



HARTWORKS

Summer 2002 • \$1



Featuring An Excerpt From
"Medea 2K2: Ghetto Fab"

The Charles Hart Middle School Literary Magazine



Delonte Williams studies his script

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.

Our final issue of the school year features highlights from “Medea 2K2: Ghetto Fab,” our students’ original adaptation of the classic play by Euripides. We also close the year with an unprecedented array of awards and achievements: De’Angelo Reed won first place for youth poetry in the Larry Neal Awards; Charniece Brooks and Sade Rauch took first place for seventh and eighth grades respectively in the Junior League Student Poetry Contest; Nadaisha Martin, Timothy Miller, and Jessica Young won the Parkmont Poetry Contest; and Ashlee Owens will have her poem “What are you about?” published in the anthology *Mischief, Caprice, and Other Poetic Strategies* by Red Hen Press. Ashlee’s poem appears for the first time in this issue of *hArtworks*. Congratulations to all our contest winners, and to all the hundreds of other students who have made great strides in their creative efforts this year.

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 Commonweal Foundation, The D.C. Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation, Borders Books and Music, Free Hand Press, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Arena Stage, the Shakespeare Theatre, Kathleen Huston and McGuire Associates, our friends at Popeye’s on Malcolm X Avenue, Ruth Dickey, Barb Gomperts, Tom Grey, Bernie Horn, David Klevan, Leonard Lucchi, 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 Fergusson, Ms. Shirley Grooms, Ms. Carolyn Jackson, Ms. Mary Johnson, Ms. Irma Morgan, and Ms. Ethel Rivers; Ms. Eleanor Elie, Ms. McKinney, and Ms. Maevern Williams.

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I See

I see beautiful babies being born
in cold streets where gangs shoot their enemies.
I see walls with names of those who've died,
who are special like the first snowflake in the sky.
I see little boys and girls playing in the streets:
double dutch, taps, claps, and fast beats
in which boys rap about their ghetto today.
I see weeds grow where the most beautiful flowers should be.
I see lights on at 1:30 in the morning
where brothers and sisters study to get out of that ghetto,
to become someone different
from those who scream with no common sense.
But it's where everyone begins:
It's where Dr. Martin Luther King had his first dream.
It's where Rosa Parks first debated an issue.
It's where Jesse Owens won his first race with his friends.
The ghetto isn't all bad, where whites say fire in hell begins.
It's where blacks first started to get themselves
ready to be successful, which our children will be today.

Kiona Bean

"↓"

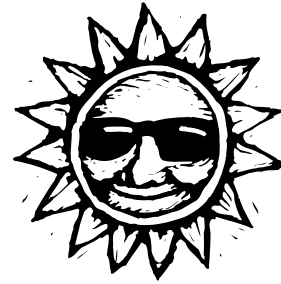
Today the sun is above us like a cloud on a winter day.
The January wind is blistering cold,
but refreshing like brushing your teeth in the shower.
I get out as quick as a bolt of lightning
striking when you're gone.
Winter trees look like California trees in Alaska
where I tan on a summer day on the coldest beach
and get so angry I'm like hurricane Juliet
lashing across the coast, as I'm still tanning.
And then I can be as nice as a quietly chirping bird.

Terrance West

Reflection Get Out of the Mirror

The mirror is an entrance to another world.
7 years of bad luck, please don't break.
I reach into the mirror, don't stroke my hand,
don't smell my scent, but listen to what
I'm tellin' you.
Reflection is like a kick in the rear
telling me what I ought to be.
In Washington, DC in my room
things are all changing, no they're staying the same.
Mother invites me into the kitchen
with all the pots and pans and forks and spoons.
Go away. I see that reflection that won't leave.
The dirty mean sponge wipes so I can see even more.
At first I was as happy as World War Two.
I was swimming in my sink, and then drowned.
Diva, don't worry about this crazy person.
I thought everything was ok, but...it is.
I'll walk on the sky to meet the clouds.
I think I have to live with this forever.
Jam apple (How are you doing).
I'm doing worse, but thanks for asking.
The reflection does everything I do.
Stop.
Stop arguing, it's me.

Britnee Jenkins



The Ghetto

Now shall I praise the cities,
those long-surviving,
still holding on to their last breath.
See, the ghetto is like a dark blue coat,
it has a face which could kill.
See, the ghetto is powerful.
I sit and look out upon all the sorrows
of the ghetto, all the meanness and shame,
all that's forgotten. The ghetto comes over me
like a raincoat when it rains,
so wet and so heavy.
I can't stand the ghetto,
but when the ghetto sky
smiles above me,
I start to think I love the ghetto.

Shawntice Patterson

This Grounded Thing

forget about “you’re in trouble”
or “when you come home you’re gonna get it”
forget about going to your room and no tv.

forget about no going outside
forget about no dessert cuz
you did something wrong and
you’re just not getting any.

forget about being grounded
because when you get off
punishment you are going
to do something wrong again.

don’t wanna go to my room.
don’t wanna have no spinach instead of dessert.
don’t wanna wash the wall for punishment.
just wanna be like every kid

and be able to go outside.

Robert Robinson

Devil in Disguise

There’s a man over there
He’s wearing all black
He’s looking for a victim
He’s looking like a cat

There’s a man over there
He’s wearing all red
He’s looking for someone
Probably in bed

There’s a man over there
He’s trying to look wise
He looks real familiar
He’s the devil in disguise

Ramon Powell

The Ghetto's Not a Beautiful Place

The ghetto’s not a beautiful place,
not no hate because we’re the same race
having fun, ripping and running
without pointing a gun,
showing everybody the love that we have
without anyone getting stabbed.
The ghetto’s not a beautiful place
even though we’re the same race.

Lorraine Smith

Parched Throat

My throat is parched.
I am unable to taste the countless victories
I could have if I would just try to do my best.
I am tasteless towards my boundaries.
I sometimes go too far and sometimes
I don't go far enough. Sometimes
I am tasteful of the wrong compliments
instead of the right ones. I feed
off people's thoughts of me
instead of my thoughts of myself.
I am unable to taste the sweetness of my blessings
for I am too stubborn to give thanks
for all my accomplishments.
I don't like the taste of the sour cuts and bruises
of my unhappy moments and sorrowful failures.
I can't stand the bitter taste of hunger
and the dry taste of heat,
but I can stand the saltless taste of riding my bike
and kissing the air with my face
and brushing it away with my braids.
I am tasteful of my sky blue sunglasses
and my worn out hat.
I like the taste of my white Keds and my big earrings.
Suddenly my throat is too parched.
I get a cool glass of encouragement
and I start to taste things differently.
Somehow now I love me
and nothing's like it used to be.
I can taste the compliments, the virtues, my blessings,
and chew my thanks. I can swallow my doubts
and digest my goals. I can eat my readiness
and I can suck on my lollipop of joy,
be hypnotized by my ice pop of happiness
for my throat is no longer parched.

Malaika Howard



l-r Terrell Hill, Amani Al-Fatah

Old Man Going

Old man going down the street
begging for change.
Old man going to get lost in the jungle
'cause he's trying to find a bite to eat.
He's going to the bank to rob it,
but he lost his mind.
The old man going doesn't know what to say
because he's lost.

Consella Thompson

Pain and Fear

Get ready with noise from the team,
jokes and laughs, full of excitement,
time to suit up.
There's only sounds of locks poppin' lockers open.
Hoping, praying the team will win.
Feels like a dream controlling my mind
walking out the locker-room with no fear in my heart.
Time for prayer with the coach and the team,
Hart Jets on 3, and the team screams.

Benjamin Wiggins

My Mother Lives in the Ghetto

She would sit on the porch
while the Earth surrounded her
full of love. It's a beautiful place
to be born into, she lived there
for a long time, but sometimes
it was a face which darkness could kill.

Lequanda Hunneycut

Rainbirds

Like a colorful array in the rainforest of the Amazon
the rainbirds have come to sing.
Like a rainbow when the rain falls,
these birds glitter like diamonds.
Like the sun reflecting off the surface of the ocean
the colors instantly blind you.
With sparkling colors like shining stars,
these birds are magnificent and beautiful,
like nothing you've ever seen,
these marvelous birds are yet to be discovered.

Josimar Smith

The Man's Day

The man was angry
but it did not seem like it
because he was voiceless.

No matter where the man goes
you always can tell he's leaving
because you see his shadows.

There was nothing you could do
that the man would not laugh at.
The man thought everyone had wooden skin.

The man finally realized that it was time to go,
so he put everything away
and went to sleep.

Chanel Cason



Parkmont Poetry Contest winner Jessica Young

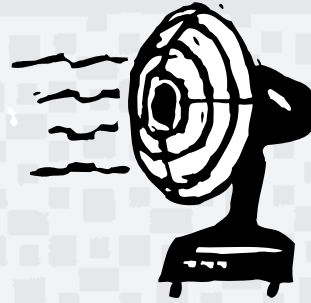
Dear Mother

Yes, this letter is to you,
where are you now?
I don't know, but I'll still pray
and wish you were by my side.
Sometimes I even cry
because of the things I hear.
You were in and out of my life since I was 2.
I don't want to forget about you,
so I'll just stay here and cry
because that's all I can do, that's all that's left,
That one picture you gave me
I talk to. Maybe I see you in me
but then again, I hate myself for looking like you
and because you helped bring a child into the world
that you didn't want
and you wonder if I still love you.
Well, yes.

Claudia Butler

Daytime Blues

Listen to the concrete, hot
like the flames of hell.
Speak to the trees of shade.
Do you see the water that runs dry?
Smell the sweat of a human being?
As the heated breeze touches your skin,
there's no relief.
I wish to taste a cool ice cream treat.
Yup. This is the Daytime Blues to me.
The overwhelmingness of the sound
of the thundercloud is spotted up above.
Trisha Ann Braxton went to her house in Manhattan
and didn't come back until the wintertime.
Well, not really, it was just early fall.
This man and woman was fighting about
"What's Best For the Child."
"Kill" I couldn't tell whether the child
was really a child or not.
He said that women were too sensitive
and should be ruled by a man's hand,
but I know that it's the Daytime Blues that was talkin'.
I've always heard what you see is what you get,
but what if I see grey elephants
and really get black?
The sweet ice cream of thoughts



made some smile and others frown with pain.
Throughout the day,
I heard cats bark and dogs go oink, oink.
Just as the heat was getting too hot to stand,
someone walked up to unzip the dark grey clouds.
Terrell, Cookie, T.J., whatever
went outside to play in this wonderful weather.
The Daytime Blues?
Is it a thing of the past?
As I recall on the calendar next door,
it's May 22, 2004.
It's dark as day now
and the brightest thing out there
is the blackest clay.
"Mi ha" said my colorfully dressed friend.
"Here I come again" said the sun,
and poof, it was done again.
My Daytime Blues that started as hell
ends with a cool breeze calming, soothing,
and it's no longer the Daytime Blues that's ruling me.

Terrell Hill

Shake Them Off Me

The January wind is as vicious as a sky full of needles
picking at your skin underneath the flesh of a hard bone.
Standing for myself, not taking no stuff from no one.
Saying petty stuff that irks my nerves,
but you know what? Shake them haters off.
Shake them off me. Just like a wet dog
shakes water off, and keeps on going,
if another obstacle jumps in your way,
you just do the same.

Indiria Hill

Eternal Life

Leaves fall like money from paradise.
She is there, smelling like blue rain.
The freezing wind freezes my soul.
Deep in the forest there is a spirit.
A rooster blows a rhyme in my ear
and it tickles. Dark air
feels like a diamond full of cherry swirls.
Money comes like falling leaves from paradise.
Birds chirp from every window in the cabin,
and the wind blows memories of happiness.
Most people be set tripping
because they are giant and so loony,
but someday you shall come out of the star
to spring out in the air for who you are.
The red eyes of the demon broke the vase.
We were bored like swimming pool waves,
but don't play that game if you shall have eternal life.

Richard Williams



My Lost Father

You left me on day one
now my teenage years had just begun
I ask about you all the time
my mother don't even pay me no mind
as I wish the day would come
when me and you can come together as one
If you don't know, I'm telling you now
I can't wait for the day that you are found
and when we meet, we will be the best of friends.
I hope this memory will never end.
The words I am writing I want to say
that in my heart you will stay.

Donetta Brown

No More No One

No knowing when your time will come
Only if I could just take one more breath
Opposite of up is the way I feel
Needing time to talk to a real friend
Empty inside and out

Just always thinking about negative things,
But no more.
It is time to give all I have to my actions.
I'm always falling into that trap
Just like a little creature,
But no more.
If I want to be successful
I have to let go of all those things trying to pull me in.
No more.
When you see me after school and we might fight,
Instead I'll say no.
You thought you had something going,
But no more.
I'm going to change for the Lord.

Shenika Canada

It Was Before

but it is no longer
it was once populated
with adults, children, and pets
but now that everyone has moved
that circle is no longer

it is now a barren wasteland near extinction,
worthless and empty
what's left is struggling and hanging on.

Andrew Holmes

I Don't Wanna Grow Up

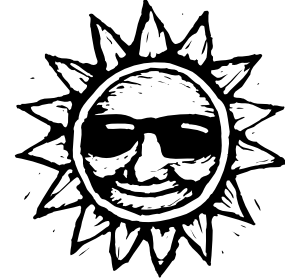
I don't wanna grow up
I wanna stay a child
play with my friends
be able to run wild
eat candy all day long
watch television
listen to my favorite song
think of Bow Wow
and Ja Rule
sleep all day
not wanting to go to school
I don't want to work
I want to play play play
then realizing
I'll have to grow up someday

Tiara Vest

The Two Personalities of the Ghetto

The first personality is very bad
where people go around being mad
where people aren't nice but very vile
and it's not even good while being a child.
You can't go a day without running for your life.
People don't talk it out, they just grab a knife.
The second personality is better than the first.
This one's good, but the other one's worse.

Tiara Vest



Untitled

I thank God for being there when my family is not there to comfort me.
I thank God for being supportive to me and others.
I thank God for giving me shelter and clothes on my body.
I thank God for helping me get through situations in life.
I thank you God for having rainy days so that you can wash the storms away.

Whitney Starr

My Heart Is Made Up of a Sponge and a Stone

My heart is like a hard rock stone.
It's not easily broken,
but if you hit hard enough,
shattered it will be.
Like a crib,
what must come in must come out,
that's what my heart is all about.
If shattered, like a sponge
it sucks it up
and goes on.

Virginia Rodgers-Owens

Cold, Hot, Cool

It was something I've never seen.
I was as cold as an AC on steroids,
like a freezing pool in wintertime,
and the wind was as loud
as a whistle through a horn.

Then like a slithering snake,
a thought crept into my mind.
It was a hot summer's day
with the sun above me like sand.
I was sipping on a drink
that was refreshing as a house so cold
you'd have to open the fridge for heat.

Then I woke as mad as Mike Tyson.
I was so heated up
even firefighters couldn't do anything,
but then I realized life is like a box of chocolate:
sometimes you wanna just eat it all up,
so I chilled in my house,
because like Frosted Flakes, they're great.

Wesley Bullock

Easy Street

Well Mom
life ain't been no easy street
there have been plenty of forks in the road
backed-up traffic
cluttered up highways
streets with jaywalkers
and people trying to get killed.
There are places where the cars are all broke down.
So listen closely when I say
I will get my act together
because life for us
ain't been no easy street.

Nakeisha Winkfield

It Is No Longer

It is no longer me and you
what we had is through
our love for each other was true
you turned my bad day to new

I thought our love for each other was real
you could've told me what was the deal
or at least how do you feel
now I'm so angry I could kill

I thought that you were faithful
but at the end you were hateful
and that's just because you were being ungrateful

Tamisha Paige

Gone

As quick as a thief that has just stolen, you were gone.
Out in the misty blue I could have sworn I saw you.
Hidden behind a secret wall.
I promise myself I'll find you, once and for all.
The haunted house up on the hill
The weary ghost trying to seek a soul
My bones quiver and tremble with fear
The chill of the night
The bones on the ground
All make me stop and think you are still gone.

Christina Ashford

No More

The world has enough, we need no more,
not another corner liquor store.

The storms are worse, I wish they'd stop,
no more rainy days, I've had a lot.

The thought of life ending seemed so unfair,
it was all like a glimpse, glance, and glare.

Perhaps now I know how to live a better life,
so I can live to make kids and have a wife.

I don't need no more pain, I've suffered enough,
these times through my life were all so tough.

So many things in life but yet I'm so young.
Maybe I need more than I thought I could be, living life wrong.

Wesley Bullock



Amani Al-Fatah puts finishing touches on her script

Bad Things Come To Bad People

“Better be safe than unprotected”

my mom told me.

“When you lie down with dogs
you might not wake up.”

I didn't listen.

She constantly warns me.

I don't listen.

She tells me when the blind lead the blind
you end up dead, so don't let friends
lead you to the wrong places.

I didn't listen.

She said “Where there's smoke,
there's danger, so don't go near.
When you see trouble don't go and get caught up.”

I didn't listen.

I told her “No news is good news
when it's coming from you”
and she slapped me.

I still didn't listen.

She finally said
“Bad things come to disobedient children
and you'll get what you deserve.”

I didn't listen,
but one day I will
and I won't bite the hand that tempts me.

Nakeisha Winkfield

It's Hard

It's hard
to let you go
but I have to
you were sick
had a lot of surgery
always had a smile
never was mean
not to anyone
everybody misses
you
I do not know what to say
but help me get on with the day
I want to cry
but I can't anymore
so just bless your mother
and your brothers and sisters
because they love you
they won't forget about you
I know I won't
because
when I look at your daughter
I see you
love you Stacey

Johnathan Grady

Street Scene

Gangs cut down streetlamps with chainsaws,
leaving rotting fishbones in an alley trashcan,
cutting paper with scissors and arteries with knives,
visiting the graveyard for a drawing on a chalkboard.

A hurricane flies by while teens are playing basketball,
careful of the time of action like trapeze artists.
Lightning bugs fly through the city
as the computer programs them to work.

A man closes the window's curtains,
cutting off the solar energy needed for the plant.
Kids' eyes are stapled to the TV, watching every cartoon.

Andrew Holmes

DC Life

When I look out the window
it's sad, scary, and frightening.
You hear gunshots 24-7
and police sirens every which way.
Every time you look at the news
you hear something bad.
You got people on the corner selling or gambling,
or driving an SUV.
People robbing stores, so people,
when you go outside you better be ready to run.
People think they got it good
until they see parents doing drugs in front of their kids.
When you look, you might see people running from the cops,
killing somebody, or jumping somebody.
People think it's all good
until they come to the streets of DC.
That's all from me.

Johnathan Grady



l-r Jessica Young, Delonte Williams, Claudia Butler

The Bus Driver

The bus driver tore my ticket
I really don't know why.
Wait a minute,
could this be the same driver
that asked my girlfriend for her number?
I guess he didn't think we were together,
but I bawled him out real bad.
Besides, he was too old for her.

James Tucker

Angels *dedicated to 4 special people*

When I was alone
with no one to hold,
angels surrounded me.
When the lights were out
and the night was dusk,
angels surrounded me.
When I was scared
and couldn't go to bed,
angels surrounded me.
When I felt secluded
but none of my friends knew it,
angels surrounded me.
When I was confused
not knowing what to do,
and hurt,
angels surrounded me.
When I needed someone to talk to,
angels surrounded me.
When I wasn't feeling too good
angels surrounded me.
And when I leave
these angels will surround me.
I love you guys.

Gloria Dease

Crying Out

Mom, I wish you could understand
the things we go through.
You tell me to stay a child as long as I can
but I don't feel the same.
Mom, I love you and don't want
you to go through hurt and pain,
but don't you understand,
life's not easy for me,
as it isn't for you.
At times I think
it's more
but we suffer together.
I wish I was an adult,
but I still want to be
your baby,
going through the tough
like a family.

Gloria Dease

Yes, There Is One Thing Braver Than All Flowers

The people of the United States of the World
are braver than flowers
because we can fight our enemies
and we stand for our rights.

That's why, yes, there is one thing
braver than all flowers.

Lilly Brown

Self-Portrait

Her mind is spinning like a disco ball
until it stops and drops
like something falling into a bottomless pit.
Things are confusing
like playing double-dutch with no rope
until there seems to be a problem
like Dad taking ballet lessons.
He is graceful like a leaf swirling in the wind
and she is happy like the sunshine,
happy that the darkness is gone.

Kiara Johnson

My Daddy's Tattoo

My daddy's tattoo
is permanent
like how you feel
when your best friend lies to you
it's not one that you can see
but one you can feel
mentally and emotionally

Where there is smoke there is a crackhouse
Stay away from it
I try to explain
so you see this tattoo sticks all by itself
striking while the clock ticks

I wait to see what's next
No news is awful good but I still hear nothing
There is no time like quality time
but I never feel it
This town ain't big enough for the both of us
but we have to get along.

Gloria Dease



DeAngelo Thomas as Medea's son, Hakeem

Pray to the Lord

I find you Lord in all things
Now I can see you
At first I was doing my thing
Now you live inside of me

You show me the right thing to do
You tell me what to do
You shall show me the way
You teach me

I love you
You love me
I am one of your kids

Darius Douglas

Steel Doors of Prison

You should think about what you do
because if you do something wrong
and you're not thinking
you know you are going to jail for something
maybe something really stupid
so you need to think
because once you get behind the steel doors of prison
you can't get out
no matter how much you cry
or even think you're going to die
even if you cry for your mom
you still can't get out
from the steel doors of prison.

Deonti Jones

One Side of the World

The world is beautiful
when you see the rainbow
after it rains,
how the trees look in the fall,
or the season when
everyone starts to play ball.

Andre Lee

In These Times

In these times in my life I can do nothing but cry.
My memories of my mother are built on nothing but lies.
In these times in my life, nothing is going right.
How can a mother give up her kids without a fight?
She never called, she didn't write.
My step-mom used to say "You'll see the light"
and she was right.

For in these times in my life, I can do nothing but smile.
I put all those memories in a great big pile.
In these times, everything's going right
so now maybe I can sleep at night.
No more crying
no more lying
in these times.

Tanya Mizelle

Hates

forget about all the haters
cuz all they want to do is hate

that's all they do
if you wear something
do something
be with someone
if you don't do anything

they hate
and all they do is hate

the people that hate where they at
what are they driving
what are they wearing
how much money do they have
what do they look like

haters
haters
haters don't go anywhere
or do anything.

Darius Douglas



l-r Reginald Williams, James Saunders, DeAngelo Thomas

Fear Is a Man's Best Friend

Fear is a man's best friend.
Fear is what a man won't call a sin.
Fear is what a boy needs to face
to become a man and stop playing in the sand.

Stephanie Smith

This and This and This

I feel like it's me against the world
It's as if I'm holding the weight of the world on my shoulders
It's heavy bad times
I choose to never give up, even if my collarbones are crushed
I won't budge
I'm a soldier
Trials, tribulations, strife, so much on one person.
I am only one man, how can I survive?
How can I make it?
How will I succeed?
When this and this and this is on my shoulders all the time.

Wayne Nesbit

This Banana Thing

Everyone like bananas
I don't know why
but I don't like bananas.

Some might be nice
but other are not
so I still don't like them.

Why can't everybody eat oranges or water-
melon?
They're good for you,
but they have to choose bananas.

Maybe bananas are good for you
and maybe I should eat them,
but no, no way.

Jasmine Jordan

The Dark

The dark is a very scary place
you can't even see your face.
It's so dark it's like you're in a dungeon.
When you turn the lights out
you will be scared to death
and you know that rats, bats and roaches
are running in the dark.
When the lights blow out,
you're just stuck there in the dark.

Cornell Lee

The Eagle Head

One day, among all the other things,
I only noticed this one thing: a bird
unlike all the rest.
Its feathers were spinned with gold
and as it flew, I watched it leave
and then I followed it into the rich green forest.
I stopped to tie my shoe and as I lifted my head
I began to be lifted into the sky
not thinking where to go
but just to follow the eagle head.

Joseph Hudson

Girls at Twelve

Girls at twelve, becoming pre-teens
they start to develop
the nastiest attitude you have ever seen.
Think they cute, think they divas
and when someone says they're not
they say "You ain't either."

They look in the mirror,
see a mature face
still waiting for events to take place.
They walk around,
flaunting their stuff
like they got it like that, sho'nuff.

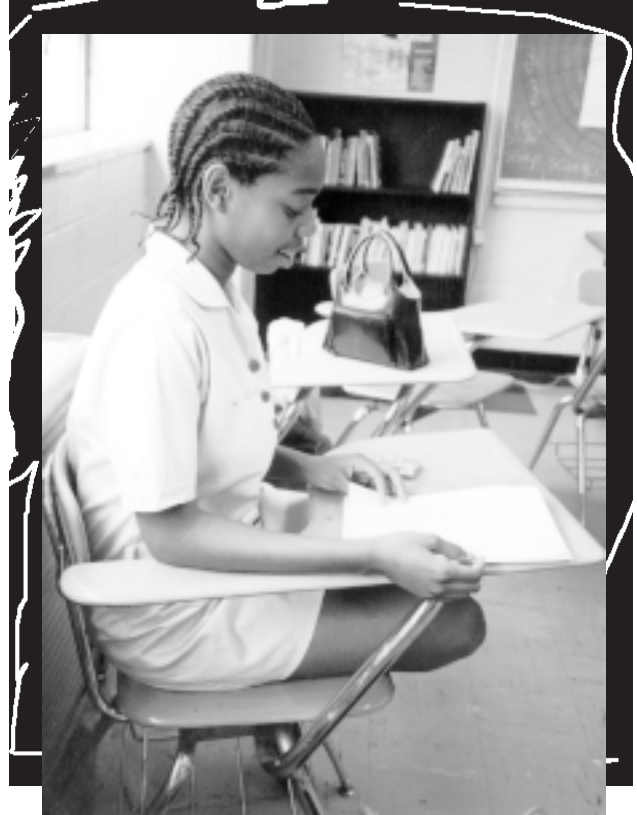
Even though they're twelve,
they still need to be held and babied.
Sometimes everyone needs love,
even when you are in your prime.

Charniece Brooks

Bullet

Bullet go bang bang
bullet go boom boom
bullet go pow
the bullet has to go now
what is the bullet?
why is it here?
the bullet goes a mile until
I can't understand how
or why

Rashae Workcuff



Chorus leader Terrell Hill

The Day Will Come

The day will come
When I will win a million dollars
I will be so happy
I will start buying things
I will get me a house, car
SUV, pets, shoes, clothes,
And buy my mom a big ole 57K diamond ring.

I will put some in the bank
For my kids and grandkids
I will give my little sister
All the dolls
And animals she wants to play with
I will get my brother
To go backstage to meet his role model Triple H

Darius Douglas



HARTWORKS features an excerpt from

l-r James Saunders as Jason and Terrell Hill as Glauce

MEDEA 2K2: GHETTO FAB

Every year, Drama Club members study a work of classical Greek drama—they read the play, discuss it, re-write it in their own words, and finally, perform it for their friends, families, and the community at large. This year, they present their original adaptation of Euripides' "Medea."

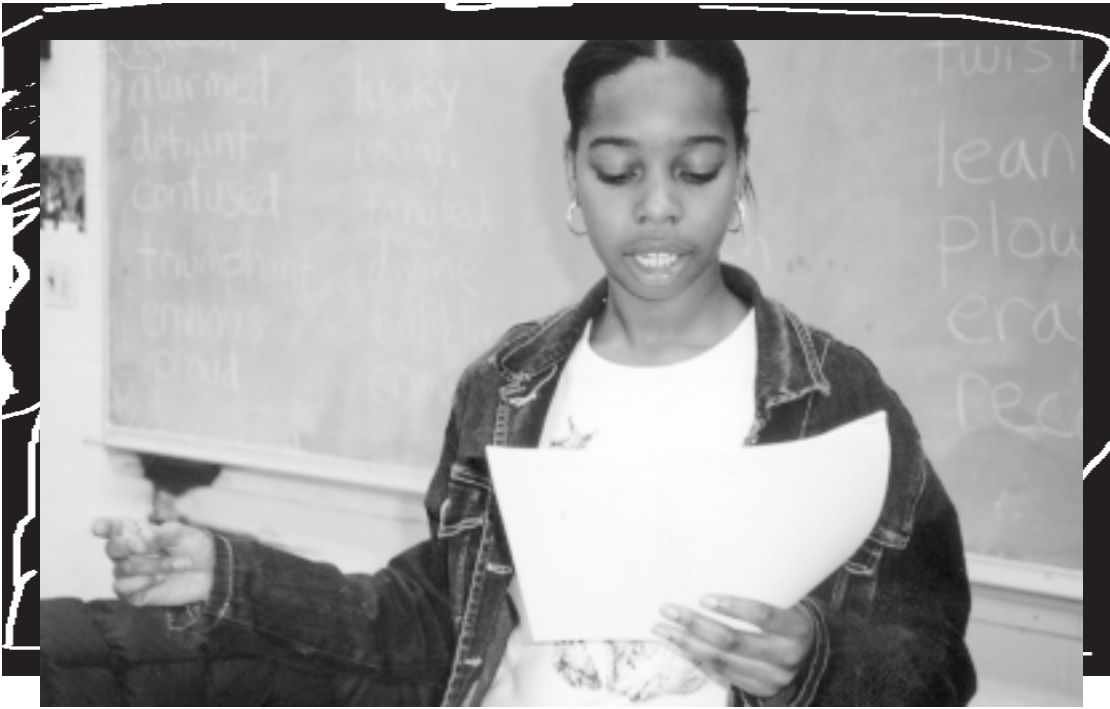
Ode I

If only Medea hadn't gone to Barefeet while
Jason was picking out his Kenneth Cole shoes
Then maybe they wouldn't have stumbled over each other
when the Chinese man was trying to find her size.
Now all that is left are broken hearts, torn shirts and pants
and bleeding coffins of 400 B.C.
Now I sit here, confused because Medea insists on
committing evil murders with intense agony
But I alone sit here and agree to her every word,
hoping and praying that she won't kill me next
The one thing that I wish wouldn't have happened was
that I was put in the middle of a bleeding broken stone on a sunny day
I, myself, fear Medea.
The fear I fear is like a crucifying death
Why can't they live a peaceful life like oak and ivy?
Don't he know love is the only thing that irons his shirt and puts on his tie
before a hard day's work?
Maybe I'll find out the madness of Medea through the firestones
that fuel all of her angers mixed with the fears.

Claudia Butler



l-r Jessica Young and Claudia Butler rehearse their lines



Terrell Hill learns her part



Ode II

Why, oh why cry?
I'm a man, I'm a soldier, and they cry very seldom.
So many things I regret.
When I talked to her face to face, I heard her voice
Accumulating a sound—a swift song of sorrow,
I can't believe I can speak about her with such pity.
She wants to be respected, but on the inside she's just hurt,
And I'm the cost, while she's just a statistic.
You must be a powerful man to make her feel so soft-shelled.
Do I really need Glauce—is this good for my children?
I don't believe I know what I believe in...
I'm a confused man
Lingering in a shattered past to predict a bleary future.
I found a woman's Achille's heel, then broke her heart.

James Saunders

Ode III

Break those luscious boards of love
Mortalize his body from my savage whips of pain
I've wasted valuable time living a lustful life
And every day I live with his curse
Why do things have to be this way?
Why couldn't these so-called gods that I worship warn me?
Why couldn't time stop?

I realize that this hate that I carry is unabolishable
Nothing matters anymore
Do I value my life?
Do I value my children?
I left a life of love for a life of translucent lust
I have this feeling of weakness,
and I just want to slit my wrists to end the pain
But I must get revenge first.

I admit that I can't even see 50% of myself, my curse, my children
Maybe I would have had a better life on my own
It's so crazy how it took me all these years to realize
that my man was a gold digger
I betrayed my father, mother, and brother in the worst way for nothing.
You know, my life seems just like a play
But doesn't everyone's?

James Saunders



l-r DeAngelo Thomas and Claudia Butler on stage

Ode IV

Things that smash the brain with hateful desires
And Army men from the FBI barge in and interrupt my cruel tensions.
The magnificence of unfolding a plan is thrilling to me.
Without vengeance, my life would be like spoiled cream pies
And old pizza that gives heartburn.
As of now, my life is fictitious,
Full of agony and revenge.
My enemies will feel the pain of a thousand knives
Poking endlessly until they perish,
To hell and burn till their bones melt.
What a world...(sigh)
I love revenge.

Claudia Butler

I'm Not Like Everybody Else

While people are wearing their fancy clothes,
I just sit there and watch.
Just because I don't have any
don't mean they can be blocked,
but all I have to say to them
is I'm not like everybody else.

Most girls wear their Keds and boots,
but it's just not for me.
I sit and wonder all the time,
but then they beg me please
to go with them to pick their clothes
and their diamond rings,
but all I have to say to them is
I'm not like everybody else.

Some girls think that I am jealous,
but I'm really not.
I just sit and wonder why,
but all they say is stop.
All I have to tell them
is I'm not like everybody else.

Dakia Koon

Accidents Happen

When you hit me with the bat
and I hit you with a fist,
it was an accident.

When you took my game home
and I took your CD home,
it was an accident.

When you bit me on my finger
because you thought it was chicken fingers,
it was an accident,

and when I bit your head
because I thought it was a candy apple,
it was an accident.

If you are thinking I did all that stuff
just to get you back, well you should have said
Sorry, oops, I sprayed it
when I was supposed to say it.

Kenneth Skinner

Feelings

I feel sorrow, the pain
the hurt, the anger—
When somebody gets
mad at me, those feelings
rush to me.

My dogs look hungry
I give both a bone.
When I feel lonely my
heart beats rapidly.

My shadow is warmed
by the music of the orchards.
My darkened soul
is awakened by the waves.

Vontia Perry

Real Love

You were there so was I
on the 4th of July I was chilling with Kool-Aid
listening to computer love
with my sweetheart.
The skies were filled with love.
I didn't know what to say or do,
but just to think of you.
I will staple you to my heart
so that you will never go away.
The thought of you makes my arteries explode.
You make me shake like a hurricane.
Open up your curtain so my sunshine can come in
because the love I have for you is true.

Tameka Scott



l-r James Saunders, Terrell Hill, Reginald Williams, and DeAngelo Thomas

Myself and I

I am everywhere, everyplace
my feet, my nose, my face.
I can't even bend down
and tie my shoelace
without seeing my awful face.
It's hard to get rid of this raggedy thing.
It's like a habit
you can't get rid of like
Whitney Houston, who likes to sing,
you can't stop her from doing her thing,
and it's ok to leave in a dream.

Joseph Hudson

Surviving

To survive, you are moving a lot:
reaching to live
stumbling to walk
striving to eat
striking animals
seeing your enemies
fleeing while you are chuckling
In the woods you hear
popping, humming, hopping,
singing and dancing.

Holding on to your uplifting dreams,
stepping into puddles of refreshing water,
looking into the future
to see what you're becoming,

Being able to survive
makes it seem hard to believe
but, believe it or not
I am surviving.

Chris'tina Allen

Daughter to Mother

(an answer to Langston Hughes)

Well, Ma, I'll tell you
Life for me ain't been no wallet full of money.
It had pennies in it,
And lint balls,
And papers torn up,
And streets filled with steam—
Hot.
But all along
I've been—jokin' around,
And fallin' down,
And broken-hearted,
And sometimes all alone
Where there ain't been no friends.
So Ma, don't you cry.
Don't turn your back on me
'Cause life for you been kinder hard.
Don't you worry now—
For I'll still be hoping,
I'll still be looking,
And life for me ain't been no wallet full of money.

Keyyonna Parker

I Hold a Longing to See Children

I hold a longing to see children,
See them playing,
Pushing and shoving

Moving and doing things
Playing in the dirt

Like singing ducks
Like dancing birds
Like worms squirming

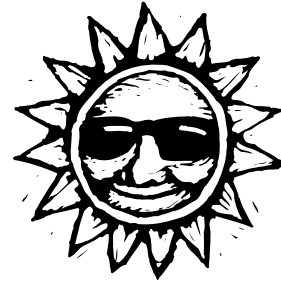
Waltzing, bopping
Doing the moonwalk

Good and bad in their souls

Moving and doing things
Tag and Duck Duck Goose

I hold a longing to see children.

Anthony Ford



To Remember

I remember all the stars in the sky.
I remember all the times I laughed.
I remember all the things that I used to say.

I remember how I used to laugh and play.
I remember how I used to holler and scream.
I remember how I used to bully and mess with people.

I remember. I remember.
Now everybody remember how good I am.

Janay Treadwell

Sometimes

Sometimes I am confused,
Sometimes I have
a deep secret I just can't tell
Sometimes I think all I need
is a tender, loving kiss to calm me down
Sometimes I am as loud
as my mother when she enters the room
Sometimes a thought creeps into my mind
like love at a cookout
Sometimes I play hide-and-go-seek
with the people who come in and out of my life
But all the time
I dream about peaceful things
and promises that I made.

Michelle Grooms

Poem

What I remember:

I remember when I used to swing
As a little girl,
When my mother used to give me curls,
I remember 7th grade,
When I used to learn and have fun and play.

What happens if I get something wrong?

Maybe I will just try again
Or stop and be mad at myself.
Maybe I'll cry
And never want to try again.

Things I forget:

I forget to do my chores,
Forget to close house doors,
Forget to mop room floors,
I forget what happened yesterday.

What I can't measure:

I can't measure the sun, wind, rain, sky,
Or my mind.

Sade Stephens

Memory

I cannot measure how long
my life will be
Which may not have no
mother, father, or future
ahead of it,
Which the day perhaps subdued
to become a candle
lit in the morning
and burned out at night.

Keyyonna Parker

Heaven

The voiceless laughter that has blown through my soul.
The cool breeze that makes my skin cold.
The wetly wooden doors that God closed there
Are now open for us to be God's shadows.
The angels flew away,
So that means something:
That God was ready for me to come
And stay in the House of the Lord
Which means Heaven.

Lia Anderson

Memory

I have to remember everything, every minute,
second of endless life—
Everything alive or deceased is locked away
in my memory book of my soul.
If I should get one rosebush wrong
my world will fall apart,
each piece dropping and falling into oblivion.
And as I stare down at my fallen world
I pick up one, just one, crumb of clay
that I will use to begin the creation
of my world of memories.
I was always quick to forget
hands, faces, or time
the tools used to make up every minute
of every hour of our lives.
Yet as these delicate tools work
day in and day out to create life,
we so carelessly take advantage of it
and take it away.
I cannot measure the amount of dishonesty,
distrust and disillusionment
that live in the minds, hearts and souls of our criminals,
each human in their own way
yet no one can touch them.

Hakeemat Ayodeji



Chorus member Sade Rauch (top) and Justin Grell as Creon (bottom)

The prize of the future

There I stand wetly, voiceless with laughter
away from broken shadows
here I am upraised with a loud roar.
Away I stand, far and wise
listening to the wind blow against my skin
see, stand, and listen. Shhhhh.....
As good as the Nobel Peace Prize can get,
I look into the future and interpret.
I stand watching a tree,
staring at wooden chips falling down.
I look at the mirror, faceless, lovingly, unforgiving
and see the nameless tomorrow, the day school ends.

Tyrone Horton

Music of Life

Have you ever listened to the rain?
or listened to the birds in the morning?
or wondered if the rainbow made music
what would it sound like?
or wondered if all the old chaff could talk
what would it say?
Have you wondered what it would be like
without birds singing in the morning?
or rain?
or no rainbow to wonder about?
or if there was no old chaff,
there would be no music of life?
Things that do not talk
say the most of all.

Cherrita Harris

I Learned

I learned that if my sisters are sad,
cheer them up.
I learned that if I want to get a manicure,
I need about fifty dollars.
I learned that I can't go to the one I love
when I have a problem.
I learned that if I give people respect,
they will give me respect back,
and I learned that
life isn't always as perfect as it seems.

Brittany Keys

The Basketball Championship

My memory of the basketball championship:
gospel music was playing,
the shoes were like homemade buttermilk squeaking,
the crowd was barefooted,
then the smell from the garden put me in the mountains
Swoosh!
I scored.
All I could hear was homecomings,
ice cream, then the memory went to sleep.
Scored.

Tracey Sauls

Things That Can Be Taken Can Also Be Given Back

I am in the room of sadness
I turn around to see a huge 1 on the wall
And it was a human being, standing still,
Sad and frightened—
It's a lady with a child in her arms, crying
I turn my head because I can't stand to see this,
Then see on the second wall it has a 2
That is in bubbles
I look down and see a wallet with a million dollars in it,
Then I go to the next wall and see a 3
That has colors
Yellow, blue, green, pink, and brown
And finally I sat down in the white chair and
Everything turned white
It shows a black 4
That has two feelings,
First it is sadness, then it is happiness
I see a lady on a wall
With a child in her arms, crying
I pick up the money, give it to her
She starts laughing and smiling
Thank you very much
As she replies, the fourth wall
Shows her with a home,
Everything that she once had,
And her life back, with bubbles
And beautiful flowers of all types,
And the colors, yellow, blue, green, pink, and brown
Yellow stands for the sun, shining bright,
Blue is the sky, green is for land that's your own,
Pink is for her cheeks, smiling so hard,
And brown for the house
That stands on top of the green,
Which is money.

Sabrina Branch



*Antonio Ashford gets advice from writer-in-residence
Andy Fogle*

Waterfall

I am slinking in like a waterfall,
I am falling into an erasing sky,
I smell and taste burnt food,
Will I see the unknown sight?
I feel the hurt of my father,
I hear the beat of my heart,
I smell the blue in the sky.
Confucius in China at McDonalds
Eating a fish sandwich.
There is no waterfall.
I don't know what a waterfall is.

Delonte Williams

Untitled

I HAVE to remember everything

Like my

aunt animals babies baths birds crying dying danger
dancing flying friends flowers family
grandma house hugs ice cream ice fights junior
jumping kisses missing music mother names

If I should get one wrong
I'd have to rebuild my memory
from A to Z, from birth to now.
This could take a while.

But I am always quick to forget

anger madness sadness envy quitting knitting
running panting ugliness

I HAVE to remember everything.
And Everything has to remember me.

Brittany Love

The Shadowy Figure

The velvet sacrifice blazes peacefully
like coffee cloud smoke.
like a squirming ocean fever
brought to you in part by decaying dirt
piercing through marble flesh.
We drink champagne to celebrate broken silence, Oh
I thought I saw eternity lingering somewhere. So
I calmly approached it to prevent danger
within the night.
They crept behind, but addressed their presence
And detained the action.
It's my problem, not yours
So leave me be.

Londell Swales

Shadows

Wooden shadows blown away.
Voiceless laughter, noble harbor, all are upraised
By love and joy.
Shadows scare; they don't care.
Your skin is clinging like a shadow.
The water's shadow goes around wetly
Not making a sound.
Every day, the shadows are blown away.

Elmer Toogood

A Baby Girl in Heaven

I picture a baby up in heaven
in a flowered dress
in heaven's garden
picking flowers
smiling
with dark, pretty eyes
and big puffy cheeks.
Don't picture her no other way.

Mikia Bassett



l-r Reginald Williams and James Saunders study the script

Myself

Myself, by myself in the world.
Alone like a bird, just wishing I can fly away.
Like a lion, not scared of anything,
I come home everyday, sometimes being bored.
It's just like dreams: I don't have to do anything,
Don't have to pay the bills, don't have to pay the rent.

Dominic Kingsbury

Here, but unable to answer

I'm here
restless, unable to smell the breeze,
thinking about when I wake up in the morning
eating danish cakes and drinking coffee.
He asks me again,
thinking that I'm going to answer.
I am unable to speak.
I would rather be in Paris
listening to French than to answer that question.
How come the last period of the day drags so slowly?
I have bigger and better things to do,
like go listen to French in Paris.

Monique Covington

The City

As I depart the land where I was born
I await the dawning of adventure.
It's like being exiled from my home.
I dream of the land that I will arrive on
and hope to listen to the song of the chestnut tree.
I hope for the many people at home
missing the individuality of the place.
People, they talk their minds and never lie.
That's the city I am going to.

Delonte Williams

Cold Heat...

goes out of my neck
in and out of comas
as my smiling frown stands, dancing the tango
on a flying foot
as I hop into sinking water
in the space of a squared circle
then I twirl, and floating
I sing to the diamondbacks and Sophocles,
write poetry for naked trees.

Delonte Williams

The way things are

The way things are with family
the mother and the son
in the room blowing their breath,
looking into the air in the sky in my little room.

They make a connection
together and together
Sing a song, waiting for
that one kiss to be close.

They talk about how God
has helped them through tough times.
That's how things are between them,
and that's how it will always be.

Antonio Ashford



Sade Rauch memorizes her lines

Cuatro Esquinas

Speaking in this thing they call a microphone
giving my pledge to a lonely painter
while rage darts bronze, came the legislature
I cry into the umbrella
while rain drops plop.
Listen to my Rockafella music:
As he talks of his criminal acts
I start listening to his song
The Rock is back.
Grief bewilders my untrained eye
while orange heat flames out of a lie.
I watch the crimson pour from my hand
and the orphan sorrow grieves heavily
while the headlight breaks into white dust.

Amani Al-Fatah

Eternal Flames

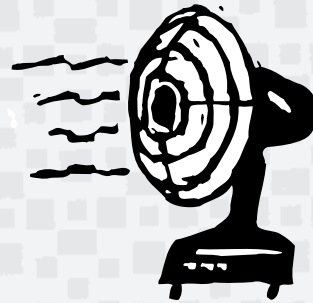
Smoke, flames, fire
my life is all of these things
done forever with my shadow as my friend.
First midnight slowly hangs the sky
while everyone is sleeping
I am in the darkness where
I can see light no more.
The steam burning my back
I never feel the cool breeze of winter
am never dazzled by the nice looking flower
Why eternal flames?

Jessica Young

Destined

Blessed be the one who saved a soul
that I thought I would never be able to compel
because I was conceived in a home that never knew the word *how*.
Times in times I've told your story
to the psychic nurse who said
he could help me, but really couldn't.
I arouse myself in pain.
I am devoted to a devoured husband
who can't bring me diamonds and pearls,
but brings me depression.
That's how I got the impression
that long grieving has its mortality
and being the snobbish brute I am
that is just my short mentality.
You say and say, but don't try to find a way
to heal this lesion of the man's lessons.
Don't write me after two years—
I've engraved the words *I love you* on the ring,
never had anyone to talk to except the child who is three months
and only says "mama" cause "dada" has been out of her question.
But if a verb is an action, than your action was a mistake.
I guess I only tried to help you overcome your obstacle
because I was human and destined.

Amani Al-Fatah



Signs

Red light, green light, yellow light
stop sign, all signs, stop, go, slow down there.
All signs, a look or wave of the hands
a smell, a way a person walks.

Things that are signs
don't have to be physical, it can be mental.
Things like a dream or figments of your imagination.
People can think of a dream as a sign from up above.
All signs.

Desmond Wright

A Dream's Dream

Rotten roads of courier plains
desert the islands of the brain
and as it floats from bed to bed
it sails through your endless head.

Through college goals and twining steps
every decision creates its path
ballet dances and fist fights
insinuate the cells to flow
and shocking secrets of the mind
follow through with the aftermath.
Trailing the thoughts of what will happen
it falls into a branch.

Challenged heads sail through the night,
while dreams are calculating all the nights
all the hours it lost its sleep,
a dream's dream never ends.

Amani Al-Fatah

If you need a reason

If you need a reason
are you going to lie?
Will you make up a story
and try to get away with it?

Will you say that you know a celebrity or famous person?
Do you know what would happen to you?
No one would believe you.
You would be like Cassandra to Agamemnon.

Antonio Ashford



(Front l-r) Amani Al-Fatah, Chakia Chatman, James Saunders (2nd row l-r) Charmyonne Bailey, Chantz Clagette, Reginald Williams (3rd row l-r) Myana Gray, Delonte Williams (Back l-r) Monique Covington, Kiona Bean

Life

The easy way out.
Children look at broken shadows.
It's hard going through the maze of life,
Feeling the sweet breeze of birth through your fingers.
Me, I feel like a caged animal being abused,
Hurting from the way of life.
Endless roads, lost shadows,
While we listen to the whispers of God.
Keep watching me Father,
I'll be there soon.

Kevin Nowlin

Signs

Is deaf when you can't hear, or is deaf when you're just not listening?
Is music what you hear or is music when you sing?
Is wind something that makes you shiver or is wind what cools you off?
Is a key to open the door or is it a key of the map?
Is blind when you can't see or is blind when you can see clearly?
Is a shadow something that follows you or is a shadow when someone is following you?
When someone wakes up are they raising from the dead or is it when you just wake up?

Tashell Burnett

At the age of 79

You know you want it back.
But you can't have it.
The doors you slammed shouldn't have been so hard.
Now there's no turning back.
The mourning, the cries, the pain
But there's no turning back unless it's in your dreams.
Dark blue skies that were once bright
When you were young and happy
All gone.
The lost past and the immediate future
Are so unpredictable.
You sit there trying not to forget the lovely things
From 20 years ago
But you have Alzheimer's.
Wishing, hoping, believing you can
But it's impossible.
The young lost person you used to know
Is urgently calling your name
So you can play with your 12 year old friends.
Sorry, but you know you can't.

Kimberly Settles

A Boy at 11

I am a boy that is 11
I walk to the playground
Nobody wants to play with me
Because I smell like a fat man's back leg.
Nobody wants to play with me
Because I smell bad.
Nobody loves me.
I am homeless, I eat rats for dinner,
Drink dirty water. I sleep in a cardboard box.
Nobody loves an 11 year old boy.

Jonathan Steele

Stop, Wait, GO

Stop... Wait... GO
My day wakes going through
the things I went through yesterday
Wait... Hold on... OK
GO, that bitter music plays through my ear
like bee-bop and jazz.
The notes play through my head
all day.
Wait... Stop... Pause
GO, that torch full of wind
blowing through my hair
then I roll home.
Stop... Wait...
GO, then the day darkens,
the bitter music fades and the notes fade
and the torch full of wind fades
and then I lie down, putting myself to sleep.
Wait... Stop.

Kevin Nowlin



Jessica Young as Glauce

Rerun Years

I'm slouching into a new year
as bored as can be
like this year will be new to me.
Fireworks and loving and the green is a breeze.
Saint Nick comes and says Ho-Ho-Ho.
You get a lot of candy, your teeth start to rot
Oh, man, do I hate that part.
Then the new year comes again,
you get all excited.
For me, it's just a rerun all year long.

Reginald Williams

Genesis

Check one, check two, act 1, scene 2.

This story that I'll bring you
is the story that I'll sing to you
this is my world, my blood,
my hugs, my kisses, my loves,
the great power that has come from above.
You push and shove, because you're not ready for this.
I make the whole world miss my old stylish hits
So I reminisce.
And now you're ready for this,
but this Genesis newborn child,
I think it's about time I gave you a piece of my mind,
it's time that I go behind enemy lines
and take what's mine.
I stay in the crib
that why you get all these blessings I give
to make these rhymes
boy, you gotta take your time
don't let nobody ever tell you poetry's a crime.
This is what I do and I give it to you,
they will never understand the things I go through
so if you're ever feeling lonely and unnoticed
come to me and I'll take you to the book of Genesis.

Londell Swales

Thankful

I'm thankful that my parents brought me in this world.
I'm thankful for having parents.
I'm thankful that I'm not poor
And I'm thankful that I have a family.
And that is my short story.

DeJuan Wilson

Thanks

I thank my parents for most this great life:
For the day of my life that makes me one year older.
For the day me and brother made my parents' life change.
The day when my parents' responsibility came in.
When the egg yolk was stirred
When the sun came up
When my father became a dad
When my mother became a woman
When the cake has been baked
When the big clothes have been put on
When the dots have been connected
When the juice has been drunk
When the cake has been cut
When the book was opened
When the light switch was cut on
When Howard and I were born.
Ever since that special day, life is just fine.

Emmanuel Solomon

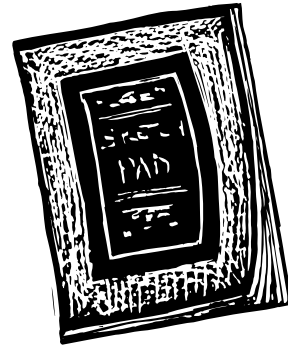
I walk toward my future

Where I live people are bad.
I mourn when I hear gunshots.
It is futile to try to make people good
And have peace in the neighborhood.

I go into exile wearing my veil.
I am walking in the air, invisible.
I wonder if I have a chance
To go to my future.

My future is peaceful.
The people will be kind and never fight.
My family will be close by
And I will then be happy.

Antonio Ashford



Untitled

I am thankful for the dry air
and the branches that become ashes in the fireplace.
The harsh wind that blew my house away.
The smoke that choked me half to death.
The winter that killed my cat.
The arm that I broke because it was brittle.
And my simple gray life.

Emmanuel Solomon

The Four Corners

In a room, a maze
I see corners 1, 2, 3, 4,
as I stand at the center of the room
I am going to the person corner, which I know I am.

But do I know if I am a thing
or feeling— I know I'm a color
The color of black — anger — sadness — terrifying
I walk from corner to corner, 1-4
then I walk back to the center
and there's the door
The door is locked, I am trapped inside
I'll go to the thing in corner 2
a magic key I see
I wonder if it can fit
as I walked to the center
the color black came back
scared, feeling the sense of danger
put the key into the door.

I opened it, with joy and more joy
as I got out of this maze.
I am no longer stuck or feeling black,
I close the door behind as I end this poem.

Tyrone Horton



Untitled

I have to remember everything,
to wake my mother up in the morning,
cut the grass, pick up around the house,
and take out the trash,
the textured face of pain.

I can never remember to do those things,
what if the trash bag busts,
what if the grass is too wet,
what if the grass pierces me with its blade,
the speed of the escape.

I can't ever seem to touch the sky
but I don't know why
which could only be compared
to being non-existent.

Dominic Gaines

In this room

In this room is a person, a thing, a color, and an emotion.
The first corner is a little boy.
In the second corner is a key.
The third corner is a green door.
In the fourth corner is evil.

The boy is trying to find freedom.
Freedom from this evil.
He goes to the second corner and grabs the key
And tries to go out the green door
But he is caught by this evil.
He starts to pray, and got out of the evil,
And opened the door, and there was freedom.
He was captured no more.

Jeremiah Samuel

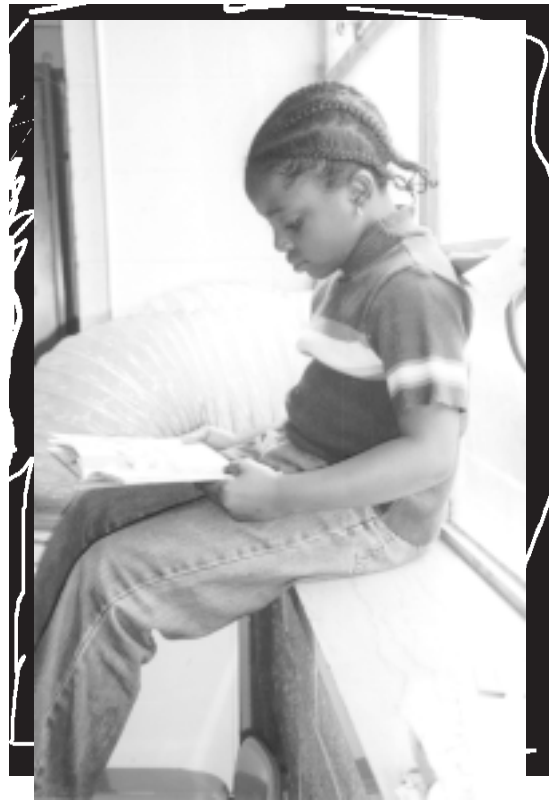
The things I left behind

When I was walking all of a sudden
I felt a change.
The change meant that I was getting over all of my chaff
things from the past.

The things I mean, like when I got in trouble,
dealing with friends who were backbiters.
The bad reports, that's the chaff,
things I want to leave and stay behind.

I have flashbacks from the chaff
that fear me
because they might catch up with me
in the future.

Chanel Cason



Diamond Williams takes a break to read

The Loyal Man

A person who just doesn't think,
but is not going to wake up tomorrow
Is it going to be his time?
But no matter what he's done,
he still prays to God.

When he leaves his house—
things like hate, jealousy, evil, cruelty—
but he still shows respect to his thoughts.

Doesn't matter what color you are
because he says to himself
we are all brothers and sisters.

His feelings are so soft,
but he doesn't show.
But deep down, it hurts him.

Dominic Kingsbury

Women at Twenty

Women at twenty have bills to pay
so they can have a place to live.

Women at twenty usually have kids
to take care of.

Women at twenty have to go down to schools, to PTA meetings
to see how their kids are doing.

Women at twenty go to the clubs
to relieve stress they had all day.

Women at twenty go to stores
for school supplies, groceries, and clothes.

Women at twenty usually have cars
and baby daddies.

Women at twenty buy makeup
for the bruises from when their husbands hit them.

Women at twenty usually are brought down
by stress.

Lashanda Williams

Pressure

Writing these poems is like jumping off a building,
always scared of someone's opinion.

Drilling yourself, training yourself,
working your mind, giving everything you've got

and don't worry about a stupid opinion

Everybody likes one but always scared at first

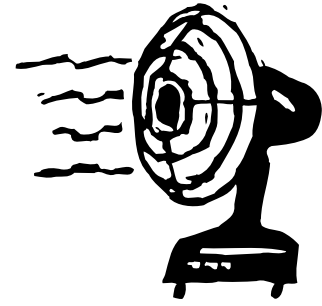
The Bad Luck House

It's early and I'm writhing in pain
because the bed feels like hard bayonets.
Got up to cook my bland noodles
that were sitting on the shelf for months
in the bad luck house.

Dominic Gaines

What are you about?

Day goes by like a vicious wind
When I was the vicious one that day
The wind whistles through my ear
Sniffing the wetness
Feeling the coldness bubbling in my hand
The smoky dryness traveling through my mouth
Imagining it even though I can't see it.
The wind is visible, not able to feel,
But you can hear through your nose and taste through your mouth.



Casper lives in the haunted Taj Mahal
But if you can't see the Taj Mahal, how is it haunted?

Tears come out my nose and up my face
Into my eyes to keep them moist.

Man, I heard you were the soothsayer from Rome
Because you're smooth to soothe me to whistle false ways
It seems to me the only way for you to understand this method
Is to make an "O" with your lips.

The jumping clouds of greyness
Filled with rain and snow
We sank into a cloud
Filled with fire and hatred,
Then became hot, bloody stones.
This moment, right now, you will
Raise us above that cloud.

Next month, next year, I will destroy the soothsayer
For making the wind whistle false ways
And time will guide him to a dimension
That never existed
Y nunca se fue.
But I have to move on and give the soothsayer a chance.
Even wind has to breathe,
And even though you can't see the wind,
You can feel it whistling in your ear.

Ashlee Owens

Love

Love, what is love?
Is it a lily in the valley?
Does it leave you sad or happy?
Love is like a rose, it comes and goes.
Love is like a 30 year plant that shrivels up and dies
right before your eyes.
Have you ever had to cry?
Who understands love, I don't know.
Maybe I never will.
People fall in love like basketballs,
get so mad they bounce around my hall.
I was in love, I have proof. I have pictures on the wall.
In my locker I have a scrapbook, something that I took.
When someone understands love, give me a call.
I'll be at home banging on the wall.

Gabrielle Martin



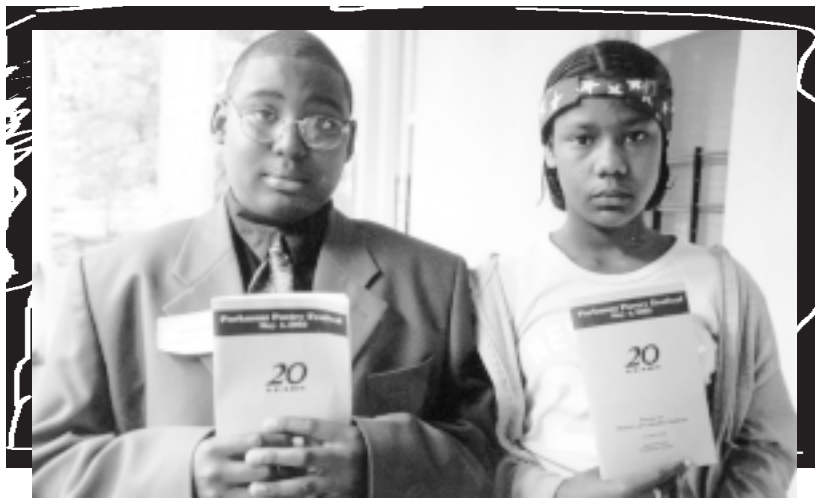
Sarah's Heartbroken

Sarah's heartbroken, like rocks falling down a hill.
Like dough being smushed by your hands.
Like you being buried in the sand.

When Sarah looks at his picture, it makes her pull out her hair
Like you pick off berries from a tree.
Like you want to scream until you lose your voice.
Like you want to stomp so hard that you make the world hear you.

He makes her so mad, she wants to hurt anybody.

Brittany Keys



l-r Parkmont Poetry Contest winners Timothy Miller and Jessica Young

dc creative writing workshop

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*Delonte Williams
as Aegeus*

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