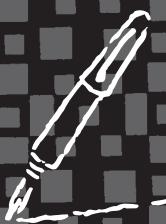


HARTWORKS

Spring 2002 • \$1



Special Issue:
Reflections on the Holocaust

The Charles Hart Middle School Literary Magazine • featuring the work of **Flora Singer**



many educators who teach about the Holocaust believe that its study assists students in developing understanding of the ramifications of prejudice, racism, and stereotyping in any society. It helps students develop an awareness of the value of pluralism, and encourages tolerance of diversity in a pluralistic society. A study of the Holocaust helps students think about the use and abuse of power, and the role and responsibilities of individuals, organizations, and nations when confronted with civil rights violations and/or policies of genocide. And the Holocaust provides a context for exploring the dangers of remaining silent, apathetic, and indifferent in the face of others' oppression. Most students demonstrate a high level of interest in studying the Holocaust precisely because the subject raises questions of fairness, justice, individual identity, peer pressure, conformity, indifference, and obedience—issues that young people confront in their daily lives.

In January 2002, Charles Hart Middle School students participating in the D.C. Creative Writing Workshop visited the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum as part of the museum's partnership with Washington, D.C. public schools—*Bringing the Lessons Home: Holocaust Education for the Community*. Following their visits, a Holocaust survivor met with the students and shared her personal history. The writings in the magazine reflect the thoughts and feelings of these young authors in response to their experiences learning about the Holocaust.

David Klevan, Program Coordinator
Community Partnerships, Education
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

On the front cover: Claudia Butler

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *hArtworks*, a literary magazine published by the students of Charles Hart Middle School, in southeast Washington, D.C. Now in its second year, *hArtworks* gives our young writers the opportunity to exercise their creative energies, speak their minds, and be heard by an audience throughout the city.

This issue is the culmination of eight weeks of Holocaust studies as part of our “Teaching Tolerance Through Literature” curriculum. Our students have read, discussed and responded to a series of works, from the poetry of Primo Levi and Nellie Sachs to the writings of children from the concentration camp Terezin. In partnership with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, we have made two museum visits, and we have held a discussion at the school with a Holocaust survivor. By confronting the issues raised by the Holocaust—tolerance, justice, authority, personal values, and community—young people can make important discoveries about themselves and help to chart a moral course into their own futures.

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 Arcana Foundation, the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, the Commonwealth Foundation, D.C. Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation/W.A.Y. To Cool To Smoke, Borders Books and Music, Free Hand Press, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Arena Stage, the Shakespeare Theatre, our friends at Popeye’s on Malcolm X Avenue, Ruth Dickey, Barb Gomperts, Bernie Horn, David Klevan, Bill Miller, Marla Melito, Flora Singer, Faith Ruppert, and Chris Thaiss.

We would also like to thank the following administrators, teachers and staff who are our partners in this endeavor: Superintendent Paul L. Vance, Assistant Superintendent for Middle/Junior High Schools Vera M. White, Principal Lee E. Epps; Assistant Principals Willie Bennett, Gregory Better, Yvonne Davis, and Samuel Scudder; Ms. Tameka Brown, Ms. Gloria Ferguson, Ms. Shirley Grooms, Ms. Carolyn Jackson, Ms. Mary Johnson, Ms. Irma Morgan, and Ms. Ethel Rivers; Ms. Eleanor Elie, Ms. Pamela McKinney, and Ms. Maevern Williams.

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HARTWORKS PRESENTS GUEST AUTHOR FLORA SINGER 30

Flora Singer *I Was But a Child* 31

OUR STUDENT WRITERS

Dionta Abbott

Me Myself and Dionta 23

Here, Let Me 54

Adrian Addison

Watch Out 25

Anger 25

Amani Al Fatah

Deep 28

Resistible to Unresist 39

Endless Three Strikes 43

Lips 50

Chris'stina Allen

The World 57

I Don't Know Why 58

Gary Alston *The boy who is a yellow star* 35

Antonio Ashford

I am a warrior 36

Pain 39

Twisted 46

Untitled 56

Christina Ashford *Class Is Now In Session* 57

Hakeemah Ayodeji

Signs 52

Bless These Memories 53

Charmyonne Bailey Riddle

I'm So Powerful 27

Leroy Banks *Words of the Evening* 14

Charnise Bell

Strong and Bold 20

Ego Trippin' 21

Sabrina Brand *Filler's Crazy Thing* 25

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|----|
| Trisha Braxton | | |
| <i>Hart's Uniform</i> | 14 | |
| <i>Bless These Memories</i> | 16 | |
| Claudia Butler | | |
| <i>Floating Away</i> | 10 | |
| <i>The Good Life</i> | 11 | |
| <i>Untitled</i> | 41 | |
| <i>Lost in Time</i> | 51 | |
| Chantz Claggette | | |
| <i>On the Run</i> | 37 | |
| <i>My Life</i> | 41 | |
| <i>The Future</i> | 42 | |
| Monique Covington | <i>Mercy Mercy Me</i> | 9 |
| Emmaly Curry | <i>Die</i> | 56 |
| Terri Davis | | |
| <i>Invincible</i> | 40 | |
| <i>Thunderbolt</i> | 42 | |
| <i>Beyond This Horizon</i> | 45 | |
| Dominique Denney | <i>Left and Right</i> | 24 |
| Darius Douglas | <i>The Boy Who Runs Every Time</i> | 12 |
| Joseph Harris | <i>Never Again</i> | 18 |
| Delawnta Henry | | |
| <i>The Smoke's Edge</i> | 15 | |
| <i>Never Again</i> | 19 | |
| Indiria Hill | <i>It's So Hard</i> | 10 |
| Terrell Hill | | |
| <i>Sing Children</i> | 9 | |
| Andrew Holmes | | |
| <i>The House</i> | 11 | |
| <i>Keep Hanging On</i> | 11 | |
| Tyrone Horton | | |
| <i>Let Me</i> | 24 | |
| Malaika Howard | | |
| <i>Sundown</i> | 34 | |
| <i>R.I.P. Cirk</i> | 29 | |
| <i>Quiet Agony</i> | 29 | |
| Louis Jarvis | <i>Lasting</i> | 43 |
| Allese Kennedy | <i>I'm a Butterfly in the Ghetto</i> | 47 |
| Dominic Kingsbury | <i>If Ever I Marry</i> | 27 |

INSIDE

Brandon Lemons

| | |
|--------------------|----|
| Ego Tripping | 38 |
|--------------------|----|

Brittany Love

| | |
|---------------|----|
| Love Me | 20 |
|---------------|----|

| | |
|------------------|----|
| For Myself | 54 |
|------------------|----|

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| You Little Children | 36 |
|---------------------------|----|

| | |
|-------------------|----|
| Never Again | 37 |
|-------------------|----|

Jade Mayo Darken Silence

26

Shawnice Millet Never Again

26

Ricardo Nesbit Bless These Memories

52

Kevin Nowlin

| | |
|----------------|----|
| Ain't no | 43 |
|----------------|----|

| | |
|------------|----|
| I am | 48 |
|------------|----|

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| What's in my heart? | 52 |
|---------------------------|----|

Ashlee Owens

| | |
|------------------|----|
| My Thought | 45 |
|------------------|----|

| | |
|-----------|----|
| Run | 53 |
|-----------|----|

Lawrence Perkins Run.....

15

Robert Randolph Troubled Life

48

Sade Rauch Never Again

50

De'Angelo Reed

| | |
|--------------------|----|
| Calling D.C. | 12 |
|--------------------|----|

| | |
|----------------|----|
| Daybreak | 50 |
|----------------|----|

| | |
|-------------------|----|
| Daybreak II | 49 |
|-------------------|----|

Robert Robinson The Way Things Are

9

Virginia Rodgers-Owens So Lonesome

10

Chayna Ross Broken Body, Broken Soul

56

James Saunders

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| King of Sorrow | 40 |
|----------------------|----|

| | |
|---------------------|----|
| The Wolf Pack | 40 |
|---------------------|----|

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| The Hound of Heaven | 47 |
|---------------------------|----|

Catrina Scott

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| Bless These Memories | 16 |
|----------------------------|----|

| | |
|----------------|----|
| Drowning | 17 |
|----------------|----|

| | |
|--------------------|----|
| Rainbow Dogs | 17 |
|--------------------|----|

| | |
|--------------------|----|
| I Don't Know | 18 |
|--------------------|----|

| | |
|--|----|
| Kimberly Settles <i>The Sunless World</i> | 36 |
| DeAngelo Spann <i>All I Can Do Is Write About It</i> | 13 |
| Londell Swales <i>Pain</i> | 51 |
| DeAngelo Thomas | |
| <i>Family Breaking Up</i> | 35 |
| <i>I See You</i> | 44 |
| Kyshawn Thompson <i>I Won't Back Down</i> | 13 |
| Elmer Toogood <i>The Fire Man</i> | 24 |
| Pamula Twyman | |
| <i>United We Fall, Together We Stand</i> | 48 |
| <i>Explain</i> | 49 |
| Tyesha Tyson <i>It seems like everyone is disappearing</i> | 55 |
| Tiara Vest <i>The Marriage</i> | 12 |
| T.J. Walton <i>Never Again</i> | 21 |
| Brandon Watson | |
| <i>Places Here</i> | 17 |
| <i>Joy</i> | 38 |
| Terrance West | |
| <i>I Walk Away from Me</i> | 34 |
| <i>"I love you but"</i> | 34 |
| Beyonca Williams <i>Persona Queen</i> | 38 |
| Delonte Williams | |
| <i>To Choose</i> | 8 |
| <i>Gold Stars</i> | 22 |
| <i>Why</i> | 44 |
| Donnell Williams | |
| <i>Heaven</i> | 19 |
| <i>Run</i> | 20 |
| Kiara Williams | |
| <i>Dead/While Reborn</i> | 23 |
| <i>What I'll Be</i> | 23 |
| <i>Not Touched</i> | 54 |
| Lashanda Williams <i>Thankful</i> | 42 |
| Reginald Williams | |
| <i>Pain and Misery</i> | 8 |
| <i>Hating Forever</i> | 46 |
| Jenae Wimbush <i>I Don't Know Why</i> | 26 |
| Jessica Young | |
| <i>Attack of the Holocaust</i> | 37 |
| <i>Existing Yet Missing</i> | 22 |
| <i>Who Am I?</i> | 41 |

Pain and Misery

What did I do, what did I say,
To make you act in such a foolish way?
I wish we all could be rinsed clean
Of this madness that we have seen.
Every day is just the same—
All my friends have passed away
Nothing beautiful comes here,
Just pain and misery.
I'm very weary and dreary,
And quick as a click
I'm gone.

Reginald Williams

53

To Choose

Betray them or hide them, to help or hurt?
Death, pain and misery are what I see
when I look out the window.
I wonder is that a good sight to see
'cause some man wants to make a better world
by killing and not helping.
That's not the life I was going to live.
To help, and know that if I died,
I died for something, and not nothing,
to know that I did something in my life
that I can think of and say
this is what I lived for, to be a life saver.

I'm just one person, what did one person ever do?
I think if Hitler lives one more day,
two hundred people will die.
I might go to war for him, or to work for him
and he still brings pain among people
just because they are different,
not like him, not his type,
in a wheelchair and not walking,
just because they are Jews.
That hatred, that's not right.

Delonte Williams

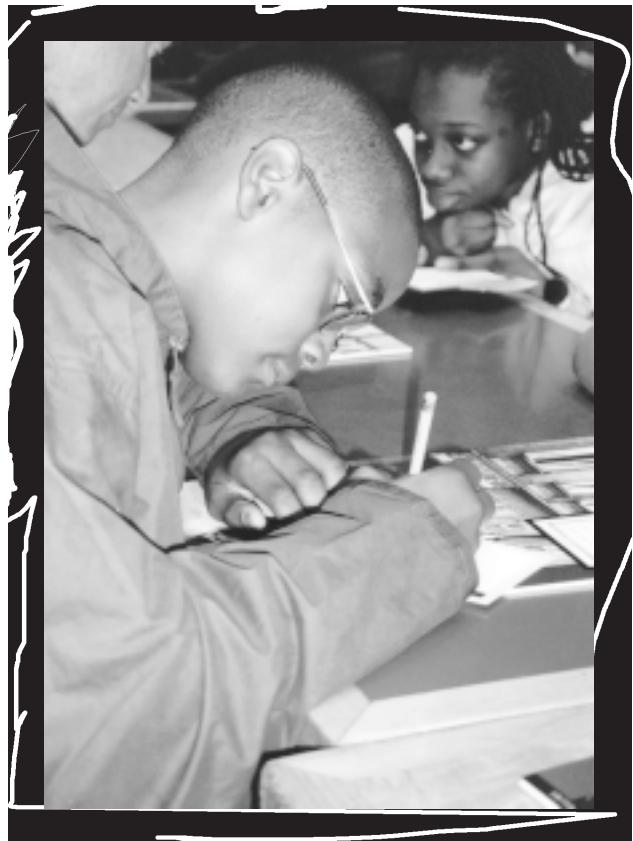
Sing Children

I know you've missed your families,
that you feel depressed,
alone, angry, even sad;
that you miss the way life used to be,
ya know, in the earlier day.
But I want you to sing.

Sing children, in such a happy way—
sing like there's nothing wrong with life,
like Hitler doesn't even exist.
Sing little children,
like Mommy would sing to you.

Remember when you went outside
and played in the morning dew?
Sing in your heart and in your soul,
but make sure no one knows
that even though you're held there
with no free will,
you sing, my little children.
Make sure your spirit's not killed.

Terrell Hill



Donnell Williams, Catrina Scott

identity Mercy Mercy Me

I see gunshots going through the air—
Oh mercy mercy me.
Trembling into darkness, did I forget?
Mercy mercy me.
All my hurt, all my pain is deeply insane,
I see prison blue
Oh mercy,
to the blue shaded windows
of hurt.

Monique Covington

It's So Hard

It's so hard to say I'm sorry when you're wrong.
It's so hard to forgive yourself
for not having a full education
because you were so in love you caught that bug.
You don't want to give it up.
If you do, you'll feel stuck in a situation
that will follow you for the rest of your life.
It feels like one part is there
but that boy is not,
now that you've given up that child.
You feel like you can't go on.
It's so hard to forgive yourself.

Indiria Hill

Floating Away

I'm slowly moving like the tears that fall from your eyes
but fastly flushing like the river flows.
It seems to have flushed out the pain
and brought in the beautiful smell of sweet honesty
like gospel music triumphantly taking over my mind.
Beautiful flowers surround me
in a field of what the wise man would call your destiny,
but if I stop and cry now, my life will fade away
like sweet kisses rushing through time zones,
then boom, the last chance to change the past is gone,
and floating away.

Claudia Butler



DeAngelo Thomas

So Lonesome

So lonesome I wanna cry.
I let out a sigh when kids go by.
I'm bleeding inside, this agony is killing me,
but I don't wanna go,
I feel like life is passing me by
like when cars go.
I feel empty inside, I'm so lonesome.
So what if I don't have any friends,
I can just chill.

Virginia Rodgers-Owens

The Good Life

I wished for a world with peace, unity,
justice, love, liberty, harmony
and Brotherhood and Sisterhood,
but I got bruised children,
whips and cuts and wounds,
bashful children with the horrible past
in which the forefathers fought for freedom,
the bloody chests and backs.
People say "What happened to the good old days?"
There were no good old days,
I want more than old cheese and hot garbage,
I want the good life.

Claudia Butler

The House

This house would always have clamor in it,
like a noisy construction site.

Siblings would argue like screaming crows,
as an angry mother came in the room
as loud as a sonic boom.

As I stood out, the January wind was as rough
and uncontrollable as a stormy sea.

A thought crept into my mind
like the slow walk of a tired old man:
"It's a good thing I don't live there."

And as quick as a flash
of lightning, I was gone.

Andrew Holmes

identity



Terrell Hill

Keep Hanging On

Keep hanging on
like the green python
like a rock climber
like a 2nd place racer

Hang on
till the finishing stroke
like a struggling student
like a boxer ready to quit

Almost there
to the final stretch
to the end of the game
to the end of the road

Keep Hanging On

Andrew Holmes

The Marriage

It's like no other marriage.
Lots of love, hugs and kisses,
that's what everybody sees, but
behind that disguised is
a lot of misery and problems.
"They have a nice marriage"
everyone says, but it's a disguise.
So the couple decides to
let them think they have a good marriage
and keep their problems
between them two.

Tiara Vest

The Boy Who Runs Every Time

The boy runs from people,
from his mother and father,
he runs all the time.

When somebody tries to fight him, he runs.
When someone tries to talk to him, he runs.
When someone tries to help him, he runs.

The boy runs for hours, days, months.
He is always running from someone
or something.

He just has a problem.
And someone needs to fix it
before he dies.

Darius Douglas

Calling D.C.

I'm banned from D.C.
but I love to live in here.
One part of my heart says stay,
but the other part says go.

As I depart from the lost city,
I leave memories of cute girls,
bad teachers and girlfriends.

I ride through the outer limits
and I learn magnificent languages
and get new friends.

But I still feel like I'm being exiled
from my life and D.C.
They told me to leave.

Come back, D.C.
Come back.

DeAngelo Reed

I Won't Back Down

Shadows on the wall
Noises in the hall
I won't back down.

Bad dogs barking loud
Big ghosts in a cloud
I won't back down.

Lions on the loose
Dragons on my counter
I won't back down.

Tough guys in a fight
All alone at night
I won't back down.

Panthers in the park
Stranger in the dark
I won't back down.

That new classroom where
Boys all pull my hair
(kissy little girls
with their hair in curls)
I won't back down.

Don't show me frogs and snakes
And listen for my scream.
If I'm afraid at all
It's only in my dreams.

I've got a magic charm
That I keep up my sleeve.
I can walk the ocean floor
And never have to breathe.

I won't back down,
Not at all, not at all
I won't back down.

Kyshawn Thompson

tolerance

All I Can Do Is Write About It

One man after another man,
one lady after another lady,
one child after another child,
all I can do is write about it.

The fathers leaving mothers
and their children, the mothers
who sell their bodies on the street,
all I can do is write about it.

The heartbroken kids
who watch their fathers get killed,
and all I can do is write
about the baby who cries
because they want their mommy
and daddy, but the parents
are nowhere to be found.

The way you see women
getting beat and raped,
and the little girls who see
their mothers selling their bodies
and want to do the same thing,
yet all I can do is write about it.

A little boy sees his father in gangs
and wants to do the same thing,
and yet all I can do is write about it.

The kids who have nothing to eat
and the sick one who is in pain,
but there's no cure for the sickness,
and all I can do is write about it.

DeAngelo Spann

Words of the Evening

Windows close as winter enters
the room of a strong blizzard.
Colors begin to disappear
as the radiance of the sun dims down
into the darkness of the night.
Owls howl, crickets chirp
as the loud noise of a helicopter
hums out to the moon like a coyote,
interrupting the forgotten yawn of a young child,
cold and hungry at night, crying out her call.
Yards covered in snow, houses quiet,
with summer just a daybreak away.
Those bare look for shelter
while flashes of lights from cars shimmer.
Walking without a vision,
too blind to see as snow blows into their faces
like puffs of hot air in Las Vegas.
Walking alone, cold with no clothes, food or shoes,
sometimes they feel as if night calls them.
Everyone hears the evening sky and moon call out.
It almost sounds like the sweet melodies of a merry-go-round.
Some cry in agony, tears rustling down their faces,
just down their cheeks, falling to the ground.
Depressed, scared. Some talking to themselves,
saying "I am unsure when this cold will end,
but I'm sure that when sundown comes,
I'll feel the cold, the anxiety, the pain
and will hear the night call out for me."

Kiona Bean

Hart's Uniform

Hart's uniform is green—
Not blue
Not black
Not brown, orange or pink, and
Not purple.
We dream of colors that Hart can't have.

Trisha Braxton

Run

Run, Run!
The Nazis they're here.
Jews were cut from everything they do—
Nazis took over Europe and people, too.

The Nazis were bad
Jews were sad.

Run, Run!
The war has just begun.

Bombs and guns were shot
Jews were getting hit (running with all they got)

They told them lies
Jews were full of cries.

What happened, what?
The war has just begun
Run Run Run
The war has just begun.

By Lawrence Perkins

diversity



Claudia Butler

The Smoke's Edge

I have to beware for hours and hours
On the edge of dark and gray smoke coming out of my chimney.
Doesn't matter if it narrows or not where diamonds shape the sky.
With dreams crawling
and crawling back into the owner's black mist that fills the sky—
Walking seconds to minutes
Days to months
and then to years.

Delawnta Henry

Bless These Memories

What do we have to do to remember these things that have happened?

God will help us remember

He will bring the frost snow to help

He will bring the beautiful stars.

Spring is a time of fun—

He does not give us fear

He will take the fear away and give you happiness.

Our parents are a beautiful thing because they love us.

God will not let us forget anything.

Trisha Braxton

Bless These Memories

Gold star in yesterday's clouds remember

Remember bowls, suitcases, kids and death

Because it is all closed down. Frosted snowmen.

Why it's all bloomed away, it is forgotten

Closed down and escaped in one snap.

Death is no longer here.

Crying kids. Lots of hair—

But that is yesterday's fear.

Bless all these memories that I give you.

Catrina Scott

Rainbow Dogs

I have a black dog
And it's not tan
Not red
Not blue
Not white
Not gold
Not green
Not yellow
Not pink
Not brown
Not pink and orange striped.

But I dream of clouds shaped like a dog
In strange weather, like this one
The weather is scheming for hours and hours
Days and days, years and years
But I cannot find what it is looking for.

Catrina Scott



Front: Chantz Clagette; Back (left to right): Ashlee Owens, Delonte Williams

Drowning

I am drowning into the New Year
And letting the old year swim by.
I walk into my old promises and dreams that I cannot let go of.
I cross over the bridge like it was yesterday.

So I am drowning into the New Year,
And letting my hopes and dreams go by.

Catrina Scott

identity

Places Here

Here I am with the searching sunlight.
Here I am sliding down into the smoky abyss.
Here I am with the thumping sound of my voice, and here
I soar above the clouds.

Brandon Watson

I Don't Know

53

My brain is like a robot.
I think of you and see hatred.
I feel your betrayal and see it deeply.
I don't know.
I wish I lived in Columbia, Ohio with Li'l Bow-Wow on
September 18, 1990.
OK. I lied. I don't see hatred.
I brightly heard you.
They smoke and become drug dealers.
I made shoes because everybody has feet.
Jimmy Creaked is a song I know by heart.
That little red car of last year.
I am as tall as an ant.
We are a rainbow at night and a person in the daytime.
Li'l Bow-Wow was there to scuff through it all.
So one, two, and three will go back in the numbers.
My shoes were happy
If I have to jump off the 54th floor to save my life.
Yo soy numero uno.
Ice cream is so cold, and a tree opens its mouth to be fed
Even as the torrent of ice cream becomes a river.

Catrina Scott

Never Again

Never again do I want to see gold stars
I want to never see trains
Never again do I want to see broken glass
But I will see frost everywhere,
Remembering the pluck of death.

Joseph Harris



Jessica Young

Never Again

The suitcases, the soldiers
People running and crying we're no different.
Hope. And the hate, fear of gas and guns
and rain.

Parents never see kids and kids never see parents.
Nighttime to day,
Hair used in mattresses and pillows.
Boarded up money. Soup. Bowls.
Living in holes and ghettos.
Others will survive this withering

Delawnta Henry

Heaven

How to find my soul a home?
I just duck the devil and stay alone.
Will I go to hell if I don't pray?

tolerance

I'm looking for a home.
I'll see you another day.
Where will you find me in this world one day?
Go to church and you will see me on judgment day.

But where are you?
Come to heaven and you will see me soon.
Just ask the Lord if you can come back home.
And when you go to sleep, just say your prayers
And we will meet.

Donnell Williams

Run

The gold star came today,
Run, run, run away
The kids thought about what they wrote that day
They thought about withering and death and what would be left
So run, run, run away.

What would be left?
Would you like it?
What could you do?
Could you escape?

It rains, snow, frost and hail
Pinched, plucked, uprooted
So run, run, run away.

Parents.
Soldiers shooting guns. Hate.
Closed down. Opened up.
Camps gas
Fear of us
Why why why
Just run, run, run away
Run, run
Run away.

Donnell Williams

Me

I am so fine, I am on time.
Music was my invention and I don't even get detention.
If I blink, the earth will sink.
I tell time which way to go.
I sing like a blue bird, only better.
I gave my people the strength to overcome.
From my finger, I made the Pacific.
My hair is as rare as the Dodo bird.
My skin is as precious as gold.

Brittany Love

Strong and Bold

When I sneeze and cough, money comes out
When I step into school, it becomes a kingdom
When I come into class, all the teachers disappear
My daughter Starr, bought me the country Chad
My son Shugalink gave me all the money in the world.

I am so strong and bold
I cannot be stopped
Not at all, not at all.

Charnise Bell

Never Again

Never again will my hair fill mattresses.
Never again will I be enslaved like a dog.
Never again will I wither away.
Never again will I seek fear in *their* eyes.
Never again will I have nightmares.
Never again will I hear guns kill my people.
I will not forget my past.

There's hope to cover our wounds.

T.J. Walton



Kevin Nowlin

Ego Trippin'

I am Queen of the Earth.
Juvenile is my uncle.
Lil' Wayne is my cousin.
I put Lil Bow-Wow in the music business.
Baby is my father,
I got hot and Michael Jackson brought me water.
I sang with Eve.
I used to rap with Trina and Lil Kim
Master P is my brother.
When my tears drop I cool the earth
I created electricity
I am Benjamin Franklin
My son Lil Romeo created CDs
My daughter Raven Simone played in Doctor Dolittle 2
Nelly is my cousin.
When I come to school, all adults bow down to me,
When I snap my fingers I get billions of dollars, a stretch PT Cruiser with cash money in it
and a mansion.
I clap my hands and the Prince of Egypt runs around the earth.
I got Johnny Cochran as my lawyer.
I am so rich I got more money than Bill Gates.
My daughter Shanan gives me the world.

Charnise Bell

diversity

Existing Yet Missing

Running along the ice of the new year's snow,
I slip and get amnesia.
All I remember is I'm alive
Walking in the wrong direction
Harassing the people on the street
Asking them, *What's my name?*
I don't know, little girl.

Every time someone said
I don't know,
A piece of life and heart went into the flesh
Of a skeleton from hell,
Leaving me with a stamp across my head saying *Missing*
Leaving my mind saying
Newsflash: Girl without a name.

My bones weaken, like the promises that the President made
To make this world a better place,
But I'm paralyzed in a world of blanks
A world of misfit people.
Do I really belong?
I think I know my name; I think it was nothing.

Jessica Young

Gold Stars

Gold stars fall on broken glass
As windows of hope go
In the forgotten soldier's heart
That survived the war.
Yesterdays fear him.
Death runs remembering
Bowls of suitcases in snow
In springing stars that ask why and
Says bloom at 9 months.
Plucked nerves bring death, instead of guns
Because frost withers away,
Never seeing life again.

Delonte Williams

Dead/While Reborn

The murderer shot my soul,
who was once my own lover.
My funeral short but demanding.
I will be cremated and she will know
how much I miss her. She will wear
baby blue to show that she will be reborn.
Her hair will be braided in a collage of colorful beads
to show her art and beauty.

On my day, I will have soul twins—
A good soul and an even sweeter one.
The hospital my home, the doctor my heart.
I fend off my thoughts (because you could break me)
but I will be reborn into a stronger being....
Rejuvenated and to only have love for myself.

When they are grown, they'll be wed on an island
wearing rainbows of blue and purple beads,
braids, and bright glittering make-up.
There will be lots of exotic food to feast upon.
Then they'll say:
I promise to love me
To respect me
To never let go or give up
Got to understand that life isn't—
and never will be— perfect.

Until death do us part.

Kiara Williams

What I'll Be

Let me rise above the mountains,
just to see what the world sees.
Let me fly in the clouds and
breath in the taste of freedom.
Let me glide with the birds
and the angels by my side.
Let me show you what I'd be
if I could hold the earth in my palm.
Let me dance with Mother Nature
while death slowly bites away at my flesh,
Let me give our god a prayer
and see if I can't free him!
Let me just take one day at a time,
Just go as I can, and
show you what I'll be.

Kiara Williams

A large, flowing, cursive-style word "identity" is centered on the page. The letters are light gray and have a soft, rounded appearance.

Me Myself and Dionta

I got married on a cruise ship on a warm sunny day.
I wore a black tuxedo with a bow tie and black shoes.
My mom is there, and my two brothers and friends.
I wrote some vows to keep myself in check.
Like never cheating on my wife, never beating on her or the kids.

Dionta Abbott

The Fire Man

The fireman has a little twirling thing in his mouth.
Black-blue, smoky gray
Girl-women, boy-men are worn-out,
dressed up with danger surrounding them.
He dreams about fighting off the dreams in his mouth.

I'm rolling on boards and wheels, performing was a memory.
Going down the street in Harlem
My mouth is on fire,
I need some water.
It's about to be cloudy.

Elmer Toogood

Left and Right

Let me feel the nice warm texture of your hair.
Let me feel your beautiful brown skin.
Let me pick strawberries and ride a horse to a fair.
Let me feel the cool breeze blowing on my face.
Let me fly so high in the sky.
Let me soar with the birds through the sky, left and right.

Dominique Denney

Let Me

Let me be a wild bear looking for honey tree after tree
Let me do anything I please, I'll shine like a bright light.
Let me be a little fish that will grant you a wish
Let me count, one, two, three
Let me see a shining star.
Let me have my way and up I'll go.
Let me swim back, forth.
Let me stop and end this poem.

Tyrone Horton

Filler's Crazy Thing

I am a filler people
who was born and raised by a powerful mom and dad.
When I am at the beach, ocean, sea, I blink
and make huge waves.
When the skin on my body starts to get dry,
it falls to the ground and starts to snow.
When I get sad, the world stops spinning.
When I brush my teeth,
my spit turns into silver bracelets, earrings, watches and chains.
I am so smart
that when I think I take the knowledge out of other people's brain.
I am so cute that when I walk and look at the boys, they faint.
I am so loved that when I look up in the sky blue,
I pull hearts.

Sabrina Brand

tolerance

Watch Out

In the future, I save the world from a giant train.
I was the person who invented the sun, North Star and Jupiter.
When I say stop, it rains so hard,
it starts an earthquake in three stars and hurricanes in four states.
When I spit in the air, I put out the sun!

Adrian Addison

Anger

Anger cuts school because he hates his teachers.
When he does come to school,
he picks fights and wears a shirt that says I hate rich kids.
Every time, he gets in trouble and screams,
starts stealing stuff and goes to jail for ten days
and cries for his mom.

Adrian Addison

Never Again

I will remember my parents

Never again

I will remember the stars

Never again

I will open up

Never again

I will look out the window

Never again

I will survive

Never again

I will remember my kids

Never again

Shawnice Millet

I Don't Know Why

Yesterday kids crying about their parents' deaths.

Why? The differences.

Why? The hate.

Kids asking where are their parents today.

I don't know why yesterday's come and gone

But what happened to the trains that escaped from guns?

We hope that we've forgotten the soldiers
that feared the destruction of pain.

We opened up the suitcases of survival.

I don't know why we are running

from the waves that uproot us in shame.

Jenae Wimbush

Darken Silence

I have been silenced

not to see the rays of light and dawn

not to look at the waves of the horizon

I am weak from a bittersweet dream, but yet and still...

The shadow of music winds through my ears,

saying tsk, tsk, tsk, humming me a prayer

that all worries leave into the darkness.

Jade Mayo



Claudia Butler and Amani Al Fatah

If Ever I Marry

If I marry myself, I won't have any relatives there.
It will just be me.
I will promise to love, respect and honor me.
And if I deserve some kids of my own
I will love them and cherish them all
They will respect me and I will respect them.

Dominic Kingsbury

diversity

I'm So Powerful

I'm so strong; I can punch the earth and make it break into pieces.
I'm so grateful; when I was born I was blessed with eternal life.
I'm so powerful; when I sweat I give the earth water.
I'm so grateful; my birthday is a national holiday.
I'm so strong; I can palm the world in my hand.
I'm so powerful; when I don't feel like walking I just fly
I'm so strong; I can jump off the Statue of Liberty headfirst
And not break a bone in my body.

Leroy Banks

Deep 3

When those long shadows cast spells of the feet,
How dangerous smiles smile in fear,
When conquer gets to meet its match, then it's deep.
Is it the slain or the shame that stamps the feet?
Or the blood mountain that's so steep?
Or the thrills of lashes cutting the beat?
Mixed together, this is deep.

Rounded passengers, square as the heat,
With needles binding their hands.
When claw fish claw mentality of Hitler,
Who was left but the envied riddler
Who feed, fied, foed, and fummed
The lessons of Hitler's crumb.
Whose mouse had a taste for flesh
And saved the Jews.

Breathing breaths of Carmen's lungs,
Swell from the water.
The language it talked, the cries it brought,
The blunder in the wisdom
Killed from aunt to sis,
To brother, to mother, to father, to daughter.
When the memories fade, you hope to keep,
When hunger rises from the lake, then all melted deep,
When mother cries to the son to save the life of everyone,
When blisters break all the thoughts so steep,
You wake up from the hideous dream.
Wow, this was deep.

Amani Al Fatah

The Way Things Are

The way things are in this world
is like bad news to us all
and we don't have any hope left,
like the end is near
for all of us put together.

The way things are in our neighborhood
is like tragedy striking at the speed of light.
People just don't want to cross the street.

The way things are about drug dealers
is like big tall people in dark coats
passing stuff like playing hot potato
but these are not potatoes.

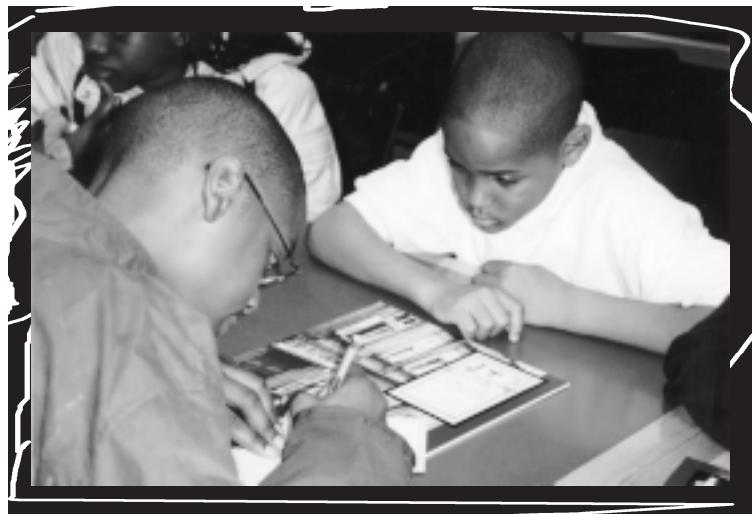
The way things are with bullies:
they're like big rotweilers messing with butterflies
so they can get tougher and tougher
for no reason.

Robert Robinson

R.I.P. Curk

I saw it one day.
Sad, it wasn't meant for him,
it just happened to happen like that,
walking down the street
minding his own business
then pow, gone, just like that,
it was a sad, sad day.
R.I.P. Curk, no one felt it coming
as unexpected as a teenage pregnancy.
Everyone's so depressed and distressed,
just hoping for a better day.
Friends wanted revenge
but instead they ended it
with R.I.P. Curk.

Malaika Howard



Donnell Williams, Chantz Clagette

diversity

Quiet Agony

Like a rolling sea of emptiness,
all alone searching for something that's not there.
Wondering why everything's such a blur
like a car's window on a rainy day.
Longing for laughter and joy
like little kids have playing on summer days.
Wishing you had a friend to call on
but you don't, you're just sitting in silence,
wishing for sound
when all you have is quiet agony.

Malaika Howard



HARTWORKS presents our special guest

FLORA SINGER

Flora Singer is an emerging author who uses her writing as a way to bear witness to her experience of events that there are no words to describe. In a unique writing workshop with other survivors, Ms. Singer is working to tell her story: the loss of so many family members and friends in the Holocaust, and her own survival. Ms. Singer and her two younger sisters were hidden and protected from the Nazis by Father Bruno Reynders, a Benedictine monk. Father Reynders saved three hundred children and nearly a hundred adults from deportation to the concentration camps.

On February 5, 2002, Ms. Singer came to discuss her story with the after-school Writing Club at Hart Middle School. Reprinted here is a memoir she has written, based on an old family photograph.

Left to right: Monique Covington, Flora Singer, Da Quan Smith. Inset: Flora Singer's family in their garden, before the war. Flora is at left, front.

I WAS BUT A CHILD

FLORA SINGER

(REPRINTED BY PERMISSION OF THE AUTHOR)

I have a photograph of a garden which I look at often and longingly. It shows several family members sitting and standing around a small garden waterfall, topped by a sculpture of a little girl holding an open umbrella. The year is 1938

The individuals depicted in the photograph are Tante Leah, mama's younger sister, her husband Alex, his brother Adolf and his wife Ester, their sister Chany, with her husband Mendel at her side. Chany is pregnant with her second child. Two children sit in the foreground on the stone edge of the waterfall. One of the children, the girl, is this writer, and the other child is Jackie, the brother of, at the same time, an as yet unborn child.

The only one of the individuals depicted in the garden of this photograph who remained alive after the Shoah, is me. Neither Jackie, a cousin whom I loved and admired—he was four years older than I—nor any of the other family members made it...none, with the exception of the unborn child, Henry, born a few months after the gathering in the garden. Henry, or Harreke, as we called him, survived the war. I often imagine him in the photo, invisible, hidden within his mother's body as he was later hidden, at the tender age of four, when he was sheltered and hidden from the Nazis in a monastery by the Benedictine monk, Father Bruno Reynders.

Months after liberation from the German occupation by the Allies, I learned from Father Bruno, who had also hidden my sisters and me, where Herreke was located. I contacted the Abbot at the monastery where Harreke was still housed because his parents had not returned from the concentration camps. Through Father Bruno's intervention, I was allowed to visit him, then later was allowed to take him out for weekend visits with my sisters, mama, and me. However, I had to return him to the monastery by Sunday evening. This became an excruciating ordeal. Every Sunday, upon our return to the monastery, Harreke, now almost seven years old, was distressed—he cried, he screamed "Flora, don't leave me, please, Flora, I don't want to stay here. I want to go home with you..." My return home without Harreke was always difficult; I could not understand why we could not keep him with us until his parents and brother returned...a return which unfortunately never materialized.

I asked mama why we could not keep Harreke with us, being that no one was coming back from the camps. She said it was against the law because he was our cousin by marriage and was not related by blood. "Mama, we can hide him; after all, we were hidden and no one found us...I'll find a good hiding place for him in case the gendarmes come looking for him—he'll be safe." "You don't understand, *mamele*, things are different now. The Gestapo are gone and now we must do things according to the law. Now we must obey all the laws."



Left to right: Diamond Williams, De Angelo Thomas, Claudia Butler, Terrell Hill, Flora Singer, Amani Al Fatah, Antonio Ashford, Delonte Williams, James Saunders, Kiona Bean, Chantz Clagette, Ashlee Owens, Reginald Williams

I was not happy about that because Harreke had become very attached to me, the big adult of fifteen years of age. I began to dread the weekly returns of Harreke to the monastery. The repeated screaming and crying. "Flora, Flora, don't leave me..." was tormenting me, leaving me with incredible feelings of guilt. There must be a way...but there was not a way. At the time, Jewish children who were sheltered from the Nazis in religious or secular institutions, or by individual families, were legally retained in their custody until their biological parents who had entrusted them to those institutions or families, returned to claim them.

The days, the weeks, and the months passed. While waiting for family members to return, not having heard of, or grasped as yet, the enormity of the massacre of our fellow Jews, we tried to settle into a semblance of normal life. Mama went to the Joint Distribution Committee, which had opened an office in Brussels, and after they had helped us with a few basic pieces of second-hand furniture, they managed to find a sewing machine for mama with which we were able to start earning a few francs to feed ourselves. I say "we" because we all helped with the work: my two sisters part-time, i.e., after classes at the local elementary school, the same one we had attended for a short while before going into hiding; and I full time together with mama.

In May of 1946 we were scheduled to leave Brussels for the United States of America...as guests of the United States Army...but without Harreke. We appealed to the US Army commander at the Military Headquarters in Brussels. We begged him to allow us to take Harreke with us. His reply was sad but simple, "Madame Mendelovics, Henry is not yours or your husband's child...according to regulations I cannot let him emigrate with you. Later, if you wish, and if you can obtain custody according to Belgian law, if his parents do not return, you can apply for a visa for the child."

With leaden feet I slowly walked away from the monastery. Tears, which I finally allowed to emerge, poured from my eyes, running down my cheeks. How can I leave him? He trusted me. I was his hope and I betrayed his trust in me. This trust was reflected in his eyes whenever he looked up at me with a broad smile, transforming his usually tight, anxious little face into that of an angel, every time I came to fetch him to join us, his family, for Shabbat and the weekend. Not today, however.

I vowed to myself that I would do everything to bring him to us in the United States of America, unless, of course, by some no longer expected miracle, his parents were to return from the Nazi concentration camps. They never did; neither did his brother.

Before we left, I contacted the recently re-established Jewish Community and informed them of Harreke's situation and whereabouts, giving them his parents' names, as well as my father's address in the United States. Several months after our arrival in New York, I was informed that Harreke was transferred from the monastery to a Jewish orphanage for children whose parents had not returned from the concentration camps. They sent me the address and for a while I corresponded with the staff of the orphanage and Harreke. Then all correspondence stopped: my letters were returned—no such name, no such address.

During subsequent visits to Belgium, I searched for Harreke, but nothing turned up. There was no longer an orphanage at the address I had: there was no Harreke. I went to the Jewish community offices in Brussels, to the municipal offices—nothing. I was devastated. What to do now? I continued my search. I addressed myself to whoever would listen, to no avail. Harreke had vanished without a trace. I could not accept that.

Fifty-two years passed before we were finally reunited. Harreke, now called Hank, a husband and father, while I had become a wife, mother, and grandmother. The road leading to our reunion had been long and arduous for me, fluctuating between hope and fear of never finding him. But, finally, we embraced in a California airport.



Left to right: Reginald Williams, Kiona Bean, Flora Singer

harreke

"Several months after our arrival in New York, I was informed that Harreke was transferred from the monastery to a Jewish orphanage for children whose parents had not returned from the concentration camps."

I Walk Away from Me

53

I walk away from myself
like a pilot sailing a train,
a locomotive floating on the bottom of the ocean,
honking horns, and driving without a car.
I get so far away from myself
I can see my future, my past and present
smashed into one.
I know the glow of Halloween is upon me
like the past I see next to me in the roller coaster seat.
That's just me and that's what I see
when I walk away from me.

Terrance West

"I love you but"

I love you but you can't go
I hate to leave you but I can't let you go
I will miss you but you can't come with me
I will see you in a couple of months

When he left this is what he said to me
When he left I wanted to go but he said
No you can't go
Stay here he said

Then he leaned towards me
I think it was a goodbye kiss
and then he bent down and rubbed the dog
and said I love you but you can't go

When he left it was like I left with him.
A piece of me broke off.

Terrance West

Sundown

I am unsure of what I can become.
I ask for your kind gesture.
I sit and yawn and think,
as it becomes sundown.
The earth is quiet
and you can hear no word.

Malaika Howard

The boy who is a yellow star

A boy that was a very bright young man,
but he was made out of gas and energy
he was a yellow star that stood out
he had no fear
not even guns could frighten this boy.

Until one day, a green evil boy named Hitler
his eyes were white as snow
his hair was like broken glass
and his heart was closed down.

Hitler caught all these kids and parents
and kids
all hope was forgotten
until the boy who shined so bright came
all hope was uprooted.

He shined so bright
through the window
everyone escaped
by running.

Gary Alston



Antonio Ashford

Tolerance Family Breaking Up

Daniel was very mad
because he had to move to the ghetto
and they had to live in this little house.
Then they had to break up—
Daniel and his father
and Daniel's mother and his sister were together.
Daniel and his father survived,
but they had to go to the concentration camp.
But what happened to Daniel's mother and his sister?
They had died.

If I was Daniel,
if they killed my family,
I would hunt them down like a hound dog.
I would get everybody.
War is on.

DeAngelo Thomas

The Sunless World

What about a sunless world?
Sorrow is what we are feeling.
Without a sun, there would not be any hope.
No flowers to smell.
Dirty water.
Summer, Spring,
Think of it as gone.

Kimberly Settles

You Little Children

You little children that called them names,
Not letting them join your games.
That evil smile, that ugly glare,
Even the teacher sat down and stared.
The persecution, the execution you will never have to suffer;
You might as well help them, or you're the problem.
The problem that never stops,
That never drops to rest.
You will be as bad as Hitler, and he was real bad.
He said he will wipe them out,
But they are still about.

You little children that gave them so much persecution:
Taunted, tease, refuse to please,
You swim in the pool, they can't.
The tears you caused never stopped,
The pain that drained in their tears.
You little children that hurt them so—
How could you sink so low?
You little children.

Brittany Love

I am a warrior

The glass falling
from the window. It
is shattered, broken
into pieces

like my heart
it is broken. You
have torn my soul
like paper being
burned down.

But I can't cry
I have to keep my
head up, be strong
I can't let anyone
turn me down.

I am a warrior.

Antonio Ashford

Attack of the Holocaust

Darkened skies of the forever bright universe
contact rough and confused bubble-headed
creatures from the planet Mars.

Imaginative questions corner the
silent dazed people who frankly
took a passport to another planet.

Their minds were blank,
but their bones watched cautiously.
Somehow they got the impression
we were coming to attack, and they
wanted to get here first.
Now because we're not like them
we have to work or be killed.
This sorta reminds me of something
that was sixty years ago.

Well, whatever's left of me,
just put it in the lost and found.
I'll get there soon.

Jessica Young

diversity

On the Run

I'm on the run again, from the place I live.
I'm on the run from the guns and the ghetto.
I'm on the run to god for hope.
I'm on the run from the future, the past
But I'm running too fast along bloody coast,
I need the most.
But I'm still on the run,
Away and away.

Chantz Clagette



Ashlee Owens

Never Again

Never again do I want it to happen.
The crying and the dying,
The vain nighttime escapes.
They think we are different,
When we are the same.

The death forgotten,
The fear that blooms in my heart
If it happens again.
The cramped bed, the shaved head,
The boarded up hope of yesterday.

Trying to come out,
Trying to shout about
The gold star hated because of the person.
Trying to wither the person with grief,
The persecution that will never cease.

Brittany Love

Ego Tripping

When I snap my fingers, money appears.
When I fall, an earthquake begins.
When I cough, my germs form a whirlpool in the ocean
When I cry, I make a river.

Brandon Lemons

Persona Queen

When I blink the world has a black out.
When I jump it is an extreme earthquake.
When I blow out my birthday candles, the streetlights go out.
When I get mad, my glance causes a tornado.
I am so strong I can pick on the Milky Way.
I am so powerful that the president consults me.
When I get an A, it is a holiday.
I breathe and the wind blows.
When I sing, the world is lulled to sleep.
When I run, the world spins.
My mother gave me my own star
I am going to be powerful forever and ever, eternally.

Beyonca Williams

Joy

Joy is jumping to the sky, waving long arms in the clouds.
Joy is spreading love across the world.
Joy is happy and cheerful spreading happiness in the world.
Joy is carrying enthusiastic love for everyone.
Joy is joyous with peace and love like a dream
Like a dream flapping its wings making joyous things.

Brandon Watson

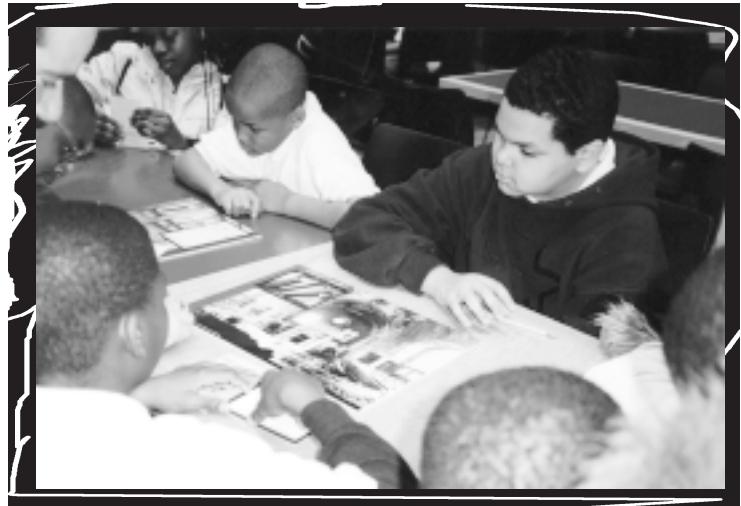
Pain

Pain is like glass
The glass is shattering on me and I don't feel it
The pain touches me
I can smell the hatred
It tastes like dead souls
I see the dead bodies around me
I am hearing the souls talking to me.

I threw the reeking pain away
Like when Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated
In Memphis, Tennessee.
It came back to me and changed my life
My booms left me because of my hatred
I can't take this hatred
The broken knife of absence leaves me
Painless as a god.
We were as happy as a funeral
We morphed through the casket
And Tony was there to follow.

Tomorrow he will stay home for a while
And look at the eclipse
The shadowy tomorrow that leads him to death
The tomorrow that comes once a year
La piensa de la vida
When the eclipse tells him it's time to go
The casket of death closes around him.

Antonio Ashford



Left to right: Chantz Clagette and Justin Grell study photos at the Holocaust Museum.

identity

Resistible to Unresist

Unmistakable happenings were a mistake.
For every breath I took,
For every intense slash, I shake
Crying, cringing, to the corpse of the underground.
Trying to overturn the impossible,
Letting everything of you dissolve.
Your name, your will, yet you try
To try to heal,
But who and what could it take?
Besides the love, the compassion,
Act of silence, out of reaction,
Let the shavings surpass pinched hearts,
The deaths of forgotten mattresses.

Amani Al Fatah

Invincible

Smothering round of thunder
crashing into the atmosphere, which,
since you fight,
you might be buried under.
Stay and fight, fight for what's right,
because one day you will
predict your own future.
I can see the pulse running
through your corrupted veins,
as you gather your raging force of nights.
When you see the depths of your future,
all you remember is
a deliberate enchantment of sinking pain.
Cross-in, cross-over until
your final fantasy is over.

Terri Davis

The Wolf Pack

The wolf pack never roams alone,
From twilight to twilight, day to day.
The pack's leader always has his way.
Individually, the foot steps, one by one
Create a rhythmic beat.
And so they attack when the coyote howls at night.
Did that moment of relaxation and
Lying down to listen to the wind guide them
To that fresh piece of meat?
So blunt, and they just live on, day after day
And still there is something
The leader will say.

James Saunders

King of Sorrow

I'm crying everyone's tears,
inside I fight a war, but will I
die by the Niagra Falls?
All of these remnants of joy and disaster,
what am I supposed to do?
My mother cooked me a soup
that warmed my soul, but nothing
still wouldn't change at all.
It's just a day that's going to go by,
just another,
and nothing's any good.
I have so much to do,
I have to carry on, wondering
if this God will give me wings,
then I'll fly into the sky
for the rest of my time.

James Saunders

Untitled

Dear Hitler:

Why must those unbearable words come out your mouth
like a parrot who transfers everything he hears?
You know you are wrong, yet you insist on dwelling
in the past tense of weakness and
indulging yourself in all of those devilish things.
Who made you the king, with those bruising
and crucifying things you've done to so many?

Let those people go.
Even in death you still haunt the spirits of the little children.
They deserve to live, just like me.
All things are possible, but you weren't one to believe—
When you hurt someone, you hurt yourself.

The children's spirits still whisper softly in my ear
like the gentle pillow and soft bear I hold
while I sleep at night.
After death, you still burn in the depths of the underground
where the walls close in and
the moths eat away at your soul.

Claudia Butler

Tolerance
My Life

My life is good and ruined.
My life is good by going to school and being loved.
My life has been ruined by seeing danger
between us and them.

Who Am I?

I am a victim
I wonder am I going to make it
I hear cries of my younger siblings
I see the tragedy
I am in pain
I pretend I don't hurt
I touch the hearts of broken chains
I worry about the crashing sounds
I cry the tears of missing people
I am the god
I believe in the stars above me
I dream I can be more than sorrow
I hope to live eternal life
I am a believer

Chantz Clagette

Jessica Young

The Future

53

I want to be with people who
don't start war,
not with thugs either.
I want to go someplace
where there is kindness, cleverness and niceness.
I'll go somewhere there is all the money in the world,
and take half,
and give the rest to the poor.

Chantz Clagette

Thunderbolt

It was a day like yesterday, when a strange and
outrageous storm raced into my fearful soul.
It was Hitler charging in, with his fire-breathing
dragons, knights, and demons that have awakened,
of such called the Nazis.
Destroying any sort of landscape or humanity
that I ever recall settling into my hand.
I don't know why, but I try to maintain
what has creatively combined together and
remains in my heart as various things.

But now I'm a slave and I must regain my freedom.
In my mind I shout *no more Nazis*,
no more Nazis as I deliberately
pound myself into this dimension
that I'm ever weary of.
But I must save my life, do what's right,
and the storm will soon cease.

Terri Davis

Thankful

I'm thankful for the winter,
because if it was not
I wouldn't know what Spring is.
I'm thankful for the frigid
brittle wind that hits against my clothes
when I play in the snow.

I'm thankful for the lost shoes,
because now I don't have to wear them.
I'm thankful for hurt and
pain in my life,
because now I know what to touch
and what not to touch.

Lashanda Williams

Ain't no

it Ain't no love in the brain of the streets
I may be soft—listening
beyond the confusion. The even (not the odds)
is against me. Every son's mother
every daddy, sister needs to know
it Ain't no pride in the heart of town
I kill you with the quiet agony
the silent, but deadly pain
i'm chewing your insides I came to bring
the pain all children to the brain
look who's inside my house
no more pain, but what I told you
it Ain't no enchantment in
the body of the world

Kevin Nowlin



De Angelo Thomas

diversity

Endless Three Strikes

Mistakes, mistakes, what does it all take
to end this trial of treacherous triumphs.

Amassing letters of the thought,
miserable means learning the thought.
Amounting 17 jewels, lurching, losing,
confusing its harmonious balance.

Broken, broken, too many were broken,
leaving you dead,
but instead you sew back the
deposits of money.

Arresting your rested pillow
into the fire, but
a piece of you doesn't cling tight.
What can vengeance do but strike?

Amani Al-Fatah

Lasting

Angel that I am, like
a person or a little thing hidden behind my door
looking out of my window as I'm dreaming
of good things and watching things go by,
like I'm floating on the ocean and screaming for help.
Somebody help, help me in a peaceful way
and it takes my very breath away.

Louis Jarvis

Why

Frosted snow and springing stars ask
why the window's glass is broken, and why fear scares them,
why the flowers bloom, and they don't,
why they cry, and where do lies come from,
why people open up and be true, and he can't,
why he's in a wheelchair, and they walk,
why the hurt don't stop hurting, the guns don't stop shooting,
the love doesn't come, the gas kills,
why yesterday's not here, and waves of death fill the air,
and the shouting, the crying, the closed doors,
the broken glass, and destruction don't stop,
and what death is like?

Delonte Williams

I See You

I see you, but you don't see me
because I'm in the dark, dark window
but I see everything they're doing,
and what they are about to do.

You are about to rob the bank, but if I
call the call, you're in trouble.

I see you, but you don't see me
because you are running from the police.
I didn't see the police, it was just their light.
I see you, but you don't see me
I see you doing bad things that you are not supposed to do,
like stealing a car.

I see you, but you don't see me
I see you jumping over the fences, but you're in trouble
because I'm going to tell that you broke into my house.
I see you, but you don't see me
because you are going to do a drive-by
but I'm going to tell the cops that there's a drive-by
at Orange Street, SE.

DeAngelo Thomas

My Thought

What I think about losing my name
I really think it's so insane
It would be a punishment, torture
My name was given to me for a reason
Not for someone just to take it away
My name is precious, gracious, and beautiful
It represents something well
As my talents, but not my violence
It represents someone smart, creative and artistic
For someone to take it away
As I said before, I think it is insane
For someone ungrateful to think such a thing
How would they like it if I take their name?
Once again I think it's insane
Their head is clenched tight
With an imposter in their name
Their head filled with chocolate brown smoking tar
As if they're stuck, so they wouldn't take my name
With the smoky gray that's in the sky
It seems as though the day has come for destruction
It's coming, they're getting drowsy
I'm putting them to sleep to escape
They're not taking my name, for goodness sake.

Ashlee Owens



Londell Swales

identity

Beyond This Horizon

Dashing thoughts of upcoming memories,
maintained in this day, but born into tomorrow.
I let my mind wander from its natural way.
Sometimes I don't know if I'm going to walk, or just fly away.
As your spirit rises upon my ego, my mistakes are still waiting
on the other side of the bridge, waiting to cross over.
Eagles fly, salmon swim,
could it be worthiness that is trapping me within?
Sorrow is among this earth, as I walk silently on this turf,
but the pain, the sunlight, the shame, makes me remember
to feed on my enemy's darkest rain.
Now it's time to end my sorrow; others may follow,
but nothing comes beyond this horizon.

Terri Davis

Hating Forever

You cannot stop me.
I will not fail to destroy all the darkness
oh, and that pale because,
oh, I forgot that's another song.
We're beaten up, we're beaten down,
I don't think I will get to see downtown.
I hate you, I really do.
Maybe one day I will imprison you,
lock you up like you did something wrong.
No, something really, really wrong.
I hope I make it, I really do,
and by the way, I hate you.

Reginald Williams

Twisted

The people killing
willing to take someone's life away.
One soul, one heart, and one life.

I look up in the stars
thinking of how Mars and the Earth
have things in common.

The screaming, yelling and fussing
makes me hot. So I ease up
to the air conditioner.

My life is like a combination lock.
You don't know what I think of when I freeze.
The electrical socket driven in me like pain.

The whipping with extension cords.
With all this hatred
I am shattered glass.

Antonio Ashford

Riddle

I'm here now, so don't hold back
The drying of the leaves and cold's lack,
We die and come again over and over,
Just like the difference of a four-leaf clover.
They're bright and dull at the same time
But in the darkness we create their own mind
I'm stuck waiting to be plucked out of the air
I'm hot and shoot like a flare
We're kind of shy but we let you see
But can you guess who are we?

Charmyonne Bailey



Erica Jones

The Hound of Heaven

I fled from him down the nights, and down the days
I fled from him down the aches of the years
I fled from him down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and the mist of tears.
I hid him from ruining laughter
From those strong feet that followed, followed after.
But with unhurrying chase, I have a sly grin on my face.
Deliberate speed, and mystical instance, yet I was sore dread
Across the world I fled, as I startled the gateways of stars.
To all the swift things, swiftness I did use.
He clanged his chariot towards heaven
An uninterrupted pace, deliberate speed, my mystery and insistence.

James Saunders

tolerance

I'm a Butterfly in the Ghetto

I'm a butterfly in the ghetto,
seeing things happen to people.
The things that happen to people,
they're dying and getting sick.
People in the ghetto are losing their lives
and their family members,
and someone they really love.
The ghetto is a terrible place.
From things I've seen today,
I'm glad that I'm a butterfly

Allese Kennedy

I am

Could this be life twirling in my existing life.
I am invisible. I can't be touched,
not with a five-foot pole.
I am many; the ones that hurt are with me.
I am one; meaning the whole world is me.
I am a dream; that's why my plans go sour.
I am a dare; my whole life is a dare.
I am you; I have a piece of you in me
I am invisible; to break it down.

(I) think before I do
(am) what you say I am
(invisible) something you wish.

Kevin Nowlin

Troubled Life

Life during this time was never peaceful
like a war right next door every day
someone's dying because they're gay
or catching cancer from the sun's rays
trouble has been electrified by the darkness
hidden by lies, but I can sense it inside
better yet, I can see it in your eyes
but to you it's a surprise that you never realized
that this day and age was down
to an eternity in hell.

Robert Randolph

United We Fall, Together We Stand

I walk to the ghetto
the hay and lighters from the roll.

While the war sends shivers
and the snow has not come
to meet my state, my city

My flag blows like my hair
and the ghetto shotgun
screams nothing unexpected.

Though my city, my state
are not what you call best friends
But when it's trouble
We stand together
We fall together

Pamula Twyman

Explain

Explain,

Explain why I have so many trees in my notebook.

Maybe because I work hard. Or maybe it's the
mad, hard, mean teachers that make me work.

Explain the clouds that pass me by
and why don't they cry their blue clear tears.
Is it because the sun is happy and rays its happiness to all?

Explain my desire, wanting something so bad
Why I scream out loud when I'm mad,
Why I sing the ghetto blues,
Why do I get scared at night,
Why do I...

Because I can.

Explain the devil in me,
Explain the angel I be,
Explain the meaning of love,
Explain the heaven up above,

Explain, explain, explain!
The book looked me in the eye
and said it's all in the tree of life.

Pamula Twyman



Kiona Bean

diversity

Daybreak !!

As the sun leaves, the sky feels
Like feet in shoes covered up all day
Until the night, when he feels like a slave freed.
The trees are loving the sun at times
But don't love the sun when he goes down.
There is hatred, anger, and sharp
Listening of the cold wind
And the trees and twigs and branches
Are wanting revenge on the dazed sun.
But the confused, proud trees remember that they can't move
And they just lace their bark, so
The trees block the way of the sun
And forever watch the silent night.

DeAngelo Reed

Never Again

Never again will I let you crowd over me.
Never again will I let you take my hope away.
You cloud me over with the forgotten yesterdays of hate.
The destruction of the broken glass suitcase.
I survive through the fear.

Sade Rauch

Lips

Lips lust and they glow
They run with gossip, they sometimes cuss.
They call upon defenders, but they betray and destroy us.

Every day they erupt to shining stars.
They spit out saliva, they wander to our planet,
They live on Mars.

Quiet agony stalks in sleep
Cry to its track, passionately they speak.

Body and soul did find a reason.
Why the boy is no one's child, why he still is grief.
Cold and hot changed the season.

They kiss and slobber and bring gangs.
A mother cries 'cause of the lips, 'cause of the shame.
Lips, lips lies can't forget.

Amani Al-Fatah

Daybreak

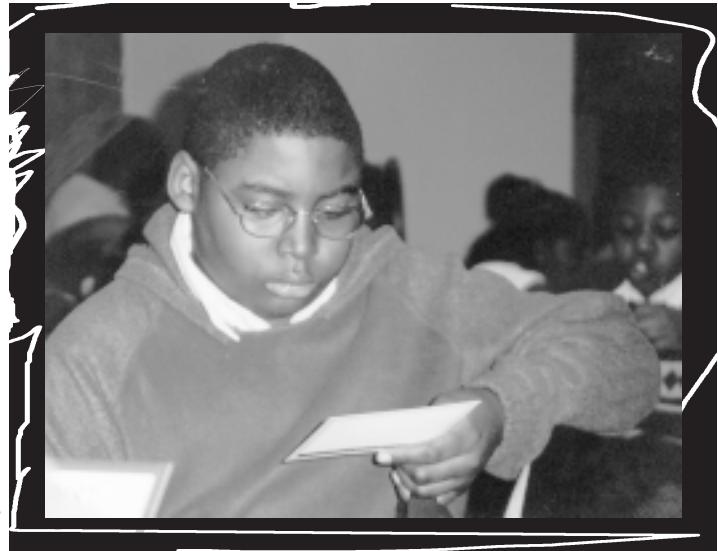
As the daybreak departs from the light
It feels like the loneliest thing in the world,
Like a dripping all by itself, with no pipes,
Like a desert and a human on the verge of death.
But he is lucky to make it out of
The tangled lonely skies, which are so silent.

DeAngelo Reed

Lost in Time

Time and time and time ticks and ticks
while I watch the clock,
with the number of hatred tatooed on my arm.
The angry life I'm living seems like I'm slowly drifting
and drifting into this world that is impossible to live
because my character was stolen by the boy who cried wolf.
No, backtrack, think back, rewind, what's your guess?
Just like that it's gone, my name yes.
Stomping, slumping, slouching, thumping
and you think I'm mad now?
Dreaming and hoping that I will change
from the belligerent person I have become today.
As I let go of yesterday's indigo and peachy winds
and the enchanted life I used to know
but when I receive the beautiful glare in my eye,
I smile like sorrow turning into soft kisses
blowing in the wind.
Life will go on being lost in time.

Claudia Butler



Timothy Miller

identity

Pain

This pain feels funny and anger amuses me.
I feel the laughter instead of pain.
If you were to dig into my soul,
you could hear those demons in my head,
you can feel my pain, you can smell the agony

My pain tastes like the all-seeing eye.
It feels like the crying image of my imagination.

So now I think, why did I follow Leo, Gary and David?
Why did I follow the he's, she's and the we's?
Am I supposed to go to Brooklyn or Harlem?
Am I virtual or a reality?

My laughter really can't replace pain.

Londell Swales

What's in my heart?

What's in my heart? What's in yours?
My love, my lust, your desire, your dream
My life, your secret, this is my life in the sunshine
Ain't no sunny nights and dark mornings
Shiny moons and dull suns.

What's in my heart?
Me, you, family and friends.
What's in my heart?
The love of 1000 cupids.
What's in my heart?
Nothing but dust and cobwebs
Why don't you tell me what's in my heart.
My life is shorter than two bags of minute rice on an open flame.
What's in my heart?

Kevin Nowlin

Signs

Silence is the sign that the wind is watching
and screeching in fear
as he watches the shadow of the blinding torch
creep across the darkened room
and closer to the sleeping child.

Dawn is the sign that the sun is rising
each ray lightly touching the deaf ears, blind eyes,
and the heart making beautiful music.

Hakeemah Ayodeji

Bless These Memories

Remember the brave warriors
who survive in the war of the battlefield.
Remember the guns shooting people
and the sad children crying for hope.
Remember the parents who raise these kids
and pray for the hatred and bad nighttime.

Ricardo Nesbit

Bless These Memories

Bless these memories I beg with my heart and soul,
hold these feelings until the white candle blows.

Feel the mist as the ghosts of the sinned
walk the earth, and let each dagger
of every person they've killed
make their clear blood flow out
until guilt eats at their hearts.

Their victims hold their hearts, souls, and lives
in their hands, letting the
clock of time tick and tock on
yet never letting go.

Feel the fiery depths of the devil's lair
as he leads them down to their fiery grave
where they will rest forever.

Bless these memories I will hold forever
in my closet of guilt and death
and as I await my turn to step
on the broken glass of my forever resting place
let everyone know I'm sorry,
and bless them now and forever.

Hakeemah Ayodeji

tolerance



Trisha Braxton

Run

Run from destruction, windows of broken glass
crying, shouting in a room of deadly hate
wanting to escape.

My eyes closed down, boarded up
Hope arrives.

I see the gleaming stars, the season of spring
my fear, my memories have been forgotten
and the wonderful trees of frost, snow, and rain.

Ashlee Owens

For Myself

For myself, going to school
Learning, discerning
Concerned with my education.
Learning to remember my ancestors.
Them struggling while others had a breeze.
Trying to break free,
Learning of my history.

For myself, come home.
But not all alone. Arguing
With my little sister, convincing
her to pull that blister.
Shrugging my shoulders, going to my room.
Doing my homework, wanting it to be over soon.

For myself, pulling away
From the nameless thing behind me.
Crack and cigarettes trying to bring me down.
I will stomp them down to the ground
And stand out, trying to shout about.

For myself, doing good
Doing what I should.

For myself, this beautiful thing going out,
Singing Brittany about. My name rings
through the heavens. Maybe I should say it again.
Brittany.
Like I said, a beautiful thing.

Brittany Love

Not Touched

Here I stand in a meadow,
untouched by the wind.

Here I stand in a burning building,
untouched by fire.

Even here, I swim in the ocean,
Not wet one bit.

Here, not touched by a single soul . . .

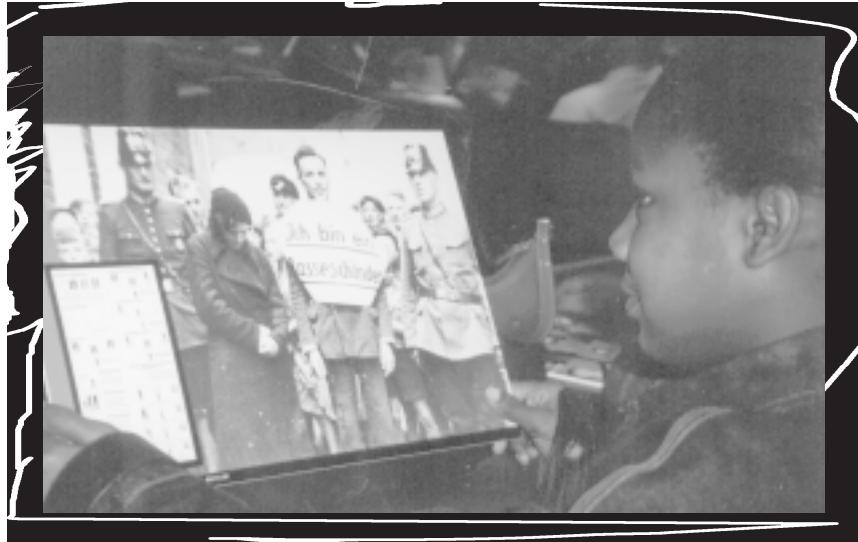
Kiara Williams

Here Let Me

Here I draw marks of I-35 on the ground
Here I pull sugar canes with my bare hands.
Here a cat chases a dog in the yard.

Let me fly on the clouds on a sunny day,
Let me talk to a red bull at a bullfight
Or else let me eat poison.

Dionta Abbott



Jessica Young examines a photo at the Holocaust Museum.

It seems like everyone is disappearing

Pay close attention
this is my point of view about our world
and the things we do.

Some things today can be tragic
it's like somebody's doing magic,
disappearing everyone
our world today can make you sad.

The things people do can make you so mad
innocent people getting shot
it's like everyone in the world is disappearing, just like that
it seems like every day someone is losing their life
seems like others can't even say goodbye.

I know all we have is memories of the ones we love
but don't be sad
I'm sure they're shining down, looking at us from above.

Tyesha Tyson

Die

Violence in all weather, shouting and fighting
Because of death, sighing and gloom
They shot a gun, now my kid is dead,
My mother, father, grandmother,
Neighbor's father, sister, uncle, aunt, grandfather
How shall I survive?
I feel like crying
Instead I just end the poem by dying.

Emmaly Curry

Untitled

broken perfume is like life
champagne is smoke

father you are a prisoner
& I am firing you

as I growl
for eternity

Antonio Ashford

Broken Body, Broken Soul

Broken body, broken soul
No way in life and nowhere to go
Hatred, crying, dying, lying
Mothers, brothers, sisters, cousins
All in shame with no one to blame
Open up but closing down
Packing your suitcase and leave out of town
Pinched, plucked and tampered with
Broken body and broken soul
No way in life and nowhere to go.

Chayna Ross

Class Is Now In Session

Pay close attention, the world that appears now
was not as wonderful as some of you think.
Children went to bed hungry,
people killed each other, men raped women.
Now don't get me wrong students,
everyone in the past was not cruel.
They fed the hungry people, clothed the little babies,
a lot of them really cared.
Now students,
where would you have wanted to live
Here or there?

Christina Ashford



Terri Davis

identity

The World

Pay close attention to how the world appears now.
People dying, killing, stealing and fighting for no reason.
Knives, guns and hate are things that kill children, adults and babies.

When they are dying you can hear their souls cry out
Help, you hear screams.
People in prison for murders, things that don't make sense.
People who have already died look from heaven to say
Try your best, be your best.
People being hit by hate, jealousy, and violence,
Being hit by air-to-air missiles.
Fiery prisons, nothing to eat, nowhere to sleep.

So pay close attention to how the world appears now
Because maybe someday you and your friends can change it
And make it a better place.

Chris'tina Allen

I Don't Know Why

I don't know why people kill one another
Parents, kids, children remember seeing their family dying
One by one, people leave the earth
Never understanding why they leave.
Things you see every day are crying,
Hate, fear, and sighing.
People wanting revenge, wanting to kill and hurt.
Then some say, where is our hope, our freedom, wisdom and courage.
I don't know why we are afraid of our enemies.
I don't know why, I don't know why, I don't know why
We do do the things we do.

Chris'stina Allen



Christina Ashford

dc creative writing workshop

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Reginald Williams

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