



HARTWORKS

Spring 2025

\$10

The Charles Hart Middle School Literary Magazine



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*Front cover, top row, l-r: Deangelo Fuller, Treasure Onley, Eden Price
middle row, l-r: Alexander Steward, Taylor Berry, Jerome Hayes, Terrence Griffin
bottom row, l-r: Armoni Griffin, Jordan Rivers, Neveah Cooper*

Inside front cover, l-r: Zuri Green, Jahziah Cabbell, Jamya Geeter, Hayley Jackson, Eden Price, Romel Jones

Introduction

Welcome to the 30th Anniversary edition of 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. Thirty 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 30 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.

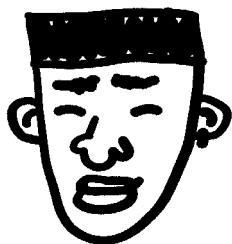
Special thanks are due for the hard work and dedication of the D.C. Creative Writing Workshop Board of Directors: Abbey Chung, Dr. John Walton Cotman, Dr. Susan Gerson, Brian Gilmore, Helen Hooper, Bernie Horn, and Nancy Schwalb.

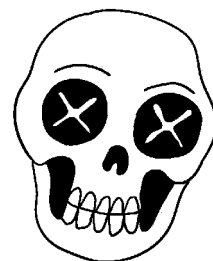
We have many friends who have helped to make hArtworks possible, and we would like to express our gratitude to them. Our sincerest thanks go out to the Bainum Family Foundation, the City Fund of the Greater Washington Community Foundation, the Clark-Winchcole Foundation, D.C. Commission on the Arts and 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, Gail Oring and GO! Creative, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Arena Stage, the Shakespeare Theatre, Woolly Mammoth Theater, Glucksman Wan and Tyler, 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.



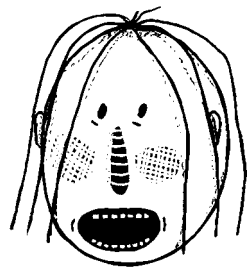
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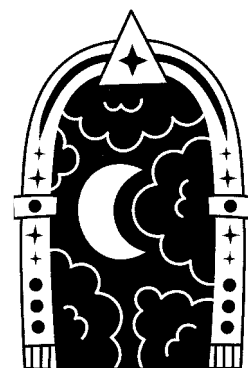


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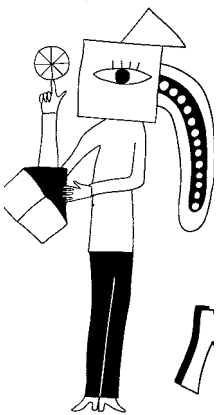
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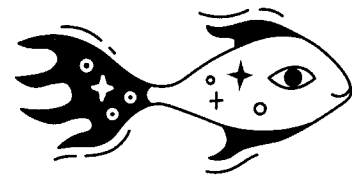




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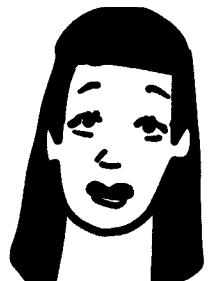
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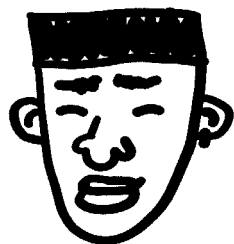
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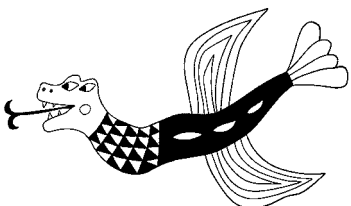
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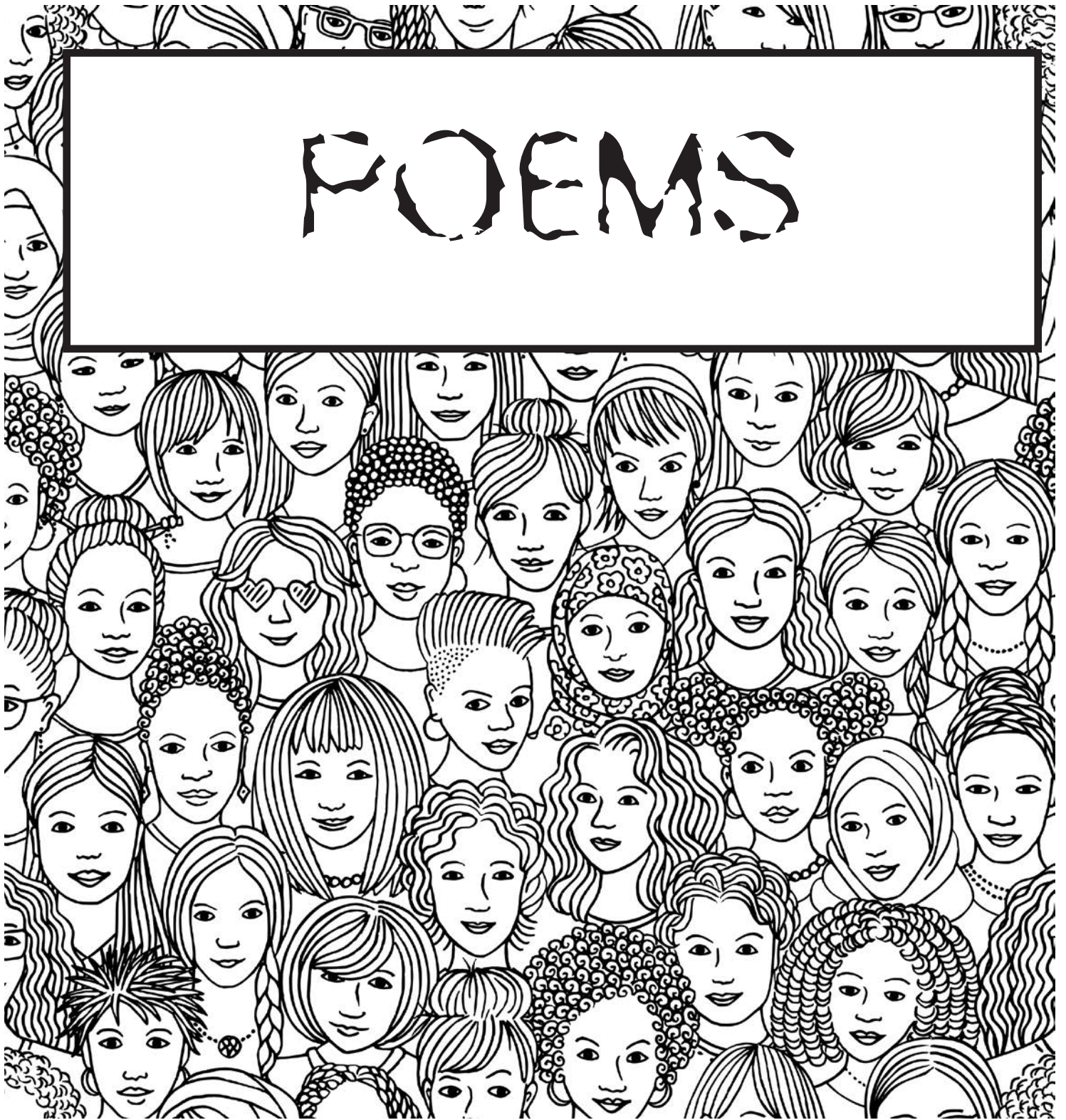


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POEMS



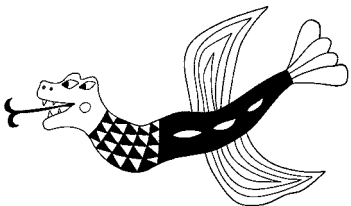


l-r: Jahziah Cabbell, My'Asia Fleming, Zuri Green

Pebbles

Lay these words in your head
 Before your mind, like pebbles
 put down by soft hands
 No choice of place,
 put before the human body
 in your mind
 Followed by the scent of smoke
 the taste of a crime
 the presence of people playing chess
 children playing hide and seek
 prisoners in solitary confinement
 Build a wall with my words—
 I'll be inside.

Brandi Fisher



Broken heart

Did she choose to have four kids?
 In silence, hoping she was back at home.

Broke three hearts, which were forgotten and buried
 deep down in her closet.

Did she love all four kids?
 Betrayed by the second oldest.

In this empty household live
 her and her daughter.

Praying that she never lives alone.
 Begging to her children that
 they won't bury her alone.

Esmeralda Parada

Haiku

Oh, how they would cry
If we met again, past lost
And saw my fury

Quindell Cortes

Haiku

I'm from the east side
I have a broken voice and
my hearing is crushed

Messiah Jones

Mystery of Age

As a child I thought
the older I got
the better it would be,
but I was very wrong.
I was hunting for freedom,
but the darkness kept me close.
It needed me.

I later had to endure the worst:
I was searching for light,
but I had important things
to attend to underground.

When I turned 12
I did not know what I was in for
I had forgotten my child version,
and the pressure got to me.

The voice I never heard told me
to never forget to be a child,
but I did not listen.
I had to recover from
the blindness I walked into.

Chauncy Martin



Damarco Bray

Immortal

Immoral, combative, rusty, and daring
Daughter of a leather jacket, sister of silk ribbons
Lover of good cries, sunset skies, and extra fries
Who feels fuzzy, rough, and smooth, all at the same time
Who finds happiness in the simplicities of life

Even though you're physically trapped in the walls of your body
It doesn't mean your mental can't pass above all limits

Who needs peace, love, and unity
and would like to see the world evolve
This is Brielle,
Who doesn't let her mortal body define her dreams.

Brielle Carry



Haiku

Imagine my mom
writing a nightmare about
a royal moonlight

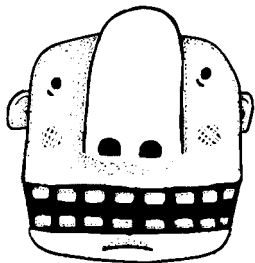
Messiah Jones

It Is This Way With Addictions

They are agony, yet peace.
They divide people.

It's jagged
in your brain
and it hurts;
you feel
as if the surface
is too high.
You pause and
you see the mirror
of the man
you could be,
a flower blooms
a horizon shines through.
Yet with
every addiction
comes a solution,
a clear dawn, and
you are a new
man.

Noah Jones



l-r: Mekhi Parks, DeMarco Whitley-Dobbins

Philosophy

My gaze is as mysterious as an unsolved case.
It is my custom to observe through windows,
seeing inside them, thinking what they have gone through.
And sometimes, looking inside, I see someone suffering.
I am capable of having a burning desire to wonder.
I ask them, are you okay?
If only they realized they just met a new friend.
A friend that would support them.

I believe in giving second chances.
Because I've felt it. Because I didn't just feel it--
I've seen it.
The world wasn't made for us to judge it.
But to look at it and accept it.

I have no injustice, I have justice for all.
If I speak of second chances, it's not because I know what it is.
But because I believe it, and for that very reason,
because those who forgive never know who they forgive
or why they forgive, or what forgiveness is.

To love is to forgive all,
and the only forgiveness is not to judge.

Esmeralda Parada

Mason's Story

I wanna go outside.
Moss.
Angry.
Fingertips.
Broken.
Buried.
Fresh.
Frozen.
Done :)

Mason Pernell



l-r: London Plight, Gavin Wood, Alexander Steward, Desean Veney

Math

In math I was the smarter kid
always had the answers, math was never
a mystery;
Never a challenge, the answers just came
to me
like a song I'm always singing

Never had a frown, always smiling
always had knowledge and wisdom;
Math just came to me like a river:
Never stops, just keeps going
even when there are obstacles

Never fallen, never forgotten
even in battle, like a soldier, I always
recover;
Me, in math, the smarter kid.

Lillie Ladd

Writer's Block

Every time I sit in workshop, engaged and ready
I sit there motionless and stare at the empty page.
My vision fogs, unable to think of anything worth
saying.

Sometimes I ask the sun, begging for answers
as it returns with a glare, as if I am nothing of worth.
It's blaze scorching my eyes and igniting my dreams,
the sun knocks me down, so I can get back up
so I can be knocked back down.

More worthless than gum on the sidewalk, I was.
But then I come up for air,
realizing I was daydreaming again.

Brielle Carry



This year

It's a new year.
The thing I want to let go is the past--
Go ahead, go deep in my brain
and take it out.
I want the past to be forgotten.
The thing I want to bring into the new year
is my relationship with God.
I want our relationship long as a valley.
I want the new year to go good.
This year, it's going to be me from 2025
vs. me from 2024.

Khalil Mitchell

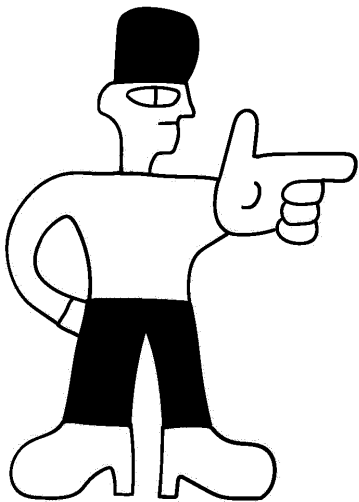
This Is My Year

It's Tuesday and 2025
I forget about the past
then turn a new leaf.
This is the year I evolve
into something unrecognizable,
changing my act
and terminating old habits.
This is my year.

Tyrell Moye



Brandi Fisher



Spirit dynamic

The things I need to keep
are my happiness, and reaching for my education
because if I get an education,
it's like my spirit, and it will be a powerful thing to have.
And these could be the things to focus on:
The thing I need to get rid of is my anger,
because sometimes I get mad over simple things;
and I need to stay out of trouble.
Getting an education can be my dynamic goal.

Jacob Haith



Childhood Memories

When I was a little girl
I was happy with whatever we had
Life wasn't all that bad

With one brother and two sisters,
I am the youngest of four
Fun moments were lost in time

My mom cooking for her kids
a dinner table together each night

My family is now scattered
but the best memories from my youngest
childhood
still linger on the bike rack in our backyard.

Treasure Onley

Dark times

Once, I met a boy
who I was insanely in love with.
I was so in grief when he left,
due to all the memories we had.
When we departed at night,
all I could hear was the voices in clouds.
We made promises to each other
that we would stick together
during the darkest times in our lives...
But it's like, when he left,
I felt so free.

Jayla Nelson



London Plight

Ode to music!

In the quiet corners of a weary heart,
when the world feels heavy and hope starts to part,
a melody whispers, soft as a sigh,
notes drift like paddles, in an endless sky.

With every chord strummed, the spirit takes flight,
Lyric by lyric, we dance through the night.
Exhausted from battles, from the grind of the day,
the magic of music gently leads me away.

Tunes on shuffle, moving dreams anew,
in harmony's embrace, I am reborn, I pursue.
So let the rhythm guide to me, let the music play on,
for in its sweet embrace, I know I'm never alone.

Esmeralda Parada

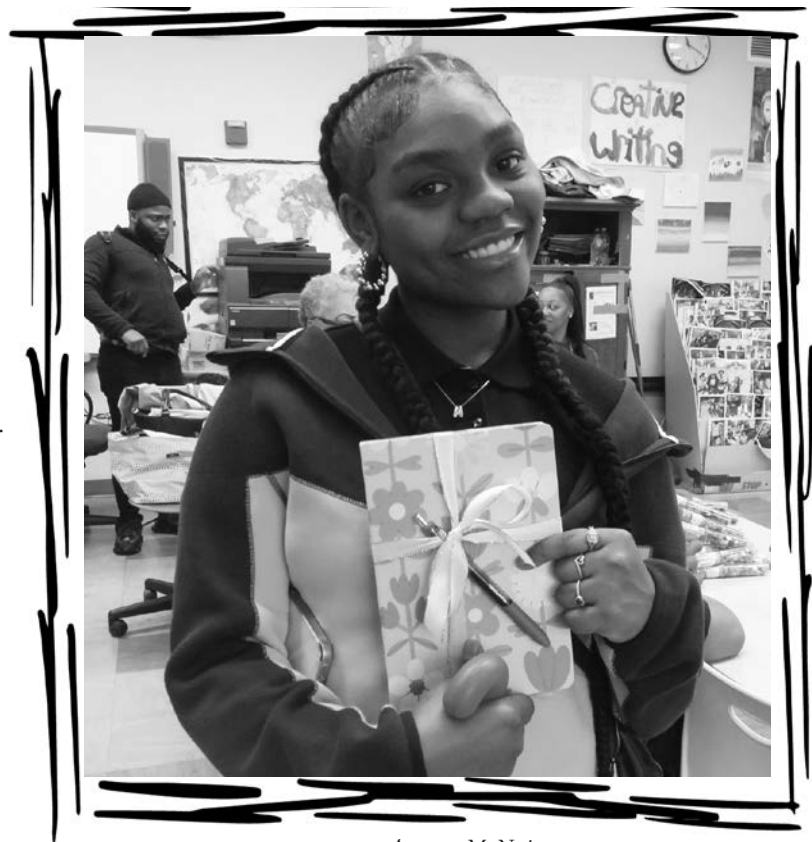




What's Possible

It's a new year! And new things will happen.
 I plan on leaving the bad things behind
 and bringing the good things with me.
 Bringing the good things can
 bring so much happiness.
 I would love to keep all the things
 and people that make me very happy,
 for example, my family and friends.
 I'd like for my grades to be good,
 for sixth grade, like term two.
 I want to have straight A's, like term one.
 Right now, I have all A's and one B+.
 But if I work hard, I can raise the B+ to an A.
 I say that because, anything other than an A
 makes me feel like I've forgotten the things I learned.
 But all A's makes me feel unique,
 like I did the impossible.

Jamya Geeter



Amaya McNair

I Praise My Mother

I praise my mom.
 I praise my mom, because over the years
 I discover, no matter how much I mess up,
 my mom always has my back.
 It is the school season
 and I'm well known,
 and my mom knows that;
 But also, I do have problems with my anger.
 so my mom helps me with it
 And for that I love her.
 She helps me whenever,
 even at my darkest moments,
 She's always got me.

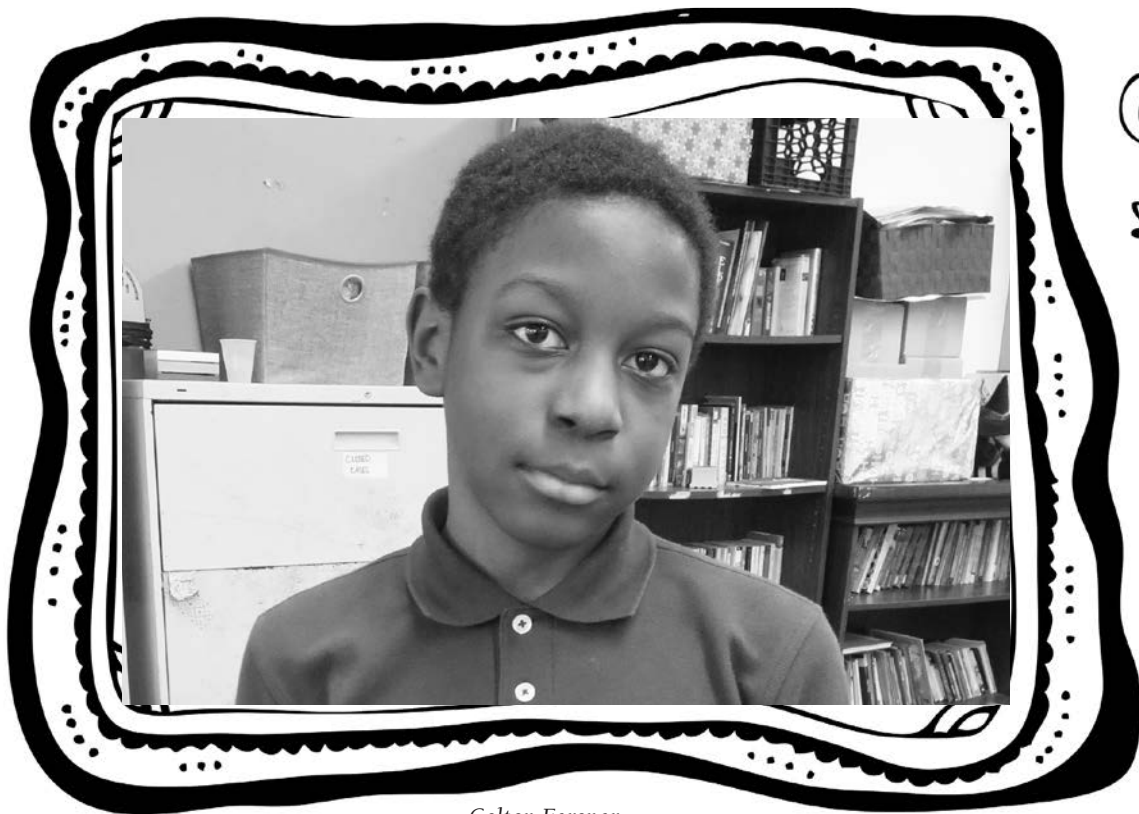
Sevia Hargrove

When I was 12

When I was young,
 I didn't have much knowledge.
 I was broken,
 in need of wisdom
 and scared of getting swallowed
 by my nightmares.

Messiah Jones





Colton Fersner

Wishbone of a memory

I burn past the power line,
face the camera, still and waiting;
The evening sun hums low,
whirling around the edges of
quiet hands.

She swoons as he counts birds,
like a butterfly caught in the wind.
A train whistles somewhere distant,
quick paws chasing the fading light.

Inside Grandpa's arms, I remember—
after the thunderstorm, tucked inside
a suitcase, like a tint-red apple,
waiting to be found.

He's narrowing down the past,
a latch clicks closed in the hush,
peas and cucumbers, covered in sand,
carving a valley of time between us.

Eden Price

Smoke

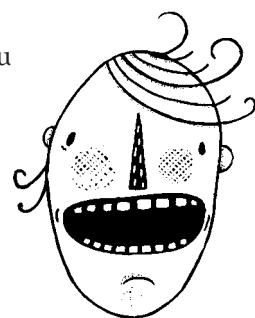
I am smokey
I burn things
I drive a black 4x4 pickup truck
I eat smoke and drink smoke
I come out when stuff burns, such as wood
I wear no clothes, because I'm air
I have one smoky pet named Burner
I have no kids
At night, smoky burns wood in the forest
and everything goes up in flames.

Quindell Cortes

Haiku

If I had a chance
I would say goodbye to you
But it would hurt to

Quindell Cortes





Mekhi Parks

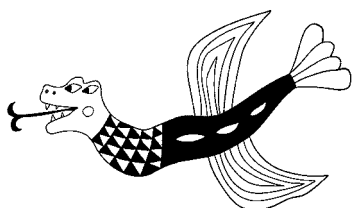
Asaad, where did the time go?

March, Asaad you were born,
your handsome face,
the touch of your skin,
it was smooth as a baby's butt.

Beyond your handsome face,
your face was full of joy
when we came home.
You smiled, you knew you were home.

First night you woke up,
it was dawn,
you cried to be cuddled
but then you went silent
like you had forgotten what you had wanted.

Asaad Cooper



Haiku

I like this haiku
I need you more than my friends
I want to learn more

Kamarri Edwards

Understood

If I can't draw,
then I might as well be happy
with sitting here sad.

If I can't be with my bestie, Ryeli,
then I won't be super smiley.

If I can't be a dancer
then someone will have to answer.

If I can't go all out
then I will fall out.

Dakota King

Haiku

My leaves fall off when
it is winter and it's cold
in spring they grow back

Damarco Bray

Life

You don't have to
do homework,
wear blue or green,
be unknown;
No suffering,
go to sleep,
party all day,
have the newest Jordans,
observe more,
shadow less;
Everything is not a mystery.

Amir Osborn



Dillon King

The Real Me

I am made out of lovely daisies,
filled with harmony and mixed with an angry bird's feelings.

I open my eyes to pictures bigger than the problem I'm facing.
When the shadows fall,
the leaves fall, and all of my memories
fall down and cloud my mind.

You might find me on the ocean,
surfing and finding peace with the waves.

I dream in shades of the rainbow
because I see things differently, like emotions, energy.

My heart jumps when I get tense
and fascinated with something.

My biggest fear is losing.

Za'Mya Bolden

The seasonal river

Throughout these seasons
there are winter snows
when the snow is cold
like a nice glass of water
and the river's cold.
And there are sunny summers
like a nice day at the beach
in the river's warmth.
And when these two combine,
they make spring,
when the atmosphere is beautiful.

Mason Pernell





Dinerio Nathan

Choices

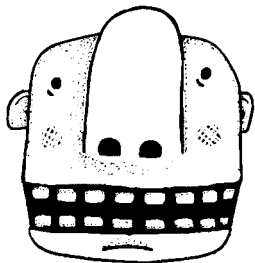
If I can't play football,
I will be happy with other sports, like basketball.
If I can't have expensive shoes,
at least I have shoes to wear
and I don't have to walk around barefoot.
Since I can't go to the championship,
I will be happy with the play time I get
and the wins we get.
When I can't express my feelings
about having practice after school every day,
I will just have to face it, and go to practice.

DaeQuan Nathan

Can't do the things I want

If I can't go to the mall and buy things,
then I have to wear the same clothes.
If I can't have sleepovers,
then I will imagine one when I sleep alone.
If I can't go outside,
then I will stay home by myself.
If I can't have candy,
then I will make all the candy in the world
vanish.

Jahziah Cabbell



Haiku

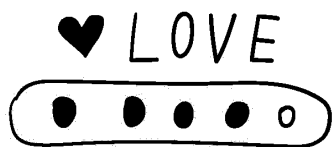
Hope I see next day
Tempo is key to music
Imagine you're in space

Alexander Steward

Haiku

I can't wait for spring
I really want to go home
My voice is hurting

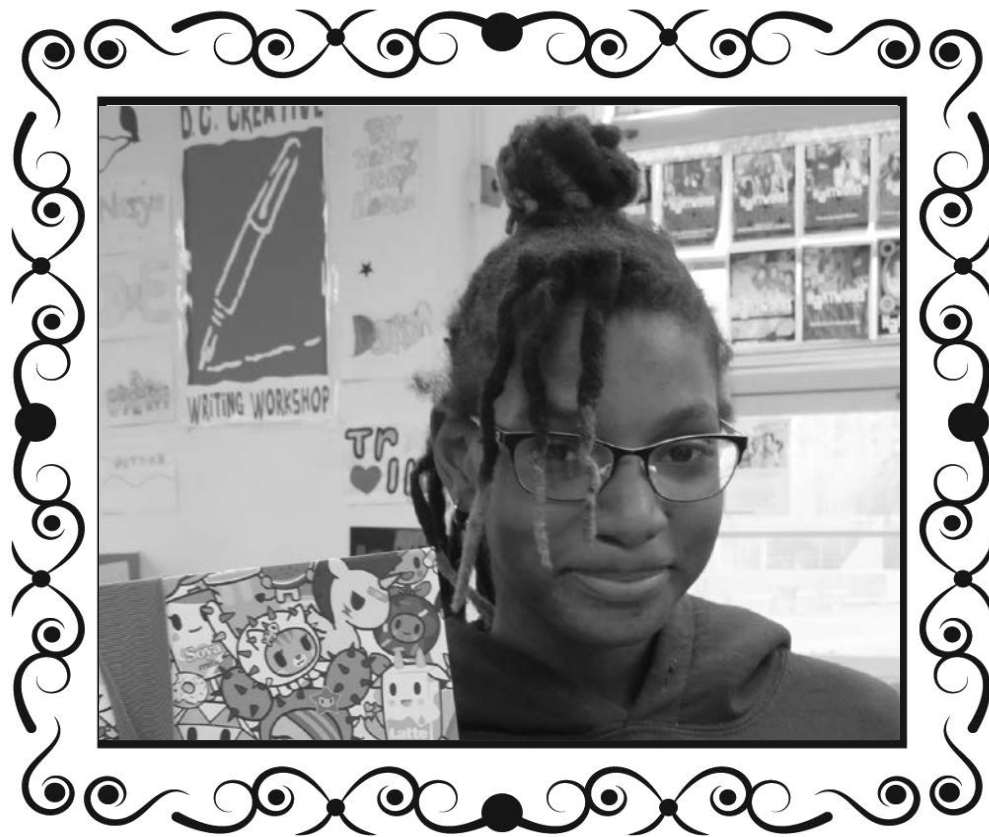
Kamarri Edwards



Angry and Lost

Sometimes you feel like
you don't fit
in this world.
I feel angry and lost,
but that won't stop me from
loving the things I love, mostly
my baby sister
and music.
Sometimes I feel like
a window is opening;
What comes in the window
is disappointment, and
what goes out the window is
me believing in myself.

Damarco Bray



Azariah Snowden

If I can't

If I can't have a gold star,
I will settle for snacks
and a juice from Tiger Market.
If I have to eat healthier snacks,
I would have M&M flavored seaweed.
If I can't have no soda,
I am okay with apple juice.
If I can't sleep,
I will just imagine I am dreaming.

Valentino Johnson

If I can't do something, then I can do something else

If I can't have all A's,
then I can be grateful
that I at least have A's in some classes.
If I can't dance,
then I don't have to be a dancer.
If I can't do things
that others can,
then I can do things that I can.
If I can't imagine that I'm pretty,
then I don't have to
because I know I'm pretty
with or without imagination.

Jamya Geeter



Haiku

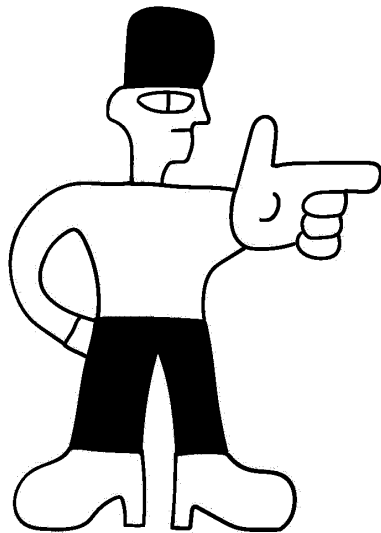
I grow like a tree
Sprouting like leaves in the rain
But breathe like a man

Damarco Bray

Haiku

I am transparent.
I was uplifted to clouds.
I was motionless.

Colton Fersner



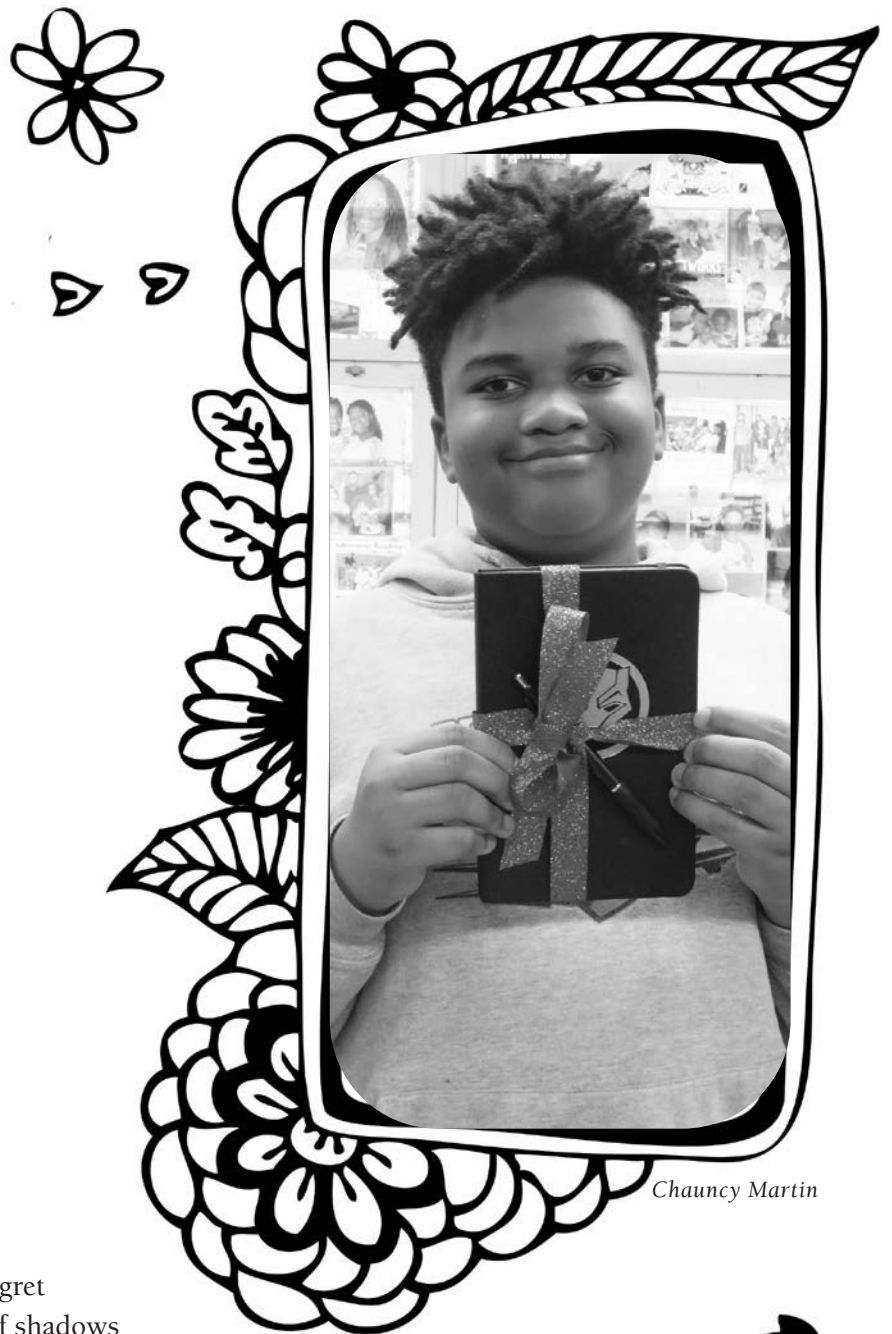
Gaze away

My gaze is full of regret
a homeland made of shadows
overflowing, which makes my love distant
and unremembered.

if I speak of destiny, it comes back with darkness
and an orbit of defeat, suffering in the unknown silence.

Perhaps love exists after all, but it doesn't have to be in people
After all, the creation is my arrival to a new life;
Leave all the darkness and the orbit of defeat--
I will conquer my goals and change
my presence will now be known.

Lauryn Simmons



Chauncy Martin



The Voice of Everything

The voice of a good human named Zuri Green
A new voice in town
hoping for a stranger to guide me.
A voice to look out for you,
a voice to dust the bad voices
out of your mind
a voice to listen to everything you say and think.

Zuri Green

Taylor Berry

Not so special

My birthday, my b-day, my big day,
my special day, that
we celebrate in a special way,
the day that's supposed to be all about me...
Well, what if I told you your special day wasn't so special

What if I told you the day you thought was all about you
really wasn't, and that over a million people
shared your special day, in their own special way?

Ricky Thomas

Flying

The sky is one thing, and only one thing for miles.

The sky is one thing, making this bridge another.

Built over the sky, there is a bridge

They walk it, they all walk it

Rising at dawn and resting at midnight.

They drown in the darkness.

But not me—

I don't walk the bridge, I soar across it.

Never going back

Every day is something new

The gravity pulls them toward the ground,

But I rise.

Azariah Snowden





The Man

I remember who I was:
 I was a sharp boy, a crystal-clear child,
 the taste of happiness.
 But I remember I was not always happy--
 I had a smile full of energy
 but the mood of a transparent man.
 But now, every morning, I begin
 by smiling and being happy.
 I have friends.
 Now I am a melody, a shining gold coin.
 I am better than the man I used to be.

Noah Jones



Brielle Carry

Spring

The fields are rich with dandelions
 a coat of clover cloaks the hills
 and I must dance, and I must sing
 to see the beauty of the spring,
 and how time goes by and the rain goes silent
 as the rise of summer comes along the way
 See you soon, spring, and
 welcome summer!

Lauryn Simmons



Summertime

Summer, the most warm and
 rejuvenated season of all--
 the season some kids become teens
 and some teens become adults;
 The season when kids can be kids and have fun
 the season the polls open,
 people start having cookouts
 and people make their best memories.

Ricky Thomas

Football playing time (I get none)

If I get no playing time,
 I have to be happy with the bench.
 If I don't get #1
 I have to be happy with #99.

If I have no other friends
 I can go to my best friend
 Daequan Nathan.

My'Asia Fleming



Kamarri Edwards

Fighting Back

Family is worth fighting for.
My mom is worth fighting for.
She takes care of me all the time,
she's really pretty, and
she also lets me hang out with my friends.

I'll fight for myself.
Sometimes you can't just do things for others;
You've got to think about yourself, too.
You have to fight for yourself.

Emoni Smith

Years of memories

Last year, I was 10.
I went to Six Flags and I had fun,
but I noticed there weren't a lot of kids there.
I realized I should be thankful for
what I have, because
not everyone has it.

Quindell Cortes

Ari

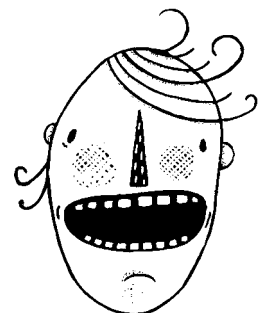
I stare out of the window
after a challenging day
the sky gloomy and gray.

I listen to my youngest sister rant,
her head resting in my lap,
her voice crackling and crumbling.

Her nightmares are swallowing her up
I try to cheer her up
and promise her stuff.

The sky clears up and
she starts to smile, forgetting
all her troubles.

A'zari Shepherd



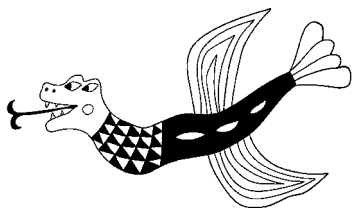


Ricky Thomas

Big Sister

Being a great sister is my destiny
 Perhaps cooking for them is the best of me
 Sometimes they put me in their shadow
 Always making me feel shallow
 But my love for them is overflowing
 Every time they keep growing
 When they see my arrival
 They run to me like I'm their idol
 They may change
 But my love for them stays in my brain
 Why am I trying to be a good big sister
 When I'm already the best to them?

Jaidyn Turner



To Paint a Portrait of the Past

First find the smell of an old home
 Remember the pleasure of ice cream at the park
 Feel happiness under the roof of old
 but if the blank space in your mind never rings,
 you'll feel vague and blind.

Most important: The potential of happiness in your home.
 The ingredient you need is nostalgia
 This is the best feeling of all
 when you smell that smell or taste that taste.

So, to paint a portrait of the past,
 feel safe and warm when you
 look around a place of memories.

Noah Jones



Malachi Jones

Friendship

I come from a hurricane of hell, with meteors falling from the sky. I make my home out of broken arrows and sticks. I see cotton balls healing the world of depression, and I wonder if my memory will outlast any people I come across. When I am home alone I wonder if the flame's going to burn my house down. I imagine that I can use my vision to tell people the truth, that hurricanes are real. Every day I see the haze in the ocean, but if I look closely, I see sheep falling asleep on the farm. A voice inside me says, Calm down. Everything's going to be all right. Right now I am a drifting car, waiting to finish the race. I wish for a bronze medal to put around my neck to congratulate me for finishing the race.

Gregory Nickens

Ode to History

The magic of time and space:
It's funny how yesterday is history
but tomorrow is the future.
It's funny how life goes by fast
but from your eyes, it's slow.

Ode to the ancestors who gave
their blood, sweat, and tears
so I could be free and live a good life.

Ricky Thomas



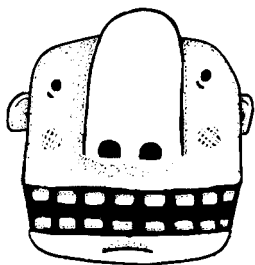


l-r: Gavin Wood, Desean Veney, London Plight

My favorite dirt bike

When I was young,
 I was riding my dirt bike and
 I was going somewhere;
 I went there and back.
 Adding knowledge and interior strength
 my mystery bike and I were making a lot of fun.
 I was passing my friend's houses
 riding through my neighborhood
 playing down at the park, and passing other houses.
 But my engine broke and my bike would not work.

Montell Barber



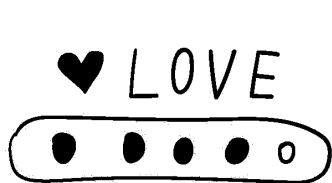
Memories when young!

When I was young, the world was
 a nice peaceful drawing to me.
 I saw people as Legos,
 what I used to play with, and I still do.

I remember when I went to King's Dominion for the
 first time,
 I couldn't go on some rides because of my height
 but I went on others, and it was cool.
 We had fun.

I love the fact that I see
 different parts of the world,
 and when I get older,
 I will understand the world more.

Dakota King



Gavin Wood

The first picture my father made

When I was young,
my father would always draw me a picture each day
so I could add it to my collection,
so I can remember him each day I get a picture.

When I was young,
my grandmother made me some fried chicken, mac and
cheese.
It was crackling on the stove and that smell is still home.

When I was young,
there were forgotten challenges,
and I was the youngest.
I had to recover from nightmares,
my voice crumbling, broken.

Jahziah Cabbell

Smiling through it all

When I was young,
I never got to eat oatmeal
and blueberries
but I was smiling through it all.
Each day, my voice would get
lighter and lighter
but I would get taller.
Now I am 13 and my height is 4'11"
and my voice is a little deeper.

DeMarco Whitley-Dobbins





l-r: Zuri Green, Jahziah Cabbell, Jamya Geeter, Hayley Jackson, Eden Price

Just Be You

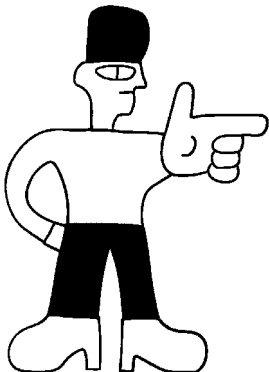
I always had a baby voice when I was little.
 I was challenged to race someone.
 I was listening to music.
 I was singing to my little brother.
 I battled my friends in Call of Duty.
 I broke my lock on my door.
 When I used my deep voice, people got scared.

Antonio Gerald

A beautiful life

When I was little,
 I used to go outside a lot.
 The birds were singing in a soothing voice,
 people playing guitar, and the sky wasn't gray.
 It reminded me of the forgotten past;
 I was looking out the window, thankful for
 God's creation

Zion Thornton



Mom feeling

the mystery of my mom's voice changes
 is still unsolved.
 One day her voice is as calm as a river
 and the next she is yelling like she is fighting
 a battle.
 It could be nightmares or personal troubles
 but it still remains a mystery.

Justin Bangura

The deep dark

Wearily, I wander through the world,
 walking through a dark and deserted door.
 I push past the precipice and peer inside
 to see a bleak darkness where
 no soul dares to touch
 except the shadow ruler himself.

Dinerio Nathan



Long, long days

On Wednesday every week
it never stops
it stays forever.

Make a cheese pizza
in the shape of a target,
clouds floating over my mom
but it doesn't storm.

The new year will be smooth and shiny,
like twilight.

Colton Fersner

Seventh Grade Life

When I was in the seventh grade,
it felt like a nightmare.
There I met my biggest hater,
my younger brother.
Since I got angered,
my little brother took that as an advantage.
My heart was broken, and I was gray
and ever since that day,
things have never been the same.
I'm smiling, covering up my real face.

Jabari Lewis



Hayley Jackson

Bad memories

When I was young, I had bad memories,
doing something bad like taking the cookies,
never listening to rules, just all the time bad stuff.
I was just burrowing down an evil path.
My good path was crumbling into pieces.
It felt forgotten, just evil things.
I was blinded by the evil sun.
I made many troubles;
to even rebuild my good side would be a challenge.
But when I started learning the effect of my bad side
I felt like my good side was rebuilding.
I started to do better and show empathy.
Now my bad side is crumbling while my good side is
rebuilding and doing a lot,
like learning more about God.
I've started to be a lot more kind,
and that's why I think
good memories beat the bad memories.

Romel Jones



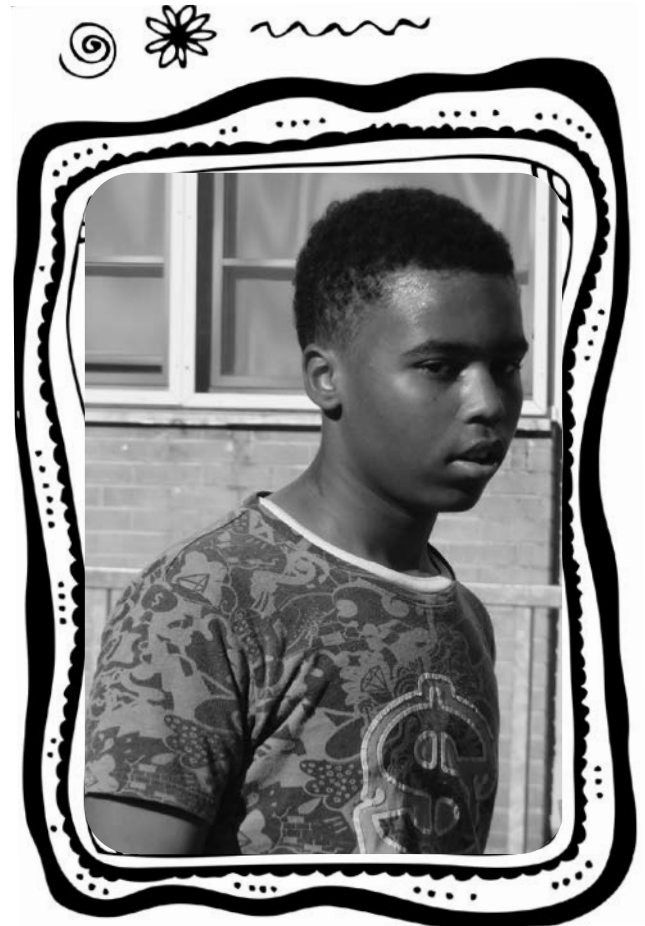
Nostalgia

A memory when I was younger,
was when all summer long
I would go to water parks.
I had so much fun.
Nostalgia always hits me
like the smell of wet concrete.

When nature's sounds hit me
I listen to all the squirrels running around.
My sister's smiling,
And we play with water guns.

The sound of my younger voice
always makes me smile.
I am scared that my fun days will end.

Kevin Robles



Isaiah McRae

The moon

My voice is innocent,
like the sun's tears forever alive in the stars
falling leaves, ashes in the nightfall,
yesterday's marching voices
a million truths forgotten in the storm.
I departed forever,
But am trapped by the weeping candle.

Jahziah Cabbell



Another dark year

Rage makes your future smoky, like loneliness
Sadness makes you shrivel up, like a forgotten mushroom
I wish I could be royal, but all I can be is a fallen king
lying frozen in the moonlight.
I live on a ghost island, where it's always October
and the memory of feathers, random,
echoes like laughter in an empire of dreams.

Being 12 is hard
It feels like a broken window
and your voice is not heard
you smile at evil
and you smell like a mystery.
Anger and hunger do not mix.

Damarco Bray

Paint the Portrait of Peace

A stroke of blue, a touch of white,
soft hues that make the world feel light.
A gentle gesture, calm and slow,
brushing warmth where worries go.

The piano hums a lullaby,
notes like whispers floating by.
A bass drum thumps steady, low,
like a heartbeat, soft and slow.

Pages turn in candle's glow,
stories stitched in time's old flow.
Words once heavy, now set free,
tales of love and memory.

A sip of tea, a book in hand,
drifting off to dreamland's sand.
Tucked in deep, where thoughts unwind,
a quilt of peace in threads that bind.

The air hums slow with lazy jazz,
no rush, no race, no need, no has.
The world outside can twist and scream,
but here, it's just a quiet dream.

No need for meaning, let it be.
Not every brushstroke tells, you see.
Some things are soft and slow, and bright,
like pillows plump and blankets white.

A masterpiece, a painted song,
a place where hearts have always longed.
No grand design, no heed, no plea.
Just home, just warmth, just simply peace.

Esmeralda Parada



Zion Fields

My favorite whale

The say that Humpback whales are the only whales known to sing,
probably more vocals than a caged bird;
I'm used to these vocals because I listen to their songs by the
shore.

I see this relationship as parasocial, believing
that the whale can hear my calls.

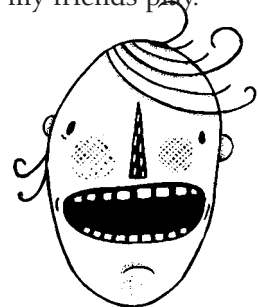
I hear they say that the person you love is 72.8 percent water—
Seeing that my only friend is a whale, it makes sense.

Mekhi Parks

The sky

The sky looked gray through the window
On the couch,
I was watching my friends,
voice silent as a mouse,
I felt myself smiling, watching my friends play.
I have to stay forgotten.

Paul Gray



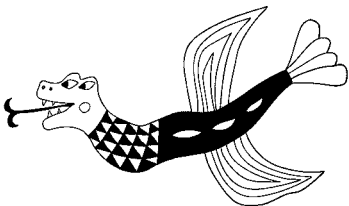


Noah Jones

So many questions

The average four-year-old asks over 400 questions a day.
 Like can I have something to eat?
 and where are my shoes?
 They ask so many questions, they don't know what to do.
 Like which blue shirt to put on,
 and what day was I born?
 To where babies come from
 to mommy, what's in your tummy?
 To why can't have some money?
 All these questions, like in basketball
 I block his shot.

Shamar Jackson



Faint memories

In 2013, I was small and bright,
 smiling wide in the soft daylight;
 a spark in the wind, singing free
 with no troubles chasing after me.

I listened, I learned, my knowledge grew,
 but now some memories fade from view
 forgotten like a half-told dream,
 drifting away on a quiet stream.

Now that I'm older,
 I'm still small and not so bright.
 All troubles chase after me.
 I don't listen, I learn every day.
 All that is just stashed in the back of my mind.

Esmeralda Parada

Spreading weather

The rain makes me feel confused
because the rain comes out of
nowhere
like an invisible doorway.

The snow makes me feel happy
because you can make snowballs
and hit your friends with it.

There is lightning
when I feel mad sometimes
like a storm blowing people
away.

Tayvion Robinson



Mason Pernell

I'm sorry for it all

Dear friend...

I'm sorry for the energy I drained,
for the heavy silence, the love I stained,
for moments lost in aching doubt,
for things I should have lived without.

I'm sorry for the anxious nights,
for turning warmth into cold fights,
for chasing things with selfish meaning,
and leaving hearts that still were bleeding.

I'm sorry for the weight you bear,
for thinking love was always fair,
for holding on when I should let,
for being someone you regret.

I know the time won't make this right,
that echoes linger past the night,
but still I hope through all the pain,
you'll find the strength to heal again.

Esmeralda Parada

12 year old life

Even when I was young,
I had knowledge,
and I loved to eat McDonald's nuggets
and their sweet and sour sauce.
My young life was like a landscape.
My dreams were forgotten, like a dry
river.
When I was young,
I played sports, but now I'm older
so I am strong and unbeatable.

Zaiden Flamer



I Believe

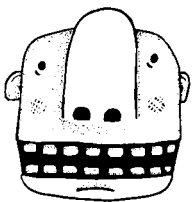
My gaze is clear, like glasses.
It is my custom to play football.
And sometimes, when I'm playing
football with my brother, I lose
Sometimes.
And I'm very good at a lot of sports and math.
I'm capable of watching my siblings,
when my mother and father leave.
I believe in Jesus and God
because I go to church.
The world wasn't made
for people to shoot and kill each other,
trash the world,
not follow the rules.

DaeQuan Nathan

Lullabies

Today my voice sings like a lullaby
and can soothe you to sleep.
It scares me.
I'm singing alongside birds over sunsets.
All I was singing, like a fever dream
feeling innocent and merciful;
I want to know:
do I soothe you to sleep?
Sleeping like peaceful babies,
like a Sunday morning.
No sound in hearing?
Today my voice sings like a lullaby,
like a quiet library on a Saturday.
Tell me... Do I soothe you to sleep?

Esmeralda Parada



Zion Fields

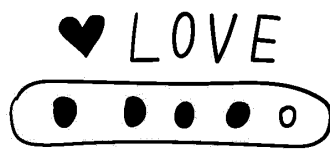
Just some thoughts

I come from the unbelievable glittering ocean
I make my home an inspiration of vision
I see an everlasting memory drifting someplace
and I wonder, when I'm asleep, if my heart forgets to beat.

When I am alone, I distance myself and dream beyond the clouds
Every day, I see forever eyes staring deep in my soul
but if I look closely, I see a calm soul drifting.

A voice inside me says, "Clash," but I wander at dawn
and I want to tell the world, the softness of my heart will betray you.
Right now, I am in a safe, charmed world
but someday I will become flames and
distance myself from the world.
I wish to hear the wind sing.

Jayla Nelson



Battle

When I was young, I listened.
When I was in fifth grade,
my mystery was being bored,
so what I did was play football
when we had recess.
My voice was low,
but my IQ was high.
I've recovered from the battle;
The battle was in my head.

Jarell McCullough, Jr.



l-r: Jahziah Cabbell, Eden Price

Thankful

I like Thanksgiving.
It's the time of year for eating good food.
I can taste the mac and cheese that comes out of the oven
on a long silver pan.

I like the feeling of summer.
I get to go to pools and amusement parks
as I stand in the heat to ride a roller coaster.

I like the smell of money.
It smells like spending, when I can get what I want
from the store, as I buy a guitar to play

I like to hear fireworks on the Fourth of July.
It's the time of year to blow your money
on fireworks, to watch the bright lights
as they fade.

Gregory Nickens

Born a Star

When I was younger,
I loved to do stuff that was unforgettable
and I was always up for a challenge;
So, one day at the mall,
there was a sign-up sheet for kids 3-7.
I loved singing and expressing my voice,
and I was one of the youngest performers there
so it was fun.

Xianah Whisenton





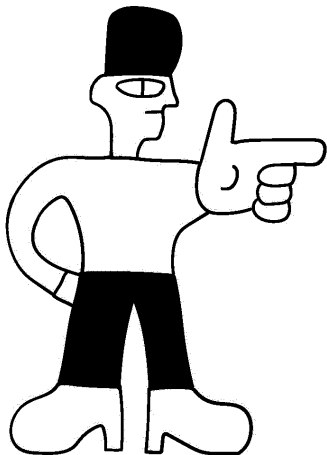
Tayvion Robinson

Wish I was young again

When I was five, it was a dark world, but
I had lot of fun, and that's still in my head.
In kindergarten, I had a lot of friends.
Field day and graduation were my best memories.

Happy that I passed that chapter in my life
but when I aged, I got more mature.
I don't have a lot of friends, and I've forgotten a lot of people--
I wish I was young again.

Serenity Avery



Memories

When I was five, my memories were a mystery
When I was five, we went to the yard--
It's like an ice cream place
It was good, and I remember that we went to Kings Dominion
and I went with all my friends for my birthday
and I went outside with water balloons
and we had fun
and this one field trip, it was to a pool.
It was me and my friends,
it was fun, we all were smiling.

Payton Phoenix

Scarred

When I was young,
the world was a broken nightmare.
When I was young,
the smile on my face disappeared.
When I was young,
I was scarred
from something I couldn't recover from.
When I wasn't even old enough...
I had never forgotten.

Jayla Nelson



I'm a baby

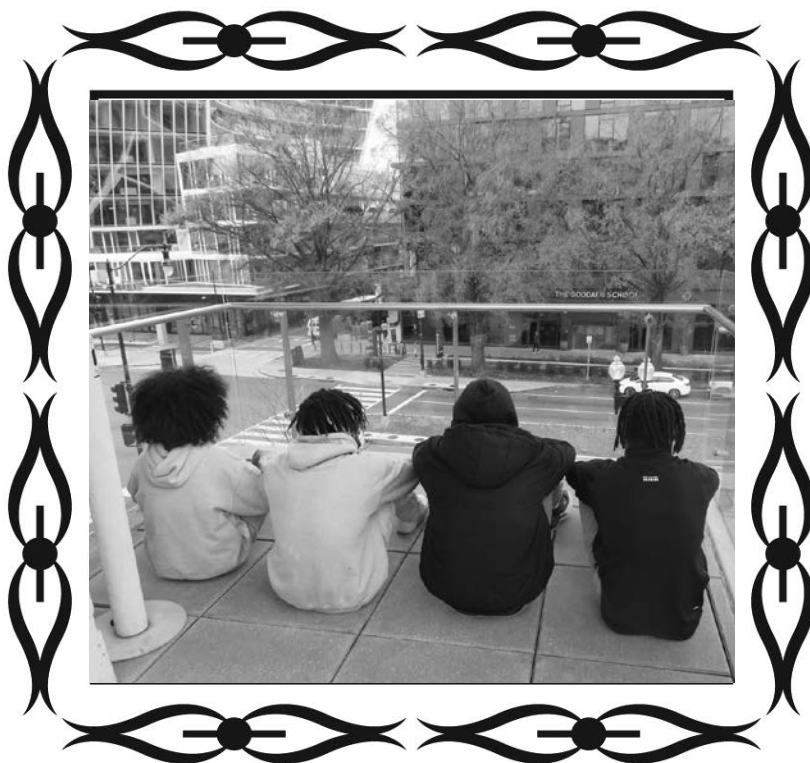
When I was younger,
I was discovered by a weird rat's
voice from PBS Kids.
I crawled up the smell of bacon,
scared of the darkness battle.
When I was young, I was a baby
tiger
eating broken chocolate-covered
vanilla ice cream cone crumbles.

Valentino Johnson

When I Was Young

When I was young,
the world was a place acted out
by the people who lived in it.
When I was young,
The CDs that were hidden in the cabinets,
I wasn't old enough to watch.
When I was young,
my parents would drive us to our grandmother's
while they went out.
When my father was mad,
he would go outside.
When I was young,
we had to eat whatever our parents made
and my parents ate whatever they wanted.

Dinerio Nathan



l-r: Noah Jones, Ricky Thomas, Amari Boyd, Zion Fields

What I remember

When I was young, I used to play games a lot,
like nightmare games
and there were widows
and I had to listen for footsteps
and there were singing squirrels
looking at me, and also
they were smiling at me.

Cordell Walker

Turnaround

When I was young, I was at home
and did not know what to do.
This poem is about third grade.
In third grade, I was a bad kid
and always got into fights
and always got in trouble.
I always was put out of my class.
I have turned it around by
doing what is right and helping people.

Jerome Hayes





My Trip to Six Flags

When I was seven years old,
I started to be very bold.
Six Flags is a fun park
so I want to explore until dark.
My voice was gone because of my wild
screaming.
I knew this was the place of my dreams.
When I was young, I had so much fun,
now I'm older and the real fun has begun!

Deangelo Fuller



Aniya Stevenson

Metaphors of metaphors

Metaphors are the youngest stars in thought's, wide
sky,
burrowing deep, where meanings twist and lie.
Each word a shovel, carving truth from clay
in the landscape where silence finds its say.

They dance in riddles, shadows sharp and bright.
A challenge wrapped in a dream, cloaked in night.
Nightmare's grin hides lessons cloaked in fear,
but metaphors make monsters disappear.
They stitch the soul with threads of fire and rain,
and name the heart without the need for name.

Zion Fields

A Sense of Home

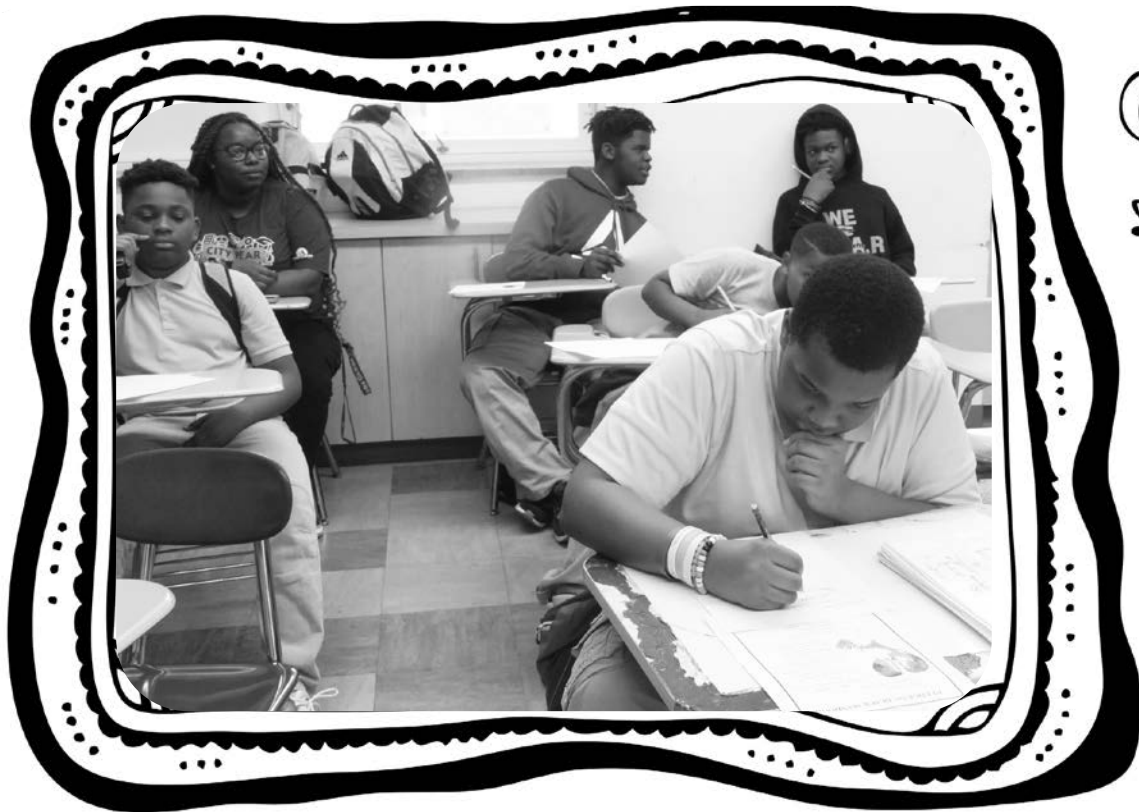
When I was young...
My mother would cook me breakfast
while I was asleep;
The smell of it made me feel like home.

When I was young...
My mother would always light candles.
It just smelled like mystery.

When I was young...
I would go to the park
and have fun
That just felt like home.

Aliya Freeman





l-r: Montell Barber, Ms. McDuffie, Jason Lewis, Deangelo Fuller, Khalil Mitchell, Romel Jones

Meadow Dance

In a sun-drenched meadow,
Silly danced with unrestrained happiness.
A shiny smile lit its face as it juggled wildflowers
Its hidden joy, evident in every playful leap and giggle,
revealed a spirit brimming with carefree delight;
A secret happiness shared with
the buzzing bees and fluttering butterflies of the meadow.

Esmeralda Parada

Steady

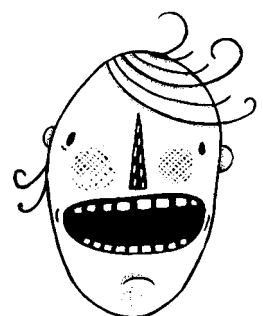
Rocks don't change.
Prisoners to their placement,
even when battered and broken,
they remain at their birthplace,
never to vanish.

Noah Williams

Everything that happened until I turned four

When I was one, I didn't know anything.
I was having trouble standing and talking.
When I was two, I was getting knowledge about something.
I was scared of doors.
When I was three, I took my first step outside,
looking around the landscape, taking it in.
When I was four, I had my first nightmare.
I was scared of a zombie movie my mom was watching.

Kamarri Edwards



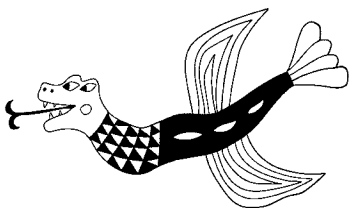


l-r: Emoni Smith, Taylor Berry, Treasure Onley

I come from Sky Zone

I make my home wild and free.
 I see drifting kids jumping around,
 and I wonder why they're running around like animals.
 When I am alone, I can be scared.
 I imagine that I can work here.
 Every day, I see kids screaming,
 but if I look closely, they would get louder.
 A voice inside me says, stop screaming,
 and I want to tell the world to be kind to others.
 Right now, I am having so much fun,
 but someday, I will have more fun.
 I wish I could work at Sky Zone.

Jahziah Cabbell



Peace in the World

I come from a place where the skies stretch wide.
 I make my home where the quiet meets the tide.
 I see the world in colors bold and bright,
 and wonder what waits beyond the height.

When I am alone, I drift in thought.
 I imagine that I can be all I'm not.
 Every day, I see the world spin fast,
 but if I look closely, I find moments that last.

A voice inside me says, "Go, explore!"
 And I want to tell the world there is always more.
 Right now, I am a dream in bloom
 But someday, I will touch the moon.
 I wish to leave behind a light that stays,
 to guide the world in kinder ways.

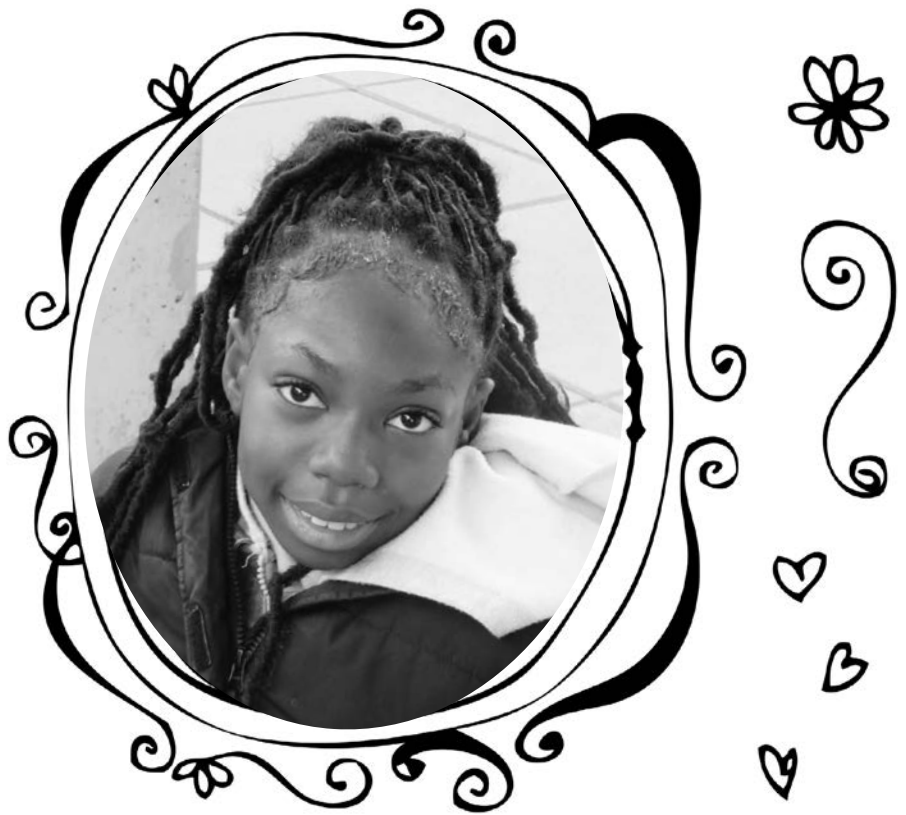
Everyone in this world, they are so selfish.
 It's unbelievable.
 Why can't we all be calm?
 It would make my soul at peace.
 But instead, it cradles with anger.

Esmeralda Parada

My Voice

Today, my voice speaks as fast as darkness
and as strong as a tornado.
It doesn't match my mood of today,
but it represents me in one way.
Something happened outside the school,
but my voice didn't step down.
Don't let anybody or anything
bring you or your speech down.
You always have ways to speak out loud.

Gabe Ladd



Jahziah Cabbell

After you

After you hurt me,
it's my revenge time.
You hurt me,
you hurt the family.
you broke the kids' hearts in half:
one piece for dinner
and the other piece for tomorrow's dinner.
My soul is thirsty for blood
his blood, in my gray-blue eye.

Aniya Stevenson

Drawing Rage

Rage is a powerful and meaningless gesture
It melts our brains and makes us talk
about non-necessary things.

You need to think about how you're mad
or make a picture of someone mad
to sketch it
then you got to add stress
inside the picture of rage.

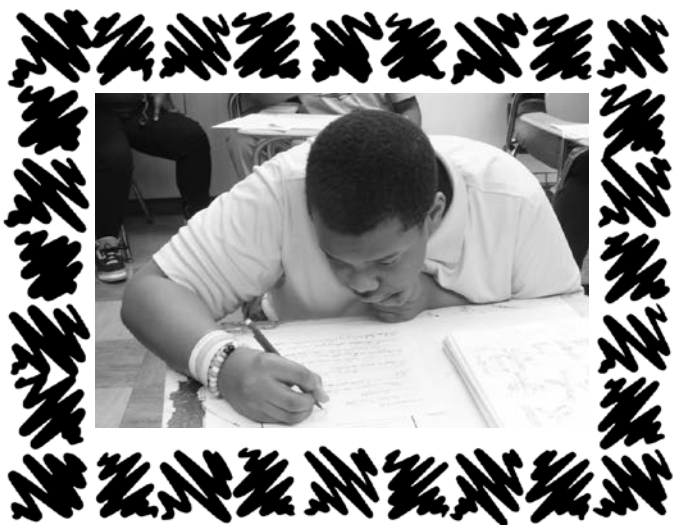
Jarell McCullough, Jr.

The moon

Here in the night,
I'm staring at the moon afloat,
floating in the midnight sky
and orbiting around the earth,
then gone in the daylight;
I watch it go back to dark.

Kayden Scott





Romel Jones

Never do things

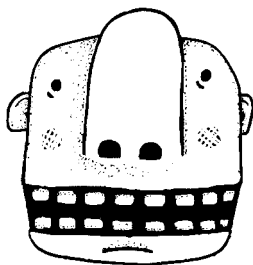
I apologize for messing up your room
and breaking your TV.
I never meant to ruin your energy trumpet
I never meant to break your car windows
I apologize for turning off your midnight alarm
I never thought you would die.
I wanted to be immortal
I never wanted my double stuffed Oreos
immersed in yogurt
I apologize for being cruel sometimes.

Jahziah Cabbell

Restart

Here in the night, I'm staring
I'm sitting in my window
scrolling on TikTok
if I could start my life again
I would love that
I could fix all mistakes
but after all
I was young

Charlie Collins



The weather within

A blizzard of thought rushes through me,
cold and relentless,
my love, my joy, my worry,
all tangled like branches in the storm.

I am voiceless behind it,
like the sky before thunder,
holding words in my chest that never make it out,
drowned by the howling wind, soft uncertainty.

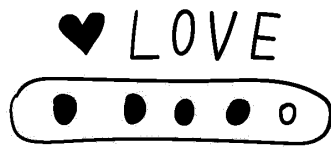
But then, a breeze,
soft, glittering with warmth,
love stirring in my bones
like sunlight after frost.
It touches my skin,
and for a moment, the century of silence
within me
breaks.

I want to live in that light,
in that delicate hum of joy.
But the storm comes again,
worry thick as snow clouds,
heavy and full of what-ifs.
The blizzard demands my attention.
It makes me forget the warmth.

And yet, the sunlight never leaves.
It only waits.
It lingers beneath the clouds,
reminding me that love does not dissolve in a storm.
Joy does not vanish in silence.
Even when the blizzard howls,
somewhere within me,
the breeze still carries the glittering
promise of warmth.

I am both storm and the sunlight,
both century and moment,
both the voiceless and loud with feeling.
And someday
the storm will tire,
the sunlight will pour,
and my heart will no longer be a
battlefield of weather.

Esmeralda Parada



Listen

My voice sounds like the wind,
the smooth, calming wind,
the sound makes you forget everything
Sit back and relax to it
let it grace your ears
let it cure your happiness
You will even fall asleep to it,
don't cry, just listen.

Romel Jones



l-r: Esmeralda Parada, Sierra Egypt, Payton Phoenix, Xianah Whisenton

Unspoken Apologies

I'm sorry for the cruel things I said,
the times I left you torn instead.
I didn't see the meaning clear,
blinded by pride, deaf to your fear.

I'm sorry for the death of trust,
for turning love into bitter dust.
I remember now what I let fade
the sunlight by the life we made.

I'm sorry for each invisible tear,
for making warmth just disappear.
Through this window, I see a new open life,
the sensible truth: I needed you.

Jamya Geeter

Fear With Love

I am fear.
I live in a window of forgiveness.
I drive a car named Smokey Sky from Tesla.
In the morning, I shine darkness.
I eat sweet blisters and heart pancakes.
I sit back and think about loneliness,
hate, sadness, hunger and pride.
I wear an old, burning gray mask.
My pet is a dirty old furry sock
with a creepy smile.
My five kids are lost in their minds.

Aniya Stevenson





Romel Jones

Heartbreak

There's nobody here to protect my heart.
 Here in the night, I'm staring at the sky.
 I was young when I found out how love feels.
 Wanting to say things, but don't have the guts to say.
 I don't remember much, but I felt shamed and confused.
 If I could start my life again, I would think before choosing.

Jamya Geeter

Home

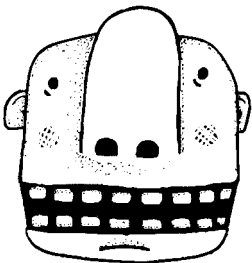
I come from Washington D.C.
 I make my home a memory.
 I see wild things every day
 and I wonder about the unbelievable.
 When I am alone,
 I wander in a strange place,
 I imagine that I can, we can, live forever.
 Every day I see clouds.

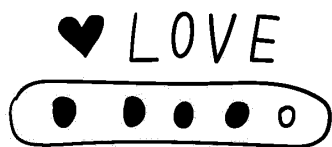
Serenity Avery

The Family

Myself: I find joy in cleaning my closet
 My Dad: Uncertainty, free from school
 My Mom: Jumping into the memories of a brand-new Toyota
 My Uncle: At nightfall, perfect driving
 Brother: Buried memories in my thoughts
 Aunt: Braids like innocent barbed wire
 Cousin: Uses broken glass to cut hair

Deangelo Fuller





My rat

Take a trip inside my rat brother--
that would be annoying
it would also stink.

He would kick you out
but let any food stay.
He needs to be tranquilized
and also has a big imagination.

He's a rat.
He ate my whole honeybun
And asked me for a dollar.

Charlie Collins



l-r: Aliya Freeman, Sierra Egypt

How to fall in love

Love is a melody, soft and sweet,
a song that hums beneath your feet.
It starts as a whisper, a trembling tune,
like dawn's first blush on a sleepy moon.

Joy is the spark, the sun on your skin,
a wildfire laugh that dances within.
It flutters like leaves in an autumn embrace,
filling the air with warmth and grace.

But love is a lyric carved deep in time,
a verse of sacrifice, steady, sublime.
Not just the chorus of passion's flight,
but the silent refrain in depth of night.

So open your heart like a blossoming rose;
Let the melody swell, let the harmony grow.
For love is not taken, nor chased, nor planned;
It finds you, it binds you, hand in hand.

Esmeralda Parada

The Weather Land

I feel happy in the summer.
Being happy feels like summer.
My smile is bright like the sun.

When I am upset,
I feel thunder in me.
The rolling thunder shocks me
as if it were lightning.
It feels scary, but I push through.

I feel chill like the snow.
It is cold, like how I feel sometimes.
Feeling chill comes and goes,
like how snow melts.

Deangelo Fuller



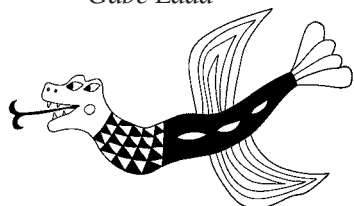


l-r: Amari Boyd, Zion Fields

Flash in my eyes

I come from a land that has hurricanes and palm trees.
 I make my home where the military makes us flourish.
 I see opportunities to do something different and helpful,
 and I wonder if I'm the only one on my journey.
 When I'm alone, I find something good to do.
 I imagine that I can make newspapers for you.
 Every day, I see stories to put on paper,
 but if I look closely, I see a deeper meaning for later.
 A voice inside me says "Do something great for you,"
 and I want to tell the world "Make opportunities for
 yourself."
 Right now, I am in school, broke and jobless,
 but someday, I will be rich and making jobs for you.
 I wish one day the world will know me
 and that when I'm gone, the stories will show me.

Gabe Ladd



Introduction

My name is Mia
 but you can call me Twin.
 I'm a nice young lady
 and a real good friend.
 I am smart today
 and was smart back then.
 God is on my side
 so I am sure to win.

Ms. McDuffie

Home

Make a house out of bullets and blood
 A blank space to clear your mind
 Where no one can reach, this is home.

Open the window to a vacant lot
 Where you and your siblings can exile anger.

As sunrise comes through the blinds,
 the sun's rays will melt your skin
 into a puddle of pleasure.
 The bones that are left will determine your home.

Dinerio Nathan

To paint a storm

First start with color,
the color of gray.
Then draw the clouds--
I like clouds.
After that, draw rain.
Make sure it's blue.
Then draw houses--
make them realistic,
remind me of home.
I like storms and their sounds.
Don't forget to add thunder.

Serenity Avery



Tayvion Robinson

Stormy emotions

My inner weather is stormy and
cloudy and, I will say, some sun.
I'm saying that I'm happy
and joyful
but cloudy
when I'm upset a little bit
and stormy is
when I am mad.

Payton Phoenix

The imagination illuminates the dark

They say that when awake,
the human brain produces enough electricity
to power a small lightbulb.
It must be true
because every time I use my imagination,
it seems as if everything around me lights up,
and the gloomy nights become bright
as exploding stars in the sky.

Dinerio Nathan

When I Was Young

When I was a kid
I wanted to be a brilliant mastermind at
science.
I wanted to burst in the air and fly high,
I wanted to blossom and rattle into the sky.
When I was a kid
I wanted to ride the breeze like a kite in the air.

These words make me try to
find a way to express myself emotionally:
Everything is joyful
Every day is joyful
We all are happy
And that's the way it is.

Malachi Jones



Summer Time

It was so hot
that I was melting
like an ice cube.
So hot
that I had to wear a suit
made out of snow.
So hot that
the air was blowing fireballs.
So hot that
I went to the ice age for a cup of frost.

Tayvion Robinson

Why In Why?

I woke up feeling happy?
Maybe jolly?
But never angry. Somehow?
But always wrong.
And this empty silence betrays
while the mirror always
questions me.
The dawn is begging. The night
is ending.
The fireflies of grief are lying
and the project is dying.

Monroe Johnson

It's okay to let go

it's okay to let go,
it's always going to come back to you
in your heart.
It's forever going to be in my past,
it's going to stick to me like hot glue.
But it's never going to rule my mind,
so it's okay to let go of stuff.



Alexander Steward

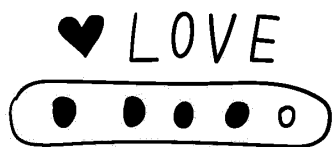


l-r: Taylor Berry, Emoni Smith, Treasure Onley

Cheating Poem

I'm sorry.
I never really was in love with you.
I never thought to take you seriously.
I never was only loyal just to you.
I never put any energy into the relationship.
I never took a second to think about how you feel.
In a way, I suppose you can say I'm a player.
For example, I never really locked with you like I said I was.
I'm sorry.
I cheated and didn't care.
I only thought of you as a flirt.
I did it.
I was a careless young girl.
I'm sorry.

Jayla Nelson



Hard work pays off

The more you try,
the easier it gets.
The harder you work,
the more you're successful.
That means when you get older,
the more humble you will be.
The harder you work,
the stronger you get,
the more successful.
When you try,
You won't have to feel haunted
Therefore you won't be afraid.

Sierra Egypt



l-r: Brielle Carry, Zuri Green, Romel Jones

My soon-to-be birthday

I am an 11-year-old
and I'm turning 12 next week.
I'm excited to turn 12.
For my 12th birthday,
I'm doing a sleepover
with my friends at a hotel.
I hate that I hit puberty.

Cali Jones

Yes!

Wake up to the smell of breakfast.
Ahhh yes! The sun is shining really bright,
Pure fresh air and a warm setting.
Ahhh yes! Laughing and making jokes with friends,
Not a single cloud in the sky.
Ahhh yes! Taking a swim in the perfectly blue ocean.
Ahhh yes! Going to bed and having a sweet dream.
If only it could be like that every day.
Ahhh yes!

Lee'Ann Graves

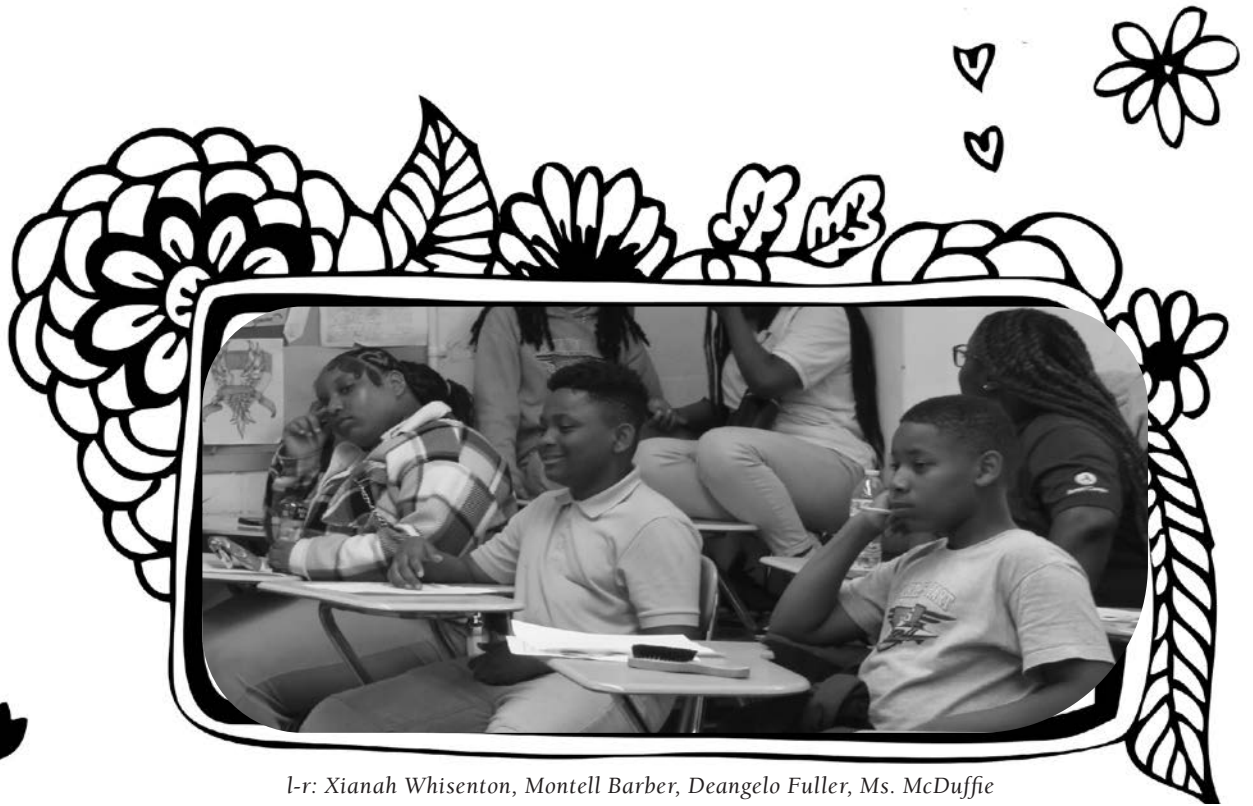
Always Aware

In life, you can never trust anybody
If we're bein' real.
When you're going to sleep,
you have to lock all your doors
because you never know if your friend
is gonna break in.

A scientific fact is that
dolphins sleep with one eye open, because
there is always something that threatens them.
Just like in life, you have to
always watch over your surroundings,
even when you feel alone.

Malachi Jones





l-r: Xianah Whisenton, Montell Barber, Deangelo Fuller, Ms. McDuffie

Revolution

Revolution is world domination.
In a world of domination,
Revolution will not always master
freedom.
Revolution is war,
But it can also be a solution.

Emoni Smith

Autumn's beauty steals the show

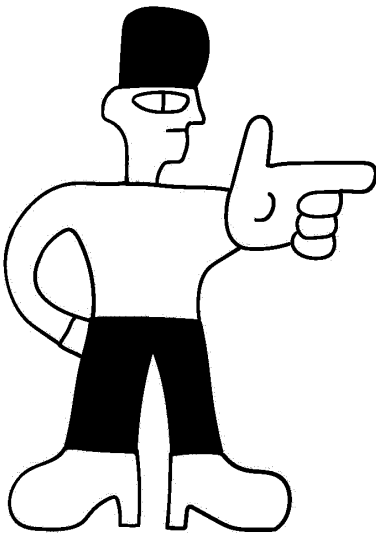
Golden leaves drift to the ground,
a whispered hush,
a softened sound.
Crisp air dances,
sky's aglow,
autumn's beauty steals the show.

Emoni Smith

Summer Ending

Summer. Those 93.6 days of warm weather, pools, beaches
and vacation. The best time of year.
As the sun rises, I blink.
I blink again, it's evening.
Each day, summer fades further away;
One day, I'm picking a bathing suit,
the next, a Halloween costume.
And back to school shopping.
One moment, I'm having fun,
the next, all I can do is replay the memory in my head.
All of a sudden, summer's almost over;
Forgotten memories, laughter and fun.
But fall's pretty nice. I guess autumn has begun.

Lee'Ann Graves



Dream house

Every night, when I was a child
I used to imagine just sitting by the pool
with the other Barbies
and going on picnics by the beach,
feeling the sea breeze with the other
Barbies.

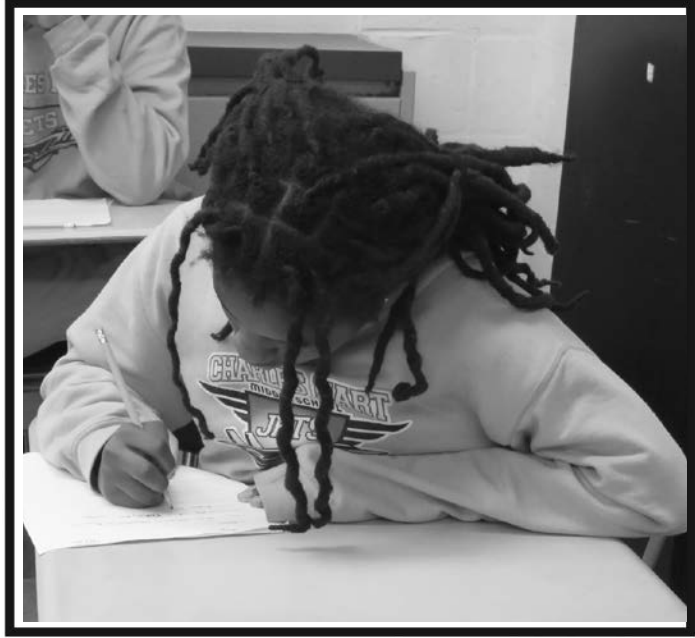
And when I was sick,
I would want to sit by the fire
in the Barbie Dreamhouse, with some
ginger tea.
Then I'd feel better in the morning
and be bursting with energy.

Taylor Berry

I'm Sorry

I'm sorry about your dog,
I'm sorry about your cat,
I'm sorry for all those mean girls still calling you fat.
I'm sorry about the job,
I'm sorry about the wife,
I'm sorry for that girl, she should really get a life.
I'm sorry about your work,
I'm sorry about your friend,
I'm sorry that before she died, you couldn't tell her
what you meant.
I'm sorry about your sickness,
I'm sorry about those guys,
I'm sorry that they say you're fat, but they look like
they eat fries.
I'm sorry about your torn heart,
I'm sorry about your ugliness,
I'm sorry that they look at you, think you're a sorry
guy.
I'm sorry about your face,
I'm sorry about your race,
I'm sorry those white guys really thinking you're a
slave.
I'm sorry about your life,
I'm sorry about my life,
I'm sorry I couldn't do more before you began to die.

Romel Jones



Dakota King

My October feeling

In October, I see the leaves falling
from the trees,
and the leaves changing colors.

As I see pumpkins, the old summer sounds
echo through the woods.

In the quiet of leaves falling,
I hear Halloween songs,
and the commotion from my mother decorating.

A taste of pumpkin lattes, frappes,
hot cocoa, Halloween doughnuts and cookies;
The feel of comfy sweaters,
and cozy blankets,
and my warm Halloween socks
while watching my favorite movie, Coraline.

Cali Jones





Blank page

Though the world
may seem clumsy,
ragged and flawed,
I find delight
in its intricate grace.
Through the writhing chaos
I am still thankful
for every moment,
every sacred space.

Alexander Steward



Esmeralda Parada

Sometimes I feel like saying yes

A still ocean breeze,
everything is nice,
like a soft tune of calm music.
I feel like I'm unbroken.
I'm undefeated.
Just one unbroken soul.
I am a single soul!
Some say you'll fall,
but I'll never stumble.
I guess today is a real yes day.

Amir Osborne



The cold night

How I feel is cold. So cold,
in fact, I could eat a mammal.
I feel the blood-dried touch of
hypothermia,
feel my skin, burning from my own
frostbite.
In the cold midnight,
an ungentle, twisted touch fills my skin.

The unforgettable song of the wind
as I feel my own loneliness,
hopeless in despair.

I feel the touch of the night
as I come to realize
I cannot fight it anymore.
Through the pores of my skin
and my understanding, hitting my brain
I come to realize it's all in vain.

Reginald Galloway IV

A star was born

I.
September, a silent evening
Something strange started to happen
I was getting ready to enter the world.

II.
My mother was in pain,
she was fascinated when she saw me.
That day I was named after gold.
I write this to look back at it.

III.
The warm breeze on Monday night,
surprising rain, rainy colors.

IV.
Broken trees,
it glows, just like you.

Treasure Onley



For My People

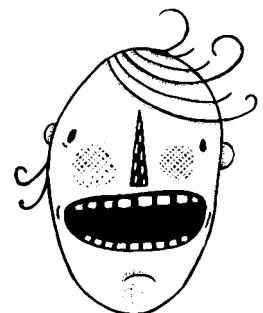
For my people, whose stories twist and twine:
Power in our hearts, though hope feels hard to find.
Dust settles on dreams, despair fills the air;
Generations yearn, but shadows linger there.

Strength's been lost; Yet change we must demand.
Let's stand as one, hand in hand!
With hope as our guide, compassion in our soul,
Together we'll rise, making our neighborhood whole.

Tomorrow's path we'll pave, brave and bold,
Chasing darkness, healing wounds untold.
For together we're stronger, victory's in sight.
We'll reclaim our streets, and bathe them in light.

Esmeralda Parada

Montell Barber



Destination unknown

In the doorway,
a threshold to cross,
a barrier to entry,
a test to swarm

A point of no redwood,
a journey to glass,
the doorway beckons,
A call to the brave.

A challenge to face,
a future to create,
a chance to explore,
a life to share,
A world to escape.

Zahkari Kollore

Scene/Seen

A sleeping sad stressed female
sometimes shy around the site of shady
people.
Shopping for shoes
shakes emotions out of shame.
Life can separate you from severe love.

Shamar Jackson

Portrait of fun

To paint the portrait of fun,
you should have
orange, and light brown,
because basketball is an instrumental
tool for fun.
Basketball is a thing that I cannot be afraid of,
it's like I am jazzing to the court
while I am playing basketball.
It's a humble sport,
like the a memory of a sport reborn.

Jacob Haith



l-r: Payton Phoenix, Xianah Whisenton

My Worth

I want to live long enough to find the value in my life.
Not just be another mindless work zombie without a
dream.
Not just another lost soul who abides by society's rhythm.
I will not cower in fear.
I will complain, I will push back against their forces.
Others ride suburban vans to the future
I will ride my dirty motorcycle over the highway of
dreams.
I will rise to the occasion.
I am more than a free person, I am Freedom.
I will write my own harmonies
I am a thunderstorm in sunny weather.
I am an earthquake in shudder.
I am scream in a world of whispers.
I've lived long enough to know my worth,
now I must share it.

Brielle Carry

August of My Birthday

August

it shines, it's blindness
as the sun shines in my eyes
as bright as a little girl's smile.

Leo

the memory of laughter,
the island beyond eyelids, unseen

I remember this:
first sand in between my fingers,
the ice cream on my tongue.

This hot weather
of mystery miracle, Monroe.

These cries of melody
smooth as paper, a miracle,
an island of bravery.

Monroe Johnson

Black Feelings

I am black,
the color of space,
but sometimes
people hate.

When I see black,
I feel blindness,
but when I see light,
I feel kindness.
And when I feel the wind,
I hear silence.

When I have energy, I feel powerful.
But when I help people, I feel valuable

Chauncy Martin



Deangelo Fuller

My Magic

I began doing magic at the age of 12.
My imagination was coming into real life.
Like Harold and the Purple Crayon,
I could draw something
and it would appear out of thin air.
I would dance around my room
with my special pencil, and drift into reality.
It was unreal to have this power
and today I'm still drawing, just like 12-year-old me.

Verona Williams



The wind

I was outside walking,
as the winds wildly whipped
air all around me.
And I was praying that God
would give me grace
while the wind was hitting
every part of my face.

Lauryn Harris

Thirteen

I am 13.
13 stands for
13 years of trauma.
My whole life,
but there were some moments
when I had a great time.
Times when I was smiling, singing.
But these 13 years have taught me everything I know:
From all the nightmares and all the fun,
I learn from my mistakes.

Taylor Berry



Valentino Johnson

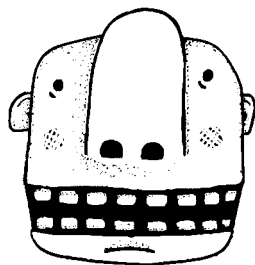
Happiness

The emotional feeling
is like a Corvette that's fast,
that can go 200 miles per hour.
I could drive this car
like thunder or lightning
with my heart racing through the car
and feel like all my anger
is racing the Corvette.
It's like a powerful car
that can drive fast, and I feel
like I could drive the whole world.

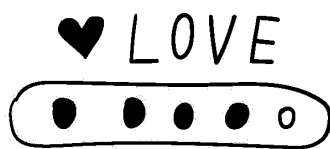
Jacob Haith

To Paint the Portrait of Trouble

When someone tells you to do something,
do the opposite,
but don't do the opposite every time--
just a couple of times throughout the day.
Then, don't comply with
most of the things people tell you,
with this, you're gonna become
a burden to everyone.
Then, at the slightest inconvenience,
get so angry your anger takes over.



Sevia Hargrove



Revolution

Revolution is
a persevering face
and a laugh of joy.
It isn't based on fighting,
guns, and commotion.
In revolution, there is
freedom and intelligence.
Revolution is not a scrubbed
version of history,
but it is civilized.
We need a future
we can depend on.

Treasure Onley



l-r: Dakota King, Payton Phoenix

Sorry, not sorry

I'm sorry for windows.
I've never pet a dragon.
I'm sorry for my energy,
but not sorry for my alarm in the morning.
I tattooed the dog, but the cat ate it.
Then I ate the cat, but not with the hat.
I'm anxious, sorry for that.

I'm sorry for being pale.
I'm sorry for swimming like a whale.
I'm sorry for being bruised.
I'm sorry for going on a cruise.
I'm sorry for having a keychain.
I'm sorry for not being Bruce Wayne.
I'm sorry for my ACL being torn.
I'm sorry for not eating my corn.
I'm sorry for being invisible,
and I'm so, so sorry my team lost in the
divisional.

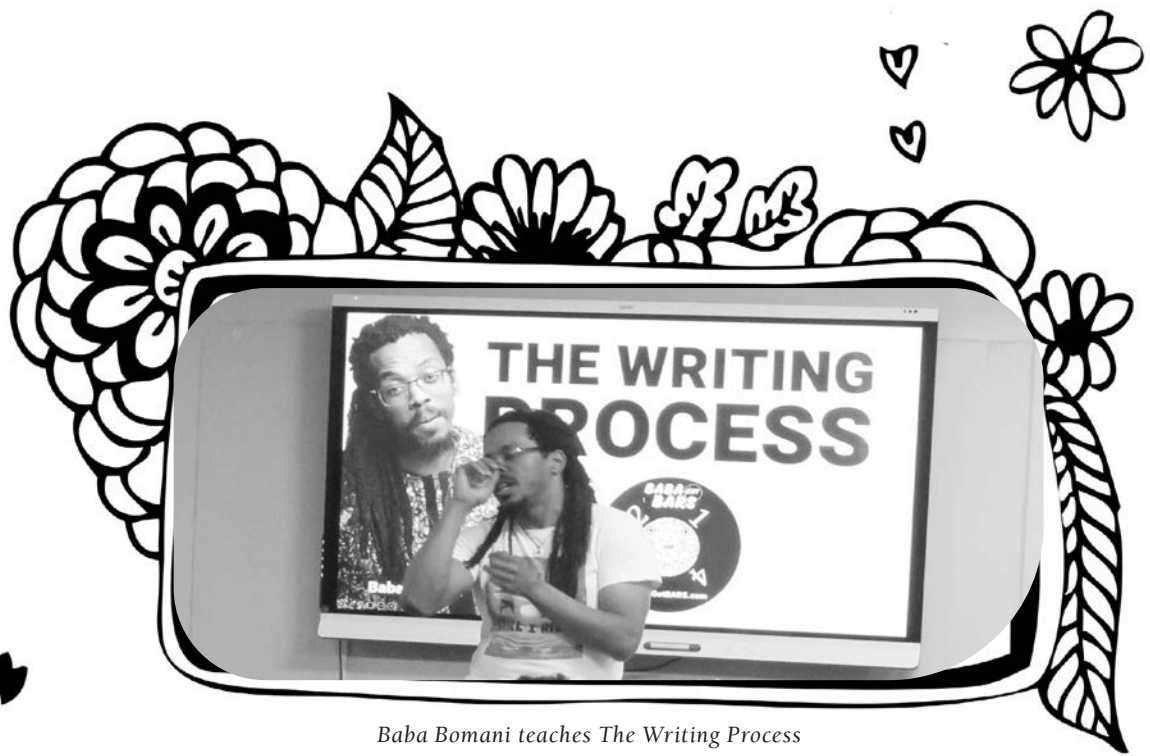
Mason Pernell

The Phoenix

When all lights go off
and the darkness presses on like a weighted blanket
and the fireplace crackles
I fly into your room.
I comfort you with my blossoming aromatherapy.
I protect you like the scorpion's venom.
I mutter sweet nothings to you.
I nourish your soul with my tune.
I dry your tears and push your dreams upward,
higher than kites, higher than airplanes,
higher than clouds,
and when you are tired and finished with me,
just say the word and I will return to dust and ashes
and hug you goodnight.

Brielle Carry





Baba Bomani teaches The Writing Process

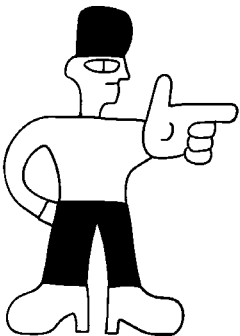
Redemption

I'm sorry I didn't do my school homework.
 My mistakes make me anxious.
 I have been bruised from my mistakes.
 I used to do bad things,
 but now life, I see, it's different.
 Now I realize that picking good decisions
 doesn't cost nothing.
 God is giving me signals.

Kevin Robles

My mother

I love my mom.
 She gave me a life to live.
 Her eyes are like the sunshine.
 Her skin is as soft as sand.
 She shows a lot of love.
 She is the best mom I ever had.
 She buys me what I want
 even though she struggles.
 I love my mom because she is
 the bravest woman in my life.



Kevin Robles

Alone-mas

Christmas, which is in December,
 you're supposed to feel jolly
 but instead you feel betrayed.

You're supposed to smell cookies
 and the vibe that makes you feel welcome
 but instead, you smell nothing. Shame.

You're supposed to taste the sweet warm milk,
 but instead, you're down bad
 and all by yourself.

You're supposed to hear laughter from your family
 but instead, you hear the fireplace crackling.

You're supposed to feel your family
 happy and loving on you
 but instead, you're in your bed
 watching other people's lives.

Taylor Berry



My Weather

My weather is tornadoes
with waffles and syrup,
sticky but sweet
and full of goodness.

It's also full of warm
and welcoming people,
but blizzards ruin that.

But there's also the endless travel
of spikes that I forcefully step on
to love those people.

Mason Pernell

Family Portrait

I took a family portrait
when we were nice and sweet
but some were out of reach.

When I took the picture
I only saw the people
who were not there.

Treasure Onley



Sierra Egypt

The Confessions

Rage is a hidden part
that can make you feel
darkness in your heart.
It has come into your friendship
because it's not just a feeling,
because it is your reality,
a broken part inside you
and it made you feel alone and sad
and lost inside
and the sadness has made you feel
hopeless and hidden.

Montell Barber



Paint the portrait of home

To paint the portrait of potential,
the word I would tell the painter
is, to be successful,
paint something happy.
You must now saturate
the house in silence;
Make sure to gather all the memories
so you can be ready to paint.
Once you're done, you can
paint another portrait.

Aliya Freeman

Gravity

I'm one who voices change, just like the earth.
When you light a candle, the room glows up
just like when the sun lights up the world.
When you blow out the candle,
the room goes back to black.
The earth has a rhythm.
When I jump, the gravity forces me back down.

Khalil Mitchell

My World

I am made out of snacks
I open my eyes to my siblings.
When the shadows fall,
that means I need to shut out the world.
You might find me sleeping,
eating, or watching TV with my brother.
I dream in shades of a rainbow, every experience.
My heart jumps when I see my baby brother.
My biggest fear is cars and dying.
The sound of my laughter is like an evil baby.
I feel like I can do anything
when I know my mom believes in me.
There is nothing like the smell of Bath and Body Works.
When it is time to rest, I lie down blessed.

Taylor Berry



Dakota King

Quiet life

I live quietly and go nowhere.
I stay in my house quietly,
and quietly I live by myself, quietly
and sleep peacefully in my comfy bed.
I get up in the morning to make my bed
and go to the bathroom to brush my teeth.
Then I wash my face,
and go to the kitchen to make breakfast.
I make pancakes, eggs, bacon and sausage.
Once it gets finished, I put it on the plate.
Then I put sugar on my pancakes
get a fork, and sit at the table to eat.
Once I'm finished eating,
I go back to the room, get ready for work,
get in my car and drive away to go to work.
Once I get to work, I check in
and go straight to working.

Aliya Freeman

Inside a football field

One thing I know
is there is turf and numbers,
a tall goalpost
and people wearing equipment,
flags on their waists,
two at a time
with cleats on their feet,
sprinting like rabbits
for a touchdown.

Jerome Hayes

Fading

His signs turn off like lights.
his name voiceless,
and his darkened footprint foreign,
knowledge, bitterness,
skip like a fog from pond to pond.

His thinking wasn't hungry from Ramadan.
He travels from south to north,
pathetic his subjunctive:
woven, horizon spiraling;
He was once master of it.

Still, all in all,
he has inner sunlight,
still warm with prevailing winds.

Khalil Mitchell

Crazy Weather

The weather is rain and thunder pouring down.
How I feel about thunder is calm, scary;
the rain is kinda calm, though the wind is blowing
through
the clouds hanging low, the leaves are wet--
Rain and thunder, heavy at times.

Aliya Freeman

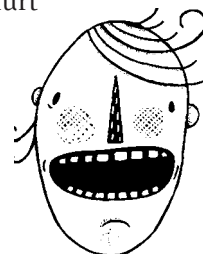


Deangelo Fuller

Paint the car in anger

Paint the car in anger
paint it a bad flavor
give the car a bad color
paint the car like you don't care.
Paint the car ugly,
treat it like a bully.
paint the car in snakes so you get bitten.
Paint the car like it's meaningless,
and I hope you get hurt
in the car of anger.

Khalil Mitchell





l-r: Taylor Berry, Kevin Robles

The Moon

Go inside the moon.
The moonlight would shine in my face.

The universe feels like an enchanted place.
From the moon, I can discover multiple stars.

The moon is the refreshing imaginable place.
Stars would shine day and night
and twinkle in space.

Colton Fersner

So Hot

I went to the store
and went in the door,
was so hot I fell on the floor.
I asked for some water
and asked for some more.
I went home and went to sleep
on the bedroom floor.

Jerome Hayes

How to not get trouble

Like, don't mess around with your friends
And don't make your friends laugh
like Khalil does.
And don't do too much in class
And don't get into fights
And just be good.

Tristan McNair

Playful dog

You don't have to sit down or fight.
You don't have to go outside in the rain.
You only have to make friends,
you only have to be nice to others.
You don't have to beg,
you only have to ask.
You don't have to get on people's nerves,
you only have to listen.

Isaiah McRae



My Special Place

The breeze of wind
the scent of fresh air,
at once I feel calm
at my special place.
The beautiful horizon
soothes my thoughts.
The once mad soul in me
is now forever calm and loving.

A'Siiyah Anderson



Damarco Bray

Summer

Summer is the unforgettable season
In the summer, it burns slides and the swings
The sun can scorch your eyes and your skin
During the sunset, it gets cold
During the sunrise, it goes back to scorching things.

Colton Fersner

The world back then and now

The world back then was safe and fun:
You could go to the neighbor's house and play freeze tag,
hide and seek, or even chess,
you could watch a butterfly fly away from its cocoon.
But life now is not like that.
There is a crime anywhere you go,
you see smoke anywhere you go,
you even see unforgettable things;
You may think you've forgotten
but trust me, you haven't.

Isaiah McRae

Peace

During the day, I lie in fresh grass
while wind blows
At the beach, I lie down in the sand
and put my feet in it
Like a stone, I just sit there
At home, after the thunderstorm,
I sit down on the porch
During the evening, I lie down
and think about peaceful stuff.
At night, I lay down and
my dream was about lying on clouds

Colton Fersner



Past, Present, Future

Life is one thing,
future is another.

In the future,
it may be harder than now,
but right now
my life is green.

Other people may have
a dark history, while
my life is pleasure.

Lauryn Harris



Khalil Mitchell

Thankful

One thing I'm thankful for is family.
No matter what you're mad about,
your family will make you start laughing with joy.
Kindness is another thing,
because showing kindness
could change somebody's bad day to a good day,
even showing kindness to ourselves can change
our day.
Sometimes the feeling of kindness
makes you ask yourself what's happening,
but you ask it proudly.

Isaiah McRae

Mood

The weather is like an endless sunset
with prevailing wind and a cool breeze
and leaves being swept from the ground.
The horizon glittering with spreading fog.
The beauty of the sky is mesmerizing,
cool with wind brushing against me.
I feel an undenyng comfort.

Paul Gray

The days

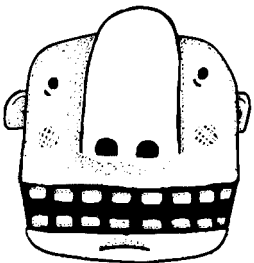
As the days go on,
I listen for an open window
of recovery from the pain of chores.
The battle and troubles of the pain
from sweeping the stairs
back and forth continuously.
The challenge of not being able to have
nightmares of the responsibilities
you have when growing up.

Justin Bangura

Peaceful place

I come from a place
where the sun don't shine.
I live in the hood
and it's never happiness anywhere.
A voice inside me says
that I need to move to a peaceful place.
I wish that I could walk outside without being
scared.

Alexander Steward



♥ LOVE



Being 12

Having to deal with more problems,
like trying to fit in,
more chores,
harder work,
and more feeling worthless,
getting easily mad.

What the good news is,
that I found more friends,
more maturity,
better birthdays,
and a better school.

Zion Thornton

Inheritance

I got my mom's face because I look like her.
And she looks like her grandmother.
She's got the same ears as my mom.
My attitude is as random as the weather.
I got the same voice as my cousin.
My grandfather has the same attitude as his son.
My family has a lot in common.

Zion Thornton

Stress

I am 12 years old and my responsibilities
are a nightmare and a challenge combined.
It's not always so bad, though because
sometimes I get to calm down about school
because it's school.
What I'm trying to say is that
I can do what I want sometimes,
and I can smile on my sweet iPad screen.
And after a little playing on screens,
I can hit the court for some B-ball and battle people.

Dillon King



l-r: Ivory Green, Payton Phoenix

Weather

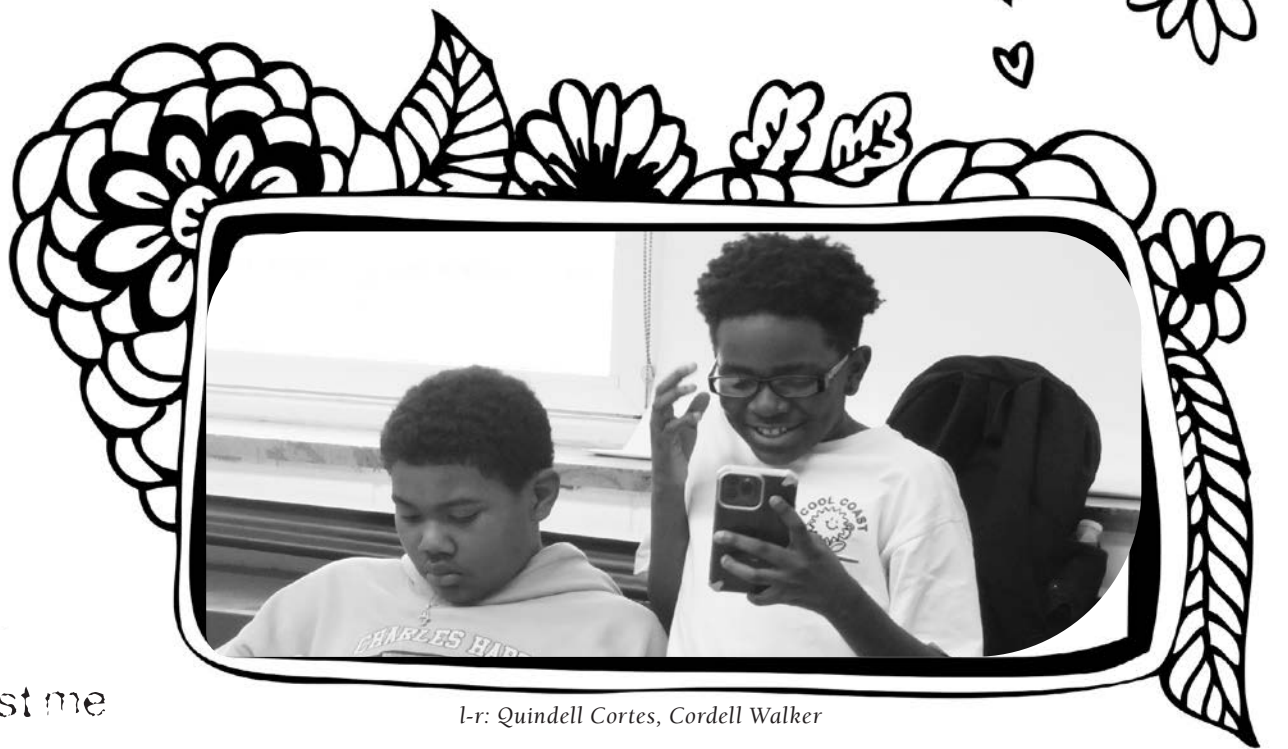
The spreading breeze was nowhere near mild.
In fact, it was a storm, grieving about,
as if in a fog of rage.

His voiceless self traveled like a compass.
He would leave the dark footprints
affecting my physical behavior.

Yet still, if foreign, the next day would be sunlight.
Not a gust, but a blizzard.
Not sprinkling, but scattering.
Not glittering, but rattling
of non-silence.

Justin Bangura





Just me

l-r: Quindell Cortes, Cordell Walker

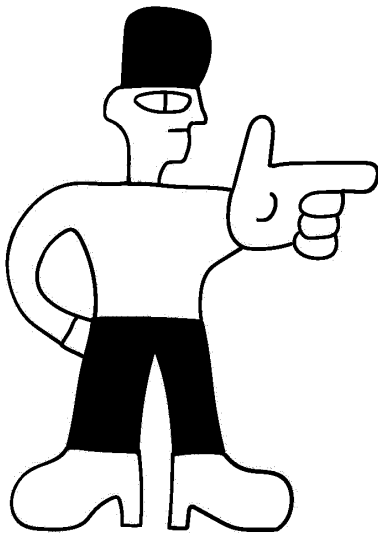
I come from a place
where my soul was created.
I make my home livable and comfortable.
I see flames in my eyes
when I get mad, and I wonder
how many loops light can
travel around the earth in a heartbeat.
When I am alone,
I'm in peace, and watch the twilight.

Dillon King

Ancestors

There's a thing I do every year
where all family members come together
have a party, brother meets
cousins, meets sister and others.
Every time I go there, I learn something new
and every time I go there, I grow too.
We must give credit to the people who made
our future and our life,
and cherish the people we love.

Demarco Whitney



Think about your future

I am made out of iron that cannot be broken through.
I open my eyes to gun violence, where the sun don't shine.
When the shadows fall, that means God tells me it's my time to go.
You might find me in heaven, talking to God about my future.
I dream in shades of becoming successful in the world.
My heart jumps when I'm going through an emotional or family emergency.
My biggest fear is not waking up at night.
My very best friends are God and family.
The sound of my laughter is soft, because I'm a quiet person.
I feel like I can do anything when I put my mind to it.
There is nothing quite like the smell of freedom and fresh air.
When it is time to rest, God will let me know.

Alexander Steward

Me

My hair is wavy.
They call me Trey.
I like to hang out at home.
I like to watch unspeakable TV shows.
People know me by my short hair.
My happiness is a sunny day,
but my anger is like rain,
and like I always said, baaaang!

Treshawn Cabbell



Jahrell Graves

Unresolved me

I see her so tired of being angry.
Every day always goes wrong.
Her heart is broken.
It makes her keep silent.
She says all the time,
Why can't I start with a fresh new life?
Unresolved me, she says.
Look, imagine her protected to the bottom of her fingertips.
She says, unresolved me. She's here protected.
Look at her climb. You go girl!

Azaria Snowden



Frozen Winter

The snow is as frozen as my heart.
The heat has no warmth,
and a lot of homeless people are sick.
I'm in the darkness
and I can't see to the light.
Hearts crumble, some struggle, and I'm sad.

Zion Thornton

My weather

My weather is full of lightning and thunder.
No birds would ever want to go through my weather
unless it's the weekend when I play football.
Then the thunder starts to silence,
but the lightning gets brighter.
My weather is winter when I play the game;
I start to get cool and relaxed.
After all the thunder, lightning and snow,
Here comes sunlight ready to shine
when I spend time with family.

Isaiah McRae



Football life



Paint first a field.
The words will tell of
the flags and touchdowns of the game.
Paint next something mad.
You must now draw a trail of fire on the field
traveling to the field goal.
Draw a football that's on fire,
flying across the field.
Your hardest task is to mess up the field
with stuff that looks like dirt.

Isaiah McRae

My Name

My name sounds like silent bells;
they swing all day but stay silent.
My name looks like shining soft drums;
they look good and feel good
but are always beating.

My name feels like sweet chocolate,
glowing in the dark, always standing out
even when it's not supposed to.

My name tastes like fresh cookies.
It never loses its sense even in intense situations.
My name smells like wet grass.
It gains nutrients from rain and the sun.

Chauncy Martin



Jamya Geeter

Endure the Darkness

When I was a kid,
I wanted to be a fast person
that could sting like venom.
I wanted to be kind and
surprise the darkness
and be a blossom that bursts.
I wanted to be brilliant,
mutter the words and endure the venom.
I wanted to move upward and triumph.
I wanted to be fearless and struggle through the darkness.
I wanted to go underground and discover the world.

Zaiden Flamer

I just want peace

I'm so tired of being wrong.
I've been climbing the mushroom,
begging for silence.
I've been looking in the mirror
and all I see is fireflies.
The water is frozen
but I still see water floating.

Lauren Dozier

Say yes

Together for five years,
pure souls intertwined to be one.
I do, I will forever say yes to you.

We are like the ocean.
Saying yes to the sun kissing the water.
Forever intertwined.

Your love is like a souvenir.
I want to cherish it forever.
Say yes to it forever.

Our memories together will never fade.
Its luminous picture is in my mind,
like music from the old days.
But it never gets old.
I just keep saying yes.

Ms. McDuffie



l-r: Zaiden Flamer, Kamarri Edwards

Unknown Silence of Poetry

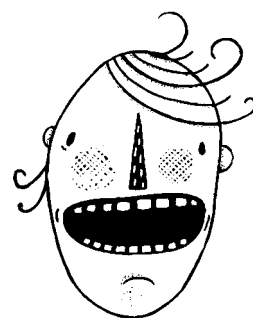
I am made out of metaphors and similes.
I open my eyes to voices.
When the shadows fall, that means
in the daytime people will write me
and at night people present me.
You might find me on paper with millions of letters.
I blend in with black and white
as much as I like burnt candle smoke.
My heart jumps when someone reads me.
My biggest fear is numbers and operations.
My very best friends are reading, writing, and the language arts.
The sound of my laughter is like someone erasing something.
I feel like I can do anything when I get published.
There is nothing quite like the smell of fresh lined paper.
When it is time to rest the book closes.

Dillon King

Love Poem

Let it be love, like kindness and drizzles,
Let it be bravery, like a forsaken reflection, like
vanilla,
This is the universe, cards like hearts and clubs;
Loneliness is like fear, suffering and hope.
I feel a white wave in the ocean.
I feel like a lunar being
primordial as a hurricane.

Zaiden Flamer





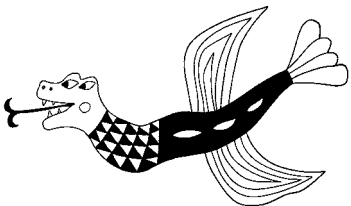
l-r: Jerome Hayes, Terrence Griffin

Mystery of Age

As a kid, I thought the older I got the better it would be
but I was very wrong.
The mystery of age is something strange.
I am the youngest, so I always thought
I had it the worst, and the invisible warmth of being a kid
did not come to me.

When I turned 12, I did not know what I was in for.
I had forgotten my child version and the pressure got to me.
The voice I never heard told me to never forget
to be a child, but I did not listen
and I had to recover from the blindness I walked into.

Chauncy Martin



Voiceless Mind

The voiceless mind is the doorway
to peace of mind
and to travel into heaven.
The bitterness of a lime, and the heart
is the compass
as the light turns into darkness.

Messiah Jones

A Strawberry is not a Berry!

Oh strawberry, red and sweet,
with seeds that dot your skin so neat.
A berry's title, you seem to wear,
but scientists say "You're unaware."
For berries form from one lone ovary,
a botanical fact, not arbitrary.
But you, dear fruit, defy the code,
from flowers, with many seeds bestowed.
Your cousins bananas and peppers too,
are berries, true.

Emoni Smith

Love Yourself

In the mirror take a glance,
See your beauty, take a chance.
Every flaw and every scar
Makes you strong just as you are.
Loving yourself, don't look away.
You are the light in your own way.

Emoni Smith

Thousand years of love

Her love is a raging ocean,
crashing waves a thousand feet high,
and when she smiles,
the sun ignites brighter than a million
stars
lighting up the darkest skies.
I'll paint that sky with stars so bright
that my heart beats louder than thunder's
roar.

Quindell Cortes

To Paint a Portrait of a Window

The first thing you need is a window;
It's like a portal to the outside world.
Next, we need the window to be floor to ceiling--
It will be big enough to see the colors of the world.
The borders of the window should be painted white.
Next, paint the outside world.
Fill the window with condos and birds flapping in the wind.

Damarco Bray

I'm sorry for the smoke and ugliness

I'm sorry for my narrow body.
I will eat more spaghetti.
I'm sorry for my silliness in church.
I'm not sorry for learning the meaning of life.

Treshawn Cabbell



Zion Fields

I apologize

I spoke too fast, I hurt too deep.
I made a promise I couldn't keep.
Regret now lingers in my chest,
I never meant to leave a mess.
If words could heal, I'd send them true,
a simple wish, to start anew.

Emoni Smith



Like me, glowing

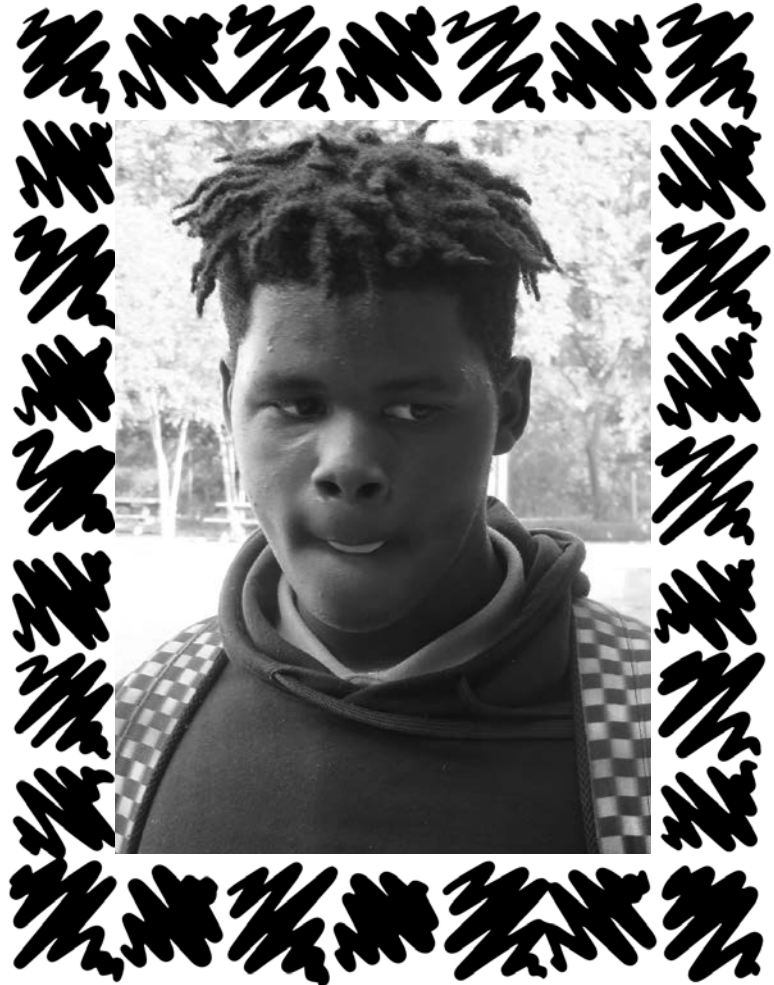
Like me,
I'm kind
I'm smart,
I'm pretty.

I like love.
I like butterflies.
I like night or morning walks.
I like to be alone.
I like to be with my friends.

I love my sister.
I love food.
I love love.
I love my friends.
I love clothes.
I love the sky.

When I walk in the room
I glow.
I'm like the sun rising into the day.

Taylor Berry

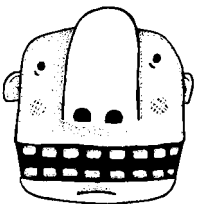


Jason Lewis

Synesthesia

A star sounds like popping, sparkling.
A circle smells like Mickey Mouse eats.
White moves in a squiggle on ocean water.
A whisper looks like the wind's breeze.
The texture of purple feels like a daisy in the sun.
The letter R glows the color blue.
Whenever I look at you, I hear waterfalls in the trees.
Every time I bite an apple, I see the moon rise.

Ryeli McRae

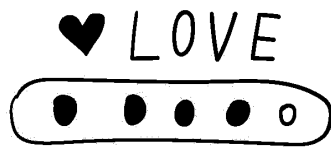


People's feelings

A silent voiceless person is a sad person
who doesn't know what's going on.
The endless scene that can always last
until the happy person comes along.

Together, a silent voiceless person
and a happy person can't stay a long distance away.
So the weather moves between windy and sunny,
that's a good type of weather,
because sometimes on a sunny day
it's too hot,
so you need some cool wind.

Zuri Green



All about me

Let it be a new T-shirt
that my friends will fear.

Let it be guerrilla tag
while I chill on my bed
with my furry white headset.

Let it be Lego bricks
that I'll build a grayish blue
fast and furious car
with cinnamon carpet.

Let it be kindness, bravery
and hope.

Valentino Johnson



l-r: Jacob Haith, Noah Jones

Prying children

As a child, I was hunting for freedom
but the darkness kept me close, and it needed me.
I had to endure the things that happened to me.
I was hunting for light,
but I had important things to attend to underground.

I had to blossom out to my true form,
but when I did,
something bad happened.
Missiles were heading down on us;
We had a spy and I had to get rid of him,
but the venom got to me
and I killed everyone in the process of judgment.

Chauncy Martin

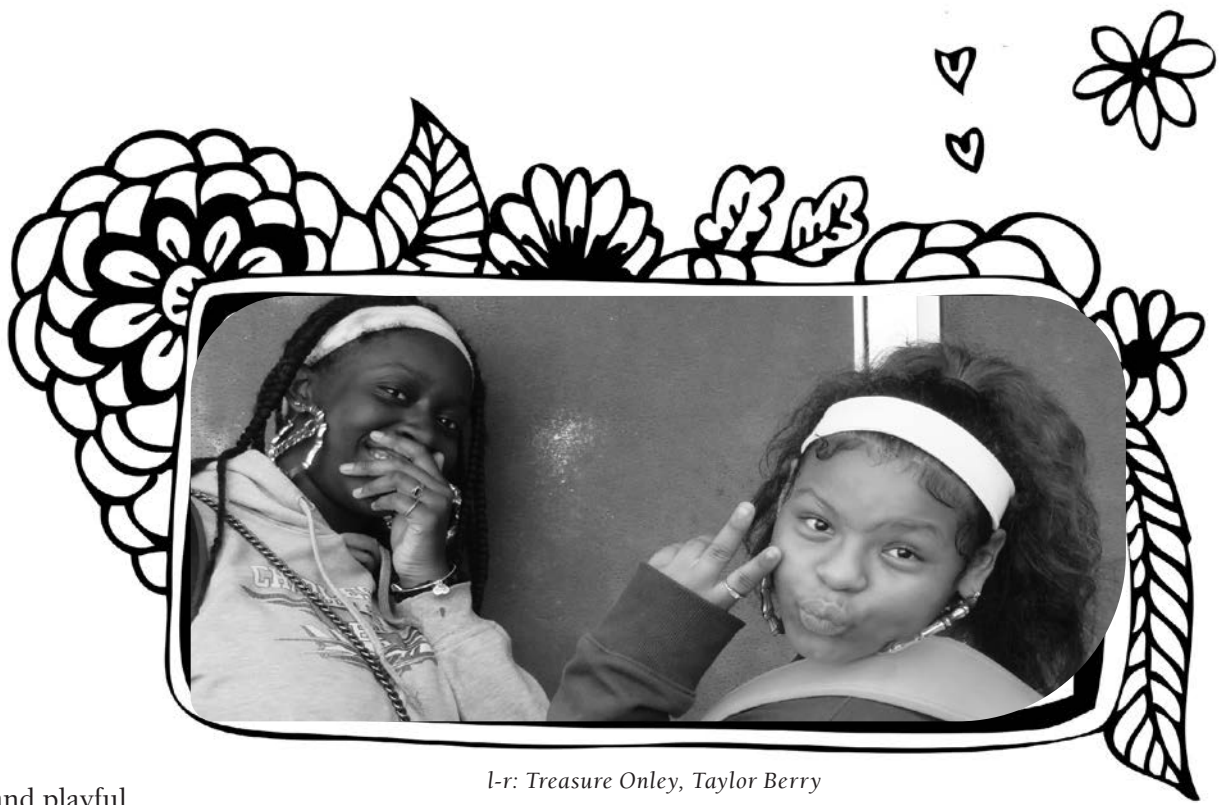
Time waits for no one

One second, it only takes one second
one second, to make a wrong decision
and one to make a right decision.
That's how fast your life could change
for the better or it could change for the
worse.

The concept of time is funny.
It's funny how people say
time waits for no one
and time flies,
but when someone is sad or
not having a good day,
one day feels like a lifetime.

Ryeli McRae





l-r: Treasure Onley, Taylor Berry

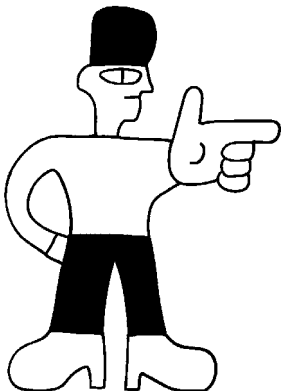
My People

My people are silly and playful.
They laugh all day, with no rest.
We have freedom every day, all day.
Some other people think that
we are in another world.

My people be unseen and misunderstood.
We push through countless times.
We don't have control; people control us.

My people are put together.
We are tangled in towers
We live, we rise, we have strength!

Dakota King



Memory

In the stillness of a bruised and torn landscape
where shadows linger, casting whispers of cruel energy
smoke rises, curling like memories into the pale sky
a haunting alarm echoes the presence of death nearby
each breath feels heavy, laden with remnants of forgotten tales
as the air thickens with the weight of moments we remember.

Quindell Cortes

It's a new year, and the year needs me

My goals didn't make it last year,
but there's a new me this year
so new goals have reached me.

I am now woke and ready.
The back downs have gone away
and been left behind in the dust.
I start to make my way to my future
and never look back, unless I want
to keep some memories to always remember.

Deep inside, I am wishing this year
goes the best for me and my family.
May 2024 rest in peace,
because 2025 has arrived.

Hayley Jackson



Zion Fields

Thankful feelings

I think some things are more hurtful than kind,
Clumsy things, silly things,
happy things, laughing things,
proud things, strange things,
sad things, are okay to express.

That's why I write my feelings proudly in my poems.
That's why it's easy to invest
in my poems in Writing Club.
(I must digress)(Sadly)

Zuri Green

I Am Sorry

I am sorry for the kids that be bruised and pale.
I am sorry for the bullies who say
"You got a narrow ugliness from a grandma."
I am sorry that someone tore your heart to pieces.
I am sorry your mother does not have enough energy.
I am sorry that your life or universe sucks, or you're
just unlucky.
I am sorry that your friends walk past you and never
say hi, like you're invisible.
I am sorry they cut the highway off from traffic
and you gotta drive another way to your grandma.
I am sorry that your dad smokes.

Ryeli McRae

I wanna

I wanna hang deep with my cousin
cause I wanna spend every moment with her.
I wanna let go of my laughter
because I get mad when people say be quiet.
I wanna let go of my teddy bear
and spend more time on books
and I wanna hang up my spirit and
keep pushing and never give it up.

Ryeli McRae

Air

Air, a pitiless burden we carry
in the vast expanse flung to the sky,
invisible whispers into the blank
space unbound yet wary;
In every breath,
the unanswered sigh.

Quindell Cortes





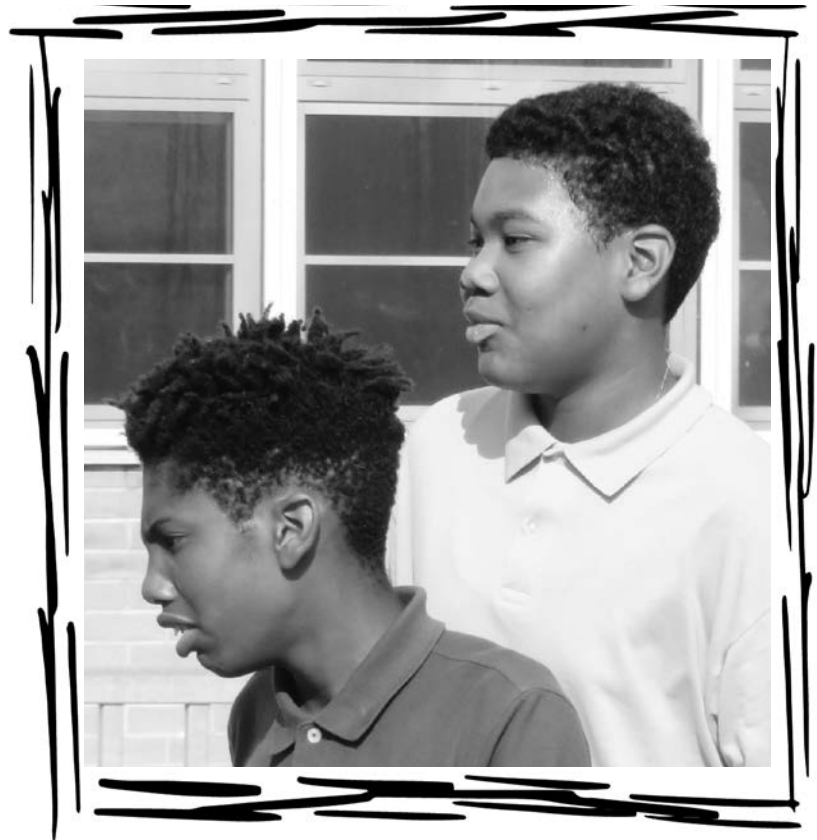
Harmony

This is the best time to play.
The liberty you have,
the life of fun that we see.

We all have this, I hope
the ability to have fun every time
we have a melody in our heads
that we sing to find justice.

We always have that balloon that
pops and is calm;
We feel something, we all need,
we all want, and what we seek
It's a harmony in life!

Dakota Skye King



l-r: Dillon King, Quindell Cortes

The Best Time Ever

This might be the start of endless fun.
We feel free and loved by the breeze,
the shining footprint breathing in the sky.

We love the best view,
the speed of wind we see
so go on rides and say whee!
Have the storm leave
And say hi to the sunlight.

The hunger that you feel,
it will go away.
The best time of the year--
It's summertime! Now have fun!

Dakota King

Inside a Brain

Go inside a brain
It will be unbelievable or a disaster.
Your mind and thoughts all in one space.

Doorway to your thoughts,
There is too much to believe.
Your imagination, your questions, and your dreams.

Your mind and thoughts help you remember,
calendar information and evidence,
your mind and thoughts help you,
and people don't even realize.

Hayley Jackson





l-r: Treasure Onley, Taylor Berry

Apolitical Intellectuals

One day there will be questions
for the man of our people.
They will be asked about what they did
once the homeland was shutting down.
Not about Greek mythology, not about the disgust
that they felt inside themselves.
Nothing will be asked of them,
or their justifications;
They come every day and leave.

Zuri Green

Love for the stop

While I'm playing football,
anger fills me
to work harder
and joy fills me as well.
My love of the sport is unbearable
to explain, and that's the end.

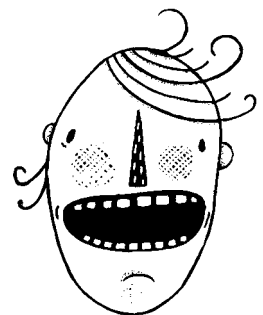
Kamarri Edwards

Save America

Let it be me.
Let it be a universe where there is no violence,
there's only love, kindness.
There shouldn't be things that make the world so hot
and things that make us suffer
like jalapeno, wasabi, paprika.
We should make the world sweet,
like vanilla, almond, cinnamon
and maybe a little bit sour.

All the people who go through stuff that makes them
take it out on other people should really have love in
their lives,
also they need a giant sloth to be asleep on
and cuddle with;
Animals always solve the problem for me.

Hayley Jackson





Zaiden Flamer

To paint the portrait of getting through the day

Paint first a plate of seaweed.
 Its nice salty flavor of jazz,
 the rebirth of space and relaxing place
 to be free.
 Do not get angry,
 Don't just hide it,
 Do not keep it hidden,
 let it be shown.
 The hunger you once had is gone, right?
 I am sure it is gone.
 The instruments will help you
 get over your fears and stress.
 People ask for some,
 and I say "With pleasure!"
 They feel like a blank space.
 Really, the sunrise out of a window--
 just know it helps me remember why!
 The memory is good to know.

Dakota King

Sadness

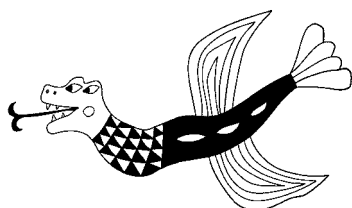
Paint first a treasure hunt,
 searching for art of blank space.
 I'm afraid of the boogeyman.
 I'm hungry for happiness.
 Paint next a bed to sleep in
 for 10 days at a time
 on the roof, next to the bird's nest.

Valentino Johnson

My Voice

Today, my voice sings like a heartbeat rhythm.
 Gather together before daybreak,
 I'm singing along with the birds this morning.
 The chord is strong and it never ends,
 the journey is starting to wind down slowly.
 Let your voice be silent,
 but not too silent,
 because you have to speak for yourself sometimes.

Hayley Jackson



Poem about voice

Let your song be bold,
Like antique gold.
It shines in the light
But is strong and holds weight.

Let your voice be alive,
Like the grass we walk on
and the colors of the world.

I can only be heard by people,
People who listen to the soundtrack
of the world and the heartbeat of all
living things.

My voice and song travel far and
wide.
I sing of peace and happiness,
and hope for our future.

This is my voice!

Ms. McDuffie

There's nobody here in my area

Here, in the night, I'm staring at the moon
wanting to say things that spark.
I live quietly and go nowhere.

If I could start my life again,
I would describe my past life.
Now that I know.

After the storm, I will float as a lonely ghost.
I don't remember much,
but I can gather the aftermath of the disaster.
I was young and outgoing and judgmental
so I like to be out and open, and curious daily.

Hayley Jackson



Treshawn Cabbell

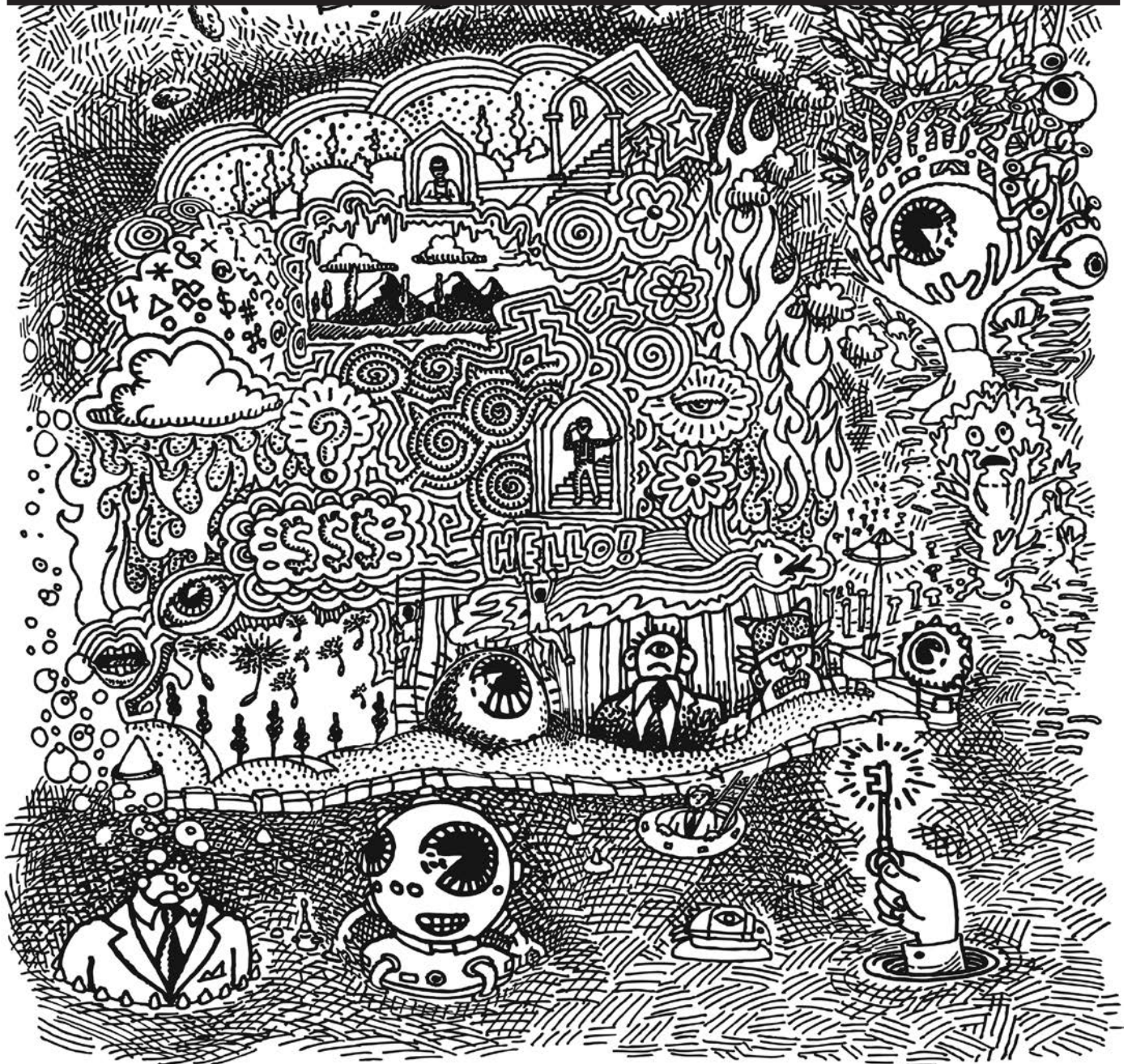
I'm Sorry

I'm sorry we are in traffic on the highway.
Next time, we should leave early.
I never liked the school alarm.
I never liked to use torn construction paper.
I'm sorry, get away.
I don't like cigarette smoke.
I'm sorry you can't see me sleeping,
I'm invisible.
Next time, try using the window.
I never want to be sensible.
I never want the TV signal to explode.
I'm sorry I bruised your eye
with my energy.

Valentino Johnson



THE END





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*Back cover, top row, l-r: Sierra Egypt, Treasure Onley
bottom row, l-r: London Plight, Gavin Wood, Alexander Steward, Desean Veney, Romel Jones*





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