

# HARTWORKS

Spring 2007 • \$5

**SPECIAL SECTION: REFLECTIONS ON THE HOLOCAUST**

The Charles Hart Middle School Literary Magazine



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# INTRODUCTION

**W**elcome to *hArtworks*, the nation's only inner-city public middle school literary magazine, written and edited by the students of Charles Hart Middle School. *hArtworks* is published through a collaborative effort between the school and the D.C. Creative Writing Workshop, an independent non-profit working to create a literary renaissance in Southeast Washington. Now in its sixth 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. The 2006 edition of *Poet's Market* recognizes *hArtworks* as "an outstanding example of what a literary journal can be (for anyone of any age)."

This issue features our students' reflections on the Holocaust, culminating our study of that period, including two visits to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and a talk with a Holocaust survivor.

This year we welcome four new writers, Dwayne Betts, Omekongo Dibinga, Sage Morgan-Hubbard, and Venus Thrash, who join Nancy Schwalb and Jamila Wade as senior writers-in-residence. We also celebrate the return of James Saunders, a 16 year old junior at Ballou Senior High, for his second year as junior writer-in-residence. And the 2006-07 school year marks the start of our college internship program, bringing us the capable and committed service of Meilani Clay, Maricia Herron, and Katie Hinden.

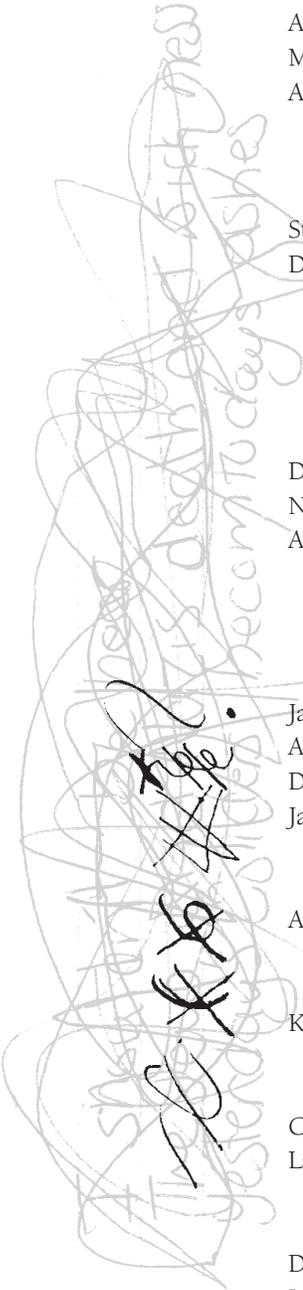
We have many friends who have helped to make *hArtworks* possible, and we would like to express our gratitude to them. Our sincerest thanks go out to the Herb Block Foundation, Sarah Booth and Bloomberg L.P., Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, Children's Fund of Metropolitan Washington, Commonweal Foundation, Community Foundation for the National Capital Region, D.C. Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation, Fannie Mae Foundation, John Edward Fowler Foundation, Rita Susswein Gottesman Fund of the Alexandria Community Trust, Harman Family Foundation, Hitachi Foundation, International Monetary Fund, Marpat Foundation, Mattel Children's Foundation, Moran Family Fund, Meyer Foundation, Project My Time, The Tom Lane Fund, Spirit of Giving Guide, Wachovia Foundation, Wendling Foundation, Weissberg Foundation, The World Bank, Anonymous, Borders Books and Music, Michael Joy and TSCJoy/Monterey, LLC, Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, Karibu Books, Holly Mansfield and GO! Creative, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Arena Stage, the Shakespeare Theatre, McGuire Associates, Joyce Page and Ms. Printing, Tollefson & Gustini Investment Management, our friends at Popeye's on Malcolm X Avenue, Gregory Auger, George and Lenore Cohen, Lee E. Epps, Tom and Carolyn Grey, Mark Hollinger and Kathy McNeil Hollinger, Frances Horn, Lynne and Joseph Horning, Betsy Karel and the Lodestar Fund, Gay and Charlie Lord, Judine Slaughter, Mr. and Mrs. Ladislaus Von Hoffman, Richard Thompson, Juanita Wade, Vera M. White, and Martin Youmans.

Special thanks for the hard work and dedication of the D.C. Creative Writing Workshop Board of Directors: Mary Ann Brownlow, Dr. Susan Gerson, Bernie Horn, Kathleen Huston, Michael Joy, Joan Kennan, Bill Newlin, Raina Rose Tagle, Nancy Schwalb, Kirsten Tollefson, and Jamila Wade.

We would also like to thank the following administrators, teachers, and staff who are our partners in this endeavor: Principal Willie Bennett; Assistant Principals Ms. Kimberly Douglas and Mr. Shawn Pelote; Ms. Katherine Bucholtz, Ms. Gloria Fergusson, Ms. Carolyn Jackson, Mr. Malvaux, Ms. Terrie Spann-Tchama, Ms. Eleanor Seale, Ms. Pamela McKinney, Ms. Ann Brogioli, and Ms. Maevern Williams.

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*On the bus to the  
Holocaust Museum,  
foreground Mark Neal*



*Ja'Quan Newsome at  
the Tile Wall*

*Sequan Wilson*



l-r: Danielle Blake, Renita Williams



## Walking into a Nightmare

Hate. Disgust. Grief and shame.  
These are the feelings—of me.  
As I enter into a sudden silence. Darkness.  
Of a memory that belongs to more than six million.

I live the life of others for only a few hours.  
But it feels as if I am the life.  
Walking for my freedom through a couple of miles.

The opening flames over innocent souls  
bring tears to my eyes, that seem to flow  
onto burned, lifeless bodies  
buried beneath my feet.

As I walk through other peoples' lives  
I seem to hear them scream for help.  
Survival. Their lives.

But I have a fear of waking up into this dream.  
Of being treated this way, told to do this or that.  
Knowing when I'm going to die.  
Seeing fear before my own eyes.

This is all a dream, flickering within my mind.  
But I choose to never again treat people as if they were a sin.

*Kiana Murphy*

## In the Midst of Life

In the midst of life  
they were burned to their souls  
they went through hell and deceit  
as their lives were taken away  
The weeping of the people and the  
innocent children.  
As the nightfall arose,  
they were just minding their business,  
when the Nazis wanted to be cruel  
because of who people are.  
It was horrifying, the voices of people  
and the  
innocent children  
who lost their lives because of identity.  
And when they came, their suitcases  
were taken away from them.  
They will be missed by the weeping  
eyes of their loved ones.

*Danielle Blake*



## Burning Souls

Never shall this nightmare live again.  
Childhood memories being burned on train tracks  
long gone.  
The flames burn with horror  
as Nazis laugh with sinister voices.  
Never again shall a bystander stand  
with grief and shame.  
We will not walk  
down the path of fear.  
Weary bodies being worked to death,  
golden stars being stitched on  
hard crusted jackets,  
the dark buds cry for the hungry bodies,  
numbers of people being killed everyday,  
the shadows of souls floating in the sky.  
Never shall this happen again.

*Reginald Conway*

## Lost Souls

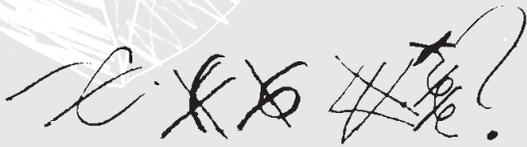
The ruler that brought us grief and shame  
couldn't take away the long-gone pain.  
Jews' grief didn't end, for them hope is lost.  
The heartless ruler would truly pay the cost.  
He presented the Jews their unmarked graves.  
Nazis treated them like monsters enslaved.  
"The Jews are evil!" the Germans were told,  
they just do not know about the Jews' lost souls.

*Sequan Wilson*

## Listen!

Burning souls  
and never forgotten memories  
follow me in my shadows  
unmarked graves and wounded soldiers  
dirty, hungry and filled with the worst sickness  
Listen!  
Listen!  
Our history is before us  
so wicked and full of fear  
terror is so bad the sun cries tears  
their childhoods are full of darkness,  
grief and shame  
so much hard, departed pain  
unhappy, broken windows and broken glass  
Thank you God  
Thank you God  
Here's the golden star  
we're free  
we're free  
we're free at last.

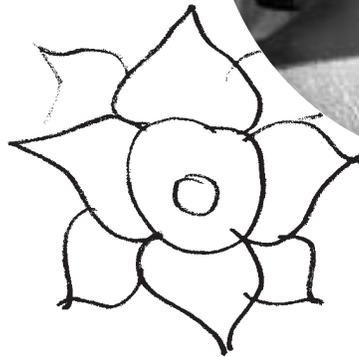
*Tionna Wade*



## Forced to March

I don't belong here  
in these empty rooms. Listen!  
My eyes and hands are ashes.  
I believe that all children should  
know the truth. We are forced to march  
with millions of soldiers, and  
with barbed wire on our walls.  
I hear voices, wounds I see on  
different types of bodies.  
I don't belong here  
in these empty rooms.

*Bnyonka Simpkins*



## Horrors

The burning souls have risen from the shoes.  
Unmarked graves filled  
with rotting bodies  
Nazi soldiers standing on them  
laughing in the blinding darkness  
The strangeness of the wounded family's  
spirit is in the air.  
They won't rest until they get revenge.  
The filth of the bodies smell is now  
lingering in the air. A witness, a young girl  
frightened by the sight of her mother  
being shot in the head.  
The horrors of the bottomless pit  
of a rectangular box of nothingness  
until it is suddenly filled with all kinds of people.

*Nichell Kee*

## Remember

Jews were put into ghettos  
The suitcases were thrown on the train tracks  
The Jews heard the Nazis footsteps  
Jews are remembered  
Many Jews survived  
Never again will this happen

*Ashley Stevenson*



## The Peace Maker

As I wished for a better place,  
it never came true.  
Golden gates, crystal rivers,  
ponds, pools, and seas  
horses and ponies galloping around  
as if they were busses or trains  
a glorious sky to look up upon  
Hunting down flowers in a fresh garden  
with posies, daisies, tulips, daffodils,  
dandelions, and sunflowers.  
Peace, no guns.  
Staying alive, no knives.  
No killing, no prisons.  
Longest labors, shorter death.  
Heroic mist coming to make my dreams come true—  
Suddenly it's time to awake,  
and as you walk outside, it's just how you dreamed of it.

*Shamia House*

## Memory

Never shall I forget  
I shouldn't be here  
The Jews and their pain  
Death, sickness  
Yesterday's soldiers, today's ashes  
Hidden in this grey smoke  
with scars and wounds of fear  
Innocent bystanders  
become millions and millions  
of unheard voices

*Myah Robertson*

## The Hunger Mob

As we want more, they want less.  
As we take, they give.  
As we fight, they surrender.  
They always take our pride and dignity.  
And we take back what's left of us.  
The Hunger Mob wears only either  
orange, yellow, tan or white.  
The Hunger Mob protects what they got.  
The Hunger Mob has dogs, but only for trespassers.  
The Hunger Mob eats what they feel.

*Shamia House*



## A Dream

I look through my glasses,  
seeing a wannabe world.  
Instead of bursting into an eternal mist  
it will be torn into a glorious aftermath.

I abandon the reality of the wrong things in the world—  
the guns, the fighting,  
the racism upon the atmosphere  
I see getting along, and peace around the world  
through the lenses of the made-up world.

The heroic soldiers are under a roof of love and care  
rather than bombs coming from elsewhere.  
Lives will last for an eternity, not for two seconds  
upon the earth's layer.

But when I take the glasses off  
it will turn back to reality,  
under many tragedies  
Thinking that violence is the world's sanctuary.

*Kiana Murphy*



## Memento

Listen, can you hear the broken glass in the hallway  
The empty rooms in the house  
The people struggling in the sun's tears  
The Jews dying and being buried  
Their scars, the wounds  
Weeping in blindness and fear  
Behind the wall, so forgotten

The struggle of burned cares  
In hidden footsteps of the Jews  
Remember their voices  
In the darkness of the departed  
Soldiers, flames, marching on the innocent  
Millions of children

*Shaiki Johnson*

## My Darkness

My darkness is forgotten souls,  
closed eyes, and unmarked graves  
like broken glass just hitting the floor  
like a bottomless pit of grief,  
shame, anger, fear and worry.

My darkness follows me wherever I go  
My darkness is like a person stalking me,  
waiting and watching my every move  
I can't get away from its silent, weary shadow  
When it's around, I am on fire, and I'm unhappy.

My darkness is burning horrors,  
long-gone sickness, and departed dust  
like the unknown witnesses of extreme filth  
At night, the sun's tears turn into golden stars  
being scattered in the night sky  
My darkness is destruction and collapsed buildings  
But in the end, my darkness eats me alive.

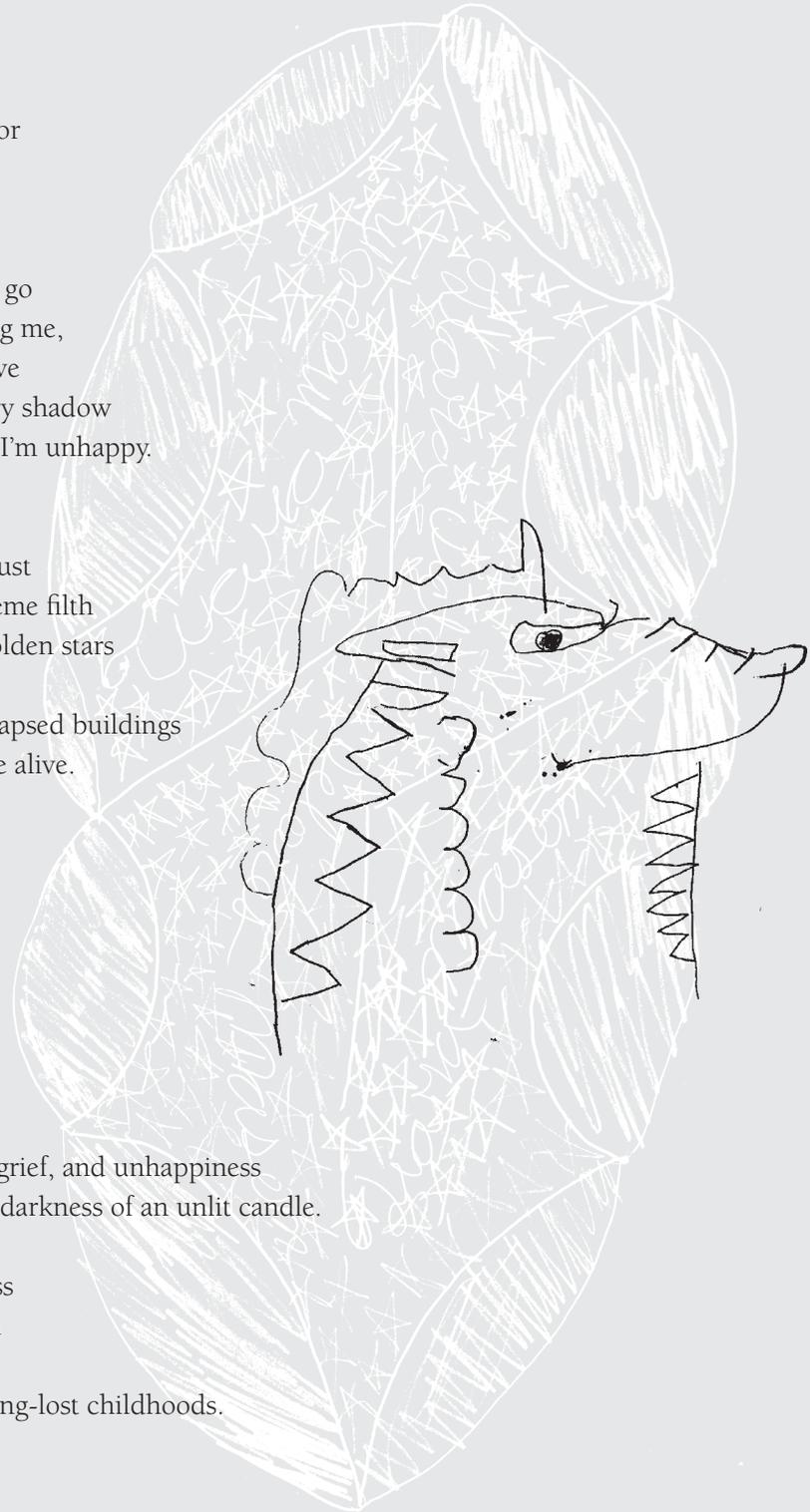
*Jasmine Murray*

## Empty Souls

Souls that feel like filth  
Souls that were filled with hunger, grief, and unhappiness  
All of these souls were silent in the darkness of an unlit candle.

Lots of souls wounded with sickness  
The fear of souls saying never again  
Flame and pain from Jews  
Not wanting to think about their long-lost childhoods.

*Yasmin Jones*



## I Was Not There

I was not there to see all of this.  
The scars. The wounds. The fears.  
I am only three years old.  
So what am I supposed to know?

I'm hiding out in my room, under the bed.  
My family doesn't know I am still here.  
Barefoot. Buried underneath all of my toys.

They took my family..  
But I don't know why.  
All I could see was marching boots.  
So all I could do was cry. Silently.

I'm in here, hungry.  
But really don't care  
cause my eyes are deceiving me  
sending me into a nightmare.

Now it's twenty years later  
and I am twenty-three.  
But I will never forget  
what the Holocaust did to me.

They took away my family.  
My home. My future.  
It gave me a history.  
Shifted me into reality.

Those Nazis. Those Jews.  
Those train tracks. Camps. Nightfall.  
And then again.  
Those uniforms. Those boxcars.  
The weeping. The silence.  
Burned. Strangers. Blindness.  
The voices. Those suitcases... Those suitcases.

But I'm a survivor.  
I'm tryin' to tell my story.  
It's what I went through. My storm.  
So all of this is forgotten.  
And this has all been a dream. A memory.  
I walk with my head held high.  
Stepping on all those hell times in my life.

*Kiana Murphy*

*Antoinette Better*



## Many Years

Tortured people, army  
and everywhere  
dealing with rejection, prejudice, and death.  
Grief and shame on a still night  
Darkness, wounding and weeping  
Unhappy people know that they are going to die.  
And if you're silent, you can hear the screams,  
the bullets out of a gun  
and the ashes below in the wind  
of a man that was unappreciated.  
Star of David, a gold star that is guarded  
by the north star, they both show  
the right way, you can believe in it.  
Sick Nazis demanding what they want  
but with faith, we will fight back.

*Jamal Buggs*



## Never Shall I Forget

Never shall I forget my grandmother's closed eyes.  
Her death will scar me forever  
And never again will I hear her say  
listen and wait  
All the faces at her burial ground  
and I can see into their hearts

Never shall I forget her empty room  
once full of life  
But now it's a gray haze, blue-black broken glass  
I step into the room and start to cry  
I not only cry, but I cry the sun's tears  
The clouds of memories, pain, and departed doubt.

Never shall I forget the emptiness of my heart  
the farewell of her body as it lay there in the casket  
I'm spoiled rotten by her  
I still cry from time to time

I'm struggling to have a good life  
but I'm weeping with hollow heartbreaks  
and the one thing I remember the most is these words,  
"From ashes to ashes, dust to dust."  
You may now commence her body into the grave

Something that was once alive is departed  
to a place where she deserved a good rest  
I will always reminisce on the memories of my grandmother  
Farewell grandma, and you will truly be missed.  
I love you.

*Jasmine Murray*



## A Dream

When I see something  
I've never seen before  
it is a mystery  
and I sit and observe  
unknown shadows;  
I get scared.  
Its change is golden.  
It looks like a beast.  
I run on, and outside.  
It was a dream,  
a dream I had

*Jamal Conyers*

## My Philosophy

My gaze is a mystery, slowly existing  
Creation of a distant sunset  
It's my custom to observe  
the ancient destiny of my homeland

And sometimes when I'm alone  
I talk to my shadow  
I tell her my suffering, my pain, my sorrows  
From her, I expect the unexpected  
And what I see is a boy and a girl,  
afraid to speak their feelings  
They both love each other,  
but are afraid of the unknown

And I'm very good at love, honor, and trust  
because I know that I'm lucky  
because I have someone to love  
I'm never unheard, and I'm never unloved

I'm capable of motherly love  
and I'm used to being spoiled rotten  
I believe in love, respect, honesty, and trust  
Love is nothing but an emotion  
Respect is the way you treat people  
Honesty is huge  
If you aren't honest, no one will trust you  
Trust is enormous  
If you make a promise and don't keep it  
you lose someone's trust

The world wasn't made for us to lie,  
torture, hurt, or beat  
The world was made for us to love each other  
If I speak of misery, it's not because I'm sad  
It's because I'm just trying to pick up  
the pieces of my life  
To love is a defeat, or someone beat you in a battle  
To love is to make sacrifices

*Jasmine Murray*



## Everyday Life

There's a boy sitting at a desk  
admiring the clock ticking on the wall  
while staring at the little black girl  
with the pretty long black braids.

The girl is wearing thick glasses,  
so thick she can look into the future.  
While the girl is not paying attention to the little boy,  
she is daydreaming of her rotten fruits in her fridge.  
Her voice is unheard and unloved;  
Words stuck in her mouth won't come out  
and she's still feeling like jetsam in polluted water  
but this is her everyday life.

*Yasmin Jones*

## Portia Spreewell

A lady that is made of onions  
on the inside  
because of her sour attitude.

Her clothes are out of style,  
checkered skirt, plaid shirt  
and green and purple socks to top it off.

Her head is smaller than an acorn  
but she chooses  
to wear oversized hats.

She wears sandals with socks  
and likes to dance  
but can't stop.

She dances until dawn (or until her feet hurt)  
goes to sleep in bunny pajamas  
and knows they are too small for her.

All the food is rotten  
because she could care less if her food was either  
fresh or twelve years old.

Her mind is blank  
because all she thinks of is dancing  
and what she will wear the next day.

Portia Spreewell doesn't like her name  
so she changes it into a dancing name,  
"Disco."

But in her filthy heart  
she still loves what she does  
dancing until dawn.

*Kiana Murphy*

## Writing Poetry

Books are better than bowling  
Love is like lined paper  
Words are like falling winter snow  
Writing is like a speeding cheetah  
Reading is like frozen ice  
Lined paper is like a kiss of the sun  
It burns like words crawling in my fingertips

*Renita Williams*

## Riff About My Father

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

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

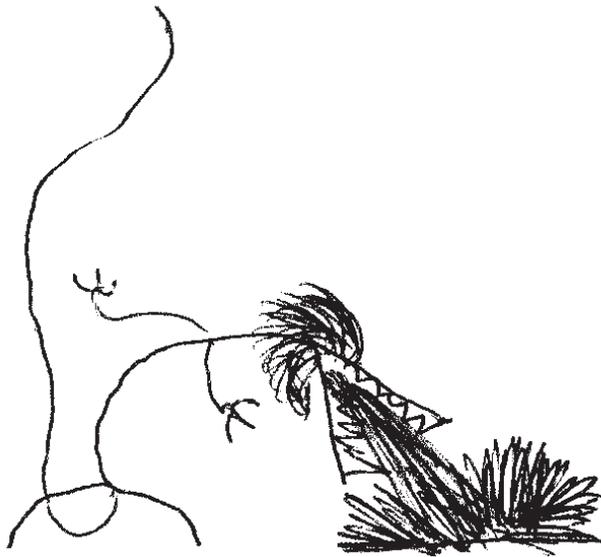
*Antoinette Better*

## Anger

Anger is like fire,  
fire from a burning house.  
Anger will rot in your mouth  
like spoiled milk that has been in the fridge for three months.  
Anger might eat your lungs  
when you drink a nice cold glass of water.  
Anger will fill your body with fear,  
fear to never be happy again  
Anger is not good for the soul.

*Yasmin Jones*

*Jamie Warren celebrates Halloween*



## Beware

My life is a silver dagger  
used by a madman  
bent on killing and destroying mankind.  
It is darkness in a golden light.

The knife of danger tells you to back up.  
The blade of power, overthrowing everything  
the handle of speed stabs very quickly.  
My silver dagger of despair will obliterate and annihilate  
every human and animal that tries to stop, hurt,  
or make me eat brussels sprouts.  
My one-way ticket to death dagger is very powerful.  
The thing you need to watch for is not the dagger, but me.

*Damon Kee*

## Homeland

If the world was the darkness of a shadow  
Perhaps the universal sunset of mystery will move;  
Slowly overflowing with triumph and maybe death  
Suffering for many different reasons.  
While observing unknown destiny outside of this orbit  
Your soul speaks out your tranquil thoughts of the ancient.

*Yasmin Jones*



## My World

My world will consist of everyone  
and no violence, no killing  
and every person will have a soul mate.  
The world we live in is unstable,  
unfit for the universe.  
A big blanket of sorrow over a planet  
that does not belong.  
The earth's people are unfair and unjust.  
We need to create a perfect world  
and I know they say everyone is not perfect,  
but let's prove them wrong.  
Just one can change the world and that one is me,  
so listen up and follow my rules so this world  
can be what it's supposed to be.  
But this is only the beginning of my greatest dream ever.

*Damon Kee*

## From One to Another

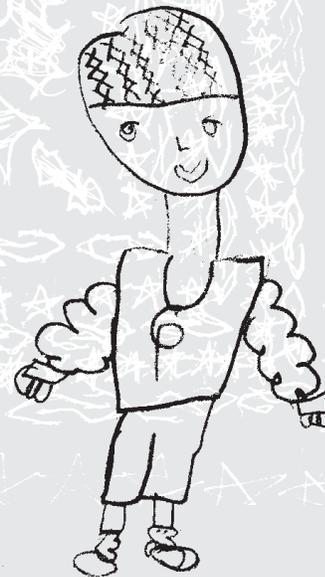
My unhappy world turns  
From misery and woe to just plain awful  
The grief I share with my soul—  
If you tempt it, the cup will tip over  
And the broken glass will turn to anger  
The fierce emotion shall come to grips with reality  
My horrible rage with its massive energy  
The hatred for the world will turn to  
A burning infinite flame of decision  
My fury will subside into a tiny flame and eventually extinguish  
A happy feeling will come  
From a candle as bright as a gold star  
Shining in the age of darkness  
Then with a shimmering tear in the eye of the people  
I say, the world is actually a cool place to live

*Damon Kee*

## My Life

I got sickness in my life.  
My life is unhappy.  
I have burning in my life.  
I see souls all around me.  
I feel broken glasses.  
I light up a candle.  
My childhood is not good.  
I see darkness in my room.  
I listen to sounds.  
I see flames when I walk.  
I've forgotten everything.  
The sun's tears are in my eyes.  
I close my eyes.  
I think about my life.

*Stelita Better*



Nichell Kee



## Gone

Some things are better left unsaid  
The reason for this is that my dream  
that was supposed to be real  
didn't appear in front of me  
My dream did not become a reality

The flight of a bird is a beautiful sight  
I wish I could fly  
The sight of a beautiful young animal is great  
I wish I was there

Basically, I'm saying  
I can't do things that people expect me to do  
I can't fly. I can't be a beautiful young animal,  
or even an astronaut.  
But the life I live is a boring one  
full of things that I can't do

I'm supposed to be a great person  
I'm just not there yet  
A dark past is revealed and forgiven  
Forgotten, gone

*Damon Kee*

## Eyes you don't have

Is my gaze clear?  
Living the life of a person  
who is low-down and depressed  
walking the streets of a world  
that was once nature  
turned into a rubbish wasteland.

My philosophy is not to worry about me  
Conduct the feeling that life is short  
Use it well  
To me, life is just a seed in the world we call home.

I believe in believing  
and as I believe  
hopefully, so can you.

*Jamal Buggs*

## On Park Street

On Park Street  
there was a parade of famous people  
just giving people money  
for being their fans.  
Each person would get  
ten million dollars;  
that meant everybody on the street  
was rich, and they moved out  
so nobody lived on Park Street.

*Beatrice Smoot*



## Rashida McDonald

Rashida McDonald has fifteen dogs that hate her.  
She thinks that they love her dearly.  
She eats rotten cheese for dinner and moldy grapes for breakfast.  
The only friends she has are the ants in the refrigerator.  
Her job pays her one million dollars an hour.  
She's an actress—she works in comedies, movies and reality shows.  
She decided to go to the army, but she ended up doing a movie about the army.  
The title was chocolate chip.  
She finally decided to eat healthy food.

*Jessica Smoot*

## My Place

The injured animal crackers poster burned from stress  
That blackboard freezes from torture  
That unloved book remains rotten, pity  
Look to the left—  
Don't you see an unheard stillness from computers?  
The flotsam words and kids jetsam into seats  
Look to the right, what do you see?  
Cherubs giggling and seraphim nod with a smile  
The dictionary religion is recovering from lullabies  
So if you dare to come in my poetic room  
Without poetic thoughts  
You'll be sorry.

*Renita Williams*

## Desdemona Scott

Desdemona Scott eats oranges with peanut butter.  
Every night she would cartwheel, until she broke her wrist.  
She also has five rattlesnakes and two rats that eat rice.  
Desdemona Scott doesn't have a job, but she finds five cents a day.  
Desdemona lives in a dirt hole next to the Empire State Building.  
In her dirt hole, she has one broken chair and a rug made out of grass.  
Desdemona's teeth are very dirty, and termites crawl in her mouth.  
She doesn't mind living like this.  
She could live better, but she never goes out looking for a job.

*Beatrice Smoot*

## My Life

I believe in death because the parents you love died.  
And you won't see that person again.  
It is a mystery that some kids can't  
find their mothers and fathers.  
This little girl is looking out of the window  
trying to figure out what happened to her father.  
This little boy is calling his mother  
and it seems that he doesn't exist.

*Shannon Allen*

## Trustworthy

I am bursting with faith  
open soothing heart that's covered with weakness  
I strut down these hallways like a Supreme  
I worry about tragic things going on  
I get very exhausted thinking of death  
Something is haunting me that's called love  
I'm scared

Blood flowing through my bones  
telling me stop worrying about amorous feelings falling apart  
If I open my soul to you, will you crush it?  
My sorrow's tears filled with cement  
so heavy it pulls my neck forward  
so my tears can break it

*Renita Williams*



*l-r: Kiana Murphy, Nichell Kee*



## I Am

I am a little girl.  
I like to laugh.  
I dream I will become a princess.  
I like to watch the moon.  
I love diamonds.  
I love the clear blue.  
I'm not fat!  
I'm smarter than a bee with honey.

*Jada Brooks*



## New Creations

It is my custom to live in eternal darkness  
with no clue of my destiny  
and the unknown ruins of my homeland  
slowly watching the arrival  
of worlds to come.

I believe in mysteries  
and slowly observing the world  
change into a new world  
a world where there's no fighting  
and no killing  
and new creations.

*Mark Neal*

## Eternal thinking

My gaze is like a mystery of darkness  
realized by the afternoon sky  
the redness standing for the hurt in my life  
my soul is weak  
This is the reason for my eternal thinking

*Almus Bush*

## Dragging

Dragging, the old years are on my back  
It is hard to get them off  
Every time I drag something forward  
my past comes back to haunt me  
like a ghost

I am dragging all these heavy things of my past—  
memories of when I had a cast  
and the only way to get it off and get through  
is to do what I am supposed to do

*Sean Favors*

## My Life

Falling rose and cherry blossoms  
red and blue birds  
and a circle of hope  
This is my life, calling  
like a ringing cell phone  
Trees fall, just like my life  
turning and flipping,  
jumping and skipping  
My heart is so black  
Why is my life like you?

*Almus Bush*

## Kaleidoscope

Stars into blue flies,  
hearts to red tigers  
crawling into stretching gold cheetahs  
into green shoes.  
Socks falling from the sky  
black D's leading into purple ovals,  
soda into glowing  
into ghosts howling in the darkness.  
Flight of the hurricane  
into blindness.  
Heat, laughter of the silent guitar,  
moonlight into shining feathers.

*Shaiski Johnson*

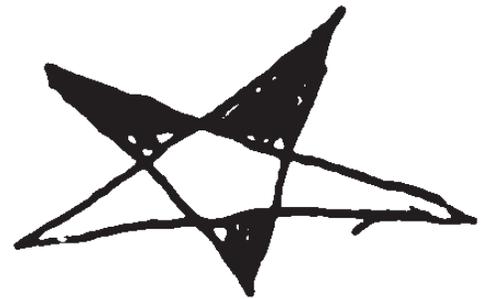
*Danielle Blake*



## My Gaze on the World

My gaze is slowly singing songs of love.  
People suffering, because of people passing away  
from families and friends.  
I think about the world becoming peaceful and nice,  
no more violence and death.  
I think about going to a neat and ordinary school  
with no violence and all that fighting  
and getting jumped after school.  
I think about what's going to happen  
to my family when I'm not around them.  
I think about all the unfortunate people  
and all the stuff we have  
and what I should be proud to have.  
I think about the pain in people's eyes when I look into them.  
I see the darkness in people's hearts  
when something that was unexpected happens.  
I see the souls of all the people who passed before me  
I see the shadow of me  
and imagine how it's going to look in a few years.  
I'm sad when the love and happiness in people's eyes leave.  
I see the anger in people's eyes every time I see death.  
It looks like they want to seek revenge for the one who caused it.

*Thomas Whitney*



## I See

I see a gold rose running into a silver sunflower  
I see a jumping tiger leaping into a pile of green snow  
I see a tall white oak tree playing with red lions  
I see a red and silver bird flying into a golden sky  
I see a tall redwood with lots of colorful lights  
I see a palace full of flaming stars  
I see a velvet tiger rolling in moonlit shadow  
I see a bronze bird flying through an ocean of souls  
I see a staircase of unbelievable colors  
I see moonlight, a candle with silver, gold and green flames  
brightening the everlasting rose

*Thomas Whitney*

## Smiling

Smiling is like stepping a foot up.  
Smiling is just like me, flying high in the sky,  
Dancing, tiptoeing, like a ballet dancer.  
My smile is like joy that comes from a new year—  
Yes, it is a new year.  
And I'm smiling for a great, crushing and loving new year.  
No, don't storm, don't let the leaves fall;  
It's a new year.  
Just have a bouncing, joyful new year.

*Dearah Chappell*



## I'm Burning into the New Year

I'm burning into the New Year  
leaving all the heartbreaking years behind me  
telling everyone I forgive them,  
struggling—every time I try to leave  
something keeps pulling me back.  
What I once was, I will become.

*Antonio Spencer*

## New Year

I am burning into a new year  
and the old year is fighting back  
like a bird flying that I catch in a cage.  
I am like a wolf in the night  
howling at the moon with a pack of wolves  
and I live to win.  
Like darkness in the light,  
the light in the dark,  
I am like the sun and the moon

*Shaiski Johnson*

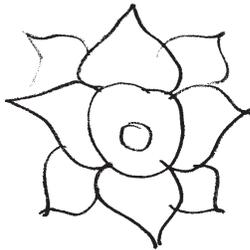
*Danielle Blake*



## New Year

Smoking into the New Year,  
with a fire for English  
and burning light of math;  
bouncing and sliding  
with the death of history,  
and skating in the halls with flying skates  
and tiptoeing to lunch,  
racing outside and stomping  
down the hallway steps,  
popping an dropping  
and showing no fear  
because it's 2007, a New Year is here!

*Dimitrius Winters*



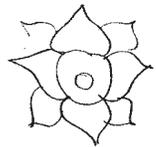
## Newborn Child

It is my custom to take care of a newborn child  
that likes the color blue-green  
and is not afraid of the darkness  
and likes to watch the sunset.

Because this newborn child's life is not so endless,  
and I will fill the dream with his destiny  
Because I love him so much and it is not his soul that gets me  
it is his joy that's sweet.

He came into this world living with his own family  
Now I have to go, I said  
into my little cocoon, which is the sunflower  
Bye, I said. Bye.

*Andrea Hermans*



## The Light of Nature

Red hearts unfold like flowers  
before they open to the sun above.  
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,  
drive the dark of doubt away.  
Giver of immortal gladness,  
fill me with the light of day.  
Overflowing my everlasting laughter,  
my shadow changes around me,  
my existing soul suffering.  
The sunset goes down on me.

*Antonio Spencer*

## My Life Today

In the darkness, I stand.  
Looking, saying who is this?  
Why are people acting like that to me?  
I see my shadow and say  
Where did the life go in Shantice?  
My friends in the distance  
from now on.  
The reason why I write this poem  
is because of a person in my school  
who was my best friend, and the  
unexpected happened:  
The friendship stopped.  
I think I should cry, but if I stop being me  
I will not be able to go on with my life.  
I know my days are counted,  
so I'm going on with my life.  
Sometimes I wish I was not born.

*Shantice Matthews*

## In my mind

Twisting red and yellow tulips  
into star shapes.  
Shouting through a green rectangle.  
Playing with a bluebird on top of an oak tree.  
Yellow fireflies playing with a plastic red rose.

*Vincent Walker*



## I Wish

I wish I was a singer with a song's name  
I had a dream  
I was in an old country club  
and it goes like this:  
weary, haunting, tragic  
I am torn in my life  
my life is gone now  
it is the end of the year of '06  
it is going on '07  
it's going to be fun  
and the new life of me has come  
my mother is back home  
the club, the old country club

*Natia Boyd*

## Trying to Arrive in the New Year '07

I am falling into the New Year  
and I don't wanna lean back,  
like the gum on the bottom of my shoe.  
I'm stomping instead of running  
around the track,  
as all my old problems won't leave.  
I'm on my knees crying and begging  
please, I'm peeking around the corner  
so that I can see if last year is gone,  
so if the new one has arrived  
I won't be alone.

*Quanika Jackson*

## Joyful

If Joyful is a person  
she is always smiling.  
She wears bright and colorful clothes  
every day.  
If you try to hurt her  
she will kill you with kindness.  
If you try to bug her  
she will ask you to go away, with a smile.  
And she would walk away with a nice attitude.

What Joyful is like:  
a bright rainbow that wears a white T-shirt  
with bluejeans.  
And she rides a Lincoln Navigator  
has a nice house.  
If I was Joyful, I would have a great life.

*Marvin McDowell*

*Raymond Reynolds*



## Colors

crimson

cherries  
getting washed  
going in your mouth

lavender

grapes  
chilling in the  
container  
getting ready to rot

azure

jeans  
hanging in the closet  
getting put on

*Beverly Wright*

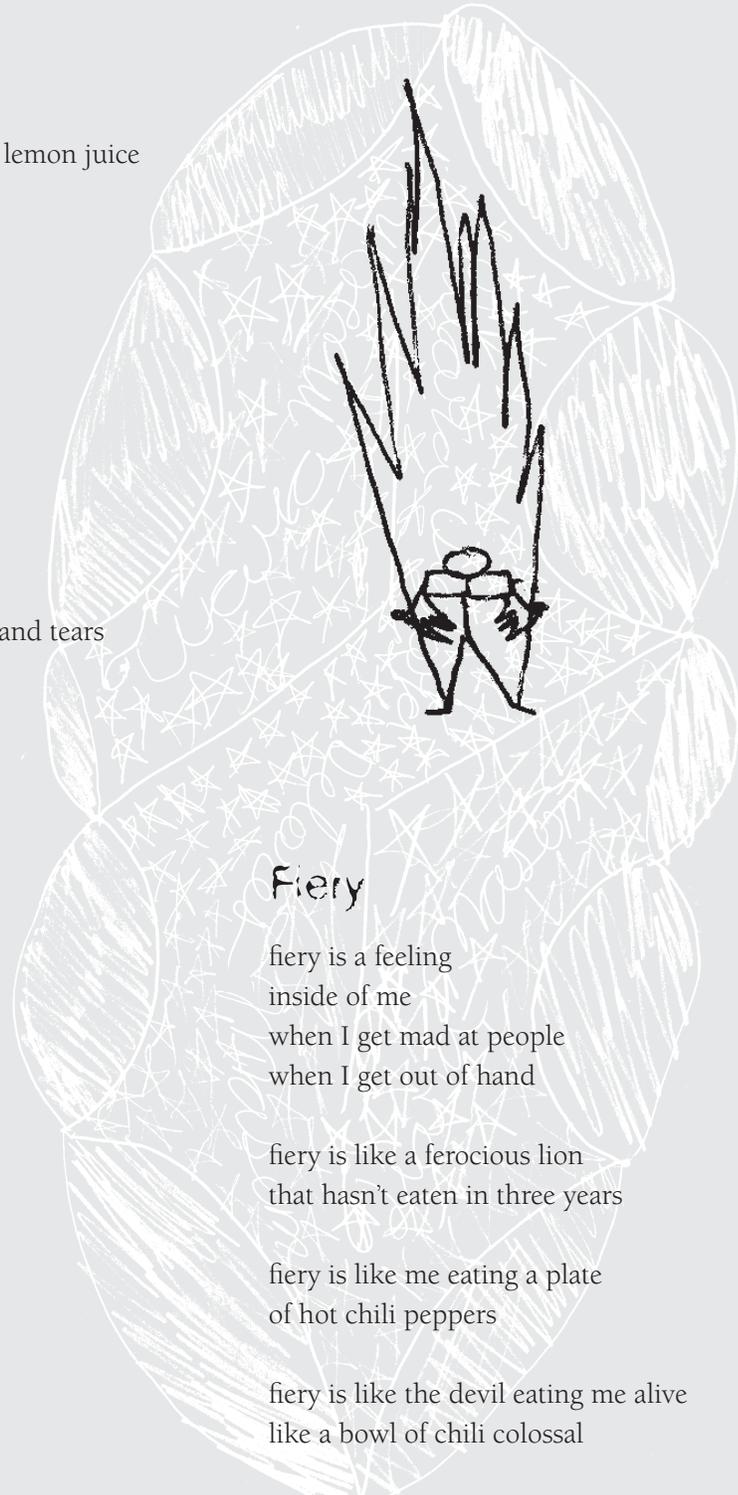


## Anger

Anger lives in a broken down  
home of a barn  
for breakfast, it eats hard nails and lemon juice  
anger is a killer, fighter, a threat  
to all people  
it has a vicious Rottweiler for a pet  
anger drives a torn up car with the  
paint coming off and no rims

When you look at anger  
it might make you itch  
or maybe die  
anger looks in the mirror at  
its horrible face  
anger wears ugly clothes with rips and tears  
has cuts on its face  
blood rushing down its body  
anger is mean, wrong, hurtful  
unpleasant  
but sometimes  
I love anger

*Markiya Davis*



## Fiery

fiery is a feeling  
inside of me  
when I get mad at people  
when I get out of hand

fiery is like a ferocious lion  
that hasn't eaten in three years

fiery is like me eating a plate  
of hot chili peppers

fiery is like the devil eating me alive  
like a bowl of chili colossal

fiery is like the devil sucking us up  
in a ferocious fiery tornado

*Keyosha Richardson*

## My Emotions

If happiness was a person  
he would be so happy  
he would always be smiling so hard  
that he would have a smile  
on his face even when he was asleep  
and he would always have a good attitude  
and would have all A's on his report card

If happiness would wear clothes  
he would wear shirts with smiley faces on it  
in black, white and all other colors  
and he would eat waffles and pancakes  
with smiley white syrup and would  
drive a light blue limousine with  
a cloud on the front and rainbows on the back

*Darien Wilkins*

## The Journey of My Dreams

This mesmerizing thought of a private pastime,  
a path that leads to a world undiscovered.  
These ideas linger into someone's twisted fantasy,  
which somehow messes up mine completely.

As I speed on to what I'm doing,  
trying to pursue things unimaginable,  
things that frighten them to think about,  
but make me brave enough to be about it.

My fascination with this weird fantasyland  
is like a vacation from reality,  
some sort of acquired taste  
that takes long to get used to.

*Maryum Abdullah*

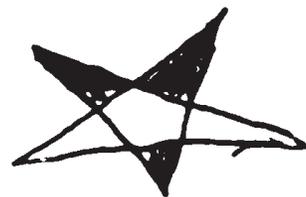
*Demond Parker*



## Tinkerbell

Tinkerbell is a  
laughing earthquake  
she cracks things with her  
laughter.  
Her short green dress is like  
a light green carnation  
in the nice spring breeze.  
Her hair is the pollen of this  
beautiful flower.  
On the other side of Tinkerbell  
is an erupted volcano.  
She can be feisty and rude.  
She will sprinkle her magical  
glitter on you to make you sleep,  
so don't mess with Tinkerbell  
or her magic will do the trick.

*Danielle Blake*



## The Inner Me

I am climbing up a mountain  
It is very cold  
I sit on top of it while  
The sun is going down  
The trees are waving hard  
And leaning to the side  
Like they are dancing and performing  
In front of a crowd  
The royal blue sky is making me  
Sad  
When I look at the top yellow mountain  
It makes me smile  
When I see the snow, it reminds me of  
Crystals sparkling on a beautiful dress  
The snow is very deep  
I am sinking  
And snow is getting in my boots  
Now as I am getting ready to leave  
I take a look back at the mountain  
To see that it is very beautiful  
And it will always be there

*Danielle Blake*

## In Ten Years

In ten years I hope to be a rich man  
In ten years I hope I will be alive  
In ten years I hope to have a good job  
In ten years I hope to have a very big mansion  
In ten years I hope to have a good college to go to  
In ten years I hope to have a police badge  
In ten years I hope I will have my friends  
In ten years I hope to still have my pets  
In ten years I hope I will still have my life

*David Brown*

## Suffocating

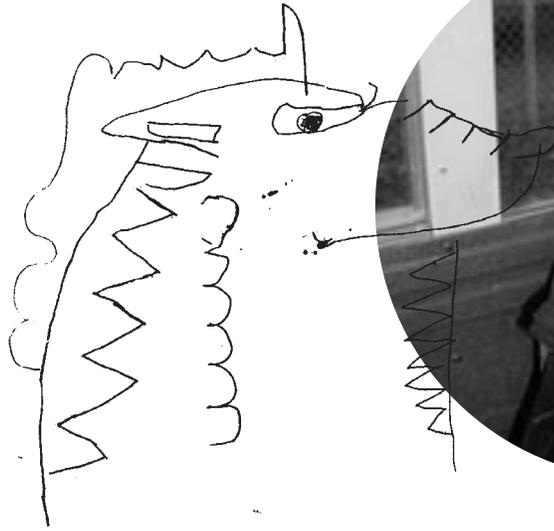
I am suffocating  
And I just need to breathe  
I am suffocating  
And I just need to be relieved  
  
Nothing I do is right  
Nothing they say is fair  
I cry and scream and throw a fit  
But no one seems to care  
  
I can't do what I want  
I can't stay out late  
So now I sit here and write this poem  
To release my pain and hate  
  
No one will look far enough  
Because I'm lost in my mind  
No one will search beyond my looks  
To see what they might find  
  
I'm still suffocating  
And I still need to breathe  
I'm still suffocating  
And I... must... be... relieved

*Kiera Butler*

## Soul

My soul is like  
a dark place  
that won't stop  
hurting my soul  
unknown, my soul  
is changing  
into a sunset  
in school or outside  
of its shadow.  
Sometimes I wish  
that my destiny will  
come to my soul  
one day.  
Slowly I think it  
might come to a  
mystery now,  
like a blue-green  
river that follows  
down to homeland.  
Unwittingly my  
soul is destined  
to be a spiral  
or a golden  
conqueror.  
My soul is defeated  
by the darkness  
homeland  
that regrets my soul  
from the start  
of the afternoon.

*Jamie Warren*



*Bryant Jenifer*

## My Dream

My dream is  
further away than I imagine  
It's not that easy to get to  
I am struggling with my dream  
It seems like no one cares

I wonder if my dream will  
be worth living someday  
It will take me further than  
my mind is reflecting

Dreams  
Dreams, oh the wonderful dreams

I believe that my dream is out there  
waiting for me  
And I believe in myself  
That I can and will  
go a long way.

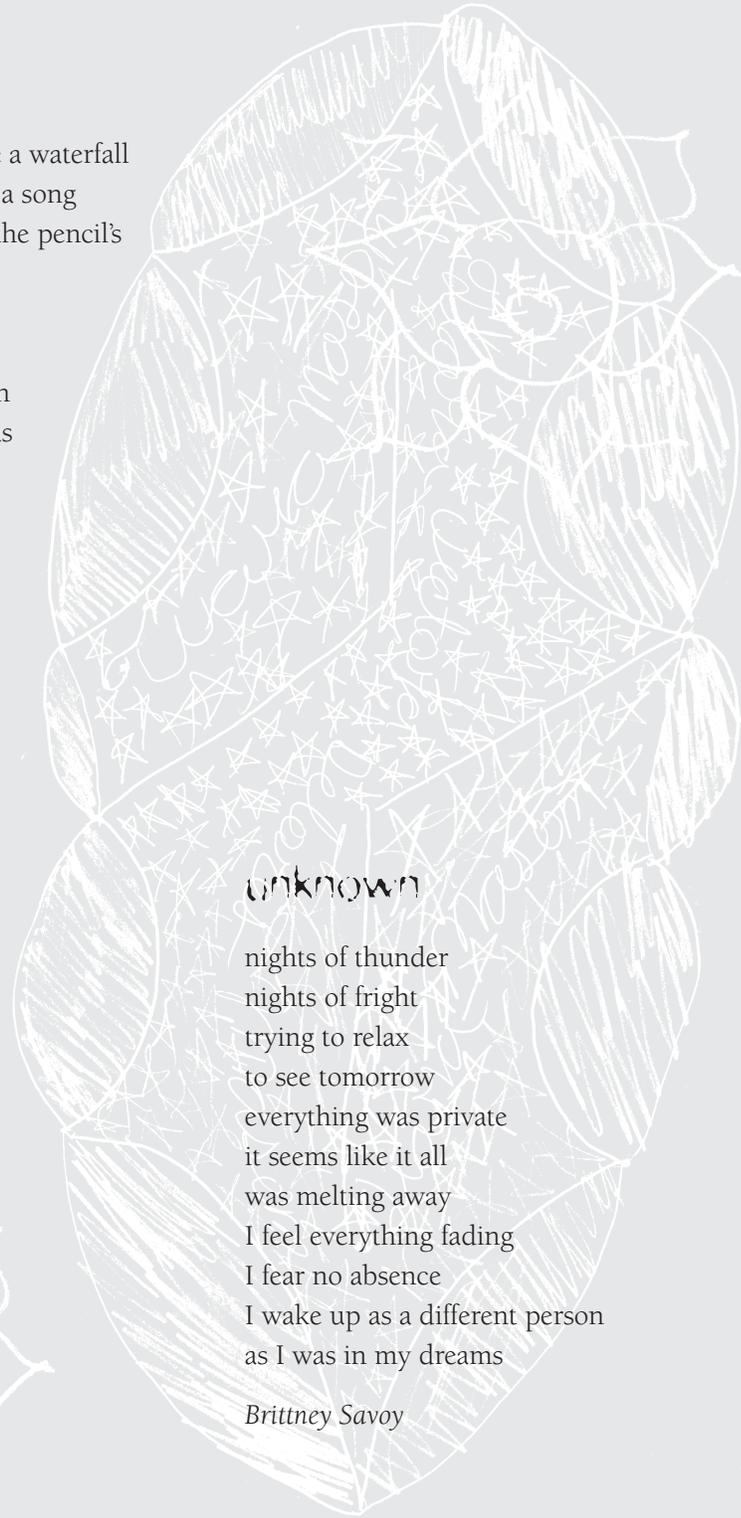
*Danielle Blake*



## A Poet

pencils drafting  
a paper being taunted  
while the lead is coming down like a waterfall  
the pencil writes like the tempo in a song  
the paper is still being stabbed by the pencil's  
every movement  
the pencil is the basketball  
and the paper is the hoop  
the pencil moves with no hesitation  
the pencil makes rhymes as if it was  
celebrating words  
The lines on the paper blind me  
with its rejoicing words  
as I read them they pop out like  
kids on a playground  
the words come together  
in a poem like a blueprint design  
and behind this design  
is a poet

*Reginald Conway*



## unknown

nights of thunder  
nights of fright  
trying to relax  
to see tomorrow  
everything was private  
it seems like it all  
was melting away  
I feel everything fading  
I fear no absence  
I wake up as a different person  
as I was in my dreams

*Brittney Savoy*

## Life Is a Journey

Life is a journey  
struggle through the storm.  
Sometimes it is hard to form  
the way you want to live it.

People get in trouble  
then they chew it up and spit.  
After all that it's probably hard  
to get through it.

Some people give up  
and let go of hope.  
Life should be tight  
like new shoes or a new bike.

There are people out here  
that are successful you know.  
Once you finish,  
you can tie it up in a bow.

*Tionna Wade*



Shamia House



## My World

I look towards the crowd  
Talking into the microphone with a heroic voice  
My words are going through torn heads like a blow of wind  
None of my words are left abandoned  
Instead they rest in the soothing memories of  
people's heads  
And soon we start to see a change in  
the world, for violence becomes peace  
The prison rate goes downhill  
This is my world of striving dreams  
There are no more enormous tragedies  
This is my oasis  
Instead of physical confrontation  
There is bursting love  
The strut of prejudice is ending  
While the march of joyfulness is starting  
There are no more crying eyes  
But instead preaching souls  
This is my place  
My dream  
My world

*Reginald Conway*



# The Designed Dream

1  
My eyes close  
as I fall to sleep  
My dream is  
designed like a candle  
The shine of it is like  
the glance of tomorrow

2  
As I dream the  
heartless flame  
melts away my dreams  
like flowing tears

3  
But this dream melts  
away slowly  
into my memory like  
a truck delivery

4  
This dream is  
bright like  
powerful sunlight

5  
The wind blows and  
the light of the candle  
is deceased

6  
My dream becomes  
a nightmare  
My fears intimidate me  
while I am weak

7  
My dreams are  
suffering  
they are victims  
of guilt and regret

8  
I see a light  
I walk up to it  
trembling

9  
As I walk up  
to it, I feel  
a gift of power  
suddenly I see it is

10  
My dream  
My candle  
My memories

*Reginald Conway*



## My Dream

My dream flies  
it soars so high  
the grace, heart and will  
of the suffering stars  
have fallen

But, as it flies  
a yawn of a gust of wind  
whistles my dream to the ground  
thrust into the horizon  
with a jolt of thunder and lightning behind me

I hear an owl's call  
that lights an infinite flame in my soul  
to the point where fear's absent  
I will flap my wings  
I will achieve my dream

*Aaron Montel Brooks*

## Colorful

When bananas go rotten  
they sit and turn black  
just like I have  
my world was gray at once  
not knowing the difference between  
black, white, yellow, brown.  
But now it's colorful  
I can see now  
I must take what I deserve  
the color of my skin  
does not, does not make me a fool  
and the others who fell into  
this colorful world of yours  
let them fall, but me,  
you will not make a fool of me.

*Aaron Montel Brooks*

Antonio Spencer



## My Ode to the Toilet

Bowl of beauty,  
Seat of sitting  
Gets no respect  
from the falling  
of the paper  
to the sounds  
of a stretch  
Give it some love  
Give it respect  
Give it some pipes  
make the rims look wet  
shine the handle  
and maybe the lid  
Make the bowl  
look twinkley and maybe you'll live  
you all don't know  
what I heard from the float  
if you don't respect him  
then you'll die by the bolts

*Aaron Montel Brooks*



## What They Mean

Cerulean

sky  
darkening and brightening  
hugging the earth tightly

Fuchsia

soda  
quenching my thirst  
smelling good

Violet

shoes  
walking with me  
keeping my feet warm

Sepia

skin complexion  
walking along the earth's floor  
meeting and greeting people of all skin tones

Vermillion

crayon  
writing on a clean sheet of paper  
brightening the day

Emerald

May's  
birthstone  
beautifying

*Tierra Thornton*

## Rap It Up

Rap is love  
to me because  
you have feelings  
inside of  
your mind  
the things you  
rap about are  
from your heart  
to your brain  
to the inside of  
your blood cells  
so stay yourself  
forever and don't  
ever be a stranger.

*Emmanuel Youman*

## Eye of the Tiger

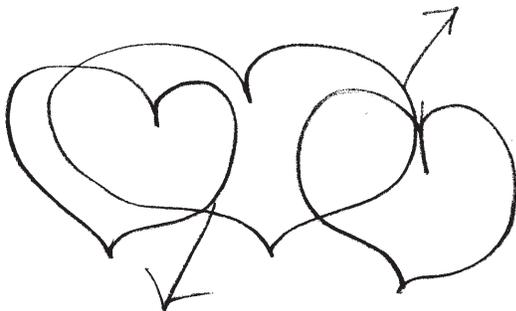
To the sound of the crowd  
as they cheer or boo at your  
reign as champion  
you've trained hard, you've fought hard  
You've been beaten, battered and bruised  
you have given all your heart  
and still have the guts to keep fighting  
But you've lost it  
the hunger, the thrill, the eye  
You must train harder  
You must fight harder  
You will be beaten, battered and bruised  
worse than ever before  
but you must get up  
to keep what's yours  
to keep the  
eye of the tiger

*Aaron Montel Brooks*

## What Dreams Are Made of

My dreams are  
mysterious, dark as  
the clouds but  
today I decided  
to write them  
down. My dreams  
are heavy filled  
with fast cars  
American dollars and  
they go as far  
as the stars.  
I had million  
dollar mansions  
expensive fashions.  
I had to buy the moon  
to store it all. Then  
after eating dinner  
with all winners  
caviar with the stars  
I could afford it all.  
But then I woke up in  
the real world eating  
breakfast, slow cars  
with white walls  
and all drywall  
public schools  
with bars, it didn't last long,  
what dreams are made of

*Luqman Abdullah*



*l-r: Quanika Jackson, Andrea Hermans*



## His Mom Would Tell Him

His mom would  
tell him to go  
to sleep but he  
was worried about  
tomorrow if he would  
get to eat.  
His mom would tell him  
to work harder but  
soldiers came by  
and started drama.  
They told him his mom  
was stealing paper every week.  
That moment he started to feel  
everywhere doubt and deceit.  
His mom tried to teach him  
addition and subtraction.  
You should have seen that face,  
that empty reaction.  
His mom would tell him  
to be strong. But after this day,  
it didn't last long.

*Luqman Abdullah*



## Anacostia River

1

Dirty, dirty waves  
a rollercoaster

2

All the fish in the sea  
just dead as can be  
swimming  
swimming

3

The boat between the seas  
rockin' back and forth  
back and forth  
upon the seas we rock  
until we are sick

4

I smell the river  
How does it feel?  
Like ocean blues?  
It moves . . .

5

The smell  
of dirtiness  
on my skin . . .  
smelly

6

A river.  
A boat.  
A feeling.  
A difference.  
A breath.

*Bnyonka Simpkins*

## New Year's Eve

On New Year's Eve

It was quiet for a minute  
But I guess people had to get out of their houses,  
Trading spouses,  
Or chasing mice  
I felt bad because people were left out in the cold  
Trying to hold on to life,  
Because some of them had a wife  
Or tried to teach their kids to fly a kite  
Or telling them not to fight  
And take them to a park and look at the sight

*Marquell Bethea*

## The stillness

The stillness of the trees makes a lullaby as the air breathes.  
The pity of a rich guy for a poor guy is unheard of.  
The injured heart is no longer pumping.  
The burning candle has run out of wax.  
The warmth of the sunlight warms your skin.  
The motherly way of a mother protects the young without the  
father.  
The baby cousin soon becomes a cherub.  
The unfaithful father is no longer in your life.  
The girl's body soon becomes flotsam in the lake.  
The thieves that honor their master rob someone else.  
The illusion of your uncle in front of you is no more.  
The rotten man reaches his recovery.  
The torture of the gun finally kills you.

*Nichell Kee*

## The Window

1  
Window that I look through  
that has a face  
and could show a place

2  
Beyond that window  
you can see other  
people like me

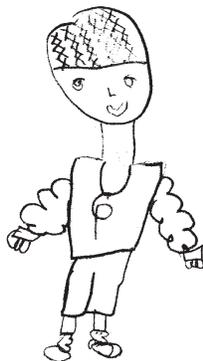
3  
You can see the morning and  
the night. The coral color flutes  
glimmering in the dark.

4  
The fingertips of the blackbird  
soaring in the sky happy  
it has its freedom

5  
Through the beach house window  
I see the ocean  
glaring back at me

6  
The sky.  
The bird.  
The morning.  
The night.  
The ocean.

*Nichell Kee*



*Marvin McDowell*



## Suffering in Silence

As I walk around millions of people,  
all I see are eyes on me.  
But there are no smiling faces.  
So I run into a building,  
crying as I look into a mirror  
and see an unpretty mask.

*DeJon Tucker*

## My Gaze

My gaze is a clear blue ocean  
It is my custom to walk through the waves  
And sometimes I look beyond  
And what I see each moment I inhale  
And I'm very good at each breath I take  
I'm capable of going deeper

I believe I will get there  
The world wasn't made for quitters

I have no problems going too deep  
If I speak of courage it's not because I know it's inside me  
But because I'm so afraid of it, and for that very reason

*Bnyonka Simpkins*



## When I sleep

When I sleep in the stars  
above there's an angel who guards  
me that has much love.  
When I sleep there are petals  
of roses that are falling in circles  
around me and I try to focus.  
When I sleep I dream of the  
sierras, how for some reason  
I would like to go there.  
When I sleep there are dark rags  
covering my eyes so that I can't see  
so that it's pitch black.  
When I sleep I think about  
what I'm going to do the next day and  
if it's going to be fun. When I sleep I  
wonder if I'm going to be safe and  
wonder if the rest of my family  
is safe. When I sleep I dream  
a happy dream and make sure nothing  
ruins it. When I sleep I wonder if  
I did all my homework and  
if I'll get all of it right. When I  
sleep I want to sleep forever.

*Nichell Kee*

## The Forest

Falling leaves tumbling off trees  
like a volcanic blast hit fast  
the tropical skies changed  
like midnight fire.

*Kaniece Whitaker*



## She Runs and Hides

She looks hopeless in the stars  
dreading her fear fire sparks  
dreams flourish promises dead.  
She runs and hides in her castle  
called "imaginary." In her world  
all alone, the song of her life plays  
over and over again. Freezing she shivers,  
hot and she quivers scared she cries  
escaping she tries simply to say  
so sickening to do.  
Lifeless in the stars  
facing her fear fire sparks  
dreams live promises made.  
She runs free and hides behind happiness  
in her castle called "happiness." In her world  
not all alone, the song of her love plays  
repeatedly. Freezing is no such thing,  
hot, she sings scared, she hit  
escaping she did sickeningly to say  
so simple to do.

*Brittany Watkins*

## Philosophy

My gaze is like a blue green mystery  
It is my custom to drive on the dark streets  
And sometimes, perhaps, being unexpected  
And what I see is sometimes unremembered  
I'm capable of having overflowing shadows  
out of the window.

I believe in creations in the world  
Because I can see it and I like it, the world  
was not made for us to kill each other  
because after a while we will regret it.

I have no universal circus  
I have golden windows that defeat and  
change the way people act  
If I speak of tranquility it is not  
because I know what it means  
it is because I like the way it sounds  
But because I say it, doesn't mean that  
it orbits around me  
My friends sometimes orbit me  
like the arrival of a farewell.

To love is suffering unknown.

*Ashley Stevenson*

## Kaleidoscope

southern blue car  
driving into  
eagle rock lions  
walking into lemon zest  
tables jumping through  
shamrock trees  
skating near circles  
of orange peel books

*Dominique Johnson*

*l-r: Andrea Hermans, Sean Favors*



## All I Can Do Is Write About It

All I can do is write  
about my voice

Sometimes I wish it was gone  
but I don't have a choice

Wherever I go, I'm  
called Lil' Squeaky

But I like  
what they call me

The only thing  
I don't like is when they say  
I don't talk like this

It gets on my nerves and  
sometimes I want to hit  
them with my fist

But . . . all I can do is  
write about it

*Keishawna Simms*



## Dreams are dreams for a reason

A dream  
is really nothing but a wish  
a wish that your heart makes while you sleep  
dreams are made to be lived out  
dreams are supposed to come true  
dreams differ  
but dreams stay the same  
my dream is not like most  
I dream to go to heaven  
dreams should be of non-materialistic things  
because after they're gone, so is your dream  
dreams are dreams for a reason

*Earl James*

## My Lovely Dream

Two days ago I had a wonderful dream.  
Until that morning, my alarm clock  
went off and woke me up.

I am one of God's angels.  
I always see my shadow  
when it is dark.  
Sometimes I tremble and get frightened  
because there are no lights on  
in my house when everyone is asleep.

The shining light was right in my face  
like it was going to melt me away.  
So I yawn and get out of bed  
and think, what a beautiful day.  
I glance out of my window and  
see everyone outside.

*Latia Pimble*

## What Is Love Without a Dream

My dreams are full with love and hurt  
My heart hurts like the flame of lightning  
My dreams fade away as the night without stars  
My dreams are private as my heart is pain.  
As the shadow of my heart beats,  
the more pain I'm suffering to prosecute my dreams.  
As the light blinks and the wind blows,  
my heartaches find nothing but love and pain.  
The gift of my dreams that I left behind for love.  
Tomorrow is not relaxing the thunder of pain and fright.

*Kiarra Payton*



## The Window

the window is open  
like the eyes of an infant  
child. I was pulled in.  
Sunken in by the weariness  
of this fiery red room  
of my love, forced to  
be happy, sad, I become.  
My soul is twisted into  
hurricanes of mixed emotions  
I have no clue what my life  
would end up like  
if I escaped from this room.  
When I looked up from the  
horrible yet lovely beating  
that love gave me, that window  
was closed shut. Now I  
know why I had fallen. . . .  
I had fallen in, to fall in love.

*Brittany Watkins*

## To be found

My dream is an inspiration.  
It really comes from the heart.  
My dream comes in all different sizes  
like dragons and their wings.

For me to get to my dream I have to  
get through this twisted life.  
I have to get there before the midnight hour.  
I can't let my dream melt away.

If I don't get to my dream,  
it's going to feel like there is no tomorrow.

*Denisha Bolden*

*James Saunders*



## I come and stand

I come and stand for me  
to be me not to be you  
to show how I can be  
myself and not be you  
not be a label and feel discovered  
looking at the reflection of me  
knowing that I will be  
something and not to feel unpretty or unseen  
I come and stand  
I come and stand so everyone  
can see who I am

*Brittney Savoy*



## Sadness

dripping green crush  
wastes from the bush  
a girl is crying because of  
the sad song playing  
in her head  
the color of cherry cobbler  
is set upon the girl's face  
while tears bounce beside it  
the triangle from the  
chair rocked back and forth  
the square window  
opened wildly  
while wind from the tree blows  
and dogs the color  
of Hawaiian passion  
bark toward the wild grapes  
which hang from the tree

*Danielle Stover*

## The Struggle

As a young boy, you walk down the street worrying  
if you're going to get shot or not and just thinking  
about the struggle and that's not a good thing.  
But in the end the struggle is  
not something you want to think about  
and the pain is like having a  
lump in your throat  
and feeling like a lady having a baby  
or like someone getting shot.

*Marquette Price*

## Just Beautiful

beautiful exotic flowers  
flowers that are dying and  
going to heaven  
song birds singing jazz  
and a lot of different things  
summer heat  
giving me suntans  
peach butter dripping  
and tasting so good in my cheeks

*Keona Powell*



## Dear Father,

There are some things  
That I would like  
To say to you  
I would like to say  
That I want to see your face  
Again, so I could remember  
If you didn't get shot  
I would still be able  
To see your face, then  
I would not have  
To replace you.

*Theodore Washington*

## Hangin' Out Wit' Friends

Up in Iverson Mall,  
Singing the blues, dancing,  
Remembering the lazy bums on the bus  
Watching candy machines  
Stealing from kids  
Seeing rent-a-cops chasing thieves  
Walking, walking  
With makeup glistening and  
Shining like a crown  
Raging madness going through my soul  
Running into a cobweb and  
Bones aching because of stress  
Seeing the generation before me  
While eyes blinking, erasing, and  
Making the mind blank.

*Monae Smith*

## Questions for God

Why is the sky blue. Why are people  
People. Why are there blacks and whites.  
Is there really a heaven or hell, then what happens  
To a changed man in a cell. Why is earth  
Called earth. Why is the milky way the galaxy.  
Why do people have noses, have lungs.  
Why do people eat to stay alive. Why did Adam  
And Eve have to die. Why do people look alike.  
Why do people look different. What is gay, what is straight.  
What is God. What are the cross roads. What is heaven.  
Why do babies die before they are born. Why are there schools.  
Why is there an NBA?

*Larry West*

*Monae Smith, Maya Robertson*



## I Am Your Sun

When you wake up in the morning  
don't you see something  
bright shining on you,  
that's me I am that sun that shines  
bright in the sky.

You could never look me in the eye  
because I will blind you.

That's me, the one who  
makes you feel happy.  
I am the sun you ask for when  
it rains or snows.

*Nicole Williams*



# My Letter to a Relative In Jail

Are you determined

To get out

Well I am too

To get out

The streets

Gang bangin'

Drug sellin'

People dying

(Huh)

More like killing

Or being the victim

Will you struggle

I am too

Struggling to get out

The hood.

Your Nephew,

PS. Keep Struggling.

Jamal Clark

## Ars Poetica #1

What is a poem?

A note of how you feel

What you think of life or how  
you like to live it.

To me a poem is more than  
that

A poem is life

Yeah, one big story.

One exciting moment after  
the next.

One harsh moment after  
Another

A poem

Until then a poem is  
whatever when you live  
it out.

Jamal Clark

## I Am

I am a beautiful, Intelligent Black Woman

I am the hope for all black children out here today

You shall know me as Sherita Angelica Grady

Not as a nigga

I am a queen

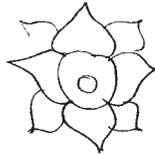
Not a nigga

Sherita Grady

# Today's News

Redskins losing all games.  
 265 people killed last year.  
 265 people killed this year.  
 66% raise in shootings  
 54% raise in robberies  
 2 weeks ago the Colts breaking their winning streak.  
 The Bears punt returner Devon Hester running 2 td's back breaking a record.  
 The college senior Troy Smith winning the Heisman trophy  
 The disease e coli spreading in vegetables.  
 An argument with Eddie Murphy about pregnancy.  
 The snow is coming into dc.  
 Shopping for the holidays.  
 The theories of fish having mercury in them.

*Trevon Jackson*

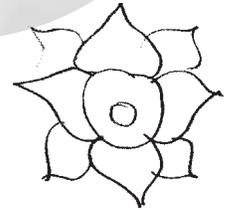


## Living with Anger

I was 6 years old  
 when my parents ran away.  
 I was stuck inside  
 a broken life  
 I couldn't wish away.  
 She was perfect, she had  
 everything and more.  
 And my escape was hiding  
 out and running  
 for the door.  
 Somebody listen please,  
 it used to be so hard.  
 Being me.  
 Living with the anger.  
 Living in a dream  
 trying to find a hand to hold.  
 Now that I am wide awake  
 my chains are finally free.  
 So don't feel sorry for me.

*Alishia Davis*

*Jasmine Murray*



## Football

I know

scared scared scared  
 run  
 explode/ (just like Clinton Portis)  
 the football field

Run  
 catch  
 spin  
 do what you have to do so you can't get hit.

You don't want to  
 have  
 fear in your H.E.A.R.T

Most  
 of all J.U.S.T H.A.V.E F.U.N

running, catching, and  
 all the requirements for

D  
O  
I  
N  
G  
T  
B  
A  
L  
L

*Trevon Jackson*



## Ars Poetica #100: Congress Park

Poetry don't mean nothing in Congress Park.  
It's all rap and R&B  
When we think about poetry, we don't care  
But when I hear about it, I think I can  
have a career in it.

When I write poetry I always  
Write about my life and where  
I'm from.

The only people I hear talking  
about poetry is Mr. Dwayne and  
my fellow classmates.

When you think about poetry, Redz  
it's just like go-go and C.T.W.P (Condon Terrace Wahler Place)  
That's what CP thinks about poetry  
and what Redz think about poetry  
and what I think about poetry.

*Trevon Jackson*

## A Poem For Myself

I was born in Washington, D.C.  
I used to come outside with no  
shoes on my feet. I used to run and  
play in the water and mud and dirt  
all together mixed it up with my feet  
and used to stomp on it and splashed  
it in my face and on my body.

*Donna Washington*

## Norfolk, VA.

With winter joy,  
The sun's breeze,  
Look out the window,  
You'll see frozen leaves  
When daybreak comes, I try to embrace  
All the cool mist around my face  
Then I stop and enjoy the silence  
Away from profanity and violence

*Jasper Hicks*

## Dear Dad,

I wish I can see you again,  
you were my best friend  
and also my father. I love  
you and my mother.  
I wish I can see J-Rock,  
Laylow, Shaun, Hakim, Mickey,  
Popcorn, Regal, Ty, Lil Dre,  
Gee, Gary, Shine and Yoshy. We  
miss all you soldiers, all of you  
soldiers stayed strong. We love y'all  
Da alley miss y'all, we wish y'all  
was still living so we could still  
be happy. Roses, Dee, Boo-Boo  
we will see y'all when y'all get out.  
Love y'all.

*Delvonte Jones*

## I Want Our Neighborhood to Be Built Up Better

I want to play on our  
football field

I want to be able  
to be on our basketball court.

I want to have fun  
in our rec.

I want for our house  
to be big.

I want to move the baseball  
stuff off of the field,  
make it a real football field.

I want Condon Terrace  
to stop suffering.

*Delvonte Jones*



## What Should Be On The News

The news should talk about the schools like we  
need the Vending Machine fixed in the lunch room.

We have mice running from behind walls and  
under the heater and we don't have grey mice  
we have white mice and they ugly and they stink.

Our heater needs fixing and it is too hot in this school.  
We need some cold air.

*Donna Washington*

*Jada Brooks*



## I Show Love By

I show love by helping  
people out like if  
it was an old  
lady, and she  
has bags in her hands  
and it looks like she needs  
help, I will ask  
her, "Do you need  
help?" If she  
says yes, I will help  
her with her bags  
and then I will ask her  
what her name is.

*Dominique Courtney*



## Football

A pulse, no heart beat. Forget tomorrow,  
what your heart beating for you're scary.

I want to be on the field like  
my man T Roy was

I want to go to the hole  
like my brothers told me.

I want to do it for my

I want to go  
to the best college.

I want to run  
like lightning.

I want to hit  
like Roy, go for

for the best quarterback  
arm.

Fly like an Eagle. Be  
like a Falcon.

*Delvonte Jones*



## Slave

slave- a slave is a person who  
is bound in servitude. And discriminated  
by one who is forced against their will and  
controlled  
by one. Beaten. Hung by the neck. Lynched  
because the color of the skin.  
Controlled by dominating influences.  
Taken from their land on boats,  
dying from the smell, starved by the white  
man. Work hard labor. Freed  
by the black man.

*Anastasia Fleming*

## My Thinking AKA Pain

Why do I feel this pain  
inside, why do I cry out at  
night at the thought  
of me not being home, me  
not being there with my family  
and friends. They  
tell me this is my family.  
Nope, it's not. This is  
where I like, no it's not  
No I shouldn't. If you don't have  
love for me. Why must I ask to  
go to the bathroom why am I  
not going freely. Go and come  
when I please. What? No.  
I really miss my sister and my brother  
but when I was free I could not  
stand them being next to me.  
What I feel is pain.

*Anastasia Fleming*

## An Incomplete List of People I Wish Were My Teacher

Martin Luther King, Jr.  
Michael Jackson  
My mother  
Michael Jordan  
Tiger Woods  
Jet Lee  
Tom Cruise  
Tom Brady  
Martin  
Jesus Christ

*Joseph Woodard*



## A More Grown Life

Shay, brown skin, always with plaits  
in her hair. She is disrespectful, but  
doesn't know it. Only twelve years old,  
people say she go hard, so she tried to act bold.

She looks grown but is not,  
thinks she's ready for a kid  
trying to live a more grown life.  
So Shay stays out all night.

About her age she tells a lie,  
every night he makes her cry.  
Shay wants to leave and so she tries,  
she asks questions from the sky.

Someone who loves her gives her help,  
tells her everything has been dealt,  
dreams about getting beat with a belt.  
He tries to imagine what she felt.

*Amber Williams*

## Today's News

Women driving in  
pain. Heart biting, can't breathe.  
Her children screaming.  
Stop! From the top of her lungs,  
body shaking hands tumbling.  
Crying in fear, the face of  
guilt in her eyes and the water  
drips of sweat down her  
cheeks.

That child's heart is broken  
with hurt inside, and given  
that hurt, pain and tumbling feelings  
to the mother that  
gave birth, and life for that  
child. And Today's News is that  
woman is still living.

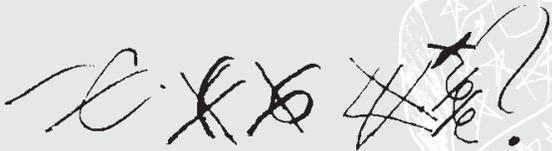
*Antoinette Better*



## An Incomplete List of People I Wish Were Alive

Uncle Pedro  
Aliyah  
Malcolm X  
Martin Luther King  
Rosa Parks  
James Brown  
Harriet Tubman  
Frederick Douglass  
Coretta Scott King  
Aunt T

*Colleta Paylor*



## Little Girl and The Squirrel

Da way dat I express  
my luv is I will draw  
a little girl with blonde  
hair, blue eyes, and very  
light skin playing with a squirrel.

Luv can be contagious  
but cannot be seen  
like a little girl with blonde  
hair, blue eyes, and very  
light skin playing with a squirrel.

*Terrance Nails*

## You Figure it Out

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

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

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

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

*Monae Smith*

## Poetry is

Poetry is  
Outrageous,  
Emotional,  
Music

*Lawrence Carter*

## Go Through

When you go through life you really never know who you are until someone you love dies but as you go on through life, you recognize what you lost when you wonder why things are gone.

The things I've been through is like a broken glass and rain drops that go drip to the ground and it is like someone dancing around, prancing on the ground.

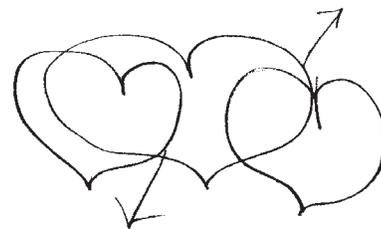
*Pauline Holsinger*



## Who I Want to Be Like

I want to  
dunk like  
Jordan, heist  
like Kobe  
sing like  
lil Boose  
fight like  
Ali, run.  
I want to  
fly like eagles  
spy like  
a fish  
climb like  
a monkey,  
jump like  
a rabbit,  
hop like  
a kangaroo.

*Antonio Brown*



## Mistakes

Mistakes is like a course. It follows you around the place. It's like the wraps of a twister it repeats all over again. Mistakes, a list of words filled with letters and numbers create a bang with a golden kiss fumble weight lightning with a touch of lips. Hear lightning scream from the top of your lungs. Stop! A mistake you make, deal with it, learn from it, my course, my mistake, my word repeat.

*Antoinette Better*



## Show Love

I show  
my  
mother  
love by  
picking up  
all my dirt  
like Mike  
Varbel picks  
up a forced  
fumble.  
I fix  
my bed  
to make it  
look neat.  
I tackle  
the floor  
with a  
vacuum  
to show  
her love.

*Damian Lee*

## A Special Woman

I respect you and love you with all of my heart  
Because you are an artist and I am your work of art

I have cherished you since day one  
Won't leave until your job is done

You raised me to be a man  
When I did wrong, you helped me understand

When I was lost, it was you I found  
And you stood by my side all year round

It's hard to stay mad at you  
Because you look so beautiful

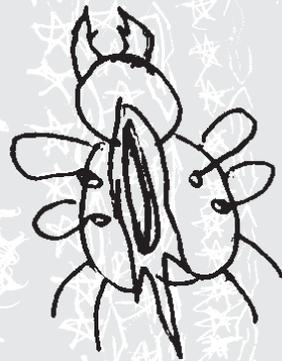
I'm so thankful and committed to being your son  
Forever and ever, my mother is number one

*Eric Quarles*

## You've Been There

You've been here for me all these years  
You are always there to wipe my tears  
You've been there when I called your name  
You have never hurt me or put me to shame  
I'm glad God put you here to show me the way  
I'm so glad you are here to stay  
You are my guide, you are my light  
I don't know what I would do if you weren't in my sight  
You were there when I was feeling down  
You were there to turn my frowns and sorrow around  
So thank you mommy for your tender love and care  
Because of that, you will always be there

*Danielle Blake*



## The Beautiful Woman

The beautiful woman on earth  
The one who brought me on this earth  
She's the best  
She's the one who filled my heart with true love  
She's the best  
She is a pure goddess  
She's the most loyal person you'd ever find  
So I wrote this to the true woman in my life  
My mother

*Jannett McKoy*

## Who Am I?

I am a scared girl  
Trying to build a better future with my sister  
I am a Queen who worships God  
I am a poor girl trying to fulfill my acting career  
I am a light-skinned girl  
Who is always being called white  
But I am actually a black queen  
Mixed with a lot of ethnicities  
I am a girl who is scared  
To live because I am scared  
Of getting shot  
I am a lonely girl  
Whose dreams might not come  
Until I turn 40 years old  
I am a loving girl  
Who shows love to any person  
Who shows me love  
I am a ghetto girl  
Who lives around fights  
Who lives around drug dealers  
Who lives around dope fiends  
Who lives around people who have sex for money  
People who shoot at their own family  
I am a girl who has family and friends fighting  
A black-on-black crime  
Whose fight aids it and they don't even know it  
I am a girl whose dreams have yet to be answered

*Manaiza Kelley*

*l-r: Shannon Allen, Annice Ludd*



This is how I show love,  
I show love by

On the desk  
banging, banging, banging  
love  
you will hear from  
the banging

I feel you son

You like my sister  
laughing when I am  
in trouble, she would  
get in my face  
and laugh.

But that's how we show love.

*Ashley Stevenson*



## A Dream

Unity, togetherness  
Is what I wish upon

A peaceful world  
Why can't we live in one?

Gentle mother sleeping on air,  
In her room  
Yes, she's there

Without one eye open  
She sleeps among the stars

In an evil world  
This is what she calls home

But now she wakes up  
One eye at a time  
After dreaming about the universe  
Then spreads her arms and starts to fly

But as mother seems to soon notice  
Her life is a dream

*Kiera Butler*

## Girls

Most people think that girls were put on this earth for entertainment and pleasure  
But as young men and boys, we should know better  
On how to judge a girl by just the way she looks  
By not believing what we see on TV, pictures or in books  
At times we may neglect them, abuse and control  
But we don't know what they can do to make our minds and intelligence unfold

*Marcus Johnson*

~~A shattered life has  
The new and old Axis death and sick men  
Yesterday's soldiers become today's fishes~~

## Sleep

Sleeping so beautifully  
She looks so peaceful  
Dreaming upon the universe  
Like she was put to sleep by a curse  
As she's dreaming of her mother  
She looked so stiff as her brother  
All of a sudden  
She dreams she's in a jungle  
So scared she curled in a bundle  
Then she closed her eyes and counted to ten  
Then she felt a great wind  
It was Hurricane Katrina  
And the ground got wrinkled  
Then she woke up at home  
But still thinking of people in the superdome

*Jasper Hicks*

## My Pain

My rage, my pain  
My loss, my gain  
The shirts I've stained  
People I've blamed  
The people that bled  
The blood, sweat, and tears they've shed  
Doesn't mean anything—our lives are almost dead  
From the 911 "accidents"  
To the wars in Iraq  
And the tragic losses by "The Man"  
To the kids in the ghetto having problems  
To the grown-ups still trying to solve them  
My struggles, my pain  
Something I want to lose, but always going to gain

*Eric Quarles*

## Wisdom

I know I am a child  
I don't know if I will become an adult  
I thought I knew what I was doing with my life  
I didn't think I knew what my life was doing with me  
I understand how to live my life  
I didn't understand how to let my life live me  
I know the meaning of life  
I didn't know life knew the meaning of me

*Lawrence Carter*

## Dreaming

Beautifully sleeping at home  
Dreaming about unity with her mother  
In a peaceful world with no violence  
And the universe is an island  
With a gentle breeze every now and then  
Then she says to her mother how lovely she looks  
Wishing that she would not wake up  
Then the alarm comes on when she opens her eyes  
And starts crying

*Jannett McKoy*

*Shaiski Johnson*



## Wake up

Peaceful, lovely  
Caring about the world  
Gentle, dreaming  
Always in a daze  
Helping, hoping, caring about me  
Never a beautiful universe  
Surfing in itself  
Sleeping nervous  
Scared of what you can be  
Hoping the next day  
You wake up to see

*Brittany Johnson*



## Untitled

I like fall

It's the best  
You get to go outside with a tank top  
No vest  
You wake up, feel the breeze  
And then the fresh air  
Not hot and stuffy  
You get to smell  
The good smell  
Of pancakes, eggs, bacon, sausages, grits  
...all that good stuff  
But one thing  
All this good stuff  
Happens in North Carolina,  
Not in D.C.  
Where you wake up to a bowl of cereal  
That's not good for you

*Isaiah Jackson*



## Summertime

Summer is cool  
You go places like ESPN Zone  
Not just sitting at home  
Watching the kids ride their bikes all day long  
Or listening to a famous singer sing a song  
Well, you could do this everyday  
After doing your chores and homework, you go out and play  
Just living the life

*Jaquan Footman*

## My Life

My life is like a movie  
People always acting in it  
Faking it  
My life is like football games  
Me always running yards  
My life is like popcorn  
People always popping up  
My life is like a baseball game  
I'm always running home  
My life is like school  
I'm always working  
My life is like a clock  
I'm always ticking  
My life is like a jam  
It's hard to get through

*Antonio Alston*

## Show Love

You can show someone  
love by giving them  
a card or writing them  
a letter. That's how much  
you love them or you  
can give them same  
flowers if they are  
Sade or they are not  
feeling good on a bad day.

*Lance Favors*

## Monae's Day

Crescent moon  
shining down  
on the Anacostia River

Report card  
being naughty  
but flowing like ocean waves

Suspension  
from the freedom  
while being on that  
rugged old plantation

Fingertips  
grow like trees  
mind gleaming like the sun

Monday  
classroom's lily blooms  
and blossoms like  
children and flowers.

*Monae Smith*

## Untitled

I am like the sky  
I get mad  
I am like thunder  
And strike people like lightning  
I am like a flood  
Just running through people  
Like a mad person  
I am like a mother bird  
Who attacks people when they mess with her family  
I am like a computer  
That breaks down a lot  
And it takes a long time to recover

*Martha Hardman*

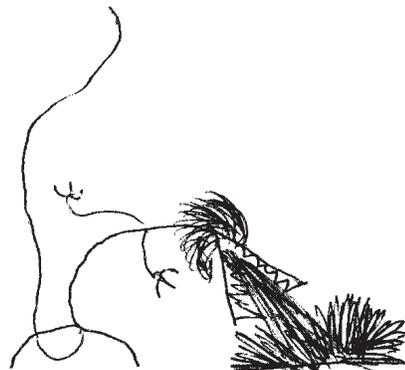
*Luqman Abdullah*



## I Am

I am a child of God  
I am a scholar  
I am the first round draft pick  
I am the positive hurricane  
I am a dreamer  
I am the impact pf the future  
I am the flesh and bones  
I am the diagram of life  
I am the prospect of college

*Curtis Canty*



## Pleading Triumph

Pleading and pouring out my soul  
complicated, filled with triumph  
living with a splintered memory  
feeling an abyss  
from this gravitational pull  
feeling driven to destruction  
trying to comprehend  
instead of mourning  
waiting for my  
worsipped reign's arrival  
trying to be the evening star  
instead of tarnishing  
a promiscuous life  
giving a celestial body, filled  
with illusions and in disguise  
looking at the scarlet sun  
trying not to manipulate  
my inner self  
recapturing dreams.

*Monae Smith*

## My life is like

My life is like a game  
All types of games  
My life is like San Andreas,  
Because people get shot everyday  
Because people look like someone  
Or guess who is who  
Or people getting killed  
Because they are going in the wrong direction  
At the wrong time  
Like the game that is too fast  
But for real,  
I don't know what my life is like  
My life is like it is make-believe

*Quintin Pimble*

## Untitled

We are on a journey to a place  
Where they are having dead basketball courts  
And where the drug dealer passes weed hand-to-hand  
They think they aren't getting caught  
But all they have to do is sit and think  
Why the court houses,  
The policemen,  
The whole legal justice system  
That is supposed to be on your side  
But at the same time  
The same people who are helping you  
Are making more jail houses than schools,  
Placing more drugs in the streets  
Why, I say,  
Are we helping them kill us?  
We are helping them place us in jail  
Then maybe we are niggas  
No!  
I am no nigga  
I am a smart, loving, colored man  
Who will make it

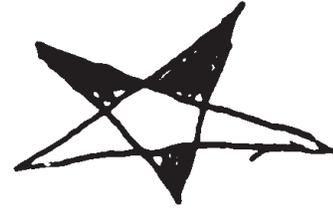
*Demarco Singleton*



## Who I Am

I'm not a nigga  
I don't pull triggas  
I want to be a millionaire and count figures  
Benjamins, of course  
Never will I get stopped by force  
Maybe by brain  
Because I'm trying to be like Fat Joe and make it rain  
Racist cops  
Coming up with plots  
To stop the black Man  
Who thinks that life is about keeping a gun in your hand  
So don't call me a nigga to try to put me down  
Because you're wasting your time  
When you look like a clown

*Eric Quarles*



## My day in North Carolina

In North Carolina  
We played basketball  
We listened to rap music  
You can feel the breeze  
Coming through the air  
As the sun sets and rises  
We ride,  
Look for something to do,  
Then we stop, drop, and roll to the fire

*Richard Jackson*

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