



HARTWORKS

Summer 2007 • \$5

HARTWORKS PRESENTS:
AN EXCERPT FROM "AIKESTIS REVISITED: RED HOT DEATH"

The Charles Hart Middle School Literary Magazine

Danielle Blake, Shannon Allen



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 2006-07 school year's final edition of *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 concluding its seventh 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 2007 edition of *Poet's Market* recognizes *hArtworks* as "an outstanding example of what a literary journal can be (for anyone of any age)."

This year marks a new milestone for D.C. Creative Writing Workshop students, as they won an unprecedented 24 city-wide writing awards. Congratulations to our 14 Parkmont Poetry Contest winners:

Luqman Abdullah, Maryum Abdullah, Ashley Barber, Shamia House, Quanika Jackson, Damon Kee, Tiara Mason, Jasmine Murray, Raymond Reynolds, James Saunders, Monae Smith, Antonio Spencer, James Tindle, Renita Williams.

Congratulations also to our seven Larry Neal Award winners: Demond Parker, First Place in Youth Poetry; Almus Bush, Second Place in Youth Poetry, Shaiski Johnson and Marvin McDowell, Honorable Mention in Youth Poetry; James Saunders, Second Place in Teen Poetry, Reginald Conway, Honorable Mention in Teen Poetry, and Lance Favors, Honorable Mention in Teen Fiction. **And congratulations as well to our Junior League Teen Poetry Competition winners:** Robert Redd, Jr., First Place for 4th grade; Mark Neal, First Place for 7th grade; and Reginald Conway, First Place for 8th grade. Our students took home over \$1,100 in cash and prizes for their literary efforts this year.

These triumphs would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of our writers-in-residence, Dwayne Betts, Omekongo Dibinga, Sage Morgan-Hubbard, Nancy Schwalb, Venus Thrash and Jamila Wade. We also appreciate the strong contribution from James Saunders, a 16 year old junior at Ballou Senior High, now completing his second year as junior writer-in-residence. And special thanks to our capable and committed interns, 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, Commonwealth 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, GO! Creative, LLC, 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: Ajeenah Amir, Mary Ann Brownlow, Dr. Susan Gerson, Bernie Horn, Kathleen Huston, Michael Joy, Joan Kennan, Bill Newlin, Dr. Pat Papero, 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. Gregory Malvaux, Ms. Terrie Spann-Tchama, Ms. Eleanor Seale, Ms. Pamela McKinney, Ms. Trenia Wilson, Ms. Ann Brogioli, and Ms. Maevern Williams.

hArtworks presents and excerpt from our students' original play, "Alcestis Revisited: Red Hot Death."	18
Luqman Abdullah	
<i>In my opinion</i>	12
<i>Behind the eyes</i>	52
Maryam Abdullah	
<i>Writing</i>	54
Antonio Alston	
<i>School</i>	43
Melvin Barber	
<i>I Don't Want to Live Anywhere Where They Are Shooting</i>	28
<i>Roses, Or My Love Poem</i>	33
<i>Those Girls That Ran Together</i>	35
Antoinette Better	
<i>? Mark</i>	16
Danielle Blake	
<i>Life</i>	41
<i>If I Was a Waterdrop</i>	58
<i>Rising</i>	58
Denisha Bolden	
<i>The Power of My Beautiful, Deep Eyes</i>	47
Katina Brice	
<i>My Father Left</i>	26
Elisha Bridges	
<i>In My Opinion</i>	12
A. Montel Brooks	
<i>In My Opinion</i>	11
<i>Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow</i>	61
<i>Cloud Nine</i>	61
Jada Brooks	
<i>My Friends</i>	58
<i>My Daddy</i>	58
David Brown	
<i>The Teardrop</i>	46
Curtis Canty	
<i>Driving, Sliding, Gliding, Fighting</i>	44
Jeremy Carmichael	
<i>Right Hand Man</i>	16
Jamal Clark	
<i>I Had a Nightmare</i>	25
<i>Smoked</i>	35
Delonte Clemons	
<i>Black Man</i>	48
Reginald Conway	
<i>What I See</i>	56
Jamal Conyers	
<i>Where I'm From</i>	45
Dominique Courtney	
<i>Life</i>	31
Iashia Davis	
<i>Fire</i>	33
Markiya Davis	
<i>Dripping Sorrow</i>	54
Kiera Dixon	
<i>Darkness</i>	12
<i>A Hug</i>	34

Sherwin Duckett	
<i>By the end of the season</i>	48
Sean Favors	
<i>I come from</i>	39
Demetrius Foreman	
<i>Stepping in the New Year</i>	38
Tywain Green	
<i>Congress Park</i>	37
Melody Henson	
<i>June</i>	43
Andrea Hermans	
<i>See me now</i>	36
Pauline Luraine Holsinger	
<i>The Life of</i>	13
Quanika Jackson	
<i>My Cry for Help</i>	37
Trevon Jackson	
<i>I Was Raised</i>	27
<i>Prayer for a Football Player</i>	32
Earl James	
<i>I am</i>	49
Brittany Johnson	
<i>Oh Mother</i>	42
Briyianne Sharlene Johnson	
<i>Who am I?</i>	62
Dominique Johnson	
<i>The Little Squeak</i>	49
Marcus Johnson	
<i>Women</i>	41
Markus Johnson	
<i>Chocolate Surprise</i>	57
Shaiski Johnson	
<i>My home in flames</i>	39
Delvonte Jones	
<i>Something of a Prayer</i>	13
<i>Dap: Dap: Dap</i>	34
Diamond Jones	
<i>I Don't Want to Live Anywhere Where They Are</i>	27
Shainairie Jones	
<i>the blues</i>	63
Yasmin Jones	
<i>Voices</i>	9
<i>My Life</i>	56
<i>Unappreciated</i>	56
Darius Joshua	
<i>Ms. Spann-Tchama, Where You At?</i>	15
<i>Fire</i>	16
<i>Dap</i>	34
Nichell Kee	
<i>In my opinion</i>	11
<i>Anacostia</i>	54
<i>Not Reality</i>	55
Manaiza Kelley	
<i>Why</i>	24
<i>A Story That Could Be True</i>	32
<i>Those Girls That Ran Together</i>	35
Damian Lee	
<i>Late to My Game</i>	24

Tiara Mason	
<i>See the Future</i>	36
Rodnika Matthews	
<i>I Don't Want to Live Anywhere Where</i>	28
Jeannett McKoy	
<i>The Beautiful Woman</i>	42
Malik Moore	
<i>Running</i>	43
Kiana Murphy	
<i>In My Opinion</i>	10
Terrence Nails	
<i>Questions</i>	15
<i>My Dream</i>	25
<i>Those boys that ran together</i>	26
<i>I Don't Wanna Live Nowhere</i>	29
<i>Son</i>	34
Mark Neal	
<i>Whirling Flames</i>	44
Demond Parker	
<i>My World</i>	39
Colletta Paylor	
<i>Crazy</i>	13
<i>Spring Time</i>	17
<i>A Story That Could Be True</i>	30
<i>Tameka Jenkins</i>	30
Thomas Payne	
<i>A Prayer</i>	17
Kiarra Payton	
<i>Fade</i>	49
<i>Rewritten Nightmare</i>	50
Antwan Petty	
<i>Pain</i>	48
Latia Pimble	
<i>Rolling Hills</i>	52
Damalia Pitts	
<i>I Want to Live Where There Are</i>	27
Keona Powell	
<i>Leave Me Alone</i>	51
<i>Invisible</i>	51
Marquette Price	
<i>He Ain't Heavy</i>	53
Eric Quarles	
<i>Fighting</i>	44
Raymond Reynolds	
<i>Thoughts</i>	38
Myah Robertson	
<i>In my opinion</i>	9
Patrice Rouse	
<i>Hate</i>	57
Erica Russell	
<i>Anger</i>	31
Gregory Sam	
<i>Those Girls Who Ran Together</i>	26
Brittney Savoy	
<i>Invisible Poem</i>	49
Keishawna Simms	
<i>For My Aunt</i>	61

Bnyonka Simpkins	
<i>My Dance Steps</i>	41
<i>Questions I Ask Many People</i>	60
<i>Colors</i>	60
Sha'Quan Smith	
<i>Running away</i>	45
<i>Frozen</i>	62
Antonio Spencer	
<i>All About Me</i>	38
Ashley Stevenson	
<i>Questions for the Homeless Man on the Bus</i>	14
<i>My Dream About Being Silent</i>	25
<i>The Forbidden Room</i>	59
<i>Dreams and Words</i>	59
Danielle Stover	
<i>Feelings</i>	50
<i>Just Because</i>	51
Wendie Thomas	
<i>I Am</i>	57
D'Jon Tucker	
<i>Blossom</i>	53
<i>Newborns</i>	53
Devonte Walker	
<i>What happens to deferred dreams</i>	25
Vincent Walker	
<i>Wayne Place</i>	40
Jamie Warren	
<i>Windswept</i>	55
Da'Shawn Washington	
<i>Me</i>	47
<i>I Want To</i>	47
Donna Washington	
<i>Fire</i>	32
Theodore Washington	
<i>My Hood</i>	29
<i>Playing With Matches</i>	33
Oshai Whatley	
<i>A Talk with Dave</i>	14
<i>The Colors of the Sun</i>	17
<i>Those lil girls that ran together</i>	26
Kaniece Whitaker	
<i>Dislike (a two voice poem)</i>	52
Thomas Whitney	
<i>My community</i>	45
Nicole Williams	
<i>Prove Me Wrong</i>	53
Dimitrius Winters	
<i>4th Street</i>	40
Da'Quon Wood	
<i>On The Bus With A Nickel</i>	31
Joylin Yates	
<i>Where I'm From</i>	62
<i>Confused Am I</i>	62
Emmanuel Youman	
<i>I'm Very Black</i>	46
<i>Forgive Me</i>	46
Kentrell Zanders	
<i>Fire</i>	33

The poems in this book were collected from the students of the
 Jackson County Public Schools
 in the summer of 2005.
 Edited by
 J. H. H. H.



*l-r: Danielle Blake,
Cherish Gaines,
Shannon Allen,
Ashley Stevenson,
Nichell Kee*



*Nichell Kee,
Cherish Gaines*



Franzel Willoby





Voices

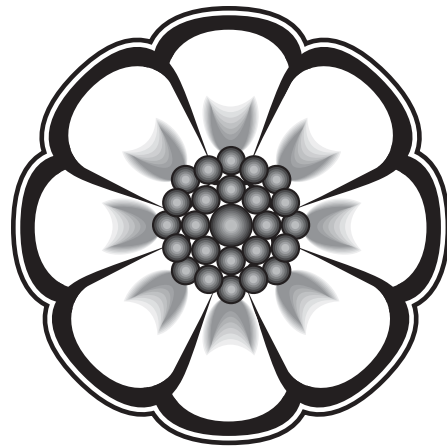
Voices in my head
 in my mind
 all the time—
 Who are you?
 What do you want from me?
 I don't have nothing to offer—
 don't bother
 me, just leave me alone.
 Whoever you are,
 you give me butterflies
 in my stomach. I tell you
 leave.
 Never come back.
 In my opinion,
 I think this voice is the devil,
 trying to encourage me
 to step into the bad side,
 trying to make me act like a buffoon.
 But, in my opinion:
 There will be no buffoon.
 These voices got to stop.

Yasmin Jones

In my opinion

In my opinion,
 I think that fighting is not necessary.
 It will get you nowhere but
 deeper in the hole
 you've already dug
 between each other.
 I've seen people get their teeth knocked out;
 I've seen people get beat down,
 gunned down, locked up.
 In my opinion,
 this has got to stop.

Myah Robertson



In My Opinion

In my opinion
Love is unconditional
No matter what
Through thick and thin.

In my opinion
Overturned skies,
With blue eyes—
What is that?

In my opinion
Guilt is optional
Courage is a must
Death is a reason.

In my opinion
Life is intertwined with
Hate
Distrust
Disgust.

In my opinion
Change the forecast.
They're telling you lies
Hidden in disguise
Going with the flow of
Made up stories
Within a path of cruelty.

In my opinion
My intention should perish
My thoughts should be burned
My feelings stirred.

In my opinion
Black thoughts are all thoughts
Lingering in the air
Where no one really cares.

In my opinion
Friendship is key
Beyond a shallow bend
Waiting, repentant.

In my opinion
No one cares about opinions
They walk around like there is no life
No presence
No destiny.

In my opinion
This world is over
There is no means for survival
Or even death
So which one is there to choose?

In my opinion?
Where are they?
Those thoughts of others?
The inner-self confidence?
The life-after-death?
In my opinion
Oh, just forget it!

Kiana Murphy

In my opinion

In my opinion, fireflies should have to eat
acorns,
and gravity should pull you up on a cloud,
and distance should mean together, forever.

In my opinion, silky should mean
rough and uncomfortable.
Immortal should mean to die quicker,
and to die means
to live, forever.

In my opinion, to have your heart crumble
means to build it up.
Hazy should mean
clear as day.

In my opinion, guilt is forced on you
by sadness, and love
is withheld by anger.

In my opinion, the Grand Canyon
is just a small bowl of dirt.
In my opinion, thorns are the ones
that bleed when they prick you.

In my opinion, shallow means deep,
and hard-headed,
and it means to kill.
But to this day,
my opinion doesn't matter.

Nichell Kee

Jamie Warren



In My Opinion

There is no such thing as an opinion.
You see, somewhere down the line
of people telling you what's what,
who's who, and why things happen
you lost your reality.
You seem to think you have your own mind,
doing what you want, when you want.
But your mind is in a game called propaganda.
It's been controlled since
the day you could comprehend,
being toyed with
like a ventriloquist plays his dummy.
Everything you have touched,
seen, heard, tasted, and smelled
has been planned since day one,
all so you can think
that you can think.

A. Montel Brooks

In my opinion

In my opinion
on that last trip to Finland
we stopped and shopped in California
as kingpins,
Or was it you—the one wit' the most stuff:
You bet 30 G's, were you calling a bluff?
That's enuff.
I was supposed to be Ford tough,
but in the end I came out like
king-bed pillows, fluffed.
That's love, dating the same person
my ex's ex did, and I always have to pay—
Hey Mike, your check bounced today,
besides your kid had no allowance anyway.
Is that hard? Eating cereal with forks to save milk...
Hey Mom, I found some worms outside to make silk
for my prom dress,
be broke to death.
Commit a crime,
get a fine.
They were throwing you out anyway.
In my opinion.

Luqman Abdullah

Darkness

I think of myself as darkness
is it dark, or is it me
is it sorrow, or is it woe

can darkness bring
dreams or can darkness
bring sleep

think of me as a dark
cloud

drifting off into dream land

Kiera Dixon

In My Opinion

In my opinion, fishing is best,
because of the action—
when you catch a fish,
the rod, reel, line, hook, the bait
and yourself, that's the action.
Standing there, waiting in the water,
smelling the water, hearing the waves,
and watching the birds fly
down to catch their dinner.
And then the fish, tugging on your line.
Wow!
Reeling it in,
the fish jumping out of the water,
is the best thing ever.
Now you've got him off the hook,
seeing him wiggle in your hand.
So in my opinion, there's nothing like fishing.

Elisha Bridges

Something of a Prayer

To the God that is listening
I write on my money

My uncle writes on his money
Now I write on my money

My money means my family eats
My money is important

My uncle got it from my grandfather

When you get money you don't do it,
but when I get my money I do it.

I love my uncle for showing me.

Delvonte Jones

The Life of...

Me as myself, short fat and looking
like a cup cake, nothing but a
big smile on my face.
Spoiled like milk,
my teeth white as the paper.

As years went by I got taller
and things started to change
the life of Pauline Holsinger went
down the drain when things changed.
It started to go slow like a
song is going off and the clay went by.

Here I am still grieving the loss
of loved ones gone out of sight
as her voice whispers through
the night. In the 7th grade trying
to get good grades and go to college.

Pauline Luraine Holsinger

Crazy

If the woman next to him has a
gruesome taste of his breath, why
would she still sit in the same seat?

Why does he have on fresh timbs
when there are only limbs
left of his hair?

If he's so ugly, why is
Bush still in office with Condeleeza Rice
on the yacht while there's a war
going on?

Why is he smelling his shoe
when they just eliminated Pluto from
the solar system?

Colletta Paylor

Tiona Wade





Questions for the Homeless Man on the Bus

What will happen if
I hit you
Would you cave if
I sit beside you
Why did you take
your jacket off
I wonder if you
have a sister
Do you have on
clean socks
Can you tell me
your name
I wonder who did
you grow up with. Your father?
I wonder who
named you.

Ashley Stevenson

A Talk with Dave

Dave, Dave why did you
stand there and wait for the bus?
I saw you walk up but, if only
I could trust my instinct that
you were trying to find a seat.

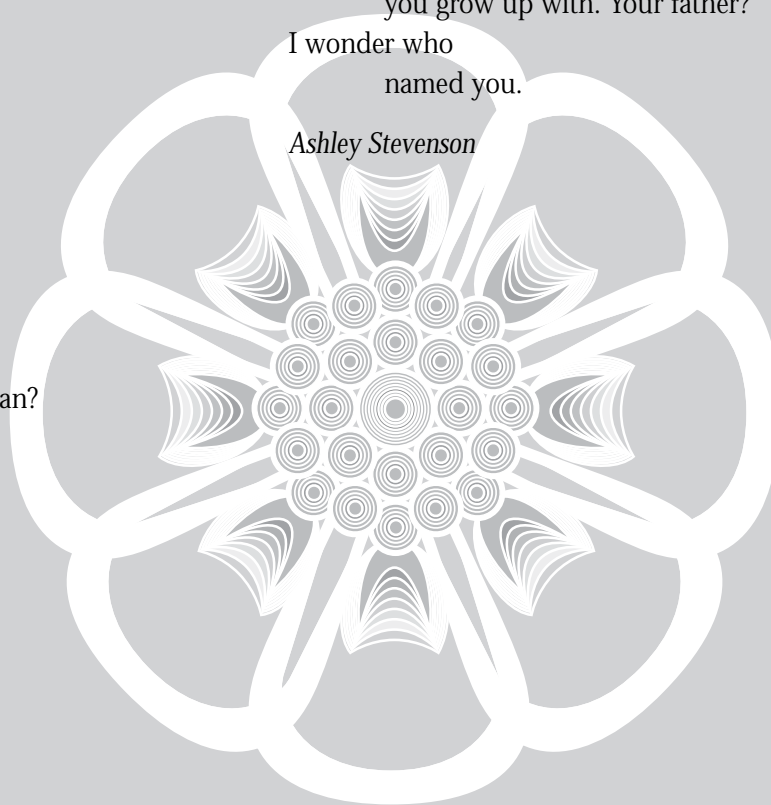
When I saw you I saw you
sit down, you kicked off
one Nike boot, but I could
only ask why did they look
like dogs were barking at them?

In a flash, in the back of
my mind, you were poor, but
I could only ask if you didn't
get on the bus how would
you look?

Would you look like a business man?
Have a wife and kids?
I'll probably never know.
I never asked.

But when I sum it all up
I would only guess what world
you have turned out to be.

Oshai Whatley



Ms. Spann-Tchama Where You At?

Where you at, Ms. Spann-Tchama
and are you OK and how
is your life now that you aren't
teaching no more?
If the fight never went on
would you still be here?

Do you think you
will ever teach again?
Now that you quit and left
us hanging with no teacher

does it ever hurt you to
just come by just
to say hi to us or ask
Mr. Bennett can you get
your job back because
getting a teacher every other
day, it ain't right to us.

Darius Joshua

Luqman Abdullah



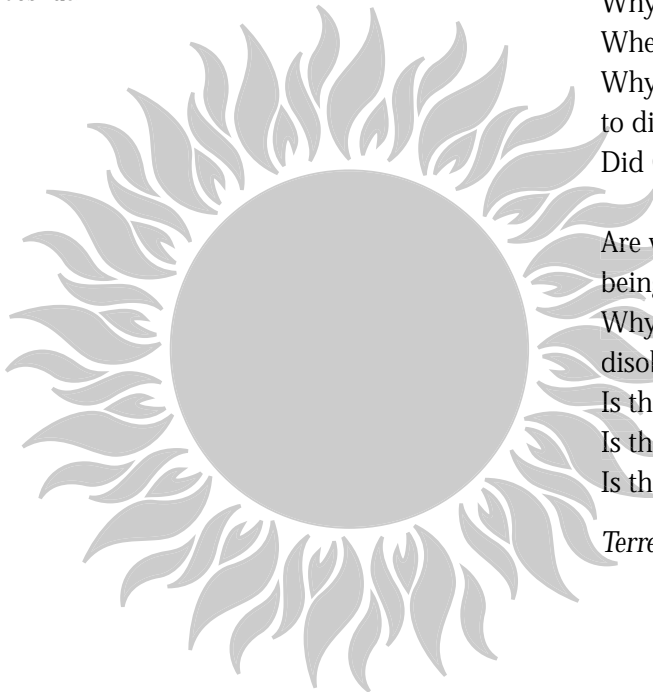
Questions

Who came before God?
Why were we created?
Why is there a space
up high?

Why don't we have superpowers?
When was time created?
Why do people have
to die?
Did God ever walk the Earth?

Are we really called human
beings?
Why did Adam and Eve
disobey God?
Is there really an Atlantis?
Is there such a thing as aliens?
Is there such a thing as ghosts?

Terrence Nails



? Mark

This ? mark is
made for asking true
statements.

This ? mark is
made to answer
and
search for
honest requests.

This ? mark is
made for earth's defense
of the
sun and moon,
what to keep?
and what not to keep?

This ? mark is
made to explore and
learn how to discover
different ? marks.

Antoinette Better

Fire

fire is like you and your
brother on the court

playing one and one
in basketball and you
hitting three back to back

and while he just checking
the ball up but you
can see in his eyes that
he is really mad

or fire can be like on the 4th
of July waiting for it to get
dark waiting for the fire
works to start going off.

Darius Joshua

Right Hand Man

I've been in this
same house for

five years; my parents
said we can't move cause

of we don't have enough
money; I've always

wanted to live in
Atlanta or Miami;

even though I
might not go there

I just want to
move out of this neighborhood.

Jeremy Carmichael

A Prayer

I've seen a man
drown in an inch
of dreams

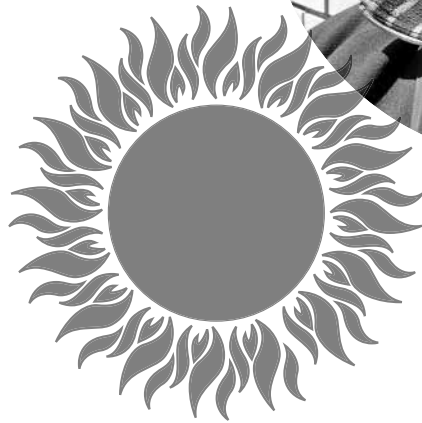
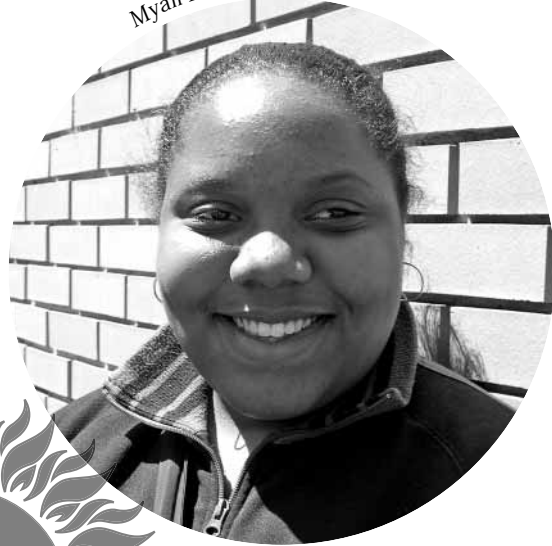
I've seen men
buried in the pavements
of the moonlight

I ain't asking for
the world, but I need
something to help me

But
It's burning inside me
to see my soul drown.

Thomas Payne

Myah Robertson



Spring Time

The aroma of a sweet aroma
of love comes from around the room,
then you start to reminisce
about laughter and smiles deep within
your mind.

Smashing into a bowl of designed
flowers on it and every flower reminds
you of each family member through
the good and bad times together.

The pie comes out and fills the
house like a thousand breezes of spring
when a knock of family
hits my door of appreciation.

Colletta Paylor

The Colors of the Sun

I've seen the colors of the sun
in my days in the streets

I've seen people walking around
with their heads stuck up and noses to the sky.

But the only thing I want to see
is daylight without the chains and fences


Just help me and
I promise to be a better me.

Oshai Whatley

hArtworks presents:

An excerpt from

“ALCESTIS REVISITED: RED HOT DEATH.”



This year, as part of our classical drama program, our students read “Alcestis,” **the oldest surviving play by Euripides**. “Alcestis” was originally written in 438 B.C. and was performed as part of the Feast of Dionysus. In this play, the god Apollo has been living with and protecting Admetus, King of Pherae. When Death comes for Admetus, Apollo can’t save the king, but Admetus is able to convince his wife, Alcestis to take his place. Death takes Alcestis to Hades, but Heracles comes to visit the palace and, impressed by Admetus’ display of hospitality, even in a time of mourning, journeys to Hades to return Alcestis to the king. Although many scholars consider “Alcestis” to be a tragedy, the play has a happy ending, with the return of Alcestis, **so our students have rewritten it as a tragicomedy**.

“Alcestis Revisited: Red Hot Death” was written and performed by D.C.

Creative Writing Workshop members: Luqman Abdullah, Maryum

Abdullah, Shannon Allen, Antoinette Better, Stelita Better, Danielle Blake,

Denisha Bolden, Natia Boyd, A. Montel Brooks, Jada Brooks, Jamal Buggs, Kiera Coleman,

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McDowell, Shambriel Metts, Kiana Murphy, Jasmine Murray, Maurice Nowlin, Kenyetta Pryor,

Keyosha Richardson, Myah Robertson, Bnyonka Simpkins, Monae Smith, Beatrice Smoot,

Jessica Smoot, Ashley Stevenson, Tionna Wade, Devonte Walker, Jamie Warren, Darien

Wilkins, Deshaun Williams, Renita Williams, Franzel Willoby, and Sequan Wilson.



ACT I

SCENE 1

WASHINGTON, DC. The centre of the scene represents a portico with columns and a large double-door of the Palace. APOLLO AND HIS POSSE enter. He moves slowly and majestically, turns, and raises his right hand in salutation to the Palace. He speaks to his POSSE.

APOLLO: (Yelling!) Man, I can't believe this! (He throws his fists in the air.) Guess what happened? Zeus killed my son, Kenneth. Zeus had the nerve to drive a bolt of lightning through Kenneth's chest. I was so doggone mad, I was gonna blow up Zeus's house, but I killed his bodyguard, Cyclops, with a .9mm instead. Then, I came to Southeast DC to help my friend out. Admetus. I've been watching him, making sure ain't nothing bad happening to him.

ADMETUS enters another part of the stage he dials his cellphone.

APOLLO: I protect him, I paid his debt and I helped his family. I, Apollo, the richest man on this earth, helped him when he had no food on the table. (His cell phone rings.) Hold on, I got someone calling me. Hello?

ADMETUS: Man, I got something to tell you.

APOLLO: What?

ADMETUS: The Grim Reaper said he was coming for me. But don't worry. I got someone to take my place.

APOLLO: Who?

ADMETUS: Hold on, let me tell you the story. See, first I went to my parent's house and asked them. And you know what my father said? I'ma' tell you what he said, "No, son, you need to take hold of your responsibility." So I said, "Man forget you" and left. Next, I went to my wife and man was she easy. She said, "Oh baby, of course, of course. I'll die for you." Man, is she dumb or what?

DEATH AND HIS POSSE enter. DEATH knocks on the door to awaken the people in ADMETUS' palace.

APOLLO: Nope, just loyal. Until this day Admetus, I have kept you from death, you were supposed to go to the afterworld for all eternity. But no, I will let someone that you love suffer and surrender her life for you. You've tried your parents, and they wouldn't do it for you. You've asked the whole world, but your wife, your dear sweet wife said yes because she loves you. (He sees DEATH knocking) Now here comes Death coming to take her down to Hades.



ADMETUS: Aren't you gonna answer it, Apollo?

APOLLO: No.

ADMETUS: But why I gotta open the door?

APOLLO: Because it's your house! (Hangs up phone.)

ADMETUS: (Hangs up phone. Goes to hide himself.) Prima donna.

DEATH AND HIS POSSE, with a drawn gun in his hand, moves stealthily towards the Palace; then sees APOLLO and halts abruptly. APOLLO inching forward like a gunfighter steps in DEATH'S path. The two Deities confront each other.

APOLLO: So if it isn't my old friend Death. (Apollo has his hand on his pistol.)

DEATH: Well, well, well, if it isn't Apollo himself. (He oddly stares at Apollo.) I'm sorry don't mind me staring. I'm just trying to figure out why you're here. Didn't you already stop the death of Admetus? You cold went on the Fates. Now, you have your pistol ready to play Captain Sav-a-lot for Alcestis and break your deal with me.

APOLLO: I have to carry this with me all the time. Plus, Admetus is my homeboy, stuff happening to him gets me all worked up. If he cries, I cry, you get it!

DEATH: So, you're Admetus's little guard dog. Man, is Admetus paying you?

APOLLO: Money is the last thing I need. It ain't like that. He's my boy and he ain't going out like that. His issues are my problems.

DEATH: You mean to take Alcestis's body from me too?

APOLLO: What you mean "too"? I never took Admetus from you in the first place.

DEATH: Well, it sure does seem like it cuz if I had him he wouldn't have been seen at Iverson Mall yesterday. And he wouldn't still be above ground now.

APOLLO: Naw, his wife took the bid instead of him and you came for her early. Man, you getting' me guh!

DEATH: I know, ha! I'm bringing her down to where the dead folks are.

APOLLO: Man, whatever, roll out. Just take her then. You won't listen to me anyway.

DEATH: Look, I'm gonna kill, who I'm gonna kill. This is my job. You have my word. Admetus is safe until it is his time again.

APOLLO: Ease up! You gon' get him. Can you at least let them say their last goodbye's. And . . . wait, isn't there a way for her to get old?

DEATH: I feel you. But I'm not really the patient type. I like to speed things up.

APOLLO: So we can't agree on this.

DEATH: How about . . . no!

APOLLO: You drive a hard bargain.

DEATH: Don't get me wrong, Apollo. Behind the black robe and the scythe, I'm a pretty decent and reasonable guy. I just try to get a kick out of my career. Plus, the younger they are, the better.

APOLLO: Can't you make an exception. If she dies old, she can have an expensive casket and the biggest ceremony. She's the King's wife, for goodness sake.

DEATH: So, you saying help the rich? I don't do favorites! Did I make an exception for Elvis?

APOLLO: That's new talk coming from you, trying to show off. When did you become captain of the debate team?

DEATH: Imagine how many times I've had to do this. If it was that simple those who could afford to buy death would not die until they got old.

APOLLO: Uh huh, I see. You're not gonna look out for me, are you?

DEATH: After all this rappin' my answer still has not changed. You know me.

APOLLO: That's wrong man. You be loafin'. That's why nobody don't mess with you. Hated by mankind and the gods.

DEATH: That's a-ight. They don't have to like me, but they have to give me their souls. You can't always have it your way, this ain't Burger King!

APOLLO: You think you doin' it real big, don't you? Well, I gotta cake baked for you. Somebody's gonna put you in your place. He'll be stationed right here in Admetus's house and I'm sure he'll be able to "persuade" you to give Alcestis to him.

DEATH: Faking will win you nothing. Talk is cheap and until any of that happens, which is never, I'll have Alcestis at Hades's spot and be done with this fiasco. I'm gonna take her and introduce her to my sword. For all who are hurt by this blade's sharpness are sent to the god's below. Now, move it or lose it. And you know what "it" is!

APOLLO steps aside. **DEATH** enters the Palace.



ACT I

SCENE 2

The hair salon for the rich and famous of Washington. The **co-owners of the salon** enter. The **CHORUS of CIVIC LEADERS** enters.

VINCENT ORANGE: Why is it so freaking quiet in Admetus's house? Is there anyone can tell us what's going on? Did Alcestis get peaced or is she still looking at the sunshine?

SHEILA JOHNSON: Did you hear anything, Police Chief Lanier? Has Death killed her yet?

CATHY LANIER: No, Ms. Johnson, and there's no one at the gates. I thought I heard a scream and a gun shot.

ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON: O, God, can you heal this disaster?

ADRIAN FENTY: But if she was dead Representative Norton, there would be no silence.

MS. DOUGLAS: Naw, she's gone. R.I.P.

ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON: But, Ms. Douglas, they haven't taken her from the house yet.

VINCENT ORANGE: Why are you so sure, Eleanor? How could Admetus have a funeral for her without the paparazzi around or her family there? She is too magnificent.

SHEILA JOHNSON: But, Linda, here are the gates and I don't see the signs of a custom ceremony.

CATHY LANIER: Ms. Johnson, I can't see the coffin and there's no sign of people in black.

ADRIAN FENTY: But this is her sentenced day to die.

MS. DOUGLAS: Mayor Fenty, what are you talking about?

ADRIAN FENTY: She must go below where Grandma and Pookie lay

MS. DOUGLAS: Mayor, that hurts. You ain't have to say it like that. I liked Alcestis.

ADRIAN FENTY: Of course, Ms. Douglas. Those who claim to be called good men, men from southeast, northeast, and even in Maryland, feel sad for the woman.

ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON: There is no place on earth that can help Alcestis. Here is a lady that is dying for her husband and she is the sweetest woman to step foot in Hades. We are here for Alcestis who was so loyal to us. For she is gone down into the gates of Hades. There's only one who can save her.

CATHY LANIER: Look, the maid's coming from the house. But why is she crying? She might know about Alcestis's death. (Speaking to the Maid.) We would like to know, is Alcestis dead or alive?



Monae Smith, Tiona Wade, Myah Robertson

Late to My Game

I was riding the bus
to my football game
when it broke down
and the game started

at 5:30 and I couldn't
be late so I started
to get mad I was
walking down the street

so I called my coach
and told him I was going
to be late He said I'ma have
to give your position away

I started dripping water
from my eyes because....

Damian Lee

Why

Why did she have to depart to heaven so fast,
Why did it have to be on Easter Sunday
Why didn't they call me, tell me she was home
from jail. Why didn't they come get me.
Why did she take so much medicine. Why
did she have to be addicted to drugs.
Why didn't she just wake up. Why didn't the ambulance
come quicker. Why didn't you say it was too
much. What did my cousin do when his mother
didn't answer. Why didn't my Aunt ask to see her son
when she got home. It's more questions I have to ask but God can you
answer these or help me find help.

Manaiza Kelley

What happens to deferred dreams

What happens to dreams deferred?

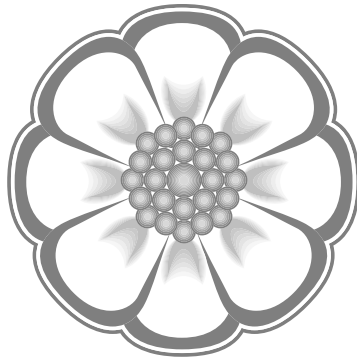
It runs like a wild deer
upon a wild roaring river

but not drinking to get
strong

It gets sick and never gets
better.

It hides under beds
like a monster afraid
of light.

Devonte Walker



I Had a Nightmare

I had a nightmare
falling from the top
hitting rock bottom
chances in front of
my face
Why don't I...
take them?
Is it because I'm black
or too afraid
of a nightmare.

Jamal Clark

Natia Boyd



My Dream

What happens to a dream deferred?

If I can't draw then
I will switch to trying
to be a successful shoes
and clothes designer.

Still drawing designs
because one job
of drawing won't stop me
from drawing.

Terrence Nails

My Dream About Being Silent

It was me sitting in class
quiet. Me doing nothing
quiet me, waving my pen
and my legs quiet.
That's what I dreamed of.

Ashley Stevenson

My Father Left

My father left when
I was born and came
back when I was
one. He hurt my mother's
feelings when he did. What
I did was feel ashamed
that he did not want me
anymore, he left again
and then he let 10 years
go past and then came
back when we had
a court case. I started
to live with him
at the age of thirteen
and a half. I just want
to live with my
mother again.

Katina Brice

Those Girls Who Ran Together

Those girls that ran together
they always dressed alike
those three girls would
always ride each other.
One girl always carried a book
bag with pink stripes. It
always had four pencils
in it. She never did work.
She just got up and walked
out of class.

What made her do that?

Gregory Sam

Those lil girls that ran together

those lil girls that ran together
at grandma's house
in the front yard near the sidewalk
everyone saw them and thought
how cute but she was only missing a shoe

everybody sees them now
but they are all grown up

now they see they are fine
young ladies

Oshai Whatley

Those boys that ran together

Those boys always ran
together. Black kids and
white kids. Run run
all together. Faster fastest
all run with each other.

Those boys that ran
together will play
sing clap and jump
together because we
are all the same.

Terrence Nails

Jada Brooks



I Want to Live Where There Are...

Children playing with smiles on
their face, playing as one.

I want to live where there are
people who want to make
friends and not want to fight
their friends or associates.

I want to live where you
can walk outside and not
see police locking anybody
up for doing a crime.

I want to live where there
are people standing outside
giving out free ice cream
to the children.

Damaia Pitts

I Was Raised...

I was raised by
the woman that gave birth to me
cooking every Sunday, treating me right
chicken, pizza, and any type of food

treating me right, taking care of me.

Trevon Jackson

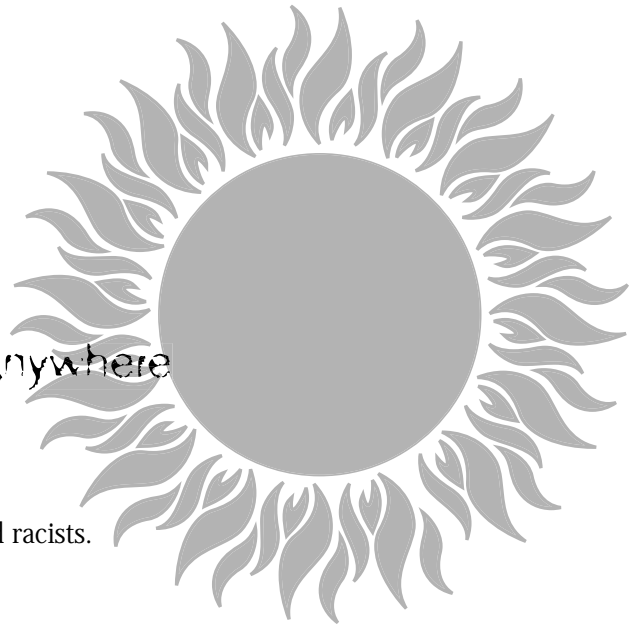
I Don't Want to Live Anywhere Where They Are...

I don't want to live anywhere
where they have bullies, killings and racists.

Bullies keep stuff started
and cause you to stay in the house.

Killings or killers are being stupid and
hating on people or they are
walking around smiling and just having fun.

Diamond Jones





I Don't Want to Live Anywhere Where They Are Shooting

I don't wanna live anywhere where
they are shooting cause my eyes
be getting weary, if you can take
your time to hear me, maybe you can
learn to love me. Just last year
my cousin got hit up on the block.
I heard it shot by shot. I don't wanna
live anywhere where they are shooting
cause my eyes be getting weary.

Melvin Barber

I Don't Want to Live Anywhere Where...

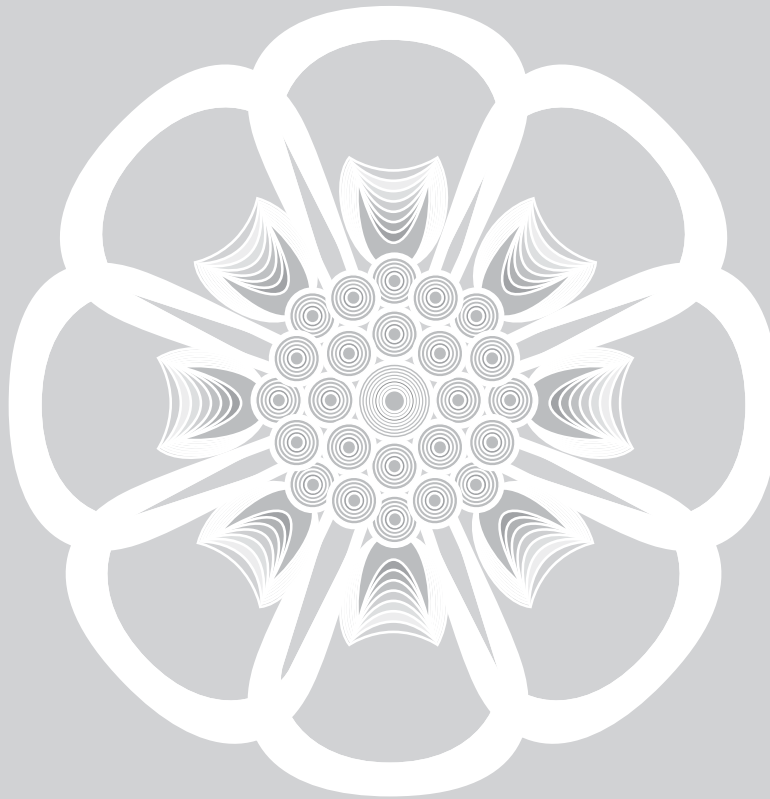
where people get shot at
where people fight all the
time
where people don't have any
homes or places to stay

I don't want to live anywhere
where

where people don't like me
where people let their
children do whatever

I want to live in
a place where I
can enjoy myself
and a place where
my family can live.

Rodnika Matthews



I Don't Wanna Live Nowhere

I don't want to live
nowhere where they are
trying to lock me
up. Where they are
sniffing crack and
smoking weed. I don't
want to live nowhere
where they are selling
weed and not getting
better jobs. Where
they are shooting and
killing.

I don't want to live
nowhere where one day
I meet a friend and the
next day that friend is
murdered. I don't want
to live nowhere where
that place is dirty and
nasty and stinky. I
don't want to live
nowhere where they
are disrespectful and
full of hate. I just
want to live in peace.

Terrence Nails

Elisha Bridges



My Hood

I live in a place
where people have
guns and knives on
each corner and
block. I live in a
place where the
crooked cops chase
you for nothing.

I live in a place where
crack heads run free
where people from St.
Elizabeth's spit on people's
food in the old McDonald's
and run free doing what
they want.

Theodore Washington



A Story That Could Be True

Day will turn to night
the wind will fight
against the Branches
that's been there waiting
for their turn to fall.

Cemeteries will bleed
humans will plead for
mercy against the moon.
Just like a thriller video
zombies will dance and one
will hear you scream.

The mound will grapple and
blood vessels shall pop
like Snapple. You run and run
wondering when help would
come to save you from your night.

Zombies will walk the
Earth and the Birth of Hades
will be brought to dawn.

Colletta Paylor



Tameka Jenkins

As Ghetto as a pole with written
hoods behind it on a wall of
RIP's. She walks with a
swagger to her hips swinging
down 16 blocks left and another to the right.

They call her Tammy. She's smart as
a cup of lemonade in a cup of a thousand
suns. She has so many Baby Daddys she
divides them into sections like army men
on war day.

You may not find as many Tamekas or
Baby Daddys, but she extends to far out
distances. A lover of the ghetto land. Her teeth
are as buck as a bull at a rodeo in Texas.
The many faces that she has will
not stop until she finds one.

Colletta Paylor



On The Bus With A Nickel

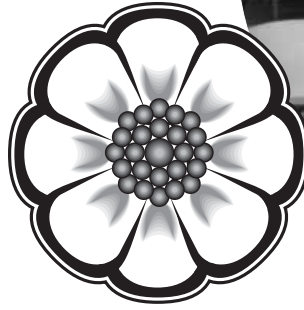
how did I get on
the bus with
a nickel
The only money
I had was
a nickel I was
down the street
from my
school, if I
didn't get on
the bus with
that nickel I
would have
had to walk home.
The bus driver
thought I put in
a token, he
looked like a
no hair body
building Charlie Brown.

Da'Quon Wood

Anger

Mad Madness Mad Anger
is Dangerous you can
kill from anger you can
harm with anger people
get angry all the time you
just have to deal with it.

Erica Russell



Life

life to me is not even fair.
life to me is not even fair.
one minute you are happy, next minute
you are sad.
life to me is not even fair
because one minute it's your B-day, next minute
it's 12:00 a.m., your B-day is over.
life to me is not even fair because
outside one minute it's light and
the next minute it's dark.
life to me is not even fair, one minute
the door is open, the next minute it closes
like this (Screak).
life to me is not even fair, one minute
the sky is white, next minute it is dark out
side, the sky is dark blue.

Dominique Courtney

A Story That Could Be True

If one day your dreams
finally come true and
you live in a big house on a hill.

If one day your mother
would stop always thinking
negative about you.

If one day your father
would stop selling drugs
and pay more attention to his kids.

If one day your mother
and father get back together
and live happily ever after.

If one day all the
drugs in the world stop
and killing stops as well.

If one day you could
bring all the people from
the dead and start a
new life.

Manaiza Kelley

Prayer for a Football Player

I've seen a football player.
In a second of time
a football player got hit
from the waist down.

I've seen a man get put
out of the N.F.L. for
a ferocious hit on another
football player.

The hit inside the man
was just like an
ultra shock wave just
from that one hit.

Trevon Jackson

Fire

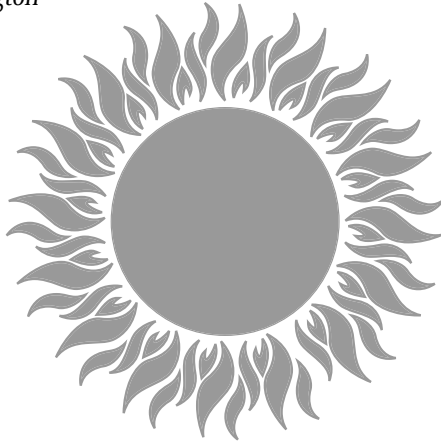
Fire is flames that fly when you
light it up. Fire is flames where
you make a camp fire you go put
your hands by it and warm them.
The fire flames are Red and Orange
and when mixed up it's like a fire
color. Fire is pretty colors and
so are the others. Fire is flames
and you can see it anywhere
on the stove, heater, matches.

Donna Washington

Playing With Matches

little boys and a girl playing
with matches setting their
self on fire, they're burning and
crying screaming for their
mother nobody there to
help they're burning up their
skin seeing them cry burns
my heart I can't do nothing
only could watch them playing
with matches not right fire
is scarey I would not play
with fire burn like hell
100 degrees, their burning souls
on fire I'm burning up my skin
is melting like a piece of ice sitting out.

Theodore Washington



Fire

Fire is like a hot fiery flame.
Sometimes I feel like
Johnny Blaze of Ghost Rider.
Sometimes I feel like I'm on fire but
don't know how to control it.
Sometimes fire can be like anger it
will always try to get you heated
it's not anger and fire that control you it's
what you do with it that counts.

Kentrell Zanders



Fire

Fire means to burn
to burn in pain.
Fire is to water
and water is to wood.
Wood floats on water.
Water burns fire.
It's all funny really
what it feels to play with fire.
People say it's dangerous.
I say it's
nothing.
Nothing but pain.

Iashia Davis

Roses, Or My Love Poem

Roses are red, violets
are blue, give me some
crayons, so I can color
a picture for you, and
please baby put some
pep in your step cause
I'm waiting.

Melvin Barber

Dap

What is dap, 2 hands hit
together and as they pull back
aggressive their snap

dap can be the beginning
of your day or walking
past just to say hi.

around my way, as I get out
of school I give dap to my friend
every day, morning and night

Darius Joshua

Son

Described a homie
a friend or close to
a friend. A name to
call

Your best friend
your main man
your boy. Not your
child, your buddy

Sticks witchu thru wateva
A friend or close to
a friend. Your son
or son-son. A friend
that you call your
son.

Terrence Nails

A Hug

When I give hugs
I feel good
because that means I
care about that person
every time I give
my little brother a
hug, I feel happy,
excited, and good because
I care for him and love him.

Kiera Dixon

Dap: Dap: Dap

A pound:

I was walking to my man
house and my other man
was on his front porch
and I went over there
and I give him some
Dap, Dap, Dap
every day I give
someone some
Dap, Dap, Dap

Some dap is a friend

Delvonte Jones

Smoked

Smoked, a threat to
assume that someone is
dead

Only two
people smoke others
feds and gangsters

to get smoked you got
to be on tha other
end of fire, a gun
and not the side of
the handle when it
goes off.

Jamal Clark



Ashley Stevenson, Jasmine Murray, Bnyonka Simpkins

Those Girls That Ran Together

Those girls that ran together
always got into trouble together lay
low they fought people for no reason
they always carried a knife where
ever they went they thought they
never were safe, they stole cars
they robbed other girls and boys
for no reason, they like setting things
on fire, they always come in
and out of jail.

Where do you think they will be
by the time they turn 20?

Manaiza Kelly



Those Girls That Ran Together

Those girls that ran together were
running around with their skirts up
to spite others. They caught a disease
and that's the end of their charade
few years later they died from AIDS

Ain't that a shame?

Melvin Barber

Seeing the Future

I come from a palace high above the sky.
I make my home an inspiration to everyone who enters.
I see a vision of my life goals
and I wonder what would happen if my stair case crashed.
When I am alone, I wander around
to find some place to have fun.
I imagine that I can charm my way into anything.
Every day, I see memories of my life around me,
but if I look closely, I can see the souls of everyone.
A voice inside me says that my fortune will come one day soon
and I want to tell the world that I am a rose just blooming.
Right now I am silent and trying to keep to myself,
but someday I will tower over everybody in glory.
I wish that some people could see their future the way I do.

Tiara Mason

See me now

I come from New York; it's like a clown world.
I make my home a very sad place.
I see nothing but bad people
and wonder if I have an evil spirit.
When I am alone, I talk and cry to myself.
I imagine I can somehow be charmed.
Every day, I see poison heartbeat walking by
but if I look closely, up in the clouds,
a voice inside me says I'm brokenhearted
and I want to tell the world nothing
but see your memory.
Right now I am flames and never ice
but someday I will be calm and peaceful.
I wish my uncle could see me now.

Andrea Hermans

My Cry for Help

I come from an unbelievable place that blooms like a rose.
I make my home a wonderful feast that bursts into flames.
I see a forgiveness place with no heartbeat
and I wonder, why do clouds make hurricanes, why?
When I am alone, I crash someplace where I'm safe.
I imagine that I can be anything I want to be.
Every day, I see bad things going on,
but if I look closely, all that is my cry for help.
A voice inside me says Blackberry, you're stronger than that
and I want to tell the world we can do it only if we try.
Right now I am happy that I'm here doing this
but someday I will be in the real world out there.
I wish for an everlasting lifetime.

Quanika Jackson

Markus Johnson



Congress Park

I come from a wild place called Congress Park.
I make my home charmed like a cotton box.
I see softest berries in the trees.
I wonder could I get there and
I wonder will my eyes change color as I walk in the street.
When I am alone, my heartbeat suddenly comes up
and my heart stops beating.
I imagine that I can sing a song in front of 1,000 people.
Every day, I see branches on the tree, a wonder,
but if I look closely, I think I am asleep.
My eyes closed, I think I am in a deep sleep.
A voice inside me says bronze away,
I say no, I got to sneak away,
and I want to tell the world that I am in some safe place.
Right now I am far away.
I wonder will I come back some day.
But someday I will ride away,
if you don't see me that's okay.
I wish a hurricane would come and take me away.

Tywain Green



All About Me

I come from unbelievable things from up above.
I make my home a palace, big and beautiful.
I see forgiveness, everlasting love,
and I wander in a memory of twilight.
When I am alone, I gaze in wonder.
I imagine that I can fly until I can't no more.
Every day, I see the nothingness of a blank body,
but if I look closely, I cry from the pain.
A voice inside me says go to the horizon
and I want to tell the world I'm a star.
Right now I am someplace doing a different thing
but someday I will shine.
I wish for greatness in the world.

Antonio Spencer

Stepping in the New Year

Stepping in the New Year with football steps high
and I tip-toe through the hole
struggling, trying to get a touchdown
crashing into other players.
Stepping in the New Year playing basketball
when I'm running down the court
it feels like I'm skating
because I'm sliding into another New Year.

Demetrius Foreman

Thoughts

I come from a palace, drifting a wind through my inspiration.
I make my home an everlasting fortune in my memory.
I see a charm bracelet glimmering in moonlight,
and I wonder if my fortune is calm enough to fall asleep.
When I am alone, I feel flames whirling around my bones.
I imagine that I can be a rose surrounded by rubies.
Every day, I see clouds piling overhead from my window,
but if I look closely, my eyes will become my vision.
A voice inside me says a song will become my destiny,
and I want to tell the world that my soul will not be asleep.
Right now I am a heartbeat reaching for my goal,
but someday I will be a shadow surrounded by emeralds.
I wish that my softness could be a spokesperson for cotton.

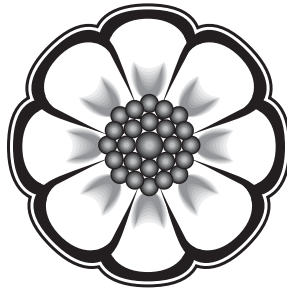
Raymond Reynolds

I come from

I come from an everlasting fortune.
I make my home a cradle, calm, asleep.
I see wild winds and I wonder
what would happen if I get poisoned.
When I am alone, I hope my shadow stays.
I imagine that I can have all the strength in the world.
Every day, I see clouds of memory,
but if I look closely, I see a softness-charmed girl.
A voice inside me says memories are glittering
and I want to tell the world unbelievable things.
Right now I am nothingness, but someday I will be inspirational.
I wish when I die I can go into the wild cotton clouds.

Sean Favors

Yasmin Jones



My home in flames

I come from darkness.
I make my home in flames.
I see flames in the distance,
and I wonder about a shadowy rose.
When I am alone, I sit in the moonlight.
I imagine that I can silence the rattling.
Every day, I see emeralds
but if I look closely it's strength and evil.
A voice inside me says wander in the tower
and I want to tell the world I will rule the it some day.
Right now I am nice, but someday I will be evil.
I wish I could thirst on souls.

Shaiki Johnson

My World

I come from a happy family.
I make my home by keeping it clean.
I see my surroundings every day
and I wonder what's important outside.
When I am alone, I like to listen to the wind.
I imagine that I can fly to a field of roses.
Every day, I see wild unbelievable visions,
but if I look closely, I see it's only my imagination.
A voice inside me says, you're crumbling at this point,
and I want to tell the world my home is like a palace.
Right now I am calm and steady
but someday I will betray my holiness.
I wish my father could see me now.

Demond Parker



Shannon Allen



Wayne Place

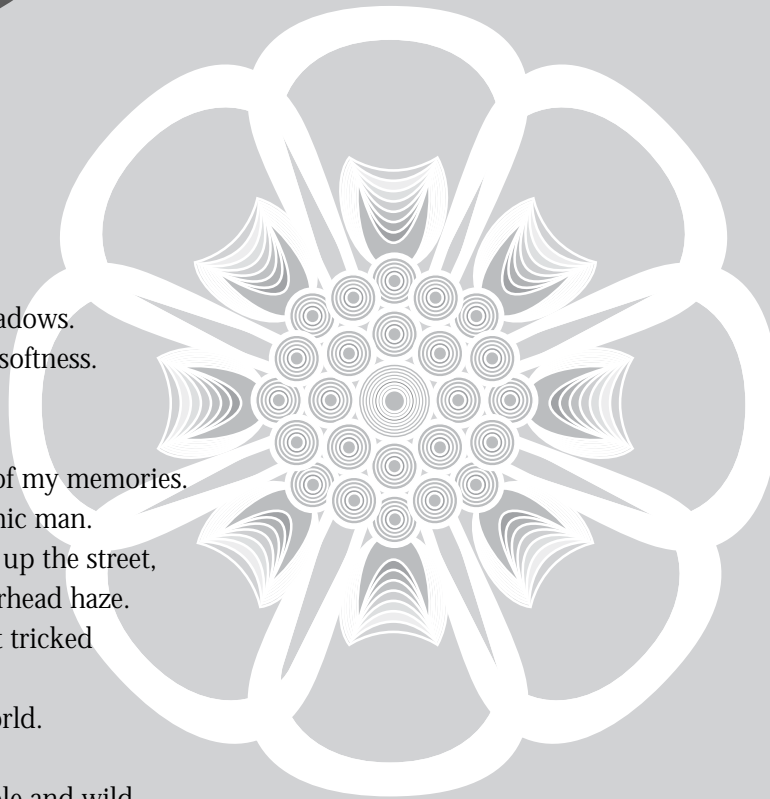
I come from someplace called Wayne Place.
I make my home turn into crumbling bones.
I see inspiration around the nation
and I wonder if I light the flames, would I be blamed.
When I am alone, I distance myself from the phone.
I imagine that I can live a long lifespan.
Every day, I see betrayal, but if I look closely,
it's like a tower, let the rain shower.
A voice inside me says stay calm,
and I want to tell the world, "Don't be alarmed."
Right now I am asleep, but
someday I will awake like a rattling snake.
I wish the moonlight would come out so bright.

Vincent Walker

4th Street

I come from 4th with flaming shadows.
I make my home charming with softness.
I see branches drifting and
I wonder if I will turn to bones.
When I am alone, I forget some of my memories.
I imagine that I can be the best mic man.
Every day I see me, rattling back up the street,
but if I look closely, I see the overhead haze.
A voice inside me says do not get tricked
and I want to tell the world that
I am the best drummer in the world.
Right now I am like a hurricane
but someday I will be unbelievable and wild.
I wish one day 4th Street would climb a tower.

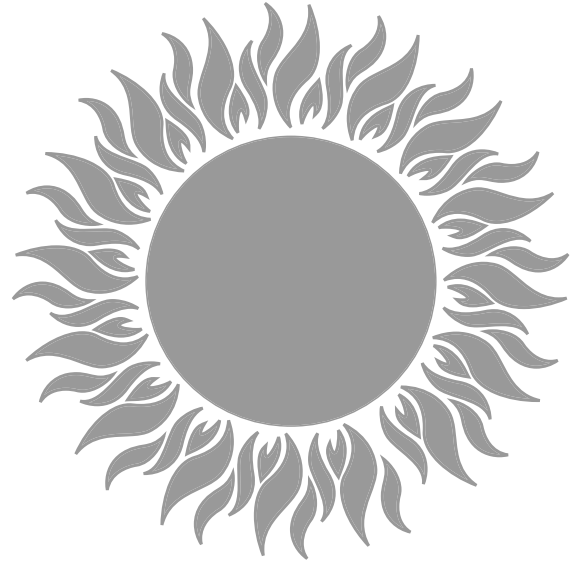
Dimitrius Winters



Life

Life is a roller coaster
That rolls right on through
Life is a TV show
That you can watch over and over and over
Then life can be a stone
Which will never mean anything to you
But just stays still, never to be lived
Life is a journey that has to be gone through
To get to the next level
To see what the end's gonna be
So if you really enjoy life and live through it
Life is smooth as gold.

Danielle Blake



My Dance Steps

I'm dancing the two steps
Flowing through the floor
As my feet reach the bar
With jazz playing in the background of my
mind
I'm spun across the stage
With the crowd's yelling and clapping
For me and dancing steps
And when I get nervous I start to thinking
About where my dancing is taking me
I desire this dream,
Beautiful,
Cute
And pretty
My feet, my legs, my steps
See me dance

Bnyonka Simpkins

Women

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 and in books
At times we may neglect them
Abuse them and control
But we don't know what they can do
To make our minds and intelligence unfold.

Marcus Johnson

Oh Mother

Oh mother,
You are so respectful
You bring the light when dark clouds
Come around the sky

Oh mother,
You are so loyal
You bring the beauty
You bring the truth
You bring the best that comes from me

Oh mother,
Don't you know?
I cherish those moments in time
Where we ate chips
While watching a movie

Oh mother,
I love you
I give my heart,
My soul,
And my promise to you

Oh mother,
I love all the great laughs we had

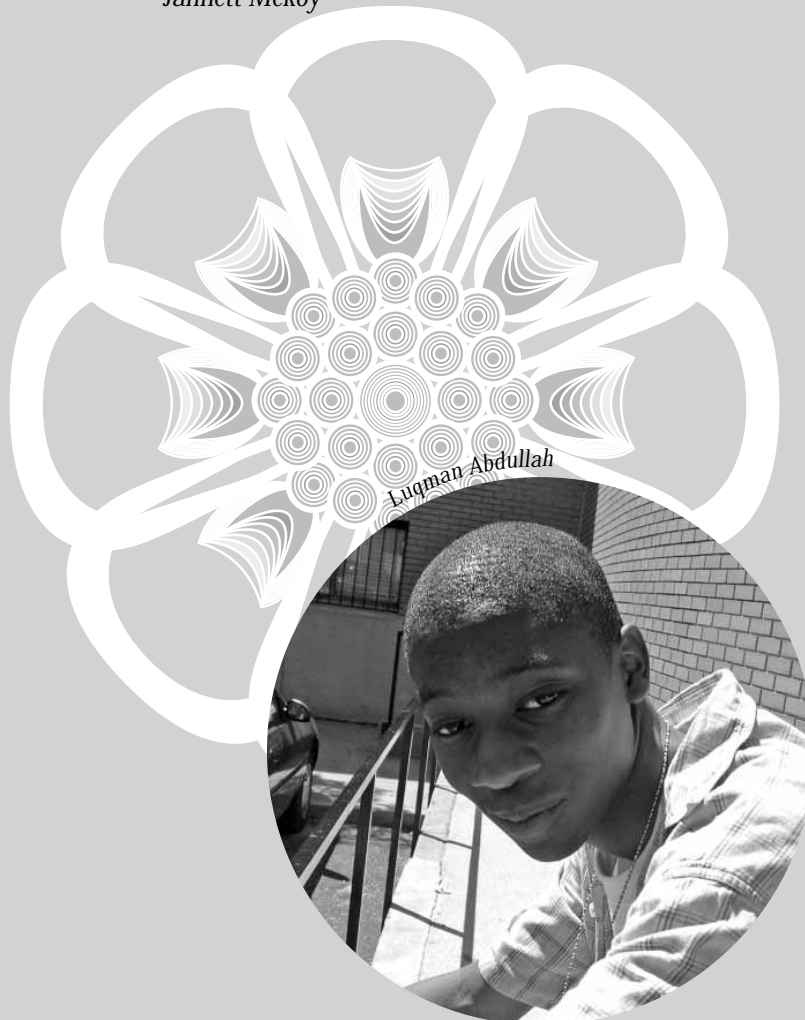
And oh mother,
I am so thankful
That I am your daughter

Brittany Johnson

The Beautiful Woman

The most beautiful woman on earth
The one who brought me on this earth
She's the best
I'll cherish her to her feet
They say you can have 20 fathers
But only one true mother
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 loyalist person you'll ever find
So I wrote this to the true woman in my life
My mother

Jannett Mckoy



School

My life is like school
I am listening to learn more
Trying to find more information
By reading books and asking questions
Working hard like my father with his job
Doing my work,
Trying to make a hundred,
Like running yards on a football field
My life is like a game
With the levels on the board
As I get older

Antonio Alston

Running

When I run away,
I'm not just running away from somebody
Or from something
I run away from the world at times
I wanna get away
From all the hatred
And evilness in this world,
From all the killing and the suicides
I wanna get away from my brothers sometimes
Because they can be pretty annoying
I cannot wait until I run away
From hurt and go on to my high school
At times I want to run away from
A lot of drama that these girls give us
In this school
Me running from something in my mind
I go to a different world
Where there is always peace
So when I run
It's not from somebody
I'm running for my own reasons

Malik Moore

June

On my
Birthday,
I smell the sweet
Birthday
Cake

II

The sun was
So bright
It was shining
In my eyes

III

The birthday cake was so good
My mother wanted a piece of it
To take home with her

IV

I went to the zoo
And the men
That worked there
Let me feel the soft tiger

Melody Henson

Driving, Sliding, Gliding, Fighting

This year,
I will be driving my way out of Hart
Next year,
Gliding right into Ballou
On the football team
Fighting to keep my grades up
And thriving to success
Making sure I only keep school on my mind
And making sure I'm collecting the right information
And transferring it to my mind
Keeping my mind on winning
And achieving my goals for the 9th grade
Hoping that God can see through the years of growing
Into a grown man
And not a child from the hood
That's why I'm going to drive,
Slide,
Glide,
And fight through school

Curtis Canty

Fighting

I fight for a chance to live
Moving to another dimension,
Another division
High school is my goal
Then next is college
Fighting for a chance
A chance to graduate
So the people can stop hating
I'm smart because I got dreams
So when I say I'm fighting
You'll know what I mean

Eric Quarles

Jamie Warren



Whirling Flames

I come from a whirling tower or hurricanes
I make my home glow with moonlit inspiration
I see visions of flames, betrayal, and trickery in my memory
And I wonder if, in the distance, a sapphire lies
When I am alone, I shoot clouds of flames into the whirling twilight
I imagine I can fly in the wind of everlasting souls
Every day I see a shadow of the ocean,
But if I look closely into my memory, I fade away
A voice inside me says Poison the ocean with hate
And I want to tell the world to be thankful for life
Right now I am asleep in the silence of the moonlight,
But someday I will clash with my enemies
I wish to live in a peaceful land of whirling flames

Mark Neal

My community

I come from majestic Japan, land of the Rising Sun.
I make my home on a hill in a distant palace.
I see food, lots of food,
rice, fish, sushi, and chicken,
and I wonder what causes them
to stay so peaceful and kind.
Sometimes when I am alone,
I think it is because they do meditation or Tai Chi.
I imagine that I can be calm and cool without all that stuff.
Every day, I see people, lots of people
walking up and down the street,
but if I look closely, I see criminals and future crooks.
A voice inside me says
why can't everybody be nice and calm,
and I want to tell the world that you shouldn't kill, steal or lie.
Right now I am hoping that
the world can change and start being responsible,
but someday I will change the way people look at the world.
I wish I could help my community.

Thomas Whitney

Where I'm From

I come from a place.
I make my home shine.
I see eyes that are red and I wonder what it means.
When I am alone, I cry.
I imagine that I can do magic.
Every day, I see bones everywhere,
but if I look closely, there is nothing there.
A voice inside me says keep calm,
and I want to tell the world that I am seeing something.
Right now I am scared, but someday I will be normal.
I wish that I was a shadow.

Jamal Conyers

Running away

I ran past school
Like a mad cheetah
Crazy and wild

I fear my people
They end up
In magical forests

I don't know
How to see
What they are looking for

Sha'Quan Smith

The Teardrop

when your body is empty
then it will get full
because your heart
is broken
then it will get full

because someone broke it
it was empty
because I loved the girl
and then she
just broke my heart
that's why it got full
I am very full
and one day
I will be empty
again, and I
hope I don't get
full again

David Brown

I'm Very Black

Black is like a light
that can't be light
because of several
people, people
are broke
from sky to above
where everyone dies
high in the sky
his heart is
like gold dust
in the sand
I can see in
his eyes
he is a bright man
his eyes rise like
sparkling glitter
he's like rain and hail
with his heart and eyes

Emmanuel Youman

Forgive Me

King
Black skin
tree
and woods
bonds of animals
then bugs floating
around the boat
and the sky feels
like puffed up clouds
like the beast
and let everyone rip
slowly in the sky
every day I feel
high, I'm trying my
best not to see the
little kids fly
and the ugly and
the bad
today I feel
so happy and glad
it did not rain
my heart is hurt bad
then pain, I'm thinking
I'm insane and love is
everything to me in
my heart I will let it be
What? Am I here today for
nothing?

Emmanuel Youman

The Power of My Beautiful Deep Eyes

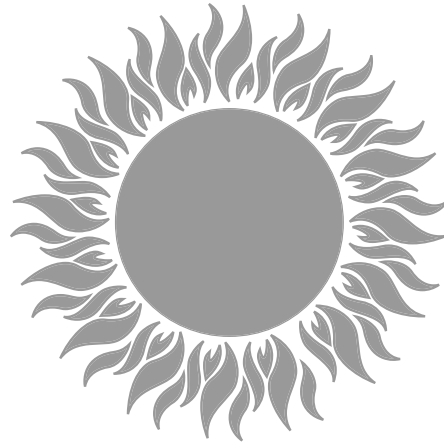
I see a man who's
lost and confused

He looks broken and
bruised

Young black and handsome
on one side
brown, black, white, and gray
with a touch of old on the other

By day by night, my skin gets
darker, my life gets brighter
my eyes have more beauty
and my body has more strength

Denisha Bolden



Me

I live as happy as a princess
I dream lovely like a star
my silent eyes are frozen like a mountain
as my sorrow falls like rocks
my mind shines like electricity
my hands write for a note
my tears flow with joy and hurt
my broken time passes like a sore throat

Da'Shawn Washington

I Want To

When I slept thinking I would see you
no one was there,
memories surround me screaming
"I won once again"
I'm trying to wake up from all the static
'cause there's more chaos coming,
I'm running towards the memory lane
For resurrection, but there's a battle
I have to fight even though it's just
a dream,
I'm scared, I want to wake up,
I want to purge us not being together,
and place everything back to the day we first
met,
I want to

Da'Shawn Washington



Black Man

Black man, Black man gettin' beat by a fed
in the dark with a nightstick bleeding from his head
probably for something he didn't do
this happens everyday, has it happened to you?
white policemen, black policement,
everyday they hurt us
while Black man daydreams
hoping for justice

Delonte Clemons

By the end of the season

Green on the grass
green in the trees
green on apples, grapes and leaves
watching blue skies
watching birds fly
providing new plants
every season
before the old ones die
by the end of the season
new plants rise

Sherwin Duckett



Myah Robertson

Pain

We out here trying to save the country,
But every time I go to war a soldier dies in front of me.
Sometimes we lose more than one soldier a day.
Some of us are doing it just so we can get paid.
Money means nothing, if you lose your life.
What do you say, that's a hell of a price.

Antwan Petty

I am

I am red like blood
call me a square
the greatest number in
the world as wild as
a lion think of me
as a waterfall wild
and obnoxious call
it go-go

Earl James

Invisible Poem

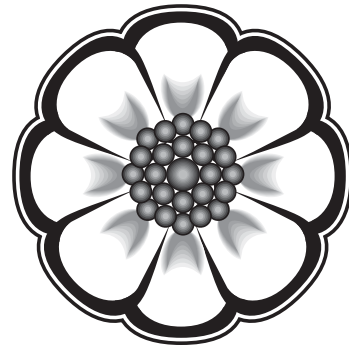
look eye 2 eye as they are two full moons
black and white hair and many colors as a rainbow
full as night madness
turning into night sadness
I am being slit in half
for a while I notice
I am looking at a mirror
the person I thought was my enemy
is my self.

Brittney Savoy

The Little Squeak

I know this girl
she's always wearing a
mask, she tries to
fit in but she is
running out like a pen
but when she goes home
there's a whole new her
she's really a nice girl
she does what she has to do
she goes to church
every Sunday that's why
I think she's wearing a mask

Dominique Johnson



Fade

Why was it that when the first time I
saw you it was like I lost you
and my heart broke into pieces?
My eyes turned into red stares, even though
you left me alone I was awakened with the
past sound of your voice when you told me
you were surrounded by nothing but tears
and broken hearts. I am waiting for you to fade
all the pain away.

Kiarra Payton

Rewritten Nightmare

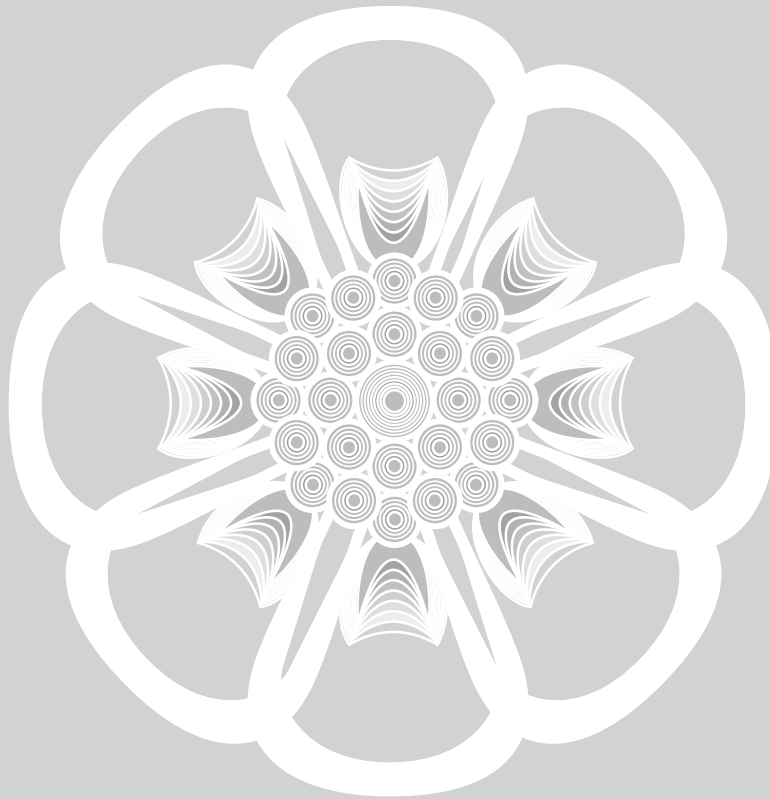
Angry twins split at birth,
rewrite their own nightmares
as I fall to sleep a wicked nightmare
of my enemy comes outside my nightmare
and starts to beat me
as I scream for help
no one seems to hear me
as my eyes turn to fire
my tears seem to pour out faster
my soul colors outside the lines of
death as the usual suspects yell,
let me go, the walls and windows seem to fade away
the angry twin wishes he was newborn again.

Kiarra Payton

Feelings

flames through the heart
as friends begin to
come toward the
defenders who seem
to glance at the victim
who stood on the horizon
frightened from the shadow
of thunder, the black eye
owl's call, which made
the wind twist, tomorrow
will melt away like a painted
portrait of a lady on a wet
surface
but still awake in harmony
I feel private and
out of dust

Danielle Stover



Just Because

Just because I am Black
and judged all over
doesn't mean I don't have
a colorful conscience
this is the reflection of my inner ghost
it has a hold on me

Just because a girl wonders
sometimes about how she has been
invisible from the start
called or known as the forgotten one

Just because someone scribbles
my face gray and colors out
the lines blue, doesn't mean
it sets my mood orange

Just because it's me again
sleeping with my eyes open
doesn't mean I can predict the
future of a child

Just because nothing ever happened
I can make his-story a dream and her-story
her future

Danielle Stover



Leave Me Alone

We wear the mask that is unpretty.
It hides our beauty.
This gorgeous face cannot be seen.
The mask is making me unseen
with labeled boxes and tags all over.
And the echoes of my mask could not be heard.
Me imagining beauty without a mask
would be frightening.
I discover tattoos and other kinds
of beautiful things on the mask.
Please, please mask
unleash me.
Show me my beauty!

Keona Powell

Invisible

We could not see his body
the only thing we could see
was the shadow of his face
sitting there listening to him
tell me things but I could not see him.
He was the usual suspect, he was
creating his own image, he was
refusing silence, naturally gifted.
He would say let me take you
to my forgotten ones.
Day by day night by night
he would soar across
the dark alley.
The clash of words I am afraid to speak
proved me wrong. He was
the chosen one,
the image of me.

Keona Powell

Dislike

A TWO-VOICE POEM

I dislike
everything
I dislike
fakers
everything
fakers
I dislike
liars

I dislike
haters
I dislike
people who
think that
they are
better
than other
better
people

Kaniece Whitaker

Behind the eyes

I've been in his shoes
behind the eyes
guess this happened last night
this can't be good
I didn't have the same face I should
I never thought I had to choose
this last night behind the eyes
I need to take a breath
keep my head
try to figure out
what's going to happen next
wait just ask myself
what's behind the eyes

Luqman Abdullah

Rolling Hills

Riding my bike
in a summer citrus
walking in a navy blue yard
here comes a cheetah running
down the island.
There are beautiful trees
no cars riding past the streets
you will not hear a sound
until this giant animal
comes out of the raspberry roses.

Latia Pimble



He Ain't Heavy

He ain't heavy
He's my brother

Because if he wants
To go somewhere

You have to lift his spirit
'Cause low self-esteem is not good

And like I said, he ain't heavy
When it comes to getting

Over the wall, when it
Comes to success

Marquette Price

Newborns

Seen together as newborns
not knowing they were split at birth
as years go by they could
feel something was wrong
going back to a place once born
angry twins split at birth
reunite in their own nightmares
they stand together as one
"let's go back as we were born,
laying side by side,
two different mothers came
and split us apart."

DeJon Tucker

Prove Me Wrong

Prove me wrong that
this is a man and a lady.
But we could be different they say.
She's a black and beautiful lady
but it seems she had a bad day
fear in her eyes as she looks.
But we could be different they say.
The man stares as if him
and this lady are thinking the same thing.
But we can be different they say.
Could they be thinking
good or bad things?
"I look like you from one side," she says.
But we can be different they say.

Nicole Williams

Blossom

I am a lion
I will be fearless
I want to be red
I used to be a square
I let go of the galaxy
I've forgotten how to jump
I remember how to be a pink
blossom

DeJon Tucker



Dripping Sorrow

June, summer
and that evening
I was outside
the heat was so hot

and the sky looked like
a hurricane was coming
so I hurried on before dawn
so that I could see the moonlight

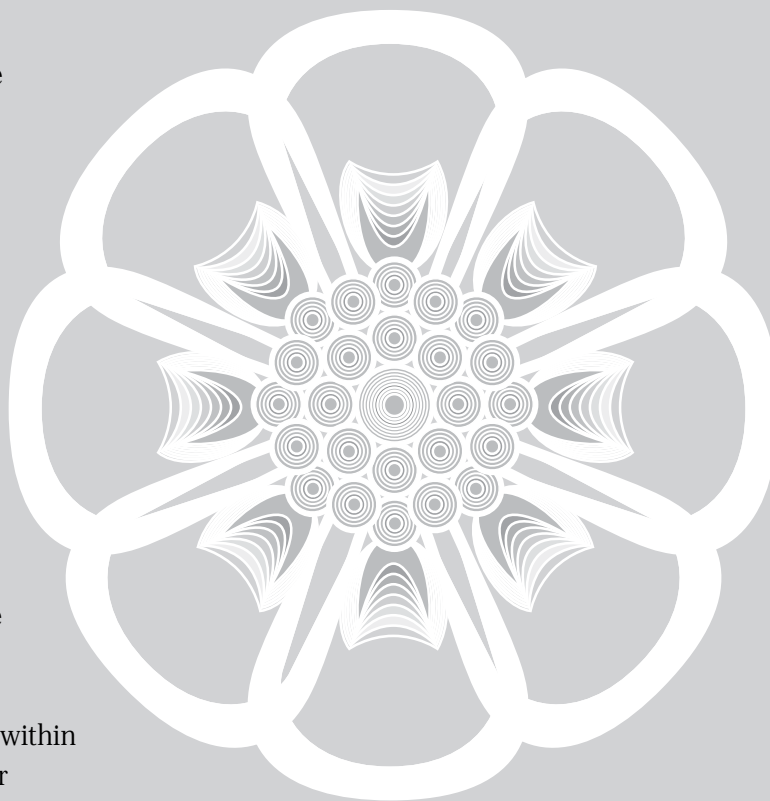
but I had forgotten my
sweater outside, then
raindrops quickly came down
and I smoothly ran backwards
to my house and forgot that
my sweater outside
was left out there
I just didn't think about it anymore

Markiya Davis

Writing

The hobby that has two intentions of pencil and paper
Ideas that preserve themselves with every inky letter
The sound of the scribbling that rhymes with the pen
The very gorgeous handwriting that's written
It doesn't exclude any genre,
drama, romance, science fiction, comedy
With every stroke of the quill,
his hand is weary with the main point
He makes lovely letters with lyrics
The strike of the mighty sword is inferior
to the pen in his angry letter
Words blend in with the setting

Maryum Abdullah



Anacostia

A never forgotten dirty place
where fish will never swim
where bodies lay beneath
the sand and dirt will sneak within
The fear of all the dirty water
that splashes up in your face –
you will never be able to get it out

Nichell Kee

Not Reality

As I strutted my stuff in the
electrifying sunlight, I found
some golden sunglasses that had
misty gray lenses

I picked them up, put them on
and there was a blinding
light, next thing you know
the store across the street
that was being robbed, now wasn't

The abandoned old woman who needed help
up the stairs was now quickly being helped

This oasis is perfect, no killers or drug dealers
no woman or man being robbed or
put down at their jobs

All you hear right now is the wonderful
soothing bells from the sanctuary
the fleeing animals, who were just being hurt
were now being carefully treated

The mango colored skies that are filling my eyes
have birds streaking across
with bursting sunlight barely showing over the hills,
the glasses started to crack as the glasses are
torn in two like pieces of paper

I saw the woman still having trouble up the steps
I saw the person who robbed the store run down
the street and shoot a little girl
I also saw drug dealers going to kids a little over twelve

What happened? What happened to my new world?
What happened to my oasis?

Nichell Kee

Windswept

I am a Black woman
who is a little windswept
sometimes in the morning
I have secrets about my life
I can't stop from being me
what I can stop is me from doing
the same windswept things in my life
and sometimes at school
I feel windswept

Jamie Warren



What I See

I see desks
with poetic people
I see pencils and
pens tapping and scrolling
on a paper wondering
what to write
I see the pictures
on the walls coming
to honor people's eyes
I see words
flowing on papers
like the ocean
I see myself
creating art
on paper
with faithful words
I hear the laughter
of the flowing group
I see words written on
the board like a lullabye
I see the tiles on the floor
lighting up like
a scarlet colored candle

Reginald Conway

My Life

Sometimes I feel my life is like
the birth of a newborn baby.
Sometimes my life feels like
a wet and cold morning
and I don't want to go to school.
But most of the time
my life is great.

Yasmin Jones

Unappreciated

There's an unappreciated woman
who's not feeling so well
she's feeling like she's not wanted
or she has no respect.
She knows that her family loves her
but she still feels this way.
She is having some problems with
her love life, but she is
still standing strong.
When you look at her you
cannot see her bad feelings
but they're all inside.
I would never have expected
her to be hiding.

Yasmin Jones



Monae Smith

Chocolate Surprise

my life is like chocolate surprise
you never know what it's gonna be
it's chocolate, but you never know
if it's gonna be a cake, a muffin
or just chocolate pudding
you never know what
I'm going to be or do
I'm like this because everyone wants me
especially the ladies

Markus Johnson

I Am

I am what I say I am
And no one can tell me how I am
If I was a voyage
I would go all over the world

I am a person who will respect
you and myself
And I am a person who will love
and help a person
I am also silly and fun to be around

I am a nice person
But at times if you get on my nerves
I will pop off
So I am warning you now
I may look nice
But I have a lot of attitude

Wendie Thomas

Hate

Hate sounds like that annoying sound when
someone takes their nails and runs them
down the chalkboard.

Hate tastes like the everlasting taste
of burnt popcorn.

Hate looks like that look that you give
the person you hate.

Hate feels like walking around your house
with no socks and shoes and stepping
on a long and sharp nail that is rusty.

Last but not least, hate smells like that
garlic smell that surrounds your whole house
that makes your stomach hurt.

Hate is a lot of things.
But you won't experience any of it,
until you hate someone as much as I do.

Patrice Rouse



If I Was a Waterdrop

If I was a waterdrop
I would go through the ground
and make mud puddles
If I was a waterdrop
I would wet the trees and
make the pretty leaves come out
I would come from the clouds
and wash the earth from its dry self
and make the earth become clean

Danielle Blake

Rising

You may talk about me
like I'm a statue.
You may step on me like
I'm a bug.
But I'm rising above you.
I may not be like you
Have a lot of friends and
get the cutest boys in school.
But I'm rising.
You may tell me that I'm fat
and I'm too smart and
won't amount to nothing.
But I'm rising.
You may tell me that I'm not
pretty and not very bright.
But over it all, I'm rising.

Danielle Blake

My Friends

My friends go to my school.
My friends are always by my side.
My friends are crazy.
But they are fun.
They are funny.
My friends are lazy.
They have big attitudes.
We always play at recess.
When I am mad, they calm me down.

Jada Brooks

My Daddy

My Daddy is fun.
We play volleyball.
We go to the park.
My Dad has a big house.
I look just like my Dad.
He always looks out the window.
He walks slowly outside when I'm
at his house.
His shadow is big.

Jada Brooks

The Forbidden Room

The empty paper was
desperate for
unwanted words.
The words on the
board are flotsam
or maybe jetsam.
The computers are
injured from
the thieves
going with
a slow flow.
The pictures
on the wall
reached recovery
from the car accident.
The words are tortured
by kids. The notebooks
make noise like an
ocean wave.
The books are unloved
and complain when
they are not being
read. The clocks
are not honoring
these teachers
'cause they are
not working. There
is stillness as
I think. The
chairs are singing
lullabies. The desk
remains as rotten
merchandise.
The windows are still
like scarlet candles.

Ashley Stevenson

Kiana Murphy



Dreams and Words

when I speak
the words just turn blue
thinking of being
in a room full of many people

having many dreams
I saw myself melting away

tomorrow maybe
I might dream
of private thunder

my dreams tell me
people fear absence
I tell them take a
glance at the orange

Ashley Stevenson

Questions I Ask Many People

Is my sister skinny as a twig
or fat as a building?

If I didn't have a sister, would I
have my own room?

Why are you king of the jungle?

Why do you sleep with the light on?

Will your car be red in the future
because back in the day you said
your car was a Lexus in red?

Without your electricity, can you see?

What would happen if you went back in time?

I wonder in the future will I be famous?

Is it always this hot?

Bnyonka Simpkins

Colors

Ochre

glitter golden yellow
on my nails
sparkling so bright

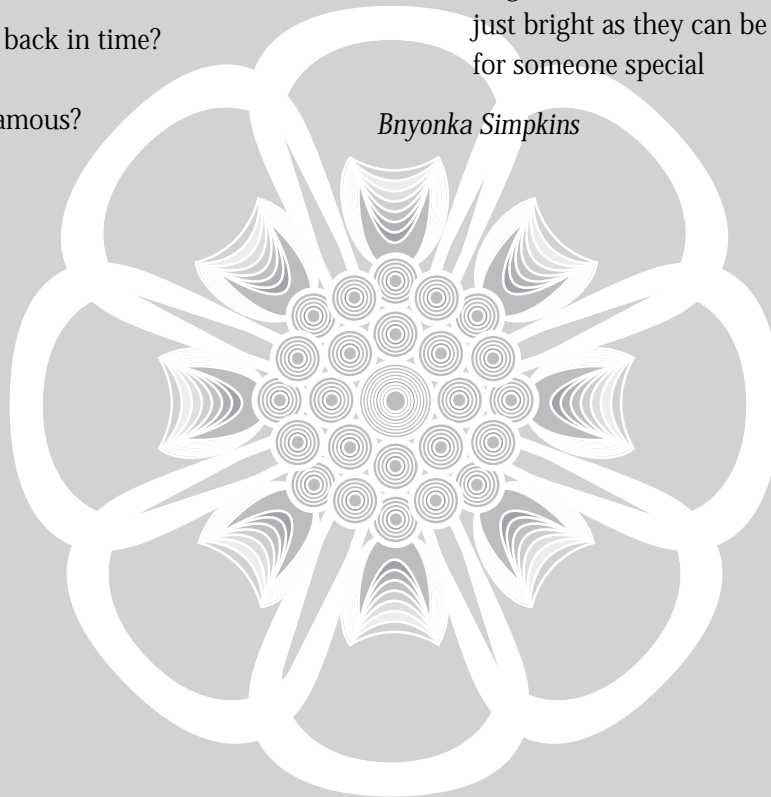
Emerald

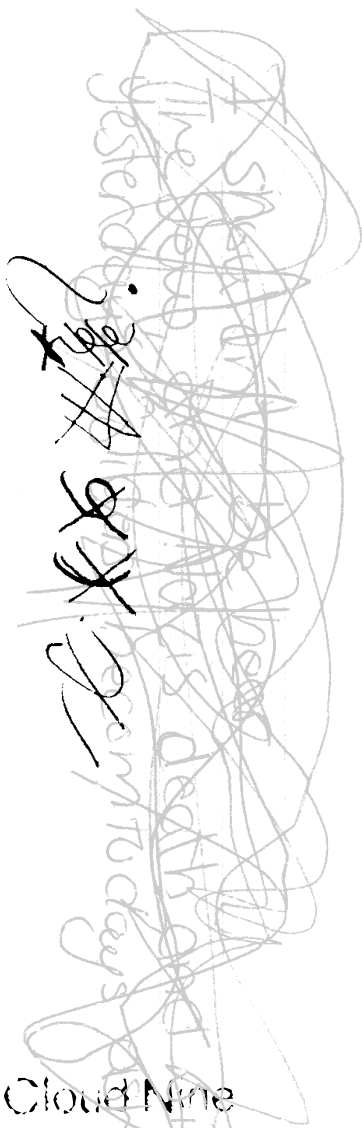
bright green trees
standing still
blowing through the wind

Scarlet

bright vivid roses
just bright as they can be
for someone special

Bnyonka Simpkins





Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow

Exploring cells, just to see what's in there
Or what can be in there when you fill them
Other people on the outside looking at you
Wondering eyes, wondering about
the not so clear past of yours and
not so great future of tomorrow
But why can't tomorrow think for itself?
Why can't tomorrow's today think of
the yesterday's yesterday?
Does it all add up to the present?
Or will we have to wait for
yesterday's tomorrow to flow
into the future?
Even if it is
yesterday, today, tomorrow,
it's still stuck in the crevices
of your cerebrum
for you to think about.

Aaron Montel Brooks

Cloud Nine

They say when you love someone
you have to let her go.
But
what if you give her infinite
chances to leave. . . .
And when you open your eyes
she's still there in your arms?
Don't get me wrong
I want her there.
But why does she want to be there?
You can tell if someone is a lie
by looking them in the eye.
But when she looks me in the eye
all of sudden I'm in the sky.
1 cloud, 2 cloud, 3 cloud, 4. . . .

Aaron Montel Brooks

For My Aunt

Girl, your dark
brown long pretty hair

you're a retired model
short and skinny

you're nice
wanna be mean

and when I'm in trouble
you're on my team

Keishawna Simms



Frozen

frozen in a cold world like an August snow
it goes past your ears, whistling slow
crumbling from wind like a fiery cloud
time awaits you like delicate rocks and fragile
mountains
angry poetry leaps

don't forget
remember to question God with your sweetness

Sha'Quan Smith

Who am I?

I'm not a cheetah who runs so fast
I'm not a snake, so sneaky and quiet
I'm not a lion, strong and loud
I'm not a hater, but a congratulator

I'm light as a rock, smooth as silk
I'm very talkative and serenely sweet
I wear clothes that are colorful and creative
I'm cool as December
I'm a dynamic diva with fiery fever
I have moody moments but I'll be okay

Who's this luxurious girl?
I'm myself
Not a cheetah or none of those things!

Briyianne Sharlene Johnson

Where I'm From

I am from the two level house
From low cut grass and Sunday dinners

I am from big boned Jaylin, Charles, and the Jacksons
I am anger and impatience

From being pretty and angry,
from bad pictures and a Christian family

I am from coco puffs from the box and canned corn
From the accident, the problems and the lies

I am from shopping with friends at the Dollar tree

I am from Congress Park
From dirt and steady

Joylin Yates

Confused Am I

To question God on a journey with no path
Searching for answers with such emancipated hands
With a poor uplifted soul staring at
The delicate rock beside the white rose
Lost in mind, lost in self,
Wondering, have I ever felt?
Bittersweet memory makes it so hard to focus
The weight of weakness won't go away
Deep down she knows something is missing, but what?
Time awaits
She's still questioning
She imagines dancing on the moon
Drowning with glory
Like red dirt and black sand, life comes
Sometimes she thinks
From simple to sophisticated to loving myself
While dining among stars
She whispers to me, "I can finally be free."

Joylin Yates

the blues

I got the blues when I found love
on a two-way street
and lost it on a lonely highway

I got the broken heart blues from being in love

I got the blues when I asked God to send me an angel
from the heavens above to Hell

I got the blues when my mother left me
with nothing to say

I got the blues when I saw
my uncle get shot
twice in his head

I got the blues when I watched him lay dead
in his casket

I got the blues when my dad threw a party for me
and it ended early because of all the drama

I got the blues when I turned 12
because I wouldn't be young no more

I got the blues...

Shainairie Jones

dc creative writing workshop

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