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Cover, l-r: Marcus Johnson, James Saunders, Khalil Jones, Deon Stover, Sequan Wilson, Marcus Barnes
Above, l-r: Marcus Barnes, Lamar Brooks, Marcus Johnson, Kiana Murphy, Steven Reed, Bernice Caldwell, Renita Williams, Monae Smith, Nancy Schwalb, DarVel Suggs, Devon Hudson, Christy Gill, Kirk Murphy
Welcome to the 27th edition of hArtworks, the nation's only inner-city public middle school literary magazine, written and edited by the students in the after-school writing club at Charles Hart Middle School. hArtworks is published through a collaborative effort between the school and the D.C. Creative Writing Workshop, an independent non-profit working to create a literary renaissance in Southeast Washington. Now in its eighth year, hArtworks gives our young writers the opportunity to exercise their creative energies, speak their minds, and be read by an audience throughout the city. The 2009 edition of Poet's Market recognizes hArtworks as “an outstanding example of what a literary journal can be (for anyone of any age).”

As another exhilarating school year draws to a close, we have many new triumphs to celebrate. Our students have written and performed their ninth original adaptation of a classical drama, this year updating Christopher Marlowe’s “Dr. Faustus” to create “Soul for Sale.” Our young poets have again excelled in writing competitions, fielding more winners than any other middle or high school, public or private, in the Parkmont Poetry Contest. Congratulations to Parkmont winners Marcus Barnes, Lamara Brooks, Bernice Caldwell, Davon Ford, Devon Hudson, Khalil Jones, Damon Kee, Nichell Kee, Shawntay Kent, Kiana Murphy, Kirk Murphy, Khadijah Rashad, Steven Reed, Monae Smith, DarVel Suggs, Renita Williams, and Sequan Wilson. Congratulations also to Imani Hyman, who won first place in Youth Poetry in the Larry Neal Awards, and to Kierra Parks and Jason Goolsby, who earned second place and honorable mention in the same category. Also in the Larry Neal Awards, Deamonte Gibson won first place in Youth Essay, and James Saunders won second place in Teen Poetry. And in the Junior League Teen Poetry Competition, Marquise Lewis was the top eighth grade poet in the city. Our students have read their work at many venues this year, including Busboys and Poets, the American Poetry Museum, Barnes and Noble, the Smithsonian Museum of American History, and the Afrocentric Books Expo at the Mall at Prince Georges. To top it all off, they have now published their 27th issue of hArtworks!

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 Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, Children's Fund of Metropolitan Washington, Community Foundation for the National Capital Region, D.C. Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation Project My Time, John Edward Fowler Foundation, Harman Family Foundation, International Monetary Fund, Lucas-Spindletop Foundation, Mattel Children's Foundation, Marpat Foundation, Moran Family Fund, Meyer Foundation, New York Avenue Foundation, Prince Charitable Trusts, Luther Replogle Foundation, Spring Creek Foundation, Hattie M. Strong Foundation, The Tom Lane Fund, Wachovia Foundation, Wendling Foundation, Weissberg Foundation, The World Bank, Anonymous, Michael Joy and TSCJoy/Monterey, LLC, Sarah Booth and Bloomberg L.P., Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, GO! Creative, LLC, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Arena Stage, the Shakespeare Theatre, Woolly Mammoth Theater, McGuire Williams Associates, Joyce Page and Ms. Printing, Tollefson & Gustini Investment Management, our friends at Popeye’s on Malcolm X Avenue, George and Lenore Cohen, Nancy Folger, Janet Horgen, Sharis and Thorn Pozen, Clyde E. Shorey, Richard Thompson, and Ladislaus von Hoffmann.

Our interns, Abbey Chung, Bernitta Johnson, and James Saunders also deserve our thanks for giving so much of their time and energy to our after-school Writing Club, as do our volunteers, Helen Hooper and Shannon Rampe.

Special thanks for the hard work and dedication of the D.C. Creative Writing Workshop Board of Directors: Mary Ann Brownlow, Bernie Horn, Michael Joy, Joan Kennan, Aileen Morse, Bill Newlin, Dr. Pat Papero, Raina Rose Tagle, Nancy Schwalb, and Rosetta Thurman.

We would also like to thank the following administrators, teachers, and staff who are our partners in this endeavor: Principal Billy Kearny; Assistant Principals Ms. Crystal Cartwright, Lisa Faulkner-Jones, and Mr. Aaron Lurry; Ms. Elizabeth Davis, Mr. Shawn Fedinez, Ms. Gloria Fergusson, Ms. Christine Gill, Mr. Jeff Griswold, Ms. Josie Johnson, Ms. Eleanor Seale, Ms. Sherry Dailey, and Ms. Maevern Williams.
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Featured Poems

Winners

of the Parkmont Poetry Contest, the Larry Neal Awards, and the Junior League Teen Poetry Competition
Happy New Year

I crawl into the new year
Expecting a change
But not really seeing a difference
I can already see the clouds rolling in
Struggle hits me like lightning
Burning my shyness and bringing with it a rain of agony

Last year was just as bad
Maybe a bit calmer, but still the usual
Thunderstorm of pain
Flashes of confusion
Thoughts, questions come storming in
How can a heart beat if it’s broken?

That year I thought I went flying into it
This year I peeked in on the cold month
And went crashing down

The year just started
Already I’m trapped by guilt
Burning a hole in my mind
How long shall I be trapped?
I’ll wait until it passes, just like every year

Nichell Kee

My Resolution

I am slithering into a new beginning:
Not completely there,
But finding my way.
Promise ahead and tragedy is behind me
Divided by a brick wall that must come down.
Like a wrecking ball to an old building,
Fire to fire causes nothing but more fire.
I am slithering into a new beginning
So I crawl away from the past.

Marquise Lewis
The Poem of the Widow’s Son

Dat pretty lightskin lady wit da pretty butta skin and da ruby red fingerwaves,
sinin’ dat song she always be singin’. It’s just her voice makin’ love with the piano. I be listenin’.

I see it goin’ down in a smoky gray and black room. It smell like cigarettes and Stetson and polished bullets. Nobody’s talking. Dey just payin’ close, close attention to the love scene. All these dudes got on suits and hats wit da feathers on ‘em. And dey listenin’ jus like I be.

She be singin’ “Love don’t live here anymore.” The piano always got the right thing to say back to her licorice lyrics. They get along so good. It’s like one of the silly fairy tales we read about in skool, dat ain’t real.

And if they is real, then it ain’t for long cuz they always die. Fairy tales die and leave you in a nightmare. Like momma when daddy died.

Daddy gone and you know he ain’t comin’ back. Now all momma got is that piano and me to love.

James Saunders
**My Name**

In the morning, my name feels deadly
In the afternoon, my name feels real
Outside, my name feels loud
At the end of school, my name feels happy
The next day, my name feels good
Going to school, my name feels magic.

When my friends call me,
when I write my name,
it feels secret.
My name feels funny
when I make my friends laugh.
My name feels like music
When people say it.

*Lamara Brooks*

---

**To Get Water**

A poem is a flame of fire
that thrashes in the forest
that makes pain come and
forces people to get out while
other people are getting wet.
A poem knits rhymes
together and takes pride in
their work, that forces other kids
to know what to do,
that freezes kids' brains and curls
their hair. A poem is
a squirmy letter that writes
what you think and calms down
what they think, something
that makes you feel dread
to read it, that makes you feel
disgust, because they have to.

*Kierra Parks*
The True Definition of a Man

I was told the true definition of a man was never cry, work till you die, got to provide, always be the rock for my family and protect them by all means, a poem gives me the chance to express what I want, I see about what a man’s to be, but I know a true man should be able to express his feelings mentally, and I don’t see anything wrong with men showing feelings physically. A poem helps me get over break-ups and sorrow, also brings me hope when I dread for tomorrow.

Steven Reed

The Day that You Are Going to Have

Forget the pool
Forget the wind
And don’t forget
To pay your rent
It’s a holiday, have
Some joy, forget
About the squeak
Just picture food
Inside your head
Don’t forget to toss the salad
Don’t forget about Pie crust, just
Picture the moon
Light and enjoy
The bread and picture
The plate you’re Going to have.

Khadijah Rashad
Get Your Elbow Off The Table

I was raised by get your elbow off the table, don't never say you're not able, get dat money real faithful type of family.

Always on my back, never let me slack, they always stay packed. Do anything for me, loved me to the max type family.

Get your butt in this house fore I tear you up. Always drinking out the juice cup type family.

Tore up off the goose put a lil cranberry in it to give it a boost, come over here and give Grandma a smooch type family.

Hand me the remote right here beside me, move out of the way of the TV I can't see type family.

Come here boy, then smack me in my head, I know you ain't wet your bed, even though I did. I'd tell her it's water instead type family.

You better do your homework beat with the belt had me crying like water type family.

Davon Ford
Sleeveless Imagination

Falling of the leaves
Frostbite of words
Defrosting of an empty mind

Bitter blackened
Footprints
Engraved beneath the soggy foundation

Heartburn erupting
Internal hail
Mixture of emotion

Temperature changes
Adjusting to the hypothermia
Of a hand losing feeling

Spite inside an abandoned house
The hinges behind a frozen door
Lost in thought, broken emptiness

Boneless structure
Defines the atmosphere
Of a chill sneaking into the anger

Decay, fire beyond unreasonable
Caressing the invisible flakes
No longer in original form

Pale
Chapped lips
Fingertips numb

Shivering among the sudden transactions
Wind watering the naked eye
Warmth under the extra clothing

Winter freezes a summer mind
Collapsing warm thoughts, destroying crimson love

Kiana Murphy
From One to Another

My father’s eyes would define mine
like a silent voice yelling in your
indescribable thoughts.

My prayers are as similar as my
mom’s gift to god.
Like the son of an unloving dad, praying
for his dad to return.

My thankfulness is what my dad and
mom combine.
Like the sourness a lemon brings
but can return with sweetness and
lusciousness of lemon aid.

Kirk Murphy

I Am Not For School

Long lessons trying to stay
awake day dreams
forever etched in my head
thinking of the fun I had
the day before
party it was great
but my shadow looks so cool
a creation of the sun
my half-baked brain
can’t process fast enough
I’m not for school
the bell has wings when it rings
I guess I’m done.

Damon Kee

From One to Another

My father’s eyes would define mine
like a silent voice yelling in your
indescribable thoughts.

My prayers are as similar as my
mom’s gift to god.
Like the son of an unloving dad, praying
for his dad to return.

My thankfulness is what my dad and
mom combine.
Like the sourness a lemon brings
but can return with sweetness and
lusciousness of lemon aid.

Kirk Murphy
The Time Is Right to Make

The time is right to make
The world a better place for
kids also adults to live better
all the colorblind people could see
bright as day

The time is right to
care for people who are disabled
and not laugh. Toss up the hating
and become happy.

The moon speaks louder than the sun
my heart beats more than it’s
supposed to when I see someone in
stress. I always try to give an extra hand.

The time is right to
warm the frostbitten fingers
from cold snow. I plant my seeds
into the clouds above to make me a
better person.

Renita Williams

I Be

I be of DC
I be a block from Eastover
I be having glitter in my hair
I be goofy all the time
I be happy all the time
I be cute a lot
I be having nothing to do
playing with my puppy I be
eating popcorn on the couch I be
Wingate all the time. I be
school I be all the fun times
I be loving my family I be
I be happy because the world makes
me and I be

Bernice Caldwell
I am

I am capable
of accomplishing
all my goals,

I am
killing souls
with blank
words,

tarnishing
promiscuous dreams.

My gaze is
slowly observing
an endless soul
tearing away
from an unkempt
body.

I believe in
conquering homelands,
tranquility overflowing,
souls and spiral windows.

Monae Smith

Unforgettable

The sky becomes obscene,
Fading to a sudden green,
Hearts get heavy, along with their breath,
Bodies shiver, but they keep it to themselves,
Visible air thrives for attention,
And chills deserve an honorable mention,
Feet sing an unforgettable but all the same tune,
“Don’t forget to buy boots for me soon,”
Thin jackets fade, replaced by something insulated
Or is it coats that are fabricated?
Something I really haven’t debated
Unlikely tunes start to sound
Like “Silent Night” and “Santa’s Coming to Town”
The endings of our summers of discontent
This winter, the snow shows new moments well spent.

Sequan Wilson
My Winter Experience

The days are being broken
Each one getting shorter
I hesitate to go outside
Below 30 degrees it is
I look on the faces of children
Outside freezing
Their faces are ivory
Just like the snow
Coming inside to taste
The bittersweet tea
The warmth sends comfort
All through your bones

DarVel Suggs

Photo

Picture you in the background
And me in the front
Eyes older than a wooden table
Face looks like a tinted mask

Devon Hudson
His son

Well, I wish that my father was living right now because I really miss him very much but when he had passed away I was mad because he was the only person that really cared about me because he always had love for me and I had love for him And he really looked out after me so I would not get lost and I love him because of the things that he did for me and he once said that if he dies or leaves my side he would pass down his favorite things in the world And he gave me a shirt and he called it the shirt of forgiveness and he also gave me a ring that he loved and always wore and he called it the ring of love and happiness and he gave those two items to me keep if he passed but he also said that the shirt and the ring represent you and me and my father said that he would hate to lose me because I was his one and also only caring, loving son.

Marcus Barnes

Random

Three red robins, one blue jay flying down the street As I see them fly I see the trees, I see deer and wolves I walk down the road and I see the church with a cross on top and when I look up I see the lions playing in the sky the rectangle-shaped casket Of all my dead poems

Khalil Jones
Poetic Autobiography

And even though I remember
the slurred, soothing words
of my mother while
she bathed me,
I failed to
understand the fact
that she had an
addiction to a thing
she called grey goose,
the thing that made
her feel good
when no one else
was there to
put the broken pieces together,
and when her bottle
was emptied of her
sinful concoction

I was there to
accept her for her,
and give her
the love she
had sought from
the lover that
only corrupted her,
but your biographers
never understand.

Shawntay Kent
Profile

Fall through the sea
I can’t see you through me
But I will fall from the sky
So you can be with me

Yellow brick road
Feels so cold
Your heart is so red and bold
If I don’t feel it, it will grow mold

Your voice is so gooey and sweet
Like it came right off a honeybee
Blue and purple sky
Tears fall from my eye
As my evil side waves bye

The angel you are, halo over your head
As you lie in the white, comfy bed
Dreaming about ladybugs flying away

While in your smile, gasp, and growl
You’re always on the prowl
Knock, knock at the door, wanting more
I love the way you explore

The way you speak
Don’t miss a beat
Whole time the poem is about me

Renita Williams
A Vivid Memory

Crimson eyes
Body language foreshadowing
An unheard secret.

Rain,
Creates saltwater
A taste that flows…

I tried to tell her:
This is all a dream,
I wish I could have been there.
You’re defeated, so am I.
Down beneath the depths of my empty heart,
I feel your pain.

But my scattered words
Created confusion
I choked on the sound of the heart I could hear cracking,
With every part of truth, a lie in my mind.

Chocolate skin, bright smile, eyes so amazing
A sight I adore seeing,
As much as fate wishes upon me.

Unexpected departure,
From our isolated place
I feel the heartburn once again

The sun blinds me,
I feel as though I’ve failed her.

Kiana Murphy
Winter Sky
(A rant)

Why can't this opaque purgatory that is the deity exist as my flame?
i will focus assiduously on the black, desolate heart of this flame.

i will chant frantically until I acquire the divine powers of a yogi.
i will worship you day & night.

But you deny me.

When humanity complained & moaned, when you spoke to us & the frigid wind stirred, i listened, recognized and loved your power.

But you don't care.

The imperceptibly vast, the uncontrollable unbuckled, unfastened, RAW force that is the sky…Doesn't mess with me.

Forever we've been insignificant dots on a line plot, submissive to your reign. And i've never wanted it any other way.

But you have no sym- nor em- pathy for my dreams. You just tell me to endure and die.

i guess around this time of year you're too gritty, too guttere, and i'm still chasing the remnants of summer.

James Saunders

(?)

I saw the unspeakable:
Without a warning, I was reduced to tears,
Not a dry eye was found, no eye was clear.
I saw the unpredictable,
Your heart was responding, barely,
But I heard no voice, was I somber? Very.
I heard the unthinkable,
Over which no one had power,
You'll leave us within 2 hours.
I listened to the unnamable
Psalms and spoken words collide,
But I'm still dead inside,
Why am I not yet over it?
I won't feel happiness yet,
Until I face the inevitable facts,
I'll never be over it because light won't come back.
The apple of my eye has been spoiled rotten,
In my heart, you'll never be forgotten,
Now, my voice'll never be heard,
So, I'll close this, without saying a _____.

Sequan Wilson
Confined to the Cracks
in the Sidewalk

You have the right to remain silent,
locked behind the hate trap
the cuffs of steel cemented on the mind.

Pushed up against the riches
no longer an experience I want to capture
High-fashioned architecture, high-priced chandeliers

The rags of my life,
manipulating the patches of clothing that bring me together
pronunciation of cruelty, vacancy of words, thoughts, actions.

Sheltered within my cold heart,
breeze from continuous empty days
massive explosions of my frost-bitten mind lying on the curb

Maniacal breath shoving freedom out of my mind
refusing to be the refugee of rough security.
My feet are swollen from personal mischief
my body shaken from life’s grasp.

Erase the black footprints from a cold heart.

Kiana Murphy
I Am from D.C.

Not from Maryland, but from D.C.
Many people from here are pugnacious.
Many people live in perpetual beefs.
You walk down the street into the wrong community, then you might get beat.

My life is a little different, I don't care what people think of me. I have a mission, not to be another terrible statistic.

Being African-American, people look at us strange, like we don't have a brain. Everyone does, but it is your choice to use the knowledge. Many don't use it correctly and make mischievous decisions, not caring about a consequence until the mind is made up about what it wants to do.

I'm from D.C. with a mission: It's not where you're from, but what you want to become.

Steven Reed

D.C.

Drugs, alcohol, and violence. Things that people refer to when they hear D.C. That's what is in D.C., not what it means to be from D.C.

To me it means…
Jump rope in the middle of the street, soul food on Thanksgiving, with fried chicken and sweet potatoes.
Public schools and children all over. Cheese buses and metro stations early in morning.

Hard times and painful sorrows finally come to the light. Loud go-go and mischievous kids fill the late-night streets. Eternal wounds scarred by the judgment of flamboyant community.

Through the good and the bad, you stay through it all. So, before you think of D.C., know what it's like to be from D.C.

Marquise Lewis
People here

People are not normal
They all hate this world
of discrimination and violence

In this world, not right for D.C.
Is there no love for public transportation
such as the train or bus?

Town houses built just to be destroyed
What is D.C.?
A beloved city of war

Walter Jones

D.C. Home

D.C., where should I begin?
The question is: what, where, when?
I love it, but there’s so much to dislike,
Like stabbings, shootings, attempts to end your life.
But love to learn, learn to love, I guess.
Oh, one thing I didn’t tell you yet—
Think twice before you move here, got it?

Khalil Jones

Where I’m from

I’m from the place where people kill,
Where people steal,
Where there’s so much beef in one li’l city,
Where no one feels pity.

Homeless people on the street,
I don’t know what else to say.
People only look for the hate in D.C.
Instead of the love or good things that are happening.
They need to look for the positive,
Instead of the negative.

Janine Green
Beyond the District, Beyond Where We Say We Are

Sorrow from disappointment
The television ads are our salvation

SmartTrip doesn’t get us far
But we get to where we need to be
Nowhere…

Everything’s the same
Day by day
Boredom controls us all

Violence erupts
Kids smilin’
They never knew what hit ‘em

The national anthem doesn’t unite us
It gives us a reason to believe
Things can never be done right

Eternal silence
The tension is unbearable
This place has a different lifestyle

School isn’t taken seriously
Texts turn into our own personal creation
Self-taught, maybe it’ll get you somewhere

Mambo sauce
Brainwashes the mind
Addicted to this, my life expectancy has decreased

Go-go beats
My heart into another dimension
Desire to dance toward sin

Scared of your shadow
These streets are from the damp and dark places
That give us a chill, a sudden fear

Everything is given to us
But it’s always turned down
Life is so much harder

Violation of all aspects
You can never own what you’ve never had
Everybody isn’t treated the same

People don’t care
About the things they bring into this world
Things just run astray

Thoughts are clustered
Focus is destroyed
Failure. Drop out.

We exist beyond the golden arch
Power is our main source of anger
Money creates this frustration

We are among the unknown
We are expected to achieve great things
Our presence ignites skepticism

The star on the map
We are creators of this asylum

Kiana Murphy
Are the words the reason
that I have to write
these things that they believe
are magnificent?

My fingers cramped up
from the thousands of words
that littered my paper, that showed my creativity
and the potential that only I possessed.

I am the newfound,
raw, untouched,
new knowledge
of my generation.

Shawntay Kent

What It Means To Be From Here

What it means to be from D.C.
Just stop, look up, and take a good look at me
Custom-made fitteds,
shockerz and bony jeans
Ice on the chain
lookin' something mean
In high school right now
but still hustlin' in da streets
Money known as cream
dat's one hell of a treat
reppin' hoods, stealin' cars, sittin' 'hind bars
constantly hearin' people sayin' you won't get far

Playin' all day, in da go-go by night
getting' loose off da goose and always leavin' wit a fight
And den da white man ask me where I be
so I tell him, “Ay! be from D.C.”

Marcus Johnson
The Voices That Create the Mind

You told me if everything wasn’t right, I was a failure

When the sawdust from the footprints disappears, The mourning begins

That loyalty is a must, But sometimes the universe can’t handle that

You told me that the worst part in life Is right behind the door

You told me to give you change, Those coins nobody pays attention to

That you were in need, And I didn’t have any problems

These salty pain killers Were the result of what you told me

The venom from your words gives me the ability to believe That bittersweet ain’t so sweet

You told me to follow my dreams, Those things beyond the stars

Why do those cobwebs become so thick, Blurring the vision that wants to go Into the center of a crying heart?

Kiana Murphy

American Trees

For every tree you cut down You slowly kill a piece of me I solemnly promise that I will Protect the trees around me

Through the storms And the rain I will always return To protect them

I will not let society Consume the trees Throughout it all No more trees will be sacrificed I will rise up to the occasion To save the trees

DarVel Suggs
No Such Thing

There’s no such thing as happiness, because people are always sad. And there’s no such thing as darkness, because that’s all you see in the light. Without happiness, you would be a very sad person—you might think about that special somebody in the world, but without darkness you wouldn’t see anything in the dark. And if you keep going, then you will see light. And there’s no such thing as habit, because you can hang around people and they will think that they are a bad habit. And there’s no such thing as a film, because all the films are always black and white and the real world has color. There’s no such thing as crooked, there’s no such thing as a scheme, and I wonder how many other ideas are not really in the world.

Marcus Barnes

Word Play

The words
Hit hard, like a car crash
The locked feeling
The laughs
They stare
Separated
Slowly the
Pain comes

Words
Just another way to hurt
In the middle of a feud
a hiccup of hateful slang
can be unleashed
This will be the outcome:
Chaos

Damon Kee
What Does It Mean?

Surreptitious people right around the corner
A simulation of familiar life of a home
Deep down, knowing they’re just as frightened as you are
Walking the streets alone
Lights flickering on and off
People walking by, looking at you
as if you’re nothing but scum
Going to the train station,
taking out your SmartTrip card
People thinking there is a lot on it
They start to surround you,
throwing curse words at you,
rough you up a bit
“Give us the card,” they say
You throw it in their faces,
try to make a run for it
They’re not finished with you yet
Grab your arm, throw you to the ground
kicks start coming your way
the fists are next
Someone comes, they run off
only to find out he didn’t come to help
Looks at you and walks away
as if it’s an everyday thing
You get up, limp to the nearest pay phone
no one’s home
You leave the station, careful not to trip
An elderly woman comes to you
“Are you okay,” she asks
You look at her dumbly, limp off into the dark
So what does it mean to be from D.C.
It could be Hell, but also okay
So you tell me, “What do you think?”

Nichell Kee

Remain Silent

Choke back the words that once had meaning;
they will not be heard, save your breath,
like secrets in your throat.
Cherish that you didn't mess up
by stumbling and stuttering
on verbs. “Cut your tongue” I say.
Your eyes told me more than thrice.

Maryum Abdullah

The Poem with No Name

Thankfulness, an attempt to heal the
wounds of your sins. But also to
respect those who have given so much.

Little words that make a big difference
in the life of a loved one.
Kindness and laughter frolic through
your heart like a tranquil meadow.

Heartwarming gestures put a cheerful
smile on someone’s face. We treat
others the way we want to be treated.

Marquise Lewis
Unwanted

You have the right to remain in this state, if you try to leave you will be shot.

Anything you do will get you in trouble and get you shot.

You have the right to call a lawyer when you get shot.

If you call a lawyer, he will shoot you too.

If you try to run away you will be shot.

DarVel Suggs

Memory

My childhood memory is when I used to go over to my cousin's house and play the game every day, but since she is getting older, it's no fun anymore.

When I was little, I was very shy to speak in front of other people, I was very nervous speaking to my teachers, and I never messed with anybody, but people used to mess with me. I was very quiet. I always wanted to be alone and in my memory, I had a stressful life because my father always hit on me and my sister, and my life was destroyed by my own flesh and blood.

I have the most deadly childhood memories in my life and that will never change, and I will never forget those dark memories, but I still had love for him.

And that's my childhood memory

Marcus Barnes
Crazy

When the world ends
I will run the halls
until blur falls from my sneakers.
When the world ends
I will clip up Mr. Branch, shatter a tear,
laugh and say I'm sorry.
When the world ends
I will jump off my 1st period teacher's desk
and do a blooming cartwheel across the eternal floors.
I wouldn't sway down the street of garments—
I would skip obstacles around wreckage,
ashes fromburning buildings.
It would be Tuesday after school,
forever boundaries and unfinished business.
I won't barricade my shadow;
it would run wild,
the heaviness in my fury
would recall precious ventures
and maintain them forever.

Renita Williams

What I see and feel

Killing, knowledgeable know-it-alls
Ignoring idiots, independent ideas
Recruiting righteous redemption
Knowing kingsize kindness kills

Kirk Murphy

NAKIA

Now named Nakia, not a number
April and apple, acrostic alliteration
Kind kinfolk, keep knowing
Ice in ice cream? Involvement, interested
All afternoon, acting active

Nakia Better
Untitled

There might be a stone in sight—
Emphasis on the might
Maintain composure in the shadow of the day
Shatter the glass and destroy the display
I feel heaviness in my chest
What I’m doing is something, I won’t digress
Grab everything we can’t carry
Cause we know the cops won’t hurry
Then a flame starts within the stone’s rust
I can’t get through this, so I burn without a fuss
Ashes to ashes and dust to dust
The world ended along with my first rush

Sequan Wilson

The Next Day of Fate

The day when I am alone in this world
When this day turns into ashes
It shatters into a globe of heaviness
To maintain these boundaries
Blooming breezes have to reappear in the sun of music
The numbness in my body is wild in a puddle
But my reflection is in the mirror and I watch it burn into flames
The shadows tell me a secret about the next day of fate
You know I don’t listen to dust of gravity that turns into lightning

Stelita Better

After Life

There is no afterlife.
When you pass, your spirit goes to God.
I watch a channel called ghost hunters.
It is about these people going to an old house, kingdom, or palace,
discovering people, dead, and their spirits are ghosts.
They try to get some attention
to prove they’re ghosts.
I watch that show because it is real.
It’s creepy sometimes.
Sometimes I’m scared to go to sleep.

Eric Armstead
**Human Denial**

There is no such thing as war
There are only minor conflicts enraged
by the twisted minds of overlooked government
A melody of misunderstanding
ricochets off the barriers of my self-conscious
as the façade of the military remains intangible
Eyes of the public continue to stay clouded by the void
of human luxuries that caress the soul
So you ask yourself, “Is there?”

*Marquise Lewis*

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**Painless**

There is no such thing as pain
Just lack of bliss, twisted, flinching
Chills down my spine
Taste of a lemon mixed with the un-sweetener
Flimsy doohickeys that are supposed to keep me from pouncing
Subliminal films that make my whole body quiver
Drop down on all fours
Say it’s all in your head
And it is…but I got a cold and can’t really sweat it out
It hurts, whether it’s mental or physical
It’s numb
But it’s not pain
For that doesn’t exist

*Maryum Abdullah*
**My Boring Poem**

Algebra, History, Reading, and Music
These are the subjects that make up
My boring day
After school I like to enjoy
A great day
A Creative Writing Club
Poetry to calm down the soul
After a stressful day
Wrestling and racing video games
To finish my day
Boredom disappears.

*Marquise Lewis*

**Boredom**

To get through these long days
I shoot alien monsters
for hours and hours
I run around the house
fighting my brother
just for fun
Listening to a beat without my friend
is like being bored, but I never am
I go outside, I look into the sky
I play football

*DeArren Dawkins*

**Distance**

Unearned family, distant love,
that hurts me most.
Not knowing who they are,
just living far, far away.
No one knows the way I feel—
A broken wing, God from nowhere,
a family unknown, from the darkness of love
needing me more and more each day.

*Past time.*

*Keyama Robinson*
The End of the World’s Shadow

If the world were to end
I would see a shadow following me
But it’s not mine
Now I notice that there is a
Blur in my head
Thinking of all my enemies
As I walk past them
My shadow begins to kill
And cry for the pain they caused
But there is no shadow
It’s me

Khalil Jones

Mask

My mask shows kindness:
generous and helpful
sweet and innocent
smart and a participant.
But what will you see
behind the mask of perfection?
And what will your reaction be,
terrified or nice?
You’d know if you knew
the real me
under the mask of perfection.

Cristal Sandoval

Why She Married That Man

I don’t know why she married that man
He messed up everything
He came in our lives, all nice and cool—
trying to show love and affection
while the whole time taking my mom in another direction
He was setting us up in his mind
We moved to a new house
We were happy for a while
That man came home every day with a smile
knowing that he was about to roll
to leave us with all these bills
He left my mother with tears
We came back during the year
Everything was okay again
until
she
let him back in again.

Thomas Whitney
**What do you want to be?**

You have the right to remain silent, the right to get out, and the right to be quit of crippled ground. Every thing you've done to hate yourself and other people, you cannot get mad and go into the darkness, not into the shadows with the evil monster that is under you, don't go there. The thing about facts, they can't find you homeless on the street, and not in a home with a family that misses you. You need a fence that holds you back from black mist that never goes away, and you refuse to go to jail, so you will be on house arrest and in a shelter that has not a lot of food, with your mind erased but with dreams of your father above.

*Stelita Better*

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**Long Gone By**

It was one day when I was in a fight after school. A boy named Ishmael kept starting stuff. I saw him around his way. He said Hey what do you think you doing around here? I said Man shut up and get out my face. He said alright, I will see you on Monday. But today I am more mature so it doesn't matter anymore.

*Eric Armstead*
Poem For A Burning Heart

If somebody nosy asks
“Well, how is it feeling?”
Fall down on your knees
because the unexpected has been revealed.

If they get scared and they say
“Well, why is it happening?”
Tell ’em “love hurts, minds forget,
futures are unknown failures.”

And if they give you that confused, black stare
trying to understand your thoughts
to the point where they say
“Well, are you gonna tell me about it?”
Just stand there and let the emotions
filter through your cranium, staring deep into their eyes
exchanging their mind-reading.

You stand there, cold yet broken
Screaming to find an exit, a place
far from your penetrating eyes.
Blood written deep down
in a dark place, waiting for trespassers
within the torn pages of my diary.

Kiana Murphy

Reality

As the numerous numbers
begin to count down
I realize the sun’s smile transitions
to the moon’s frown
As the Alaskan snow begins
to melt away
I wonder if we’ll all see
the next day
Being true to the fact,
we’re all gonna die
Most of us will burn
in what’s not well
Many of us will go to
where it’s all swell
Some will jump (with joy)
Some will cry
Some will laugh
Some will fry
But all will know the sad truth
with the penetration of reality
that everything must die.

Marcus Johnson
**Coming to Southeast**

I remember when I first moved here to DC almost 9 years ago

That was the worst day ever
I wish I could go back

I came from North Carolina which is much better than Southeast

I said that it was better because the crime rate is better

And there are excellent neighbors there and there are great restaurants

I absolutely loved it down there
I used to be able to go outside and play without worrying about anything happening to me out there

That was my worst memory, coming to Southeast DC.

_DarVel Suggs_

**A Day I Want to Forget**

I want to forget the day I was about to fight.
I forced her to the locker.
It was like a big snowflake hitting the ground, it was like men rebuilding a building.
Then I smacked her.
It was like an echo, it was like a splinter in someone's foot.
sounds like a greedy pig.
I charged toward her like a mouse running for cheese.
It was like a distance away— you can hear it, the day I want to forget.

_Kierra Parks_

**I want to forget**

I would want to forget getting hit by a car on a wonderful day of school

that day, great after, ok
driving, fun

getting hit, disastrous
I wish it never had happened

_Walter Jones_
What it's like to keep a secret
(for those who haven't)

Feeling like you’re not finished
Sweat reflecting your urge to speak
But the words are lost
Flames wild in your chest, growing, growing
It’s the feeling of exposure
Lurking in the depths of emptiness
Formed behind your eyes
Suffering the burn in silence
Confined within every corner
Claustrophobic
Falling in a puddle of tears
Created from your unspoken nonsense
Coping with the cold heart
Salty waters, heated skin
Concrete, yet unstable
Thoughts swallowing every emotion
It’s like knowing your heart wants to,
But your mind is sentenced to silence.

Kiana Murphy

Never

There is no such thing as death
There are only dreams once death strikes you awake
People believe that when you die
You’re going to rot
And people are going to forget about you
Death isn’t truly what it reveals
It is really a deep rest that God anoints to a certain citizen
When their time comes
But if your time comes with Satan,
It will be too late…you’ve paid the price

Kirk Murphy
Look

Look at one thing,
appearance (you should know what I mean),
then the potential philosophical mind
how hot a girl or guy is
instead of how beautiful their emotions blend
think about it, you love your physical appearance
but you’re dying inside because of emotional clearance
so I’ll tell you again, you’ll never know what’s in there
outer appearance is dependable to you, but there’s probably more

Sequan Wilson
What It's Like to Live Your Last Minute of Life

Trying to tell God
“Forgive me for my sins”
Like I’m trying to pull my life back together
(50 seconds left)
Many memories running through my head
Remembering how I first learned to walk
On the apple juice-stained rug of my mother’s
(30 seconds left)
My heart begins to pound faster
Like my life is close to being over
(10 seconds left)
I gasp for air as if this is the end
I fall to my knees
Praying to God
“Send me an angel”
(1 second left)
I feel my heart stop
My life is over
Wishing that I could go back to make
My life better than it was

Kirk Murphy

I Lose My Boredom

I lose my boredom
by sleeping and falling
into an unconscious
world where everyone
and everything is powered by me.

And everything is myself
in my twisted mind,
and I’m the king and
I’m above the slaves
of the bored days—
I do what I want.

In my unconscious mind,
where you take steps
in a path that no one else
will take, and I’m lost
in my mind
I control, because I’m bored.

I should break things that
don’t belong in my mind,
just to become unbored
in a world alive
that stays the same.

Walter Jones
To My Old Friend

I want to 4get meeting you
Completely
I wish you never even
saw me
Believe me
I’m serious
I must have been delirious
at first
because knowing you were
dumb,
I loved having fun
2gether
but I can see our
friendship is not going to
get better.

Janine Green

Forget

i would want to forget the day my cousin
died, and my uncle. i would want to
forget nine eleven because a whole
lot of people died by plane crashes
and by falling buildings like the
pentagon. i would want to forget
the days i did bad things like
stealing, and a lot more. i just wish
those memories didn’t happen.

Edward Marshall

#1

He’s among the top three,
Not in class, but the whole country.
Self-proclaimed genius, but modesty is his profession,
But his pointless confessions further hide his depression,
Fate is cruel, ending is a mess,
Tears of woe fill the room, but I digress.
No help from anyone, but I have to confess,
With a mind like that, this took me by surprise,
His ingenuity and intelligence shouldn’t be his demise,
Why can no one hear his cries?
I believe I can handle that question myself,
He never asked anyone for help.

Sequan Wilson
O, Graceful Weapons

Swing with intent, my graceful scimitars against a bland suit of armor, dressed in cavalry, with intent... to kill.

Sing, silent blades, let this coliseum hear an éclat of tings and tongs, move in a dither. Heckle these walls, scream reflection.

Distend with fine simplicity a show. Allay these rebel thoughts, my graceful scimitars, force their demeanor quiet resignation.

Free me, these scimitars with gentle, vile, seraphic intentions.

James Tindle

The Two Sides of Me

The broken fears that can't stop being angry at something stupid. It is like a moment to yourself, you look out the window and you think that disrespecting something happens in a fire, but your family's spirit is full of love that lifts the endless blood of life. You dropped with roses all around you, but you are blackened in the shivering cold of a crystal ball that shakes and never dies. In your past, you felt dangerous without a man by your side. It is the bitter things that hurt you, but when you hurt somebody a tear falls like you did something wrong but you don't feel wrong about it. You say your prayers to live beyond safety to hear your voice and taste of the silent song of the Lord. The echo of cherishing random things nurtures that selfish daughter's stillness swift through the rage of light deeply in the future. The other side of me is like being stuck in the darkness of shadows.

Stelita Better
My childhood

My life as a child
someplace where
unbelievable silence,
silence in the wild eye
rose with a heartbeat.

My eyes everlasting,
full of memories
drifting into beams of
the moonlight,
whirling into
an ocean of
nothingness.

My eyes see
forgiveness, cried,
cried for strength.

And the vision of all
glittering memory
will not be forgiven.

Nakia Better

Dreams

There is no such thing as dreams
There is just an empty void
In your mind
That’s why you can barely
Remember your dreams

When you go to sleep
Your mind becomes vacant
All thought disappears
Things seem ethereal
But are not dreams

Dreams are tricks played by
The human mind
They almost seem real
But never come true, which is why
There is no such thing as dreams

DarVel Suggs
Graceful Weapons, Come
(A Sequel)

i scream for those who oppose us
Graceful weapons, with
Tragedy in
your arms
Graceful weapons, rhetoric in
your blade
a sweet, canorous
pathogen.

Watch us, our masters
as if we are not your slaves
Watch me and them,
sweet scimitars
with
rhythmic vice
bruising your sky
implications coherent,
free us.

Maunder
let them watch our pain
let them hear you, graceful
weapons
i’ll play at your side
with a melodious parry
and inventive
thrusts.

O, Graceful cadence
listen to your maker
those
graceful scimitars,
the blueprint of my aggression

James Tindle
I Too

“I, too sing America.
I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
when company comes”

When company comes, mom thinks
I will act up and not be myself. My
Mom thinks I will have no table manners
or start to play with my food. My
Mom thinks I will embarrass her when company comes.

David McIntyre

Kidnap

“Ever been kidnapped by a poet?
If I were a poet I’d kidnap you.”

I would take you to my house
throw you on the couch
ask you questions.
I kidnapped you because
you are beautiful
like peaches
you are so sweet
Baby I want you to be my lady.

Kyree Matthews

Caged Bird

“I know why the caged bird sings”
The caged bird sings till morning comes
“For The Caged Bird sings Of Freedom”

My caged bird sings to get out.
My caged bird needs his own house.

Mya Manigan
**Mom’s Last Confessional**

They notice these obscure bruises:
emphatic love,
latent hate.

A week before I issued the metallic bruises
his punches left seven marks,
one for every day I cried,
so I scratched a star
with seven rays.

His speech loving
his fists irascible, unscrupulous
I don’t bemoan, but I hate these selfish walls
I pity them.

These walls don’t scream, so I run
corners
jumped at me
down junctioning hallways
to this dimly lit haven.

Dovish she sleeps
emotionally colorblind
just impregnated on a day of swollen and selfish vows
under her circular nightlight
my burdens embodied within my eyes
the last uncolored light she’ll ever know.

I sat down
three headaches before the migraine I
received from the cataclysm of fists
I sat down on my knees next to this lifeless bassinet,
pulled the metal bruise from its perch and went to see her, colored.

His face, watching the doorway, set in malicious snicker
His face ignorant,
schadenfreude.

*James Tindle*

**47 Pictures, 47 Black Faces**

“Taped to the wall of my cell are 47 pictures
of 47 black faces”
I went to jail for acting racist.
Man I regret doing that in
so many peoples faces. Man
Oh boy I could’ve gone so many
places. 47 pictures, 47 black
faces. Man I shouldn’t never
have acted racist.

*Nyesha Morrow*
When I told of my penpal’s anorexia

“When I told of my penpal’s anorexia

On those sunny days when moms wants to go out i sit in the
the window, watching the minivan pull from the driveway.
That window, my patient comrade, the one with the bird’s eye view,
the one with the small seat in between its two walls,
the one made for a five year old girl,
the one that holds my withered and compacted.

At the base of the bed
hammering down mom’s secret stash of doritos
hoping for an escape.
Secreting his stomach as far as he can within his ribs
praying for flat on his corpulent reflecting body.

When alone he sits in the bathroom
tiled adventure for company. Persistently
banging his stomach against the bath
grasping the escapism, residual amounts of cheese on the tile
at the base of the toilet. Stoically, stubbing his hands and knocking
his chin against the porcelain rim.

“When it rains
the windowpane’s thudding constantly shakes
the sole of my feet. The lingering smells of dad’s
mephitic narghile, chokes my stomach and grabs my hands.
Though my
breathing isn’t visible, my lungs are on display.
For weeks i’ve had to pee and though no releases,
i still shrivel. Constricting, my big toe moves
and i can hear the bones in my neck shift.”

That 6’7 handsome giant, spent his time drinking 40’s and downing that boy’s edible dignity,
ejaculating insults…who, with no fat children, enkindled an anorexic-bulimic child who’s
epidermis burns with the vomit he spits up with every feast, whose voice is no longer amiable
with the scratchy tone of a man who fought sleep and befriended a rum bottle
from the base of that bed.

That boy, the one who obviates his hunger and sleeps light on an empty stomach,
tired and agog, his meatless knees rubbing themselves into anger, grabbing tidbits from
beneath his pillow, a sallow sleeper.
Sitting in that window, back bent from famine
Arthritis in his fingers, lips swollen, breathing
sharp. Cold then hot, hot then cold, caved-in,
celibacy, the shadows, cementing his skeleton-like figure to that corner window
the one with the seat in between its two walls, the one with the bird’s eye-view,
the one that holds a five year old girl,
the one that held his compacted and withered.

The aghast look on his face
His body
sallow
still
His eyes xanthous and blank
Fading from that corner window.

*James Tindle*

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**Caught**

“Ever been kidnapped by a poet? If I were a poet I’d
kidnap you.”

If I were kidnapped by a poet
I would be stuck in a house
reading poems and more
with my brain aching
and sore. I’m sitting
in the chair I can’t take no more.

*Jasmon Gassaway*

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**Liberty’s Glasses**

“Excuse me but lady liberty needs glasses and
so does Mrs. Justice by her side.” So if you
don’t have any glasses go to Mrs. Justice
because you just don’t know. Go get some if
you need some because Mrs. Justice is on your side.

*Christina Moody*
**We Must**

“If we must die let it not be like hogs hunted and pinned in an inglorious spot. While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs.”

Let us not be dragged down by darkness. If we must see the light, let us believe in ourselves before we make it there,

Our lives are not always easy but we have to make it better. Some of our lives flash before our eyes when we die.

We will not be driven down by the pits of hell or captured by the devil and put down for rest or work.

We will fight for our freedom and when we die, the freedom that we fought for, God will make our lives much better.

*Seleen A. Ford*

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**Such a Fool**

“You Are such a fool I haveta love you”

Hold you like you’re my boo
I’ll never let you go
I’ll tell you later
cause right now we got haters
Let’s move out this spot

“But we real cool
we left school
we lurk late”

We share traits
Don’t really know.
We’ll call your old girlfriend a foe
cause I’m here now
We all go down
down to the ground
never to come up again
because to me your more than just a friend
right now you’re an addiction.
If you leave me, I’ll feel affliction.

*Danisha Woodard*

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**Deferred**

“What happens to a dream deferred” is
You don’t pay attention to it anymore,
You set it aside. What happened to A dream, to me when it is deferred I would set it aside and just let it disappear.
My dream deferred was amazing Because it was exciting and interesting.

*Courtney Slater*
Andre White

“I too sing America
I am the lighter sister
They send me to eat in the kitchen when company comes.”
They love me very much.
I do like to sing.
I am a good person.
You do so like me!
You really are nice.
I don’t like to write.

Erica McCrae

Abracadabra

“We are the young magicians” freaking people’s minds in the city. New York’s asking how we do it but a true magician never reveals his secrets charging people five dollars a trick to do amateur tricks.

We are the young magicians and no one will know how we do it.

Pournew Miller

All I Want to Do Is Read The Newspaper

All I want to do is read the newspaper but I keep seeing Obama. Yes we see him, what about Obama I saw him already, I know he’s in the White House. Tell me something new I don’t know. I like to hear about him but not every day. Just tell me something I want to know. Like more information about pistachios.

Jasmon Gassaway
All I want to do is
read the newspaper

All I want to do is eat pistachios
But I can't because they tested for salmonella.
I want to watch the news.
But I can't because this boy keeps looking at me. All I want to do is eat peanut butter on my sandwich but I can't because there's something in it. All I want to do is hold my nephew but he don't like me picking him up.

Courtney Slater

Newspaper

All I want to do is read the newspaper.
People are dying. While other people are in court lying. Twitter is new online talking to people who don't know who.
Looking at the comics, it's really funny turn the page, people getting married and calling each other honey. But all I want to do is read the newspaper.

Daja Leonard

We The World

We will never unite as one, because the world would never be as open minded as me.

We came to this earth with a purpose, but that purpose will never be.

We start trouble and try to fit in. We curse, fuss and all those other sins.

We feel like the world owes us promises, dreams, and success, but we owe ourselves to do our best.

We the world, and we're not perfect.

Davon Ford
Down But Not Out.
All I want to do is read the newspaper to see people lose their jobs.
How they take less money and less money then after that they are broke.
And see if they can afford the good buffets.
All I want to do is see if they can pay their rent.
And also to see if they lost their full-time jobs.
I would want to save up like them, and save until I could own my own business.
I don't want to want to get ready to eat.
I don't want to get ready for school.
I don't want to do my chores and watch my sister.
I don't want to go to the store.
All I want to do is read the newspaper.
Kierra Parks

News Flash
All I want to do is read the newspaper, but
All I do is sniff and sniff again
Bail-out or constitution
Go to heaven
Eat snacks
Watch a movie?
Be an adult?
Be a liar
Take out the trash
Eat corn
Go to class.
But all I want to do is read the newspaper.
Christina A. Moody
**We So Sweet**

We so fresh. We shop at H & M. We get our flats from Payless. We go to Go-Go’s. We have a ball. We sometimes fall. We stay out late. We get da bait. We are so bad. We wake up and we remember the fun that we had.

*Tanasia Lloyd*

**We**

We go outside. We come back in. We watch TV. We eat green. We go to sleep. We run fun. We color purple. We got the bait. We outside late. We is great.

*Tanasia Lloyd*

**We Box**

We work abs. We throw jabs. We dance flash. We hit bash. Our hands smash. Blood do splash.

Our eyes don’t blink, your knees will sink.

*Devonte Tolbert*
Party ing with Mom

Go-Go with mom
not so fun
you can't shake
you can't break
just stand like a tall rake.

Cookout with mom
you gotta stand under her arm.
Only look to eat a little
no boys near.
Mall with mom
buy what she wants
you to wear
do everything her way
don't dare be rare.

A day with mom
might not be so fun.

Zane Harrison

Athletic

We
athletic
We
athletic
ball
sometimes
we
fall athletic
we
jone
we athletic
sign out
we
fresh
and athletic
we cook em

Marlon McDowell

Pretend

Pretend I can't see the darkness
in front of me.
Pretend I can't see the pain of
my eyes straining
to see
Pretend I can't see the scar
of the eclipse
in front of me.
Pretend I can't see the thought
of no lights in
front of me.

Imani Hinds
Success

Many African-Americans invented and achieved, and it's all because they had faith and they believed; they risked their lives for you and me that's why we should look up to the heroes that set us free, like Martin Luther King when he said his speech, or like Rosa Parks when she didn't give up her seat. They taught us to set out for our dreams and never give up, even if we don't succeed just keep our head up, and attempt another dream. Like everyone says, two times the charm, like the great march leader Lew Farrakhan and the million man march, the way he said his speech he really had heart, so now it's our responsibility to play our part, they're counting on us to do our jobs. If you put in effort it won't be hard!

Sheldon Hickerson

I remember

I remember when no one could coax me to play football, When I'd stand there thinking about the man I'd get mad in the moon, though words filled head and stomach

Kenard Wyatt

Drunk man

Pretend I can't see a drunk man walking cross the street
Pretend I can't see him trying to hold himself up, to get to the other side
Pretend I can't see his army jacket getting dirtier and dirtier
Pretend I can't see him going into the liquor store and getting another bottle
Pretend I don't see him pass away into ashes that fly away just pretend, just pretend.

Tylashia Joyner
Not There

Pretend I can’t see
my so-called friends avoiding me
starting to act flakey.

Pretend I can’t see
that my whole world is crashing down on me
that the sky is not blue as the sea.

Pretend I can’t see
feels like people watching me
and life is not good as it seems.

Pretend I can’t see
that my hair is falling out repeatedly
that every night my eyes are red as can be

Pretend I can’t see
every one that I love is dying on me
and I feel so lonely.

Pretend I can’t see
that I smile every once in a while
and that my best friend did something
very foul.

Pretend I can’t see
my name is Angelique
and life is not what I want it to be

Angelique James

Pretend

Pretend I can’t see
the other side of me
waiting to be

Pretend I can’t see
the dreams waiting for me
the souls I can free

Pretend I can’t see
the things accomplished for me
the goals you set to be

Pretend I can’t see
how you feel raising me
the things you’ve done for free

Marlon McDowell
The Current

You no-legged dog of my heart, glad, happy not silent but there in my mind. A winter chill that touches my spine. Maggie Moo’s next door to Alero’s looking outside of the window—you see U street busy with barking dogs.

Imani Hinds

School Song

You big dirty school with your unclean bathroom and your mean teachers who care about themselves. But your dances be fun. They short. Your pizza is the best pizza I tasted yet. Hart Middle School, you couch potato, eating chips all day.

Shamiyah King

Poem

You scary house on east street by itself, looking like a haunted mansion in the fog.

Tyray Johnson
Six

You green train line
track tunnel to
any destination I
choose. You snare
a place with temptation
I walk away from
one place of blasting
music or games on
every corner, that
store, food station
in the middle.
Real big place,
five side stores.
I still have not
been to that notorious
place that makes
the other places
look dead, fifty
or more dollars I
need to be there,
you know that very
well, filled with
five or more thousand
people in it. You
place to go see
people. Pentagon
City is how I know it.

Walter Jones

The Makings of You

You be live on
Saturdays, be like
the brother of the
Bryan Manor,
your parking lot full
of kids playing tag
or manhunt. Your
buildings be filled
with drug dealers
selling drugs to addicts,
steps full of addicts
waiting in line to get
their drugs. You
and your rats make
kids run away forever.

Kesahn Kaigler
The Old Home

You big beautiful
white cloud
full of love
and hate,
happy but
not sad,
powerful but
not silent.
The White House
so rich with
roses that
smell so good
grass that’s
cut so rare,
how busy you are.
House of the
first Black President.
So glad to live
in this moment
in my life.
How grateful I am.
To have you in
the grandest city
in America.
with the history
of the war of men
fighting to be free.
But now thankfully
home to us.

Tylashia Joyner

Remember

I remember when no one could
coax me to play baseball.
When I’d stand there thinking
about the day in front of me
though words filled my head
I hate him for making me play

Sanchez Threadgill

History

On Friday I shot hoops
by Bald Eagle, the sun was
beaming and I still dropped
buckets on my cousin
until the sun dropped.

Telly Tinker
A Young Boy

A young boy all alone on the side of the street, rhymes in his head as he taps with his feet.

Rhymes running through his head like rats on the street. He makes history as he raps to the beat.

He emerges from the curb still rapping to himself. Then he raps out loud to the sound of his steps.

He raps all the way to the recording studio, then he speaks in the mic as they beat to his flow.

After a couple minutes of rhyming to the beat, they finish the recording and put it on a CD.

The CD passes around and they soon became copied. The first rap CD which made the world happy.

Davaugntae Shepherd

My Heart

The fist in my chest. Red or pink. The one that makes me breath. You keep my life going like how a movie goes on and on for hours. Never give up, tough as a pro-wrestler. Control power is what you have. If you had a choice, who would you give up on?

Dana Kaigler
A Child’s Biggest Dream

A young girl had a dream that she believed in, that she always thought about. She never told anyone cause she said you’re never supposed to tell a dream, or it won’t come true and it did and she told everyone.

Charmaine Walker

What I Don’t Know

I don’t know how to write a poem but I could play sports catch me on Saturday in Wingate with a ball in my hand.

Telly Tinker

My Life Is Like

The blooming flower of my life is a surprise in the morning it’s like jumping in joy with stepping into heaven, it’s jumping on a moon bounce; it’s screaming off the top of your lungs; it’s just having fun.

Cassandra Taylor

The Sky

is like air you can walk through it, light blue with white clouds above us giving us light to see the world during the day.

Wonder where we would be if there was no you You brighten our day with confidence, happiness. Would we be blind on the dark lonely road?

Niya Rogers

Thursday

Thursday afternoon after school looking out the window seeing cars drive past and people picking up children and girls playing jump rope in the street and boys playing basketball, people crossing the street people walking the sidewalk and I see my friend that’s my street. That’s what I see out my window.

Malik Green
Forgiveness

Forgive me for stealing a jacket forgive me for saying bad words out my mouth forgive me for spitting in my little brother’s face forgive me for saying I don’t have no father because he wasn’t there for me forgive me for fighting my best friend over a boy forgive me for failing in math class forgive me for writing on the hallways in Hart Middle School forgive me for everything I ever did bad or wrong.

Lacrecia Johnson

Dad I forgive you

Forgive you for not being in my life.
Forgive you for not being there for me when I needed you.
Forgive you when you were out getting in trouble and getting locked up.
Forgive you for not being at none of my football games.
Forgive you for not being there at my first fight.
Forgive you for not being there for me when I needed someone to talk to.
Forgive you for not being there when I was sick.

DaJuan Jones Jr.
Phone

Black, new blackberry
you always are used
to chat with my parents
small black and fresh out
of a box.

Why don't you break like
the Xbox 360 and get repaired
so the teacher could forget me?
Phone get lost into a fog,
come back for me when I do
something even more stupid.

Teacher on the phone
phone please cut off
like scissors. Phone beep
while chatting to my mother.
Black new black berry.

Derreen Jones

Pretend

Pretend I can't see
the sorrow in my mom's eyes
at night while she cries about bills.

Pretend I can't see
the wrinkles and bags
coming out of a thousand homeless eyes

Pretend I can't see
the danger around, just think
about it I'm lucky to be alive

Pretend I can't see
how us black people are
still under slavery, without knowing it

Pretend I can't see
minds in the same frame
walking around me

Pretend I'm not writing
this right now and I was
never here. Forget me.

Davon Ford
Pretend

Pretend I can't see
or feel courage within me,
thinking about what I could be

Pretend I can't see
thinking of somewhere it's
only me, leave me alone and let me be

Pretend I can't see
and take away my family
then all I have is misery

Pretend I can't see
This is the life I'm trying to flee
but can't cause it was made just for me

Pretend I can't see
only betrayal left in my memory
my blindness is trickery

Pretend I can't see
Diantra Landry

Pretend

I pretend to be an inspiration
but it's not a hesitation
I'm surprised for their great celebration

They threw a big birthday bash
even when the lights flash
I'm glad it's not a big dash

At the end there was a maze
I was in a haze
lost in a freeway

Really there were big lies
at the end I gave away a prize
You could see happiness through my eyes

Kourtnee Spencer
I Am Mad Now

Heartbeat really fast cried wild eye
really unbelievable and memory
sudden mind full of hatred

For a long afternoon haze in my
mind forever sing songs filled with
shadows like a baby rose sudden

Find betrayal in flames somewhere
being an inspiration to people that
are younger than me sudden forgive

kids that hated on me
Charlene Monroe

But

All I want to do is read the newspaper…
But I don't want to read the newspaper
cause all they do is talk about Obama.
I don't want to watch TV. I don't want to
go home. I don't want to go to sleep.
I don't want to eat no peas. I don't want
to do my little cousin's hair cause all she'll
do is cry. I don't want any sisters cause they cry
too much. I don't want any brothers cause
they are bad. I don't want no friends.
I don't want to do no homework cause
its boring. I don't want to walk home from school
because my legs be hurting. I don't want to eat
lunch at a certain time. I don't want to watch no
scary movies because I get scared. I don't want
to go to school. I don't want to be cool. I don't
like that girl. I don't want no curls.

Ashley Hinton
Fang Poem

Swim stroke don’t stop now
Dive sink hit the ground
Cry hurt don’t get mad
Drown die with no sound

Erica McCrae

Summer Fang

Splash splash in the pool
Sit chill talk be cool
jump dive please stay safe
kick kick splash in face

Dante Lewis

Play=Pain Fang

Run jump please have fun
Climb climb block out sun
Fall cry hurt your knee
run run from that bee

Dante Lewis
My Hair T’ang

Sat long in a chair
Put braids in my hair
Bright braids what I picked
Tight braids make me stare

Chernell Tillman

Rain T’ang

Pit pat to the ground
my face has a frown
I’m sad on this day
no one is in town

Tai’Lon Jackson

Green light T’ang

I’ll see you real soon
I can’t stay it’s noon
I have to go work
and bus has no room

Tai’lon Jackson

Rock in Out T’ang

Pop top cause I’m hot
Rock stop cause your not
Don’t get scared get red
tick tock stop the clock

Jasmon Gassaway

Football T’ang

In game hike the ball
but then tried to stall
Move back and got sacked
ouch that was a fall

Michael Muhammad

Deon Stover
Maryum Abdullah

What it means to come from D.C.

It means a lot for me to be from D.C., because many rappers and singers come from D.C., like Jennifer Hudson. One day I want to sing with her and be famous for singing and everybody will know my name.

Lakeisha Thompson

I.L.Y. Pang

Lil love I love you
She says she does too
Love is at stake yep
But he has no clue

Lapriya McNair
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