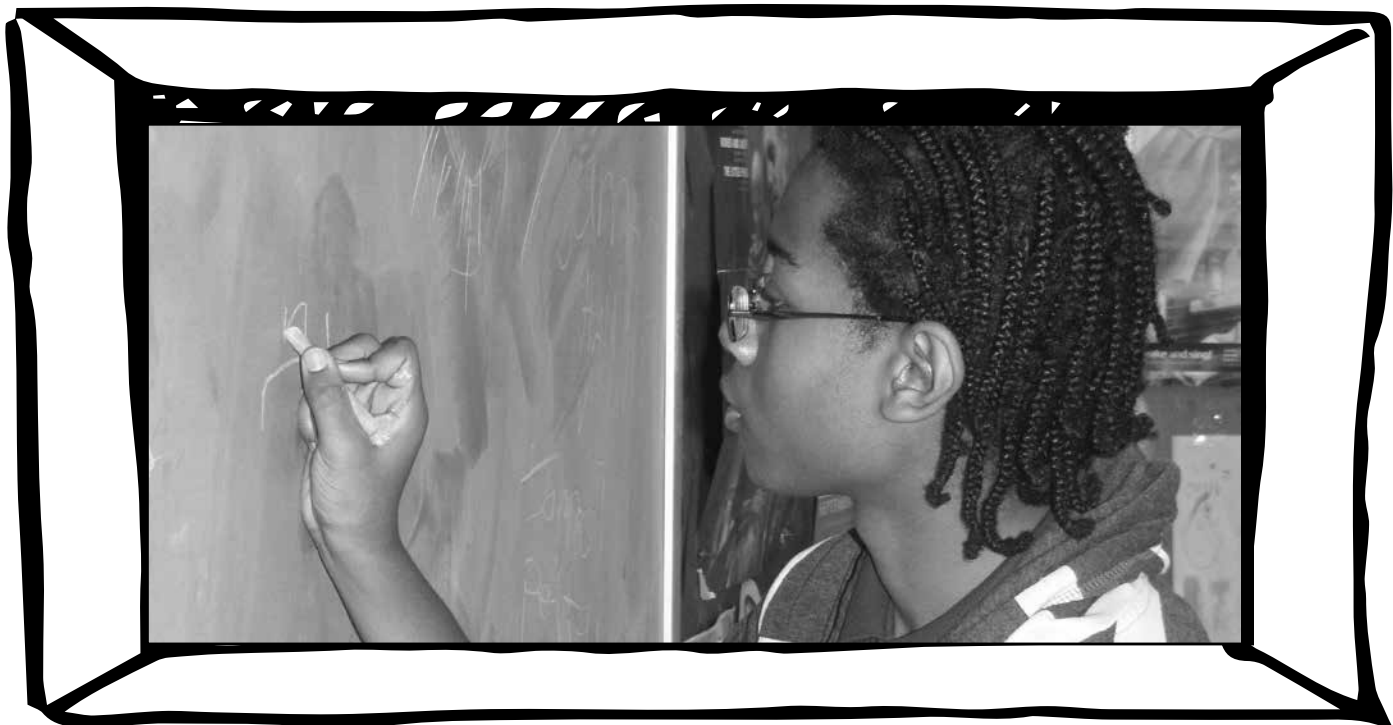
No, I never got my mom's name tattooed on my arm.
 I never set an alarm to get up for school. But I
 did pull the fire alarm to get out of school.
 I never replied to my mother's text, but I replied
 to my sister's.

I never had an imaginary friend.
 I never got suspended from school.
 I never crossed the street when I'm not supposed to,
 but I played in traffic the other day.

I'm sorry.
 I did it. I got my mom's name tattooed on my arm.
 I broke one of the windows at grandma's house.
 I did it.
 I ate a blue orange,
 I gave the leprechaun
 all my gold.
 It's my fault. I'm sorry.

Robin Jones





Lawrence Rosemond

Youth

It's because you're old,
you don't understand;
But we're young
as the flowers in a field
or the sand in Egypt.
As young as a volcano
on a tropical island.
We know something you don't.

Daiquon Felder

My Life

My life is like the
softness of a pillow.
My life is like the wisdom
that pulls you on.

My life is like a
dream that never
disappears. My life
is the laughter of
a little nephew. My
life is like the
struggles of a black man.

My life is like money
that never runs out.

My life,

My life is like a
steady heartbeat. My life
is a warm hug
from my mom.

David McIntyre

They Collected

They wanted my soul.
I gave them a penny.
Because of their betrayal
my soul collapsed and left,
an executed flute
a sapphire guitar
and a purple-blooded piano.

They wanted a
crossroads of glass and sorrow's tongue.
My moon-eyed honeycomb
took me to safety.

Wake up to see the scarlet sky
every day and night.
Watch as my harmless fire
Burns, just like
the echo of quicksilver.

Lakeisha Thompson





The Essence of a Dream

I am the voice in your head
that tells you to accept your life;
I am the foam left behind
from a bar of Dove soap
that is waiting to be washed away.

I am your condolences
that you share with others
during sympathetic times.
I am the gesture
that you make when
you are feeling uncomfortable.

I am yesterday,
the one who was left behind
because of today.

I am the shadow
from the wheel of your bike,
turning and turning
but never getting old.

I am the yellow brick road
that Dorothy walked on
to find her way home;
As her glitter red shoes
tapped three times,
there's no place like home,
there's no place like home.

I am the pigeon
feather, lonely,
wishing I was on
the body of a bird.

I am a perpetual dream
and not deferred
but a future, a fantasy
a goal, a small girl
with a big empire.

Kayla Rosemond



Kyree Bradshaw

Ode to a Game

And they keep upgrading you,
as if you weren't already good,
working like a stream of water on a gristmill;
The battery lasts for a long time.

Or dying slowly,
and bought from a top quality game store;
As soon as I opened you
I was amazed how slim you were.

From slipping in my pocket to
fitting in a crack in the wall
save every game I play, as data
imbedded in your system

Abdull Ali







Zinquarn Wright

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