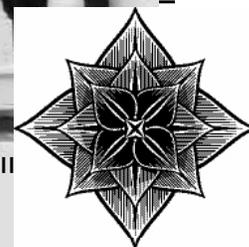
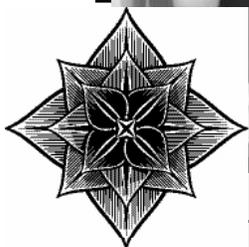
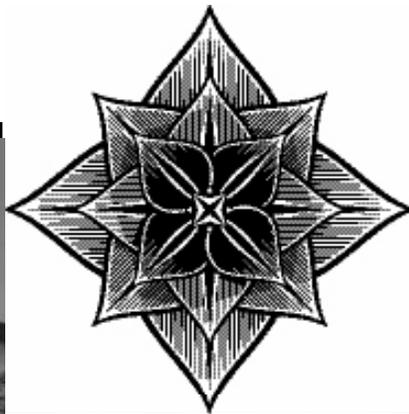




HARTWORKS

Summer 2011 • \$5

The Charles Hart Middle School Literary Magazine



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 30th 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 eleventh 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 2011 edition of Poet's Market recognizes *hArtworks* as "an outstanding example of what a literary journal can be (for anyone of any age)."

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, Catalogue for Philanthropy, Commonweal Foundation, Community Foundation for the National Capital Region, D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities, Horning Family Fund, International Monetary Fund, Marpat Foundation, Moran Family Fund, New York Avenue Foundation, Prince Charitable Trusts, Luther I. Replogle Foundation, Spring Creek Foundation, Hattie M. Strong Foundation, The Thomas Circle Singers, The Tom Lane Fund, Wachovia Foundation, Weissberg Foundation, The World Bank, Anonymous, 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 and Company Investment Management, our friends at Popeye's on Malcolm X Avenue, Sally and Tersh Boasberg, Dickson Carroll, Janet Horgen, Joseph and Lynn Horning, Gay and Charles Lord, Cameron Sanders, Joan Shorey, and Ladislaus von Hoffmann.

Our intern James Saunders also deserves our thanks for giving so much of his time and energy to our after-school Writing Club, as do our volunteers, Joseph Hudson and Daquan Johnson.

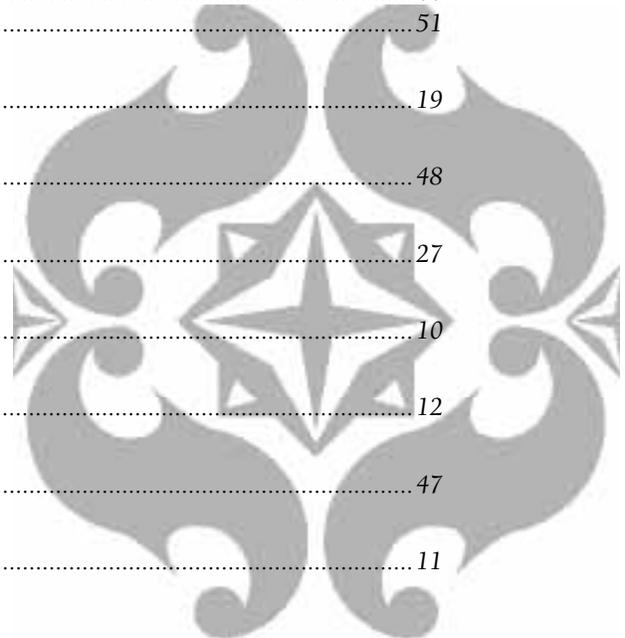
Special thanks for the hard work and dedication of the D.C. Creative Writing Workshop Board of Directors: Dr. John Walton Cotman, Dr. Susan Gerson, Brian Gilmore, Helen Hooper, Bernie Horn, Bill Newlin, and Nancy Schwalb.

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, Ms. Lisa Faulkner-Jones, and Dr. Sharon Piner; Mr. Travis Barnwell, Ms. Lisa Body Davenport, Ms. Nijma Esad, Ms. Gloria Fergusson, Mr. Matthew Komar, Ms. Caryn Voskuil, Ms. Aldridge, Ms. Eleanor Seale, Ms. Ron'Treece Gibson, Ms. Sherry Dailey, and Ms. Ann Brogioli.

INSIDE

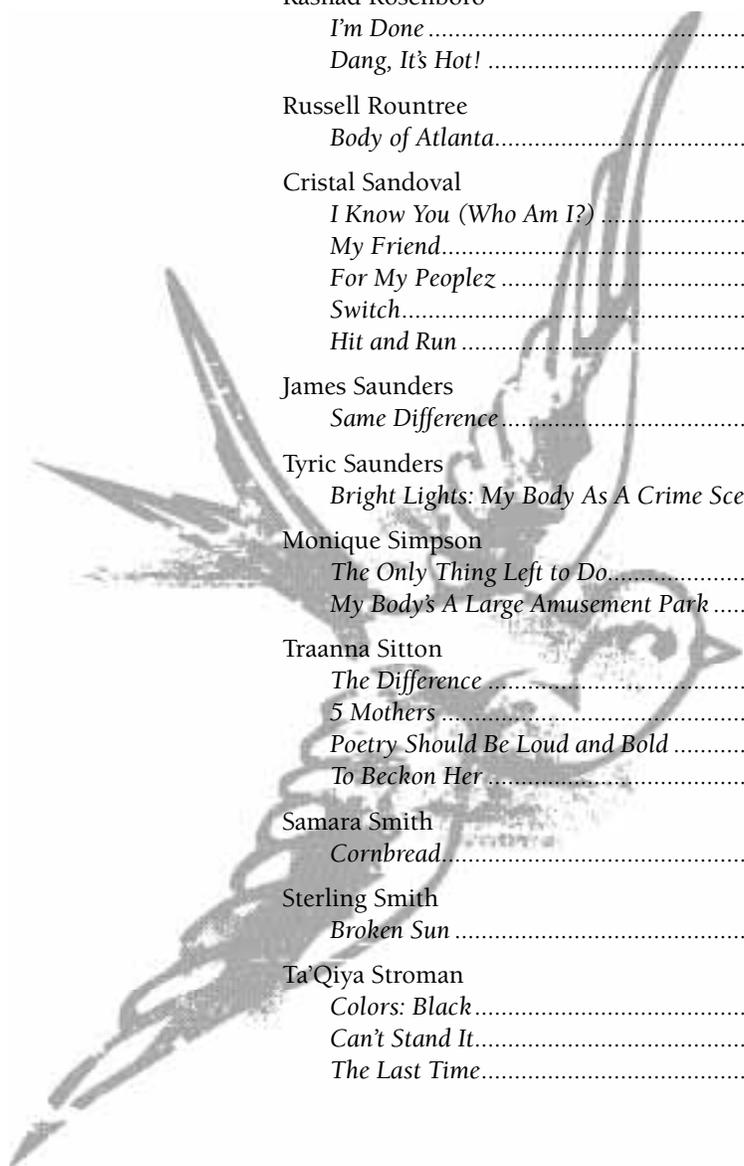
Maryum Abdullah	
<i>The Difference</i>	32
Abdull Ali	
<i>Hit Me and Run</i>	38
<i>On the Bus</i>	41
Muhammad Ali	
<i>My Old House</i>	2
<i>Blazing</i>	49
Alexis Avery	
<i>Raised By Women</i>	15
Marcus Barnes	
<i>Different</i>	37
<i>Fever Dream</i>	48
Sharri Barnes	
<i>Dancing, Singing and Rap</i>	3
<i>Can You Hear My Soul?</i>	39
Amira Bean	
<i>Dehydrated-Dehydration</i>	8
Nakia Better	
<i>The Worst Job</i>	47
Abigail Bibb	
<i>Unexpected</i>	6
<i>Not Now</i>	7
<i>Too Far</i>	8
<i>Favorite Color: Green</i>	21
<i>Body Town</i>	28
Kaitlyn Bowman	
<i>Scorching</i>	13
<i>Favorite Color: Guess</i>	21
Steven Brown, Jr.	
<i>Non-Progressing Life</i>	39
Jessica Carpenter	
<i>Mirror Image/The Beautiful Similarities</i>	36
<i>Single Leaf</i>	41
<i>On the bus</i>	42
CheYonne Dickens	
<i>I Was Raised</i>	19
Joshua Dunmore	
<i>I Can't Take the Heat</i>	50
Gregory Edelin	
<i>Wasted Life</i>	36
Brandi Ennis	
<i>Not Today</i>	9
Daiquon Felder	
<i>alone</i>	37

Seleen Ford	
<i>Unraveling the Truth</i>	42
<i>Remember</i>	44
<i>Summer</i>	50
Rene Frangel	
<i>Poetry Should...</i>	13
Deamonte Gibson	
<i>I am</i>	20
Shadajah Groone	
<i>Archaeology</i>	46
<i>Heat</i>	48
JoVante Hall	
<i>I Was Raised By Women</i>	3
Alyssa Hester	
<i>My Unknown</i>	15
Brittany Jenifer	
<i>Inside</i>	25
Michael Johnson	
<i>Difference</i>	34
<i>One Stop</i>	43
<i>The Last Football Game</i>	44
Myron Jones	
<i>The last time I gave</i>	5
<i>Neighbor</i>	33
Robin Jones	
<i>The Last Time</i>	25
Nichell Kee	
<i>Unwanted</i>	34
<i>Bus Ride to School</i>	40
Johnathan Lewis	
<i>A Terrible Job</i>	46
<i>The Heat and Immunity</i>	51
Mary Lewis	
<i>I Was Raised</i>	19
Nyelle Marshall	
<i>The Crazy Heat!</i>	48
David McIntyre	
<i>My Body as a Football Stadium</i>	27
Davina McKinnon	
<i>Harvested</i>	10
Kiana Murphy	
<i>Becoming</i>	12
Kirk Murphy	
<i>The Worst Job Ever</i>	47
Adewale Oluwakemi	
<i>A Hot Sunny Day</i>	11

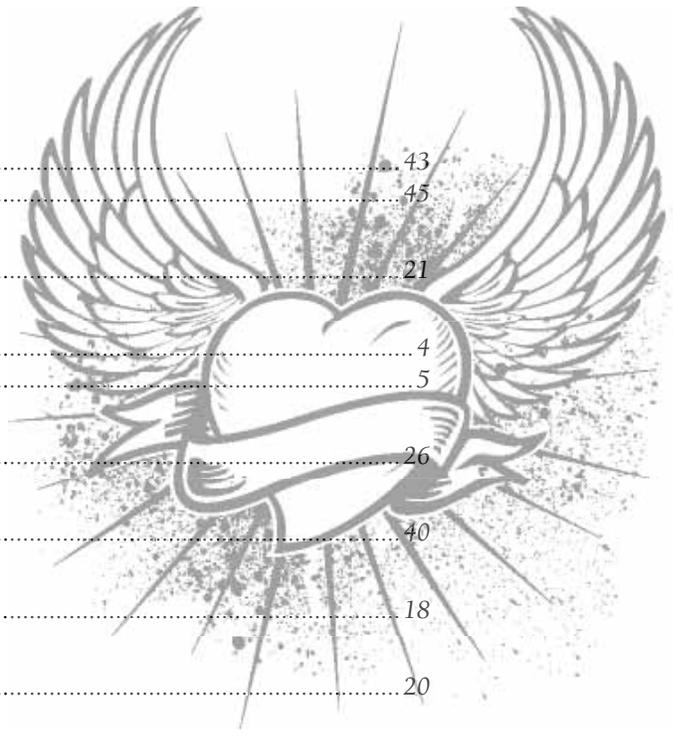


INSIDE

Yunique O'Neil	
<i>Raised By Women</i>	16
<i>Godmother</i>	24
Arnehé Owens	
<i>I Didn't Mean To</i>	10
Michael Parker	
<i>Cry for Help</i>	38
<i>Changes</i>	51
Mariah Parmely	
<i>I am The Book</i>	16
Ivory Quarles	
<i>Poetry Should</i>	25
Shaukeria Reese	
<i>What For</i>	17
Kiyon Robles	
<i>I Was Raised By</i>	17
Rashad Rosenboro	
<i>I'm Done</i>	35
<i>Dang, It's Hot!</i>	52
Russell Rountree	
<i>Body of Atlanta</i>	23
Cristal Sandoval	
<i>I Know You (Who Am I?)</i>	4
<i>My Friend</i>	14
<i>For My Peoplez</i>	18
<i>Switch</i>	20
<i>Hit and Run</i>	31
James Saunders	
<i>Same Difference</i>	32
Tyric Saunders	
<i>Bright Lights: My Body As A Crime Scene</i>	24
Monique Simpson	
<i>The Only Thing Left to Do</i>	9
<i>My Body's A Large Amusement Park</i>	27
Traanna Sitton	
<i>The Difference</i>	2
<i>5 Mothers</i>	18
<i>Poetry Should Be Loud and Bold</i>	22
<i>To Beckon Her</i>	29
Samara Smith	
<i>Cornbread</i>	6
Sterling Smith	
<i>Broken Sun</i>	7
Ta'Qiya Stroman	
<i>Colors: Black</i>	19
<i>Can't Stand It</i>	49
<i>The Last Time</i>	52



Andre Thomas	
<i>Rewind</i>	43
<i>Football</i>	45
Mychael Thomas	
<i>Remember</i>	21
Lakeisha Thompson	
<i>Time</i>	4
<i>E. T.</i>	5
Angela Thorne	
<i>My Body In Conversation</i>	26
James Tindle	
<i>Seeing Red Curtains</i>	40
Antonio Todd	
<i>I Was Raised By Women</i>	18
Triony Valdivia	
<i>Favorite Color: Red</i>	20
Jaynise Vandervort	
<i>Remember</i>	24
Cer'cia Wallace	
<i>D.O.A</i>	11
<i>Should I</i>	12
<i>Favorite Color: Black</i>	21
<i>Last Time</i>	28
<i>The Trail</i>	29
<i>I'm Not Your Friend</i>	31
Aneshia Whitney	
<i>Unshackled</i>	45
Aaron Williams	
<i>Free</i>	45
<i>The Burning</i>	53
Rasheen Williams	
<i>Remember</i>	22
<i>Poetry Should Have a Family</i>	23
Renita Williams	
<i>The Last Walk Home in the Dark</i>	26
<i>Caught in the Moment</i>	30
<i>As a Young Girl</i>	33
Tajia Williams	
<i>I Was Raised By</i>	14
Sequan Wilson	
<i>Raised</i>	30
<i>Untitled</i>	35



My Old House

Old house,
I remember
that old cherry tree.
I remember
that beach where we used to go.
I remember
that window I would look out
when I was in trouble,
that branch where I used to swing.
It was so high I could hear
the birds singing.

That house
was such a thrill.
I could always take time out
to chill,
and
I remember
that old wooden floor
that used to creak
when someone walked in.
I remember
the old rocking chair
that rocked back and forth.
I don't know why,
but it always faced North.

Muhammad Ali



The Difference

She has blonde hair;
mine is black as licorice.
Her skin is white as clouds in a winter storm;
mine is many shades of brown.

She is thin, I am thick.
Her voice is as soft as velvet,
while mine is calm as a still lake.

There was a game called love
we played, two very unlike people.
He was to choose:
the game has started
the rules are set.

I begin to take my turn—
She cheats,
she throws the dagger;
I trip up, I lose.
Tears swell up in my eyes.
They walk away.
I guess I wasn't good enough.

Traanna Sitton



Dancing, Singing and Rap

Dancing, singing and rap—
That's the job for me.
Ever since I was a little kid
I've wanted to be a big star.

Dancing, singing and rap—
They're all I know about.
I want to be the biggest
star in the world,
so when I'm gone
everyone will remember the icon.

Sharri Barnes



I Was Raised By Women

I was raised
by fried chicken
on a Friday night
with a side of mac & cheese
and string beans
type of lady

Brown, thick hair
the body that
make men stare
light skin, beautiful
type of lady

Some Kool Aid
and Pepsi-sippin'
sit back and watch TV
with her children
type of lady

Say it loud
and proud how
she feels
always keepin' it real
type of lady

I was raised
by my mother.

JoVante Hall

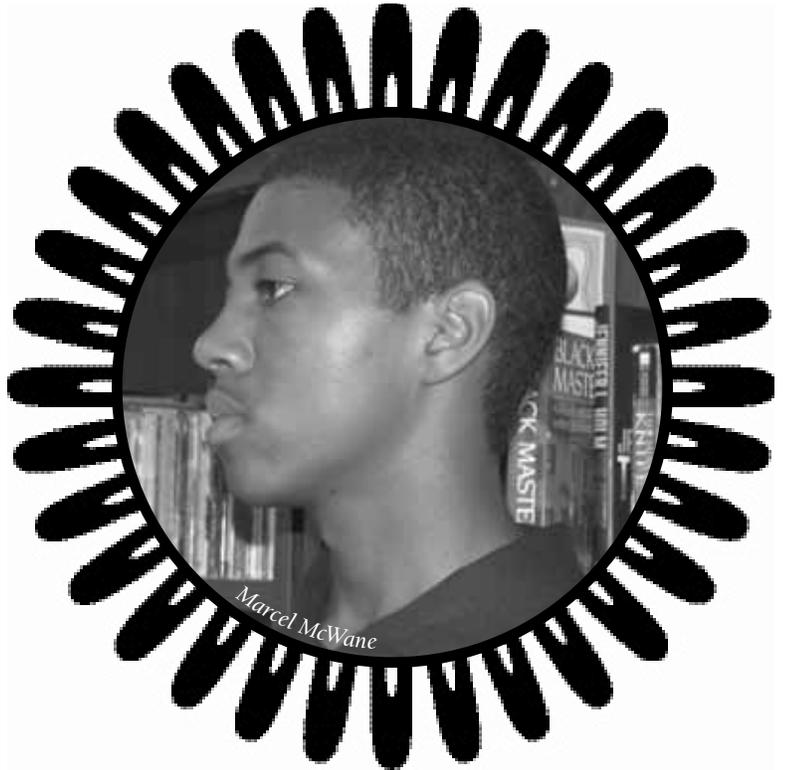
I Know You (Who Am I?)

I know you
I know your every move
I can sense your thoughts
I know what you did
It's my job to.
I can find your darkest
secrets by your habits
I can tell if you're lying
or telling the truth.
No, I'm not your friend
No, I'm not your parent
Nor a gossip or stalker.

I know you
I know your mind
I know it because I am
that little voice in your head
called doubt.
I haunt you in your dreams
and once I get a warrant
for your arrest
you'll know
that I am more than a cop.
I creep into the unknown
and bring the dark to the lights.

I know you
Hired for personal reasons
Is he cheating?
Where did she go after work?
There are no secrets
except my job
Who am I?

Cristal Sandoval



Time

Tick-tock
As the time passes
I'm ready to kill.
As I hear the sizzle of my creation
the pressure, the noise
I'm ready to kill my creation
and let it die.
In my memory
I have no mercy and wear no pain

Lakeisha Thompson



E.I.

You're an extra-terrestrial.
You're also a criminal
because you stole something
important to me: my heart.

While we were watching the moon
while aiming rocks at birds
and eating dessert
we stole from my mother.
She'll be mad, but I don't care
at the moment.

Swimming at the beach
chasing fish underwater
as we watch the sun rise.
We plan on going on a killing spree
together, as we change our identities.
You're foreign to me
and you bring out the best in me

Lakeisha Thompson



The last time I gave

Take,
take, selfishness;
being greedy has become a habit,
giving hurts.
I can't take any more
so now I steal,
but each time I do, it
eats away at my soul,
The guilt
til there's nothing left.

Myron Jones



Cornbread

Cut it nicely.
Bite it.
Enjoy it with some Kool-aid.
Slap it with some butter.
Taste the sweetness in the bread.

*Cornbread, you're so delicious
I can eat you all day.*

You can use your fingers,
no utensils needed.

*Cornbread, I hate it
when you're dry as hay.*

But make sure you don't
don't drop a piece of it,
cause it's really good.

*I love you when you're moist.
You are just as sweet as can be
and when I see cornbread,
I can keep you all for me.*

Samara Smith



Unexpected

in the voice of a hit and run witness

This scene I witnessed
was a tragic thing.

A car flew by
while a man was in the street.

Not stopping or looking,
the car hit and went.

I was coming from the store
with my groceries in hand.

He fell to the street
without pause or blink.

Didn't know what to do
except dial the phone.

They came, I left
to go home alone.

Knowing a soul may be gone tonight,
I won't forget my feelings—scared with fright.

That sound—*Crash!*—in my head
poor young man who won't be in his bed.

Abigail Bibb





Not Now

Walking through the heat,
unbearable as a fire on the stove.

Can't figure out what to do
about this sweat I can't shake free.

Stuck, sticky, moist
on my head to my feet.

Kids run to the pool.
Parents shade with umbrellas.

All that could be done—
to go inside, turn on the vent.

Not going out again,
maybe not tomorrow.

Waiting for another day
to bear and enjoy.

Abigail Bibb

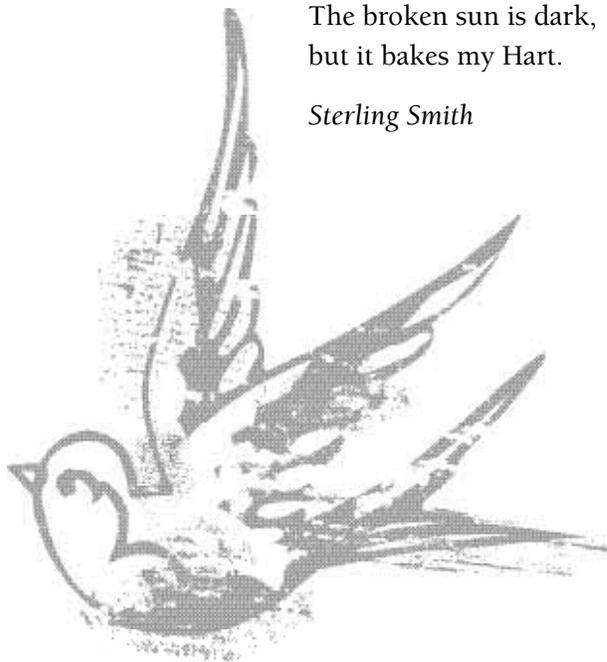
Broken Sun

The broken sun is one
of the darkest days,
but I know how to stop this.

The broken sun is what I can pass
like a hall pass to get out of class.

The broken sun is dark,
but it bakes my Hart.

Sterling Smith



Too Far

We always laughed.
We always cried,
never did I think it would come.

The crack in the hole
that spread between us.
Never did I think it would run.

One little argument
that grew like trees.
Never did I think it mattered.

Forgive me, sister.
I'll forgive you, too.
Never will we go too far.

Abigail Bibb



Dehydrated-Dehydration

Drenched in my own sweat,
I still thirst for an iced tea with lots of ice.

No need for cold water. The heat is as hot
as the devil's toes. Heat waves break out.

Pools are packed because it's summer.
The more people there are, the hotter it gets.

My mouth is as dry as salt.
It's boiling out here.

It feels as though the world is a pot,
and our sweat is the water,
and the sun is the fire.

Until I get my iced tea, I'm holding a grudge
against the dehydrating heat monster.

Amira Bean

Not today

I still look the same.
Still short.

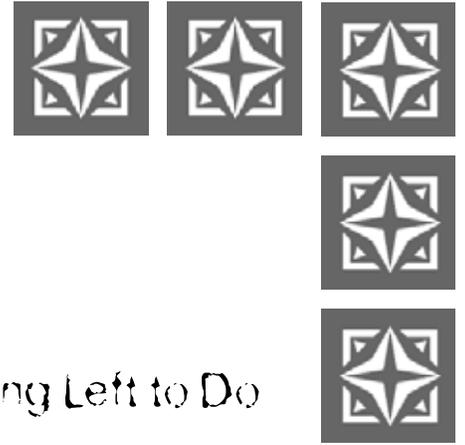
Why did they laugh at me?
The two kids I saw that morning,
walking to my father's job.

I still look the same.
Still light skin.

They wanted my forgiveness
after I told them
not to talk to me anymore.
Once friends, we stopped talking.

I still look the same, short
and light. *Get out of my life!*
I never saw them again.

Brandi Ennis



The Only Thing Left to Do

Was run away and cry.

Forgive me,

MB, for all the times
I was mean to you.

You once told me my mother
would never let me wear that
and I see the rags you wear
and repeat those words.

Forgive me

for talking about your hairstyles,
for talking about you to others
and telling you something else.

Forgive me

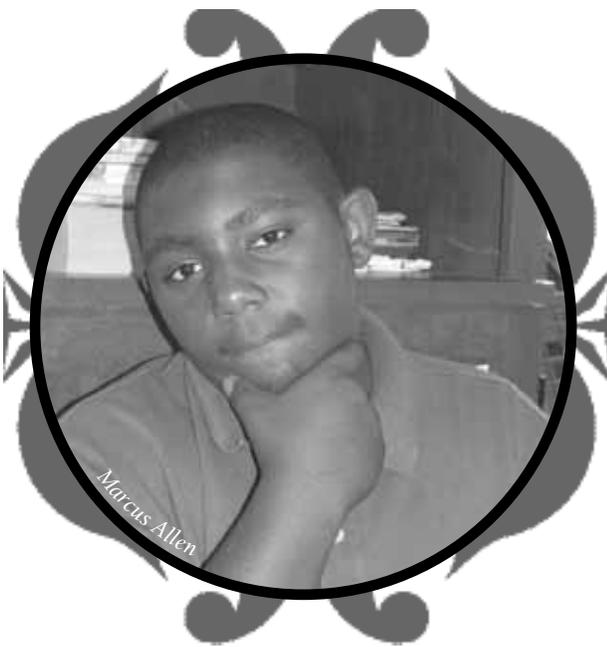
for being the wrong kind of friend,
for being someone pretending
to be your friend.

Forgive me

for the time you tried
to commit suicide
for your depression.
I'm sorry for everything.

Forgive me.

Monique Simpson



Marcus Allen

I Didn't Mean To

Forgive me for when I didn't
listen and follow directions.

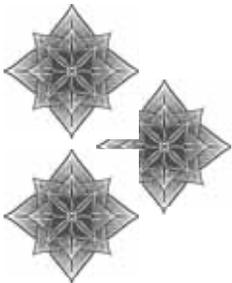
Forgive me for rolling my eyes
when you yelled at me and
I deserved it.

Forgive me for slamming doors
around the house.

Forgive me for writing about you
in my diary, saying how I
wanted to leave that house.

All I want is for you to come
back and I promise I will
be the BEST child there is.
I miss when you drove
us to the store at night,
dropping my sister off at
the airport to take a flight,
but it's all good because I
know that where you are,
you're alright.

Arnché Owens



Harvested

The crunch I make from my salad,
you dread. Glazed donuts
sweet like the sunset.

Just take one bite.

A dozen roses shot from the stem,
my red blood strawberries.

Just take one bite.

It's as bitter as green apples.
We have no fear, so goodbye.

Just take one bite.

Death is as strong
as gingersnap cookies.

Davina McKinnon

A Hot Sunny Day

A hot sunny day.
Never so hot like this in years.
People are trying to bear the pains,
but can't wait any longer.

We are all sweating boiling water,
then the sun starts laughing at us.
We can barely bear it. The heat
makes it so we can't recognize each other.

Babies crying everywhere.
No one to take care of them because everyone
Is looking for a way to get
an air conditioner for their kids and home.
What a hot sunny day!

Adewale Oluwakemi



D.O.A.

I used to want to be somebody,
used to be a kid with dreams,
hopes, wanted to be a lawyer,
but now I'm an empty soda can,
kicked down the street.

I'm a pile of rags,
but I'm at peace with my rages,
at peace in my cardboard castle
with my concrete yard
and my invisible fences.
I was at peace,

then the big man came on down
with his gun in my face.
Wanted me to dance.
I said, "If you want a show
go to the movies."
He gave me a firework show—

Pop, pop went the bullet.
I turned cold and dead
and I didn't have nobody

to cry for me
when the cops came.
They checked my pulse
and said, "It's dead on arrival."

Cer'cia Wallace



Should I

Should I, I can't decide
cause fire still burns inside.
Forgiveness is hard, it takes time
and that's something I don't have.
I used to wallow in self-consciousness

And to forgive, I had to be a butterfly of
love, but forgiveness is hard, hair pulled,
teeth punched out, I think when I try to forgive,
choking on self-hate.

To forgive is to forget and I
can't forget, cause what happened here
changed me. My demons are
buried now, they tore down the wrong one

and got you a bullet for breakfast,
a knife for lunch
and a deadly desire,

but I can forgive, but shall
not forget.

Cer'cia Wallace



Becoming

She comes from
broken glass and broken faces,
all over superficiality in her neighborhood.

From a mother who lost inspiration
and a father whose corruption glows
inside and out.

The spotlight shines on the wealthy,
rich and significant,
transparent to the loneliness within
a city
of lost dreams
lost hope,
lost imagination.

She screams for change
beyond herself,
unchangeable,
with locks on laws that control society.

She feels herself emptying
as the pressure point of
guns becoming the new voice,
students cheated of education,
and war as a symbol of strength
pushes itself to destruction.

She is becoming
what she's always asked for:
fake authority
over people who will always want,
but can never have.

America,
we are becoming.

Kiana Murphy



Poetry Should . . .

Poetry should be silent
Comforting the lonely
Nurturing the sick
But so quiet and quick
It's like a flash before your eyes.

Poetry should be creepy
Stalking behind you
Making you turn around
To see if you're safe and sound.

Poetry should be deadly
Cutting across you like a knife
Spitting out words of hate and love
Before death creeps up and takes you above.

Poetry should be eternal;
Coming back to life
Bringing peace to the world
Restoring nature
Poetry should be bliss.

Rene Frangel

Scorching

It feels like 200 degrees,
like I just got out of the pool
and water is running
everywhere. Sweat.

Give me a ton of ice cream
or ice. Give me something
before I melt out of my clothes.

Kaitlyn Bowman



I Was Raised By ...

I was raised by
Macaroni and cheese
Collard greens cooking
kind of women

A thick hair
I would smack you in your face
'cause you need to try harder
kind of women

Got muscles, cursing
Didn't have manners or need
a man type of women.

Some glasses wearing
"Men ain't nothing"
kind of women.

I was raised by women.

Tajia Williams



My Friend

Laughing at everything
Not harshly not weirdly
But the deep deep
down laughter potential it has.
Turning tears to rain
Turning smiles to sunshine
She can make anything
grow to reach its dream.
She's not a scientist or
a genie, but a poet
a transformer of words
that turns into beauty and life.
To show imagery in
Letters and stanzas
Poetry. Cer'cia.
She makes poetry
what it is
her poems are the creation
of flowers blooming and
lingering on every magical word.
She is poetry.
She is my friend.

Cristal Sandoval



My Unknown

What comes out of your mouth
is not thought through or even thoughtful.

You stand out even when you
Are sitting alone. Brag about what you have
And don't have.
Loud as a siren (if tempted)
Laughter heard ten miles away
Hands never kept to self
Even if it's to harm or embrace.

No limit when it comes to sports.
Your endgame.

He has something that belongs to me
and he don't even know.

Allyssa Hester



Raised By Women

I was raised by
kitchen cooking
bread popping
greens boiling
“wash your hands before you
eat”
kind of women

Big boned
Keep nails done
Fashionista
Always standing up for what's right
“It's better to be alone than with
bad company”
Type of women

Heels wearing
Hips switching
Go shopping
Color beaming
“Always matter no matter what
you wear”
Type of women

Not artistic
Cigarette smoking
Liquor drinking
Always partying
“Who buying the bottles”
type of women.

I was raised by women.

Alexis Avery



Raised By Women

I was raised by God fearing
Independent, everybody get together
For the holidays, type of women

The “who you talkin’ to, respect
your elders”

The “don’t touch it unless you
gonna pay for it”

The “get up so we can go to
Church”

The “not believing in not disciplining”
type of women.

The French vanilla, just got done cooking ribs
and burgers and hot dogs and chicken and mac
-n-cheese and sweet potatoes and potato salad
smelling
kind of women.

The nice suit and formal dresses
type of women.
The “ooh grandma what’s that” type
of women.

The long curly, pretty hair, the thick natural,
and the thick wavy type of women.

The wise and wondrous encouraging
type of women.

I was raised by women.

Yunique O’Neil



I am The Book:

I know who you love and who you hate.
I know the comments you keep to yourself.

I know the truth.

You told me you didn’t really like the shirt
Dad gave you for your birthday.
You told me who really smelled bad.

I know the truth.

You told me how you really didn’t like that
girl’s hair.
You told me about that F you got in class.

I know the truth.

Mariah Parmely



I Was Raised By

I grew up with
“You gonna sit
at that table and
finish your food!”
Type of women.

“Wash those dishes”
Kind of women.

“Don’t come home stupid after school”
Type of women.

I was raised by, “Change your
little sister and brother’s diapers”
Type of women.

I was raised by a woman.

Kiyon Robles



What For

At two I lived for toys:
The dolls with the Jeep cars
Rubber made Polly Pockets
Bratz mannequin heads
Cinderella dress up shoes
and every Dora The Explorer toy made.

I lived for movies and TV shows
Mighty Joe Young, the movie
that always made me cry. Dora
the Explorer, the show I
always watched.

I lived for games.
Me and Daja playing
Power Puff girls on the
playground and a good
game of house.

I lived for second grade.

Shaukeria Reese



5 Mothers

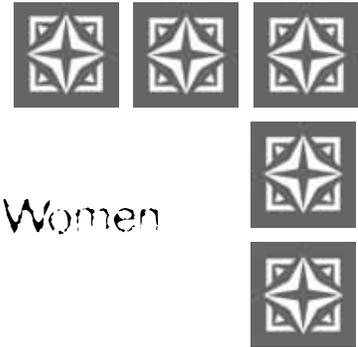
I was raised by
“girl get your butt
over here” type of women.

I was raised by
“remember your heritage,
you ain’t a hood rat, you’re
a black princess” type of women.

I was raised by
you na, better na,
hope na I na don’t na
tell na about na that na
little boy and you na smirking
type of sister.

I was raised by
“fight for your life”
“kick him high and low”
“Get mad”
“Church on Sunday”
“Church on Wednesday”
“You better thank God”
type of women.
I was raised by women.

Traanna Sitton



I Was Raised By Women

I was raised
By hard working
Independent
Good looking
Good cooking
Women.
Spiritual women.
I was raised by women.

Antonio Todd

For My Peoplez

For my peoplez everywhere helping me
do me and you
do you.

For my peoplez who push me on and
Help me succeed no matter what
Obstacles.

For my peoplez who write poems
And songs about everyday life
And cold winter hearts

For my peoplz who love to sing
and dance and express themselves
through anything they touch or do.

For my peoplez who cherish the
Thought of us being besties forever.

For my peoplez who are my peoplez,
Who’ll stay my peoplez, because
I love my peoplez and my peoplez love me.

Cristal Sandoval



I Was Raised

I was raised by
 Going hard
 Taking nothing from nobody
 kind of women.

Long haired
 Caramel skinned
 Droopy curl styling
 kind of women.

Throw down
 High heels stuntin
 Hip shaking
 “Can’t nobody compare to me”
 kind of women.

Baked chicken
 Mash potatoes
 Broccoli & Cheese
 Making type of women.
 I was raised by women.

CheYonne Dickens and Mary Lewis

Colors: Black

Covering the world with your dark embrace
 When everything’s wrong and out of place
 You’re depressing to some
 Happy to others
 You search the world for vindictive lovers
 I love you. You’re my favorite color.

Ta’Qiya Stroman



Switch

Lip stick skirt short
Talking like a G
Jonng on my past friends
Attitudes everywhere
Mixing myself with my lie
Switch home.

Long jeans, loose shirts
Dancing in the living room
Liking both worlds
while song writing
Switch classroom

Quiet proper talking
Writing creatively
Being an innocent
while others are
thought to lie
Always on honor roll
Switch? I ain't havin it.

Cocky Crazy girl
If you touch me
you'll get beat twice
in one hit.
Come check me.
Switch.

Cristal Sandoval



I am

I am me
I am loyal to others
I am me

Playing my games
Waking up in my boxers
Eating cold pizza

I am me.

Deamonte Gibson



Favorite Color: Red

A perfect color for a Ferrari.
The wheels spinning in flames like a
Campfire.
The rising sun in the morning.
One of the colors in the rainbow after
a rainy day.

Triony Valdivia

Favorite Color... Guess

The trustworthiness border.
The book with four white lines
with the pencil, pen, and ruler.
The strike of power.
Be respectful, I lurk everywhere
even in the sky on a beautiful day.
The A and C in teaching.
The sparkle in her bracelet
You embrace my eyes.
How I love the shades you make.

Kaitlyn Bowman

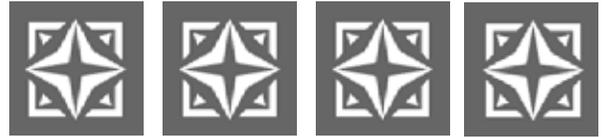
Favorite Color: Green

You taste fresh
The ring on my finger
Some may call you plain
You're the color of nature
All around in the woods
People use you for purchase.
I am in the world.

Abigail Bibb



Aaron Williams



Remember

Remember the name
the laugh, the smile.
Always remember
the friendship.
Remember the voice
Remember the caring.
Remember the legacy.

Mychael Thomas

Favorite Color: Black

I am the color of a break up
I taste as bitter as my bite
I am sour, not sweet
The color of absence, color of a beaten eye
The color of the TV off

The color of blues.
The color of the motherland
The color of an empty box of fries

A rainbow of many
The color of death
Of life
Of nothing.

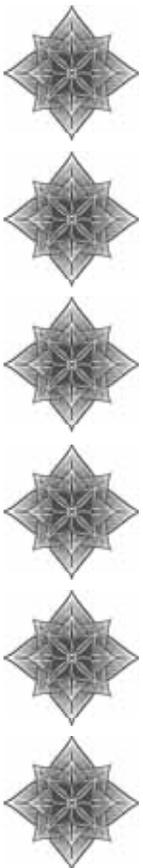
Cer'cia Wallace

Remember

Remember the day that the pool opened. Remember the chlorine that burned my eyes as I dived in? Remember the day when I was hungry and got some of Mom's spicy chicken.

Remember the day I hopped on that plane and my stomach dropped. Remember when we stayed in that fancy hotel in Orlando. Remember going to Ocean City and watching the heavy sun burn us as we sat on the beach. Remember we enjoyed life.

Rasheen Williams



Poetry Should Be Loud and Bold

Poetry should eat hamburgers every time they go to McDonalds, chase the cat down the street with a mouse in its mouth. Put on its leather jacket and go to the movies.

Poetry should yell at her granddaughter and tell her to know everything!

Poetry should do cartwheels in gym class, run down the school hallway, and toilet paper the school lawn.

Poetry should play double dutch in the bathroom. Poetry should lie and say she didn't cheat on her test, and sing old blues songs during happy hour, drink orange juice in the shower, and poetry should eat meatloaf with cereal. Poetry should be loud and bold!

Traanna Sitton

Poetry Should Have a Family

Poetry should have a family.
Poetry should have two kids with Non-Fiction, named
Hip-Hop and Jazz.

But the next day, Non-Fiction
was cheating on Poetry.
Poetry caught her and Non-Fiction was guilty.

Poetry should have moved on.
But he didn't.
Poetry could have left but he stayed.
Poetry kept his family under control but still
Lived happily ever after.

Rasheen Williams



Body of Atlanta

There is always something to see
inside me. My heart is the Atlanta Dome,
the crowd is always pumping.

There is always something to see.
My organs are the CNN Building,
working together, breaking the news down.

In my body there are always
places to see.

Russell Rountree



Godmother

My Godmother
Short with the horse legs and the
Wide, mile long hips.

Typical genius, very fancy, you'll
Catch her in a dress and heels, she stays
In the nice four wheels.
Her gloss is poppin, Lil' Mama don't
Got nothing on her lips.

Goes to church on Sunday morning
Comes home jonin then gets
Convicted next Sunday.
Though she goes to church
Don't mess with the gospel gangster.

Her hair may say she's Mustafah in the morning and Beyoncé by night.
She has to keep her curls tight.

In her house she may talk to herself
But she's my Godmother the crazy,
psycho, silly, Rachele.

Yunique O'Neil



Bright Lights: My Body As A Crime Scene

The white cell gang ran up
in my heart. Red Blood cells
carjacked my lungs.

White blood cells jumped
an infection. The orange juice
ran through me, as if criminals
running from the feds.

Tyric Saunders



Remember

Remember the inner voice that spoke
in a sound of quiet and no spotlight
Remember the DESA girl who
dreamed of this since she could talk.
Remember the quiet drama queen
that spent most of her time with dumb drummers.
Remember me as the prodigy of Joshua.
Remember the voice inside a soul
of bittersweet music that branches for
a bigger spotlight than the middle school stage.
Remember Me.

Jaynise Vandervort



The Last Time

I wake up in an empty hole
cold, dark, and all alone
no pulse, no inner thoughts
no life inside of me to help me breathe.
As I get up, I see a light in the corner.
In that light, my heart lies there in pieces
I try to fix it, a piece is missing
I look and look, it cannot be found.
Tears began to fall, I can't love anymore.
I hear footsteps, closer and closer they get
I have nowhere to run, nowhere to hide.
As they approach me, they have no name, no face
but they have the missing piece in my heart.
I can't touch, can't feel, only see them.
A face appears, one I used to love
one that used to love me, the one that hurt me
the last time I was with him
was the last time I loved.

Robin Jones

Inside

Sometimes I wonder why my
stomach growls and how.

I wonder how my fingers move
and what type of muscles are inside me,

what makes up half of my body.

I really want to know
what goes on
once the lights are out.

Brittany Jenifer

Poetry Should

Poetry should be a language.
Poetry should curse his boss out after
Not getting a raise and say things like
“Why in the FREEVERSE didn't I get a RAISE!?”
And “What the HAIKU is wrong with you!?”
Poetry should be like a dance and know all the latest moves.
Poetry should be something else to add to this poem.

Ivory Quarles



The Last Walk Home in the Dark

As I was walking
it was the night of the living dead
Friday.
Fog covers her ankles as she walks
clenching her purse
close to her body
as she panics with the fear
that a silhouette is following her.
Giggles from cars
driving past, she feels threatened and nervous.
As a man approaches her
she thinks to herself how her punch combo
gonna go down if he tries something.
Right jab, left hook,
uppercut and straight.
Yeah!

I like that, she says to herself.
But all he did was walk past her
Phew, she said
She gets to her door,
looks through her window,
and says that's the last time
I'm walking home in the dark.

Renita Williams



My Body In Conversation

When my lungs talk, they breathe
heavily. Tell me to stop running.
I was going up and down the steps.
They said, *We're tired and hurt.*

After writing all day, my hands
said, *Slow down. You're done.*
Your teacher won't care if you stop.
I got mad. Told them to shut up,
but didn't know who I was talking to.

When I tried to write again, my hand
pushed the paper away. Leaving me
to wonder what was happening.

Angela Thorne



My Body's A Large Amusement Park

My organs are rides. My heart
is the best one. My veins
are large roller coasters
the blood rides like passengers.
Once they reach the heart,
they become something different.

My large and small intestines
are kiddy rides for new foods.
They don't stay long.

The vitamins stay and help out.
They work the rides. Sometimes
I wonder what is happening inside of me;
well, at least in the summer.

Monique Simpson



My Body as a Football Stadium

Would be loud.
Lots of people; thousands
of them like little ants.

The game would be fun—
White blood cells vs. red blood cells.
The game would go well
and be enjoyable.

But wait! White cells
are in the lead. No, hold up!
Red cells came back. The crowd
goes wild amid the smell
of hotdogs and hamburgers.

At the end of the game, white cells
would be declared the winner: 17 to 10.

David McIntyre



Body Town

The body is a town.
Different things and activities.

The thumping of the heart,
a building being built.

Breathing in and out,
the wind swishing through trees.

A runner speeding by
like the tongue that never stops.

In the stomach's depths
goods are mixed with horrible wastes.

The body could always use repair,
but it has to be a commitment.

Take care of it so it so it can last
as long as it can.

Abigail Bibb



Last Time

Hold up
let me go back
back to the last time I cried
back to when my eyes were a waterfall
and my heart sang the sweet blues
when I wandered aimlessly to nameless curbs.

Back to whimpers and tears
back to when I cried for movies
back to Tuesday, when Peaches died
back to age five, when blanky was killed.

The last time I cried,
I was a child, now I am grown
went through a metamorphosis
of my own and became stronger,
better, never ever cry,
yes, cause the last time I cried,
the old me died.

Cer'cia Wallace

To Beckon Her

I need sage, saffron, pumpkin, thyme,
and the flame of the rainy eclipse night
to beckon her.

I need the wiccans of my past
to burst through the windows
to beckon her.

I need to see her silhouette.
Someone had to sacrifice
I didn't know it would be me;
I didn't know it would
take this much just to conjure,
just to beckon.

But now I am one of the wiccans
who burst through the windows.

I am in the box

I was the ultimate sacrifice.

Traanna Sitton



The Trail

Dripping with sweat
the river winding down my back
collecting in my shoes
sticky hair clinging to my face
as if afraid to let go.

The heat did this
the heat, a snail
making its way down my body
leaving behind a trail of slime
green gooey stuff
that comes at this time of year.

A shower kills slime
it's rain in the desert
longingly anticipated, highly praised
real hot, but getting cool
summer is so mean.

Cer'cia Wallace



Raised

I was raised by commands,
by people who swore to God
that they had the upper hand;
Yelling, screaming, at the highest volume
to make necessary emotional scars,
telling the middle-born child,
You don't look as if you'll get far.

Crying causes bodily harm;
Expressing anger deprives me of
my well-deserved freedom.
Expecting so much, but
the one time you don't get what you want,
you begin your infamous tirade,
talking all the time, but you never listen.
Criticize my every move, day after day after day.

Then for a second, you show a shred of hope
and I forget who you really are.
Under these conditions,
there must be something special for me
if I came this far.
And then I'll show you what you wanted me to be;
Maybe this is just your way of preparing me.

Sequan Wilson



Caught in the Moment

Passenger seat confronts my body
strapped safely by the seat belt
knowing nothing would happen to me.

Traffic slows
because of the big red fire truck
but no sirens singing their tone.

We move closer to the scene,
I see a man lying face down, not moving
my first thought, *oh man,*
the cops got him pressed out for something.

Then I notice blood upon his chin
Oh no
The paramedic is trying to revive him
but I think their clench to his heart
isn't strong enough.

The closing of his eyes
repeats in my mind
which makes me shudder in shock
blurs all over my memory
flickers my nerve.

Being safe in this car
didn't know I would get caught
in this moment.

Renita Williams



Hit and Run

Pain, pain shatters through my veins
my will, slowly withering away
like my life, like my day.
I want to be put out,
put out of my misery.
Why? Why couldn't they just...
Just stop to think of me
how I, just a homeless being
feel, or if my life matters
to those in the ambulance
who care nothing for me
as though I am nothing,
nothing but a waste of skin.
Even my mind withers,
wITHERS AWAY
but now I see,
I see truth, I see love
What is it?
It's too bright
It is light.

Cristal Sandoval

I'm Not Your Friend

We ain't cool.
We are two tectonic plates
moving farther and farther apart.
We used to laugh, now we're silent.

Our friendship flower used to bloom
now it withers away,
used to be solid, but now we're melted.
Now we're gone, like last night's meal.

I ain't your girl; ain't your home girl,
girl, ain't your friend.
We done; we don't exist.
Leave me alone.

Cer'cia Wallace



Same Difference

Understand your element
Your power...
I'm still mastering mine, I'm still coping with it.
That might make me like everyone else.
My fragrance, my fragrance
Obscene and well-kept.
MTV did it!
(In my mother's voice)
She forgives MTV.
My soil is fertile and fine
The rate at which a plant in my mind can prosper!
Nourished by vivid visions of the past
That plant will become a vine
A divine vine predestined to inundate this temple
That is my body.
And it is my choice to desecrate this temple
And it is fate
And it is fine
I have a knife
In my possession
I am willing to use this blade to cut a slice
Of my struggle and feast with you, my brother
I insist.
The fat of this struggle keeps me full
The bad fat
I have more than enough to divide with you
Resistance.
Ecliptic shade.
It seems as though I'm the only one with
An appetite for destruction
I'm the righteous one
Born on the path of righteousness, without a choice
So I never chose to be different
I just was.
So, while entranced in your thoughts with
Your plate full in front of you
Wondering if you're different, realize
How many before you have asked the sky the same
Question.
You are like everyone else.

James Saunders



The Difference

The difference between me and you
is the threat of a past amnesia, of ancestors
who forgot their place,
the taste of a castaway.
Only difference between me and you
is I'm mocha and you're a splash
and a puddle away from being vanilla.
This flight is historic,
that satire of you can't do this
because you're this color of the rainbow
or what we eat for dinner
is what society calls different.
Just the memory of lying under the train tracks
at dusk, chasing faux roller coasters,
You're my favorite outcast
holding hands, mixing some expensive coffee.
My dear Skipper, the only difference is
the narrator of my life is Morgan Freeman
and yours is Slash.

Maryum Abdullah

As a Young Girl

As a young girl she was an outcast.
Being the last one out of the classroom,
She stayed to herself, and never really had
the popularity attitude.

One day at school she was getting picked on
by all the more light-skinned girls:
How she was boney, black and unpretty.
None of them liked her at all.

She cried all the time because of how she looked
Hey! There goes that boney girl, ha ha ha
She didn't hit puberty
Leave me alone, she said, but they wouldn't.

The next day she made a friend—
This might surprise you, but it was one of the pickers
That young girl didn't really want to be her friend
but the way she was raised, she gave her a chance.

Her skin was light and mine was brown
which means we're different. She held my hand
tight and stopped them from messing with me
And we've been best friends ever since.

Renita Williams



L-R: Aneshia Whitney, Imani Glass



Neighbor

Why you hang with him?
He no punk
He my mans
He cool
And you tryin' to beat him.

Your friend can hear you
He's scared
He should have gone
But then, you say something
Then you both are fightin'
Your mind becomes more strong
No mere ebonics.

Myron Jones

Unwanted

I am nothing,
Gravel that rests underneath your feet.
My tears are the rain
You block out with umbrellas.

Fingers, my fingers
Stutter out against the pavement
My feet blur, jumpy
Eyes twitch, avoiding oblivious gazes.

Fleeing my chores, house watch
The sheep shift away
Distancing themselves from the wicked wolf
I dance around the cracks on the sidewalk.

I am a bug, dodging the soles
Scatter to the street, unwanted.
On the crowded road,
I find my place.

Nichell Kee



Difference

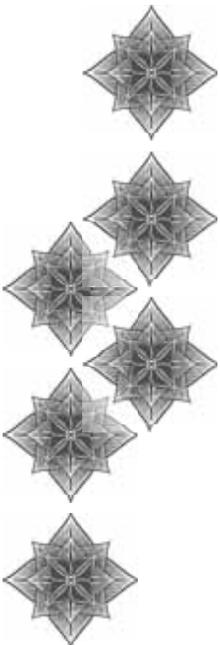
Chilling on my porch, watching cars go to and fro
My neighbor pulls up in her Impala and says
“Can you help me with these groceries?”
I get up and help. She says “Thanks a lot,” and gives me ten dollars.

My dad finally comes out of the house, “Are you ready?”
I give him a straight face to ask if he’s serious
We get in the car and go to my aunt’s house
I cut the radio up and fall asleep.

After 25 minutes, I wake up at my aunt’s in Richmond
I feel like I’m on another planet
I get out of the car and the lady walking past clutches her purse tight
You can tell by the look on her face, she doesn’t trust me.

Where I live, dreads and big coats are common
Out here, people watch my every move like a criminal
I went from helpful neighbor to common threat,
Average person to an outcast—Boy, what a difference!

Michael Johnson



Untitled

You look at him as if you know it all,
As if you know what caused his downfall,
Prejudging before even reviewing the case,
Reaching a verdict before visiting the scene of the crime.

Staring because you don't understand,
Laughing for quick demand,
Recounting mindless self-indulgence into
a mind chock full of denial,
Having no choice but to put on an act,
Without even thinking of another's pain,
And all for pointless personal gain.

Shame is associated with those willing to repent,
But I bet you don't even regret the thunder
you've stricken on this man,
I hope you're content with that waste you call a life.
By the way, I just gave you an ultimatum,
So a simple "thank you" could suffice.

Sequan Wilson



I'm done

Dead to me
Abusive
Also ripped apart
Guess who it is?
My soul
Why do I feel
like this? I feel trapped
in a needle stack
Should I die?
The question is, should I not.
People don't care
they don't like me
Why the freak
I feel animated
Goodbye.

Rashad Rosenboro



Wasted Life

The events of the past,
running on replay

Standing, wanting something more,
help even. Someone who cared

Living out this box of lies and shame
Asking for change as if they owed me that much

Then in a blurry vision
death upon impact, like it was intended

My last seconds of life, my killer runs off
Me, nothing but a lost soul of society

They didn't care, the time I wasted
getting here seems like an illusion

But it's too late for half-hearted regrets

Greg Kyo Edelin



Mirror Image/ The Beautiful Similarities

Staring at my grandmother's photo
trying to spark a narrative
as to what her life was like

Back in the day.

She's standing in the dusk of night
stars outcasting her felt-tipped afro,
lapels flapping in the wind
bell bottoms pleasing the ground
platforms, hoop earrings, lipstick.

She was foxy and fly in her day.

Staring in the mirror
into my grandmother's eyes
tryn'a do things to make sure
there is no difference.

In my day

Posing proudly on her front steps
sun threatening to bake
my tresses, so cotton-like
collar taking flight in the wind
jeans dragging slightly behind me
canvas shoes, hoop earrings, Chapstick.

I'm a historical puddle of her essence:
looking at me, she will never catch a case
of amnesia.

Jessica Carpenter



Different

Differences in a lot of this world
and a person like me has been through things
In my life, when I see things
I think of differences all the time
but being in the world is so hard.
A lot of people have a lot of differences
but it's at every different level
It's fun doing things in the world
seeing everybody every day
and doing a lot of things every day
But you keep doing it, it gets boring.
I see lots of people
trying to do as many things as they can
Me, I try many times
but I can't do it sometimes
A lot of people call that multitasking
and that's a difference to me.
Being on the planet makes a whole lot of difference
but people have to go there every day
and now it is a new year and differences follow people
everywhere they go, which is kind of cool
But people have lost their lives and their souls
to something that is pure evil on the streets
and that's why it's a difference in this world
But you know that it will be life on the streets.

Marcus Barnes

alone

Cold and hungry
cuts on my hands
There's no reason
to try
There's no help
or chance
I cry and ask for help.
They laugh at me
She is the reason
I cry
wondering if she knows
who I am
and can she feel
my pain?

Daiquon Felder



Cry for Help

I walked down the street
crying for help to the lost soul

I cried in pain,
watched the lost soul cry
for help,

but then
there was the light
so bright it called for
the lost soul

and it was saved

Michael Parker



Hit Me and Run

To the medics, I am nothing
but a poor homeless wound,
breathing
trash.

To them, I am like
a wrapper they don't want
that floats through the wind.

Fire trucks never come
the man just stares
he doesn't do anything.

I got splattered like a mallet
the cops still won't help me
Everybody doesn't care
they just drive by.

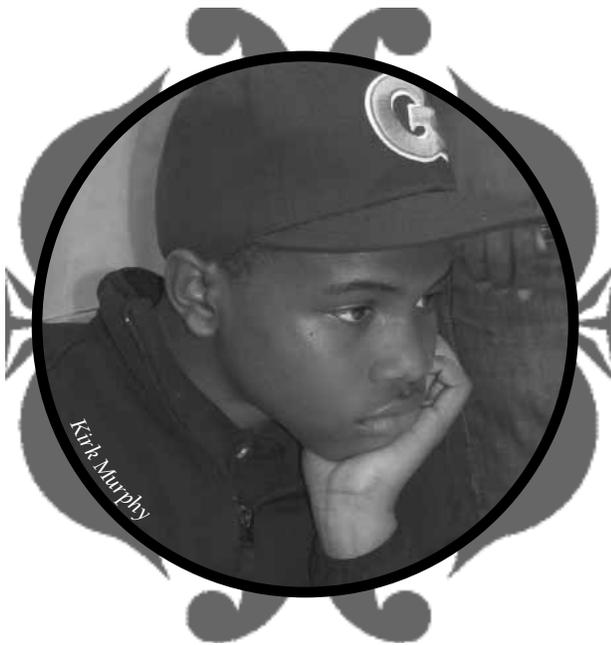
Abudull Ali



Can You Hear My Soul?

Hey you!
Hey you, can you hear my soul?
From the bottom of my soul,
it's people that know
I'm still in the sky
in my mind, all white
flying high, real.
I always wish
that I was dead
People laughing
making jokes, now
it feels like I'm shot in the head.

Sharri Barnes



Non-Progressing Life

As I lay in my trash-filled
alley, I saw that I
shunned life, thinking to myself
what have I ever got
by being alive. Society
clenches at my throat
with no mercy.
While I was drinking
a warmed bottle
of vodka, I began to walk
into the street to end
my pitiful non-progressing life.

As soon as I got in
the middle of the street
I became a terrified frozen hopeless
shell that couldn't move, until
I was struck by a cold iron beast
moving at a quick pace
and I came to my senses
noticing that I was in grave pain
from being hit by a car.

At that very instant,
I wanted to make s
omething of myself
instead of shunning the world
for my stupidity.

Steven Brown

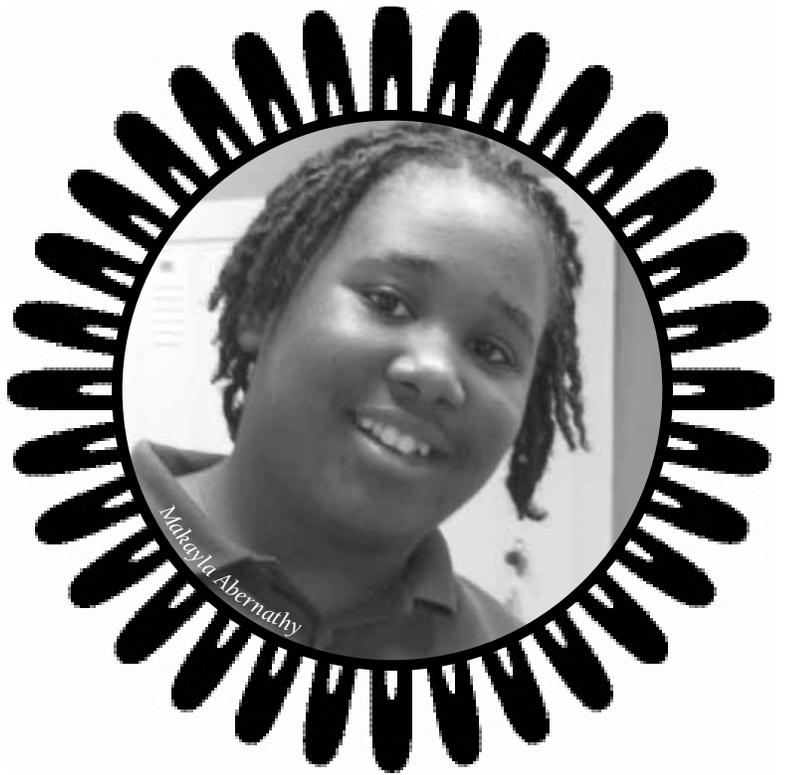
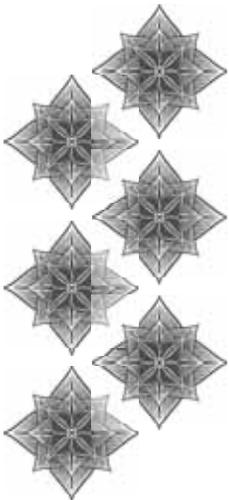
Seeing Red Curtains

He crumpled in an academy-winning performance
four blocks from Broadway,
where all the A-listers are
his ensemble
unwilling and lazy,
still wrapped in their hangovers
scared of bad reviews

In this metaphysical jigsaw
where all the pieces fit perfectly,
including the wind-blown pipes
and the pretty blue blender of debris
I tripped and fell from my townhouse doorstep
into their melodramatic plot
like an unmatching puzzle piece
being shoved into the place of another

His blood-red climax
showcased four blocks from Broadway
merged in a sad flicker of high operating
machinery
and bad timing
set and filmed on the other side of New York
escaping the clutches of mainstream media

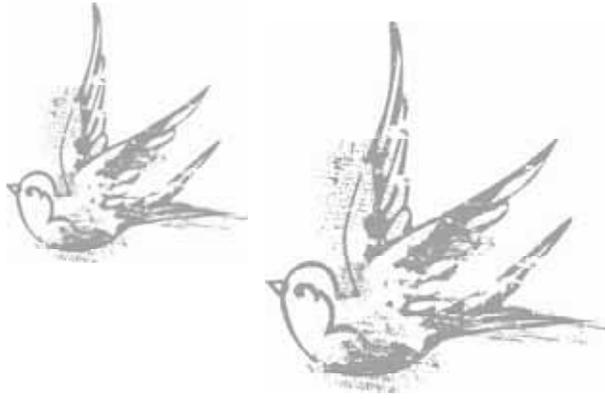
James Tindle



Bus Ride to School

Vibrating seats, shaken voices
Give off a false sense of fear.
Tense atmosphere, bursting lungs
Stale air, raised guards
Rolling wheels don't stop the flowing anger.
Disturbed environment, it makes a sound.
Wide expressive eyes
Fists connecting with moving targets
Two more join the party
Thunder rolls through the bus.
Footsteps, unsure, scatter like roaches
Young eyes turn on like a faucet
Yelling *Mom* through the tears.
What could any of us do?
My stop was coming up.

Nichell Kee



On the Bus

I ride the bus.
All I see is my game,

then a bunch of boys
attack an elderly man.

The elderly man went on an overload
and beat the other man.

Someone said *stop*,
and it was me.

Abdull Ali



Single Leaf

A single leaf
in the middle
of two white lines
not expecting
a gust of wind
to take it away
in this star-flecked night;

A single soul
taking its last
unraveling breath;

But before it all ended
somewhere it began,
like an overripe piece of fruit;

The blur of animated lights
coming for her, seconds
only seconds before
that bomb detonates;

The click-clack of her shoes
hitting the ground
only a memory of where
she used to stand;

Her teeth clenched
to brace herself for impact
as if a mallet were
hitting her big toe, pain;

The last stutter of breath
escapes her mouth
as the orchestra's music
ends. Diagnosis: death.

Jessica Carpenter

On the bus

Doors open,
W6 Garfield-Anacostia Loop
I put my fare on the box (*beep*)
the direction the bus goes
causes a forward jolt.
(*bing*) Next stop please.
People get off, people get on
oh great, the big, drunk guy
smelling of gin is cursing
out the cute bus driver.
Lady gets on the bus
bus currently in a state
of overload. Wails pierce
my ears as the bus stops
No more room! scream many.
Elderly woman says, "Sir,
can you move your bag
so I can sit?" Ignorance commences
Big, drunk guy swings, I get hit
Guy swings, he hits the window
I squint, angered I get
off at the Salvation Army a known
landmark (*bing, stop requested*)
Doors open,
W6 Garfield-Anacostia Loop.

Jessica Carpenter



Unraveling the Truth

For the first time in my life
I'm homeless
It was all a blur to me
My mom was crying
It was terrible
but people helped us,
like my cousin and my grandma.

It was wicked for me,
my mom had to find somewhere
for us to live fast
Then she found a shelter,
we went; on the first day it was rough
But after a few days passed,
it started to get easier.

I met a lot of people
I made friends, it was fun
My mom was still crying
she was saying it was her fault
Sooner or later she was diagnosed
with a sinus infection
from all the smoke, it was sad.

But now it is all a memory.
I'm glad, but we are still homeless
to this day
but people are helping us
I never want to go back
there again.

Seleen Ford



One Stop

Walking down Silver Hill Road
smelling chicken and fries
it widens my eyes,
Popeye's on the left
Census Bureau on the right
sun comes from behind
a cloud and it gets real bright.

I put money on my SmartTrip
then I pay my fare
then I notice this girl
and she starts to stare.
What is she looking at? I really don't care.

I walk down the steps on the right
on the track, I notice an elder laid on his back.
I'm thinking of what happened to the girl
thought it was funny, till these boys
knock her down, running with money.

The man gets up, chasing them up the stairs
then my train pulls up I get in my seat,
some lady speaks,
"That was ignorant, the way that man got beat"
I get off the train, dreads wet like a mop
now it's raining
all that in one stop.

Michael Johnson

Rewind

I told them to forget the past:
the time in class
the memory of me
making reference to TV.
I told the teacher,
"U can't C me."
So can we rewind
to before that time
when life was cool
and I wasn't a fool?

Andre Thomas



Remember

I remember when I was with you
made me feel special
You made me who I am today
It's like déjà vu.

But you are good,
you cared about me
you call me when you can
I can't forget you, you aren't in the past.

I have lots of memories of you
when I was a baby
and until now, I still do
You were a father I never had.

Well, he is alive and you aren't either
I wish I could rewind back
and spend time with you
like we used to.

I can't wait to see you again
when you come back from jail
I hope you're taking care of yourself
I miss you.

Seleen Ford



The Last Football Game

This may be the last time
I giggle at defenders
who can't catch me,
the last time I sacrifice my body
for a team that loses
every year in the playoffs,
the last time I feel the blues
for trying my hardest.
I'm having a metamorphosis
into a person I can't understand—
looking out a window of pain
into a random peace,
no longer having to sprint
never-ending laps
feeling like the wind
was punched out of my lungs.
Thrown into life:
a game stranger than UFOs.

Michael Johnson

Unshackled

The last time I went with a boy
I was very happy at first
but when it got later into the relationship
it became unhappy for me;

It felt like I was handcuffed to him forever
It was like there was no way out
of the darkness that I was in
My friend tried to bring me back to reality.

I was fighting for my life
But I had lost the war
and had to be a slave to his power
But finally when I let go
and he did too
I jumped out of my shackles
and became a goddess.

I could never go back
to that black hole of darkness
I have freedom and I will never go back!

Aneshia Whitney



Football

When I played the game
My skills were a flame
Showing fools how they're lame

Dodging left and right
Your friends a sacrifice
To the lord of the night

Move like a shadow, even in the light
Making people fall:
This is football

Andre Thomas

Free

People sacrifice life
because of fear
When you let go
you go through a metamorphosis
Windows are chances to fly,
the feeling of freedom,
the flame of life, it will grow
Nomads have no handcuffs
to hold them down.

Aaron Williams



A Terrible Job

Every time I go to work
I hate it
Sometimes I see a new face,
a new voice
that might hear society again
They look like caged animals
behind bars
They wish they could cross over
but they can't cuz society is rejecting them
This is a mythic curse
an unworthy heaven
that should have never been made
When I leave those doors
I feel free
but I'm depressed because
the others couldn't leave with me

Johnathan Lewis

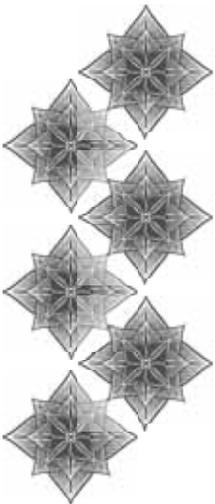


Archaeology

I study the remains of past human life,
the materials of fossils,
artifacts, humans, dinosaurs.
I also study the remains of
the culture of people,
dig up graves of ancient people
scuffing my salt brush,
scratching the desert pavement.

Rocks black as tar
Sunrise is glimmering
Blinding eyes of nature
beneath my feet
Snakes on the ground
slithering for water
Ground looking thirsty
and the desert is sore.

Shadajah Groone



The Worst Job Ever

I get called on the spot;
Moment of silence,
Looking at this page of unlimited words,
The teacher says “Read or I’m calling your mom
for disruptions in class, fighting, and everything else
you didn’t do.”
My heart begins to go at a drumline pace.
I take a deep breath.
I go to speak these unfamiliar words
on this slim piece of trees...
...No words are coming out
Come on! What’s happening?
Then, after a good ten seconds,
the only thing that comes out is
an outrageous blast of stinky air
out of my rear end.
Ugh! So embarrassing!
This is the worst job a kid can have.

Kirk Murphy



The Worst Job

The worst job
is being in love
All that heart-aching
pain
Why can't it just
go away?

You tell someone
you love them
and get an “I don’t know
what to say” back.

You thought
you were in heaven
but the love
gate slammed in your face
One last freedom kiss
from the one who doesn’t hurt
makes you feel like
you’re in paradise.

This job is hard
so don’t do it
Don’t stress
cuz those love doors
will open once again
Just believe in that heart
and trust
they’ll be there.

Nakia Better





Heat

On this one hot day
it brings all that nature is
that shows like summer times.

Navigation of soft winds
navigation of soft river streams
with sounds of that time and season
the summertime, so sweet.

Shadajah Groone

The Crazy Heat!

Still standing in the heat
Not able to breathe or talk
Only able to concentrate on the heat
that's on my face
As I dream of fresh air one day,
Being able to move as I still sit there
Days and days pass by
as I sit and watch the blazing sky
Wondering what I want to eat
as I sit right there in this crazy heat
Trying to think of air balloons
think now I'll see you soon

Nyelle Marshall

Fever Dream

As I was walking down the street
I was navigating the whole street
and I could feel my knuckles hurting
like I was punching some kind of wall.

I looked up to the sky
I could see balloons spiraling over my head
and I could feel the blindness
from the hot burning sun.

As daybreak drifted toward me
I was feeling very lighthearted
and my wings made it very hard
for me to see outside.

I tried to control myself
from being this hot and I looked up once more
to see a flock of starlings, birds
flying above my head
and at the end of the day
I had taken a long nap all day.

Marcus Barnes





Can't Stand It

The heat is like a crematorium
It beats us with such force
It bakes us like a fiery torch
I despise the sun
I despise the heat
I despise the fire
It makes me freak

The heat hugs me tight
so I can't even breathe
I'm allergic to the heat
It makes me sneeze
I'd rather prefer the cold
It has such a pleasant breeze

Ta'Qiya Stroman

Blazing

Why this heat?
It's baked me like
cooked meat.
Why this heat?
It knocks me
off my feet.
And it is hard to find
a nice cold treat.

Muhammad Ali

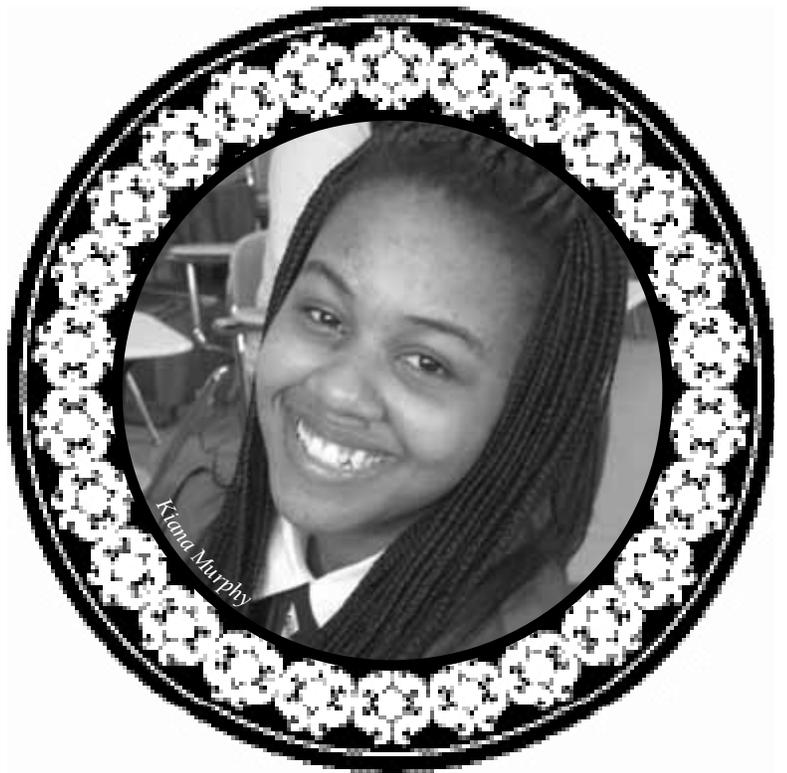


Summer

One hot summer day,
I was thirsty, it was too hot
We were trying to swing to get some air
I went outside to cool
and get a popsicle, but it melted.

The house was hot
So I went back outside
when twilight came, there was too much grief
My friend felt lightheaded, she was going in spirals
I got to get used to summer.

Seleen Ford



I Can't Take the Heat

When it's hot, sometimes I try to stay outside
and sometimes I have to get a fan to cool myself down.
I know I could open the window for some air
but that won't work.
I sweat all the time, so my feet stink.
My underarm is funky and sometimes I
put on some deodorant to
kick the funk from my underarm.
Sometimes I will splash myself with some cold water;
I have to take a shower with cold water, not hot.
I hate when it's hot in the house and outside.
I wish God could make it cold outside;
I wish God would make it snow.

Joshua Dunmore



The Heat and Immunity

Man it's hot!
I stay in the shade
where the cool breeze is;
I stay in the shade
like a scared animal wondering
where this ray of light is,
and why it's so hot.
I watch little kids running with popsicles:
They're immune to it
but it feels hot, like it'll burn my flesh
I use a wet towel to make
a quick door to where it's cool.
I get in the room, it's like a glacier
my towel like a desert
and body looking like hot bacon.

Johnathan Lewis



Changes

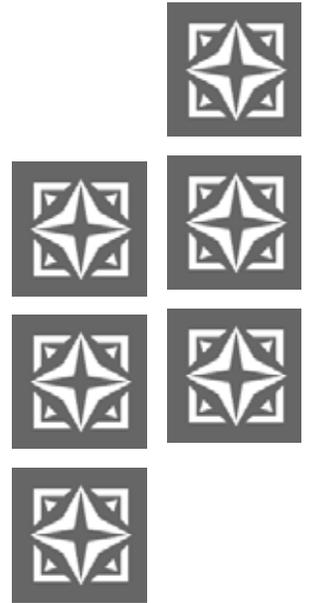
I am unpredictable as lightning
No one knows what's next
I will cause damage
I roar like a lion

I soar like an eagle
flying from danger
I am as quiet
as a mouse

I burn on the hatred
I am a knife causing pain
I am the pain that you feel
And your pain, I feel

I am the ocean
controlled by the wind
I am the cheetah
running to hide
I shoot like a star
yet I'm blowing into
something different

Michael Parker



The Last Time

The last time the vampire bit,
his fangs were fierce
his heart still thirsts
his anger sang
his eyes insane
taking the neck
filling it with pain
screams of terror filling his ears
last breath getting near.

Now the ritual's done
and you're one too
following his ways
Now he bids you adieu
you're on your own,
transforming others too.

Ta'Qiya Stroman



Dang, It's Hot!

It's so hot outside
I don't know what to do.
I want to go to Alaska, but
What's the point?
I need to die anyway
How many people feel like me?
I wish I could see these people
How many times have you heard people say what I say?
Can you find my soul?
No you can't,
Under all this heat.

Rashad Rosenboro



The Burning

The heat,
the sun beating
like an angry mother.
But here comes water
the pool, my lifeline in the heat.
First I find my trunks
which are my keys to the pool.
The heat has mugged my joy
I feel lightheaded,
navigate to the promised land.
Now I am set adrift.

Aaron Williams



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