

# ARTWORKS

Summer 2017

\$10

The Charles Hart Middle School Literary Magazine



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# Introduction

Welcome to *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 sixteenth 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 2016 edition of *Poet's Market* recognizes *hArtworks* as "an outstanding example of what a literary journal can be (for anyone of any age)."

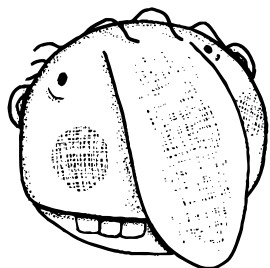
We have many friends who have helped to make *hArtworks* possible, and we would like to express our gratitude to them. Our sincerest thanks go out to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Children's Charities Foundation, the Clark-Winchcole Foundation, Commonweal Foundation, Community Foundation for the National Capital Region, D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities, Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation, Harman Family Foundation, Corinna Higginson Trust, Horning Family Fund, Lainoff Family Foundation, Marpat Foundation, Cathy and Mark McNeil-Hollinger, New York Avenue Foundation, Luther I. Replogle Foundation, Hattie M. Strong Foundation, Holly Syrrakos, Gail Oring and GO! Creative, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Arena Stage, the Shakespeare Theatre, Woolly Mammoth Theater, Jack and Monte, Tollefson and Company Investment Management, our friends at Popeye's in Eastover, Brian Adams, Barbara Bainum, Fritz Edler, Joseph and Lynn Horning, and Robert Johnson.

Our friends at the Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative also deserve our thanks for giving so much time and energy to our after-school Writing Club, as do our volunteers, Steven Brown, Jessica Carpenter, DeArren Dawkins, Bernitta Johnson, Daquan Johnson, Damon Kee, and Anthony and Annette Williams.

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 Charlette Butler; Assistant Principals Ms. Samecia-Muriel Broussard, Mr. Derek Gorham, and Dr. Sharon Armstrong; Ms. Pamela Dixon, Ms. Latavia Drakeford-Allen, Mr. Craig Duchemin, Ms. Nijma Esad, Mr. Jamal Kennedy, Ms. Jasmine McGill, Mr. Derrick McRae, Ms. Sheranada Robinson, Ms. Elaine Mixon, and Ms. Eleanor Seale.

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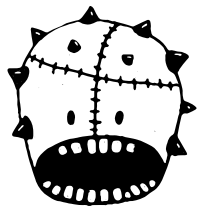


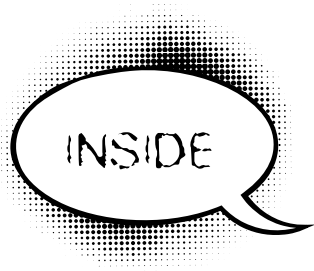
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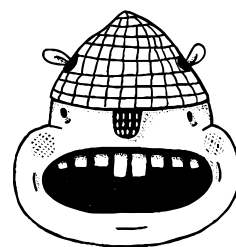
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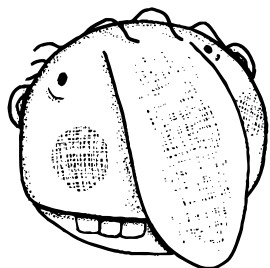
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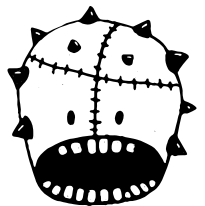


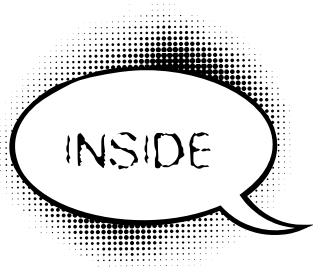
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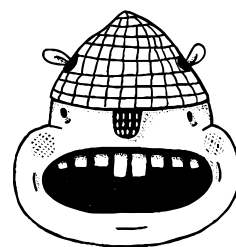
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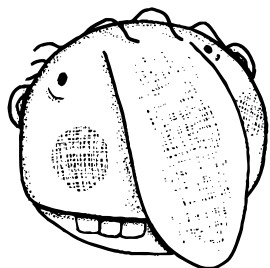
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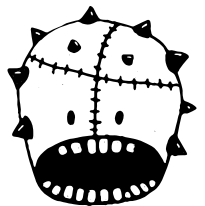


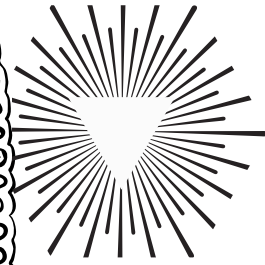
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*l-r: Shannell Jones, Christa Madikaegbu, Tatiana Pierce, Amir Green, Saquan Short, and Faith Thomas at the Parkmont Poetry Festival*

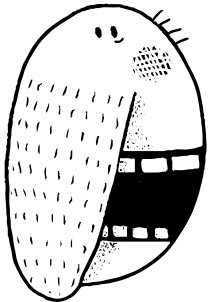
## Sights and Sounds

A whisper looks like a person fading away.  
 The letter B glows like the color blue.  
 Smiles sound like laughter.  
 A new idea feels like clothes coming out of the dryer.  
 Whenever I look at you,  
 I hear my heart beating faster.  
 A star sounds like a mascot shooting a shirt cannon.  
 The sound of a circus makes me smell cotton candy.  
 A circle smells like peace.

*Saebian McKnight*

## Synesthesia

The star sounds like the Earth's lullaby to us humans  
 A circle smells like snake sheddings and dishonesty  
 White moves in the color black  
 A whisper looks uneasy to an unpleasant ear  
 The texture of purple feels like smoked lips  
 The letter B glows the color red  
 Whenever I look at you, I hear claws on a chalkboard  
 The sound of gospel makes me smell fresh collard greens  
 A baby's cry is a symphony to a mother's ears at first sight  
 Smiles sound like Christmas carols  
 A new idea feels like a crushed juice box in the palm of a teenager  
 Every time I bite an apple, I see an evil queen  
 Awaiting her death



*Renita Williams*



## Synesthesia Wordplay

A star sounds like glowing in the dark;  
 A howl tastes like moonshine.  
 A circle smells like deliciousness,  
 Smiles sound like bodaciousness;  
 White moves in a shadow,  
 A baby's cry is bright in a meadow.

A whisper looks devious;  
 Mischief smells like evil, tedious.  
 Texture of purple feels a-okay;  
 A new idea feels like a genius new day.

Whenever I look at you, I hear fake.  
 The sound of what you give  
 is the feeling what you take.  
 When I bite an apple, I see land,  
 But really we're the mans with the plan.

*Jayden Gray*

## Benji Synesthesia

Tears sound like a basketball  
 bouncing around inside  
 a hollow quiet room.  
 Love tastes like waffles  
 on a Friday morning,  
 with birds chirping in the window.  
 The texture of red  
 is a sunny day  
 full of joy and great spirits.

*Jamel Pettaway*



*Arman Thornton*

## The Senses of Synesthesia

A star sounds like  
 it's glowing in the dark;  
 Well, go ahead and take a nighttime  
 stroll in the park.

A whisper looks like the wind,  
 silence will be grinned;  
 Mischief smells like trouble,  
 so crash and burn under all that rubble.

Trap you in a bubble: It's double trouble!  
 A new idea feels like gold, you are mold;  
 I'm the brave and the bold,  
 and everyone knows that we're all  
 tight and stone cold.

*Jahir Gray*





## Senseless Senses

A star sounds like it's singing  
to the other stars;  
The howls tastes of  
a lot of madness, or a wolf.  
A circle smells like Thanksgiving,  
a lot of food that people like to eat.  
Smiles sound like happiness;  
White moves in a diagonal way.  
A baby's cry is bright,  
like a shooting star going across the black sky.  
The texture of purple feels all soft;  
Whenever I look at you, I hear you singing like Shakira.  
Every time I bite an apple,  
I see Snow White waking up  
from a true love kiss.

*Shaki Knight*



*Arman Thornton*

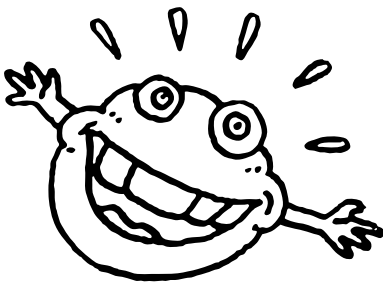
## The mix up

A new idea gets you excited,  
gets the blood pumping in your veins.  
The sound of your excitement  
smells just like that carry out  
up the street from your house,  
or that brand-new brownie  
that you smile at.

Smiles look like a happy bright face  
like a baby's cry, or  
the crooked face of someone  
about to do something wrong.  
Mischief smells like a burnt cookie  
or it tastes like grief.

That grief is so sad  
it's brighter than a star  
that sounds like a new idea  
for writing a new poem.

*Albert Gordon*





## Lay Synesthesia

A circle smells like my  
sister cooking spaghetti in a pot  
A whisper looks like  
a dark untold thought  
White moves in a wavy flow  
like an ocean  
The texture of purple  
feels like an evil, wicked potion  
A star sounds like  
a depressing echo at night  
Whenever I look at you,  
I hear you cry every night.

*Tavon Berford*

## At First Sight

My love looks like  
a glazed doughnut  
smothered with the smell of love.  
His rose, strong smelling cologne  
feels like thorns.  
Hearing him speak  
makes me see his true colors.  
I feel the taste of his heart  
beating extremely fast.

*Tatiana Pierce*



*LaBrea Carter*

## President of mixed emotions

The president of mixed emotions  
is as dark as a thunderstorm.  
One minute the president is roaring  
like the thunder,  
when the next,  
the president is bright as the sun  
as it shines down afterwards.

People think the president  
to be bipolar or confusing  
but at the end of the day,  
the president doesn't give a hey.

The president still remains untouched  
and travels where he pleases  
while feeling like cold winter breezes  
or glittering, like a cherry freeze  
on a hot summer day.

*Cortney Seburn*





*Christina Taylor*

## Hopes and Dreams

Brightness at the beginning of life  
 Hope and greatness;  
 Some stay in the light  
 But others go to the darkness.  
 Floating like a thought,  
 We always have something on our mind—  
 Some stay silent, and others speak up.

Skyscrapers reach for the sky/stars  
 like we have our hope, and dreams.  
 People try to get their dreams from the stars  
 but very few succeed;  
 Some reach a half-point  
 and get part of their dream,  
 but the rest don't even see their dream.

*Jewpriya Richardson*

## A Child's Universe

Many invisible allies I had,  
 Traveling in a blink of an eye  
 Laughter everywhere you go  
 Untouched by world problems  
 Glittering with untouched ideas  
 Triumph is what kids strive for  
 Voices everywhere screaming of fun  
 Barbed wire over what is beyond us

*Jewpriya Richardson*



## Loyal

Loyal would eat cinnamon toast crunch  
 Loyal wouldn't stab you in the back  
 Loyal wouldn't walk on the same street  
 Loyal would brush her teeth from right to left  
 Loyal would be friends with only a select few  
 Loyal would drive a Mercedes-Benz  
 Loyal would wear a curly ponytail  
 She is married to anxious  
 but awaiting her divorce.

*Kamilah Jeffreys*



## In my head

Let it be hope  
Let it be bravery  
Let it be a universe  
telling me right from wrong;  
Let it be a transformation  
in my day.

I feel like a whirlwind, but  
in human form;  
I feel like a myth, with struggles.  
Sometimes I feel like  
I'm by myself,  
like mustard without ketchup.

When you're angry, you might  
feel like a bone crushing dog.  
When I am angry  
you should fear me,  
because I'm a reflection of darkness  
and a blizzard, all in one

and I might shoot lightning.

*Cormonee Mason*



*Arman Thornton*

## I am the president of childhood

My childhood has arrived, and I'm now awake.  
Every important thing I do is like a headline.  
Others are forgotten.  
Sometimes I think back  
and wish I was invisible,  
or maybe even empty.

When I start falling, I wish for someone  
to catch my drift.  
I hear a voice in my head  
melting my soul but leaving it untouched.  
It moves me toward the doorways  
but the door is broken,  
nothing but silence and a wooden clock.

I try to leave, make them think I'm missing  
but when I go to the window  
it's like it has barbed wire surrounding it.  
I think to myself:  
am I trapped with a freezing clock?  
am I felt but untouched?  
am I really trapped in my memories,  
filed with smoke and unmoved mountains?

*Cormonee Mason*

action and leadership of trained volunteers.  
se is exclusively educational and charitable.

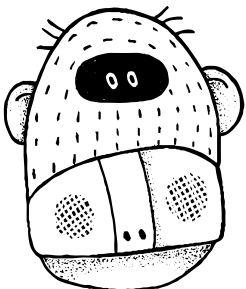


*Jaleel Rush (center) and  
Arman Thornton (second from  
right) receive their awards  
from the Junior League Teen  
Poetry Competition*

## A Kinda Love

Let it be a whirlwind.  
Let it be a white wave  
coming to me like a blizzard of hope,  
a mist of love that you might find.  
This is a kinda love someone shows.  
People struggle for this kinda love.  
People hope for this kinda love  
but I just wait for love to come,  
like it's a vanilla wave from the sun.  
I see lightning;  
it comes fast.  
This I know, my love has come to me.  
This kinda love is meant to be.  
How did I find this kinda love for me to see?

*Briana Bartley*



## Who is a Peacemaker?

A peacemaker is one who faced hunger  
and one who helps the hungry.

A peacemaker is someone who has  
been through war  
and one who ends war.

A peacemaker will help prisoners  
and has been imprisoned.

A peacemaker is one who reminds  
but is constantly reminded.

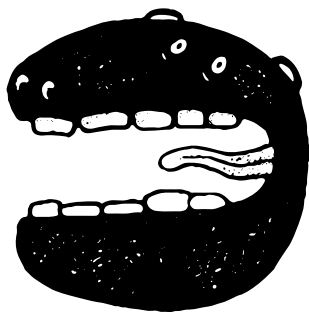
A peacemaker is one who turns around  
when his life is upside down.

A peacemaker is one who shines a light in darkness  
even when light is nowhere to be found.

A peacemaker is the solution in disguise.

*Riley Campbell*





## 4 Corners

The president of pain is a coward.  
He runs away from the truth, screaming quiet.  
Happy is a language he has forgotten.  
Seems to be invisible, lies he left to go rotten.

The president of hope is far from obedient.  
The fake religions keep him benevolent—  
Broken windows untouched,  
filled with sin;  
hope has left it once again.

The president of the past comes from the ruined ruins.  
He hears fading voices from his broken childhood.  
Toward the barbed wire, the more he dwells—  
Consults the president of pain  
as they fall to hell.

The president of the future is self-reliant.  
He believes in glittering, uplifting triumph.  
Already he's forgotten the past;  
Runs with the president of hope—  
Life's a play, they're the cast.

Oh aren't they in for a surprise:  
All four presidents are soon to die.  
The reason they rule has proved nothing yet,  
but to leave people waiting, or  
dwelling to their deaths.

*Riley Campbell*



*D'hanii Rispus*

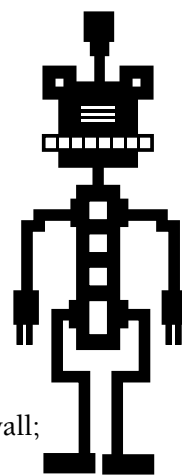
## Vanilla and Wasabi

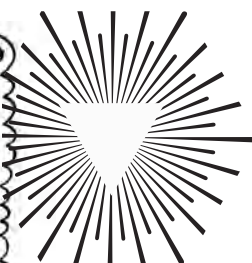
Let it be uncertainty.  
Let it be defiance, where  
honey and jalapenos sever ties.

To instill fear and hope into the mind,  
a path of four leaf clovers and broken mirrors  
and an open gate to  
melancholy roses and human struggle.

Acquired like ginger, wanted like peace  
it can be everywhere, it can be everything:  
The reflection in the mirror, our faces against the wall;  
It can be nothing. It can be all.  
The perfect mix of good and bad—  
vanilla and wasabi.

*Riley Campbell*





*l-r: Marcantony Pierce,  
Elijah Douglas, Tayvon  
Berford, D'hani Rispus,  
Christa Madikaegbu,  
Armani Thornton*

## Dreamy

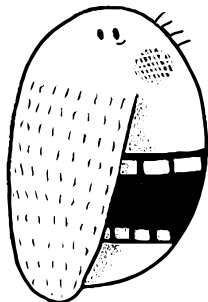
What if a house is an arrow,  
colored with the showers  
and the sun's baby?

and if it takes you  
through a parallel universe  
you wouldn't go through the door,  
for it has no knob—  
you would fly through the window.

As the amber sun has  
seemed to disappear  
a pie-less sky leaves you in darkness,  
soon to be lit by nature's city lights.

All the people in this land  
live in the arrow  
where their lives are  
dream-like and are  
Spring forever.

*Riley Campbell*



## Cupid

Let it be a blizzard;  
Let it be a hurricane—  
I'll still shoot arrows out like lightning.  
If it is a blizzard, I will still  
shoot arrows for people to  
show love to each other.

Let it be reflection;  
Let it be history—  
They will always know how they meet  
and their history is upon their people.

I will look upon the universe  
as if I was in love  
and I will always remember my history.  
I will show love, like  
they are my family, but  
a different kind of family.

*Aaliyah Shaw*



## All about Happiness!

Happiness lives in a small town  
filled with nice people  
and the houses are rainbow colors  
and happiness has flowers in his yard  
and the people dress in bright colors.  
They also get along and have parties  
and cook out every weekend in the small town!  
And happiness sings himself to sleep at night  
and eats ice cream before he goes night-night...

*Shahida Harris-Thomas*

## Kingdom of shame

The shame kingdom is rising every hour,  
because of the untouched souls.  
The souls are untouched  
because there are no forgiven souls.  
The terrible triumphs give the kingdom its  
name.  
The shame needs some sunlight  
and it will have an open doorway.

*Kent Parris*



*Destiny Rhodes*

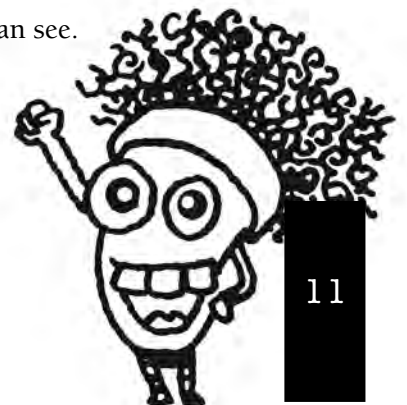
## Working to Be

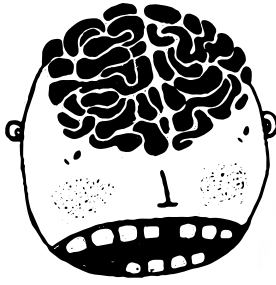
I'm the president of triumph  
which can be invisible to the ears.  
I travel through doorways  
into rooms of joy.

I am untouched  
like a glittering childhood.  
I could never be forgotten  
because I awake the eyes to see.

Rising mountains are what I strive to be.  
You may feel empty, and hopeless  
but obedient  
is what we can be.  
Don't look down;  
Uplift yourself, so you can see.

*Terion Sugick*





*LaBrea Carter*

## Who is a Poet?

A poet is a person who craves words

A poet is a person who has a solution for everything

A poet is a person who can storm a blizzard of ideas

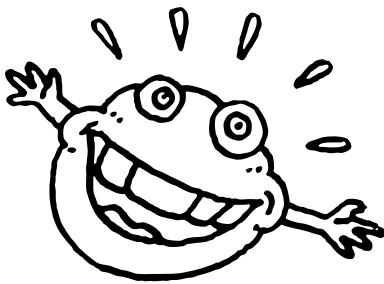
A poet is a person who has creativity

A poet is a person who will write just to write

A poet is a person who has instant thoughts

A poet is just an artist in disguise

*Albert Gordon*



## Beware of Ghosts

Beware everywhere as ghosts appear  
with darkness and fear  
coming in the middle of the night  
crashing, gnashing  
coming as fast as they can,  
just to see the darkness in your eyes.  
Their teeth are black like a cat.  
When you get up in the middle of the night  
you're invisible as you walk  
in a sewer of evil,  
just like the devil,  
unfeeling  
the ghost is in the ceiling.

*Marcantony Pierce*

## The Now Found

Who knows what we are in?  
We are in a dreamy bubble,  
wondering where it might land.  
There is laughter in that floating bubble,  
giggling to keep it active.  
There is always a beginning  
but no ending, with  
a full moon, really smooth.

*Kent Parris*

## The Hand!

I see a hand  
floating in the water  
trying to grab the sky

And the hand is violet  
and it's coming out of the water  
and it's tall like a skyscraper

And if you turn the art sideways  
it looks like it's a hand coming through a wall

And if you look at it right side up  
it looks like a colorful world  
with a dry tree in it  
with a sky, with no clouds.

*Alex Foster*



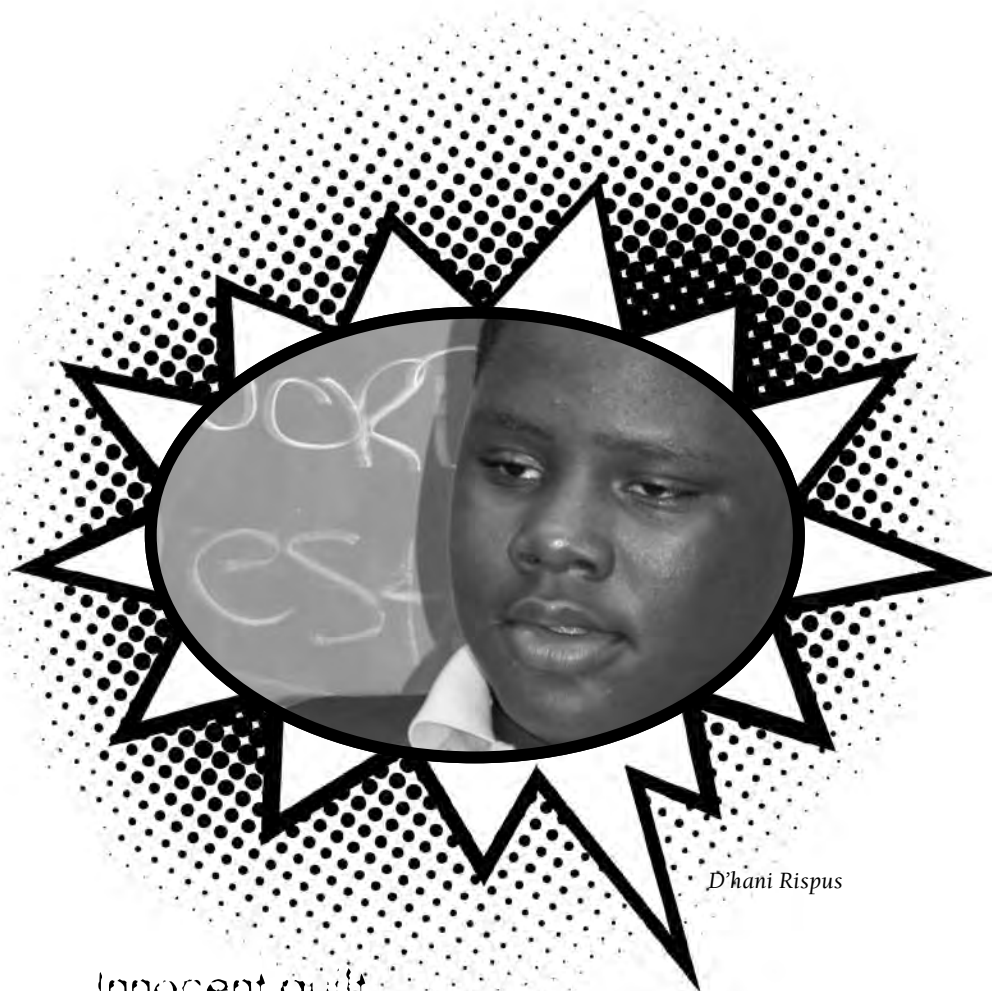
*Tatiana Pierce*

## What is a Poet?

A poet is one  
who has a mustache.  
A poet is one  
who does not whisper.  
A poet is a prisoner  
who is thankful.  
A poet is one  
who is flooded with kindness.  
A poet is one  
who is careful,  
but once didn't care.

*Tyjuan Prailow*





## Innocent guilt

The president of guiltiness is innocent;  
 He is blind, but he can see an innocent person anywhere.  
 He is deaf, can't hear or talk  
 but he can speak his special language.  
 He has no voice, so it's silent  
 but it's also loud.  
 He has a tattoo, but it is invisible.  
 He lives around barbed wire.  
 He is president, and he is  
 guilty of imagination.

*Albert Gordon*



## Perhaps Gloomring

I celebrate myself  
 listening to a jazz symphony.  
 I rescue people off the roof,  
 celebrate parties, blowing green  
 small bubbles with teachers.  
 In the morning I wake up  
 watch TV and dance  
 to the intro and outro rhythm.  
 I celebrate myself  
 head to the sky, praying.

*Reginald Shepherd*

## What Ocean?

Yes! Green laughter  
 tables tumbling  
 windows shuddering  
 Evening swirls, twists  
 and branches swell  
 Cracks in my skull,  
 like plexiglass brains  
 churning, thinking of yes!  
 Listen to luminous windows  
 clean, not dusty dirty,  
 cloudy with a chance of rain.

*Reginald Shepherd*

## Powerful

I've promised my girlfriend  
 to always say hi to her.  
 My girlfriend sings a song  
 to the waterfall.  
 My mother's promises  
 I can tell to no one.  
 I use my eyes to look for  
 a single cloud in the sky.  
 I want to blow bubbles at the  
 playground  
 and be away from all the promises  
 I've caused.  
 I want to move forward  
 but my feet come to a halt.

*Joeseeph Smith*



## A part of growing up

The sky is singing out my name.  
Realize that I can't come out  
because I've got promises,  
about six of them.  
The powerful pull of fun  
is on lockdown,  
because I can't do it.  
I've got to go forward,  
not backward,  
because I've got promises.  
My whole childhood is melting away.  
Did you know when the water falls  
it's really crying?

*Marcantony Pierce*

## The Young Response

Is it a fact that old people  
know more than young people?  
Nah.  
Old people want to make it seem  
like young people don't know things.  
Well guess what? We do.  
Promise us truths,  
and I promise you we do.  
But it is the truth  
that we don't know everything.  
Reverse your life, all the way  
to when you were young.  
You loved it.  
So why turn your back on the young now?

*Marcantony Pierce*

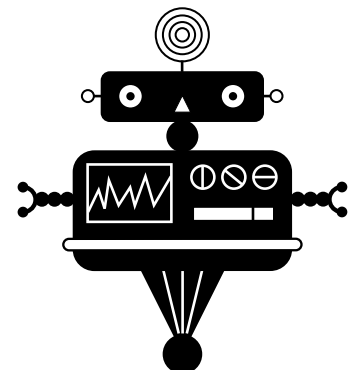


*Vincent Wingfield*

## Food

The feeling, to think my one thing in life is just simple:  
It's the soft, fluffy texture of a marshmallow;  
A round, sugary taste of a doughnut;  
The long and savory feeling of spaghetti;  
The mighty aroma of the supreme burger;  
That taste of the acidic feeling of soda,  
and the greatest combined food of all time.  
Every 1,000 years, the four forces of the universe combine  
Burger, Pizza, Burrito and Taco  
to form...  
El Burgerito Supreme!

*Troy Chaney*





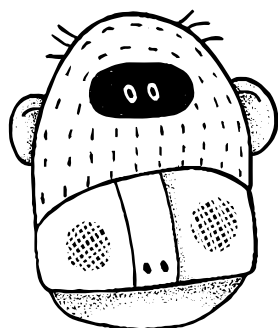


*Destiny Rhodes*

## Journey

When I wake up in the morning  
 I'm happy to see the birds in the sky.  
 The bird's chirping is music to my ears.  
 The wind blowing, feeling the breeze;  
 dandelion flowers blowing away from me.  
 The sun is shining on me to begin  
 a new journey.

*Joeseeph Smith*

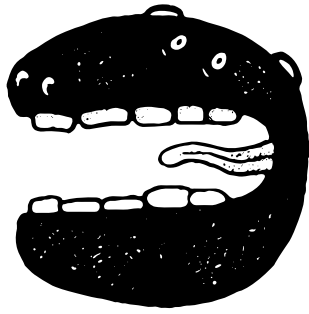


## Flowering Yes

Green says yes  
 and I feel happy  
 pigeons flying up high  
 in the sky  
 say yes and I smile  
 and it is evening  
 everybody is going home  
 and I am excited  
 I get to play games  
 and be alone  
 and the whole world  
 smells like cookies baking

*Tommy Fridle*





## Being Young

Applause is excitement  
while you blow away  
like dry leaves on a windy day.  
But it's impossible to fly.  
Running makes me breathless.  
I should grow wings immediately.

*Tommy Fridle*



*Sàquan Short*

## Why

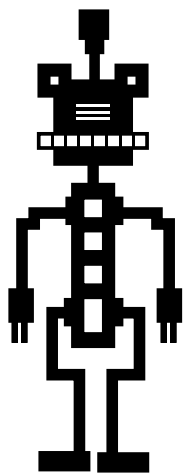
I'm going to write a poem about  
Transforming:  
Angels transform into super angels  
to battle your nightmares  
There is a guy, and he's a mystery  
he's a mystery guy  
he's stronger than nature itself  
My super angels will protect me  
against any challenge  
They have forgotten to make sandwiches  
They need more knowledge

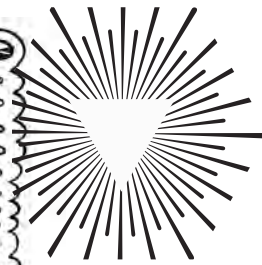
*Ricardo White*

## In My Imagination

I keep my window open  
to see the moonlight  
the breeze from the fan on high  
softness from my bed  
along with my smooth covers  
blue-black helps me think  
thinking of my parents and girlfriend  
helps me fall to sleep

*Ricardo White*



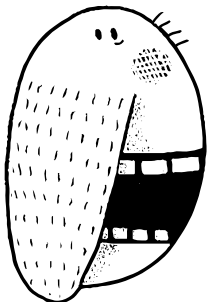


*l-r: Earl Bullock, Jamel Pettaway*

## Cruising down the street in my 64

My life is invisible  
 like a Yes Day  
 Every time I throw a football  
 it's a perfect spiral  
 Sometimes it can get a little crazy  
 on the Yes Day  
 I'm undefeated on a Yes Day  
 I never have been defeated on my Yes Day  
 On a Yes Day, I listen to NWA  
 I'm cruising down the street in my 64,  
 if you know what I'm saying.

*Ricardo White*



## Tamia's Routine

It's time for bed  
 Sophia, the first nightgown on my body  
 Purple slippers on my feet  
 I've had a long day; I am beat  
 My pink nightlight glows bright  
 Just like the moonlight in the sky  
 My crimson bed sheets tucked nice and tight  
 But my ears are wide open  
 I just wanna sleep tonight  
 Turn off all the lights  
 It's super dark, the way I like  
 Now I am ready  
 To count those sheep  
 Until I fall asleep.

*Tamia Moyd*



## Everything Says YES

My YES day is playing the guitar  
until it's time for bed  
blasting music, causing chaos  
flowering roses in my background  
watching the ocean splash water on my face  
while it tumbles down my cheeks  
sun shining bright, giving me clarity  
YES, my hair cascades  
like a waterfall on a stormy, rainy day  
the branches swing in the wind  
tapping my window  
waking me up from a YES dream

*Erica Bell*

## Celebration

I have heard what the talkers talk.  
I celebrate myself on January 15th.  
I pack my things in the morning for VC house.  
It's the beginning of something different.  
I am 14, full of energy, always ready for fun.  
I love to hear Ne-Yo harmonizing over the music.

Leaping into a field of rose petals  
because thorns would hurt my skin;  
Sweeping away bad memories,  
so my new memories will be crystal clear.

*Faith Thomas*



*Shannell Jones*

## Time for a change of pace

I'm done, not going like this!  
Not this time, I'm not going to stay here  
in the forest any longer!  
These mushrooms are nasty,  
the place is always wet  
and the wolves and bears think I'm food.  
I've been stuck here for months  
and I have had it!  
No more, the wild animals have pushed me too far.  
The next wild thing I see crawl in this forest,  
if they don't have papers  
they are getting a Full FI-FI Smackdown!  
This is war!

*Troy Chaney*





## Singing

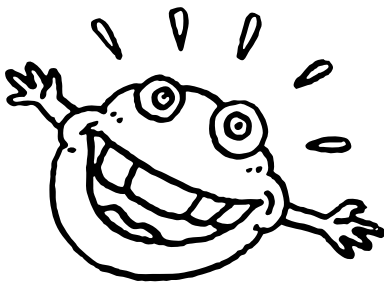
I wanna make songs like "Beat It"  
 It makes me excited to dance on stage  
 The window to my heart is open  
 Challenges faced to make the perfect  
 mistake  
 Nightmares of losing hope  
 Broken dreams sleeping in my mind  
 for eternity  
 So let's sing songs like "Beat It"  
 To delete insanity  
 Singing seems like the cure  
 To mostly everything, I think.

*Joeseeph Smith*

## Nasty Blues

Yuck, school lunch  
 Just thinking about it makes me ache  
 It smells and tastes horrible  
 The burnt look makes me  
 bitter with no regrets  
 Nobody likes it at all  
 Someone should send them  
 a note about a change  
 Maybe my mom's spaghetti  
 or maybe  
 my grandmother's fried chicken  
 Never seen so much food  
 gone to waste

*Tommy Fridie*



*Arman Thornton*

## Well

Share a funny joke  
 Hear the laughter  
 like lightning cracking  
 and wind over the ocean

Send a compliment  
 Lift their joy  
 Delight  
 Sun bright  
 Happiness before them

Smile  
 Teeth white as snow  
 Snow White  
 Easy, simple  
 Recovers their day

Sing  
 Miracle's voice  
 Music notes in the air  
 All is well

*Erica Bell*

## The youngest recovery

From writing my solo band beat  
to being in the hospital,  
I have been through too much  
over my stay.

From the shards of my album  
found in my eyes  
to blindness,  
The crumbling nerves  
found on my arm from a ceiling fan.

My wisdom tooth,  
now gone from the flying stands  
and broken, yet delicate, leg  
lost from the fall of the music player.  
All see lost and I...Am...Done

(Blink)

I'm alive! I'm ALIVE!  
Wait, if I'm alive, then I just went a...  
A youngest recovery in a dream

*Troy Chaney*



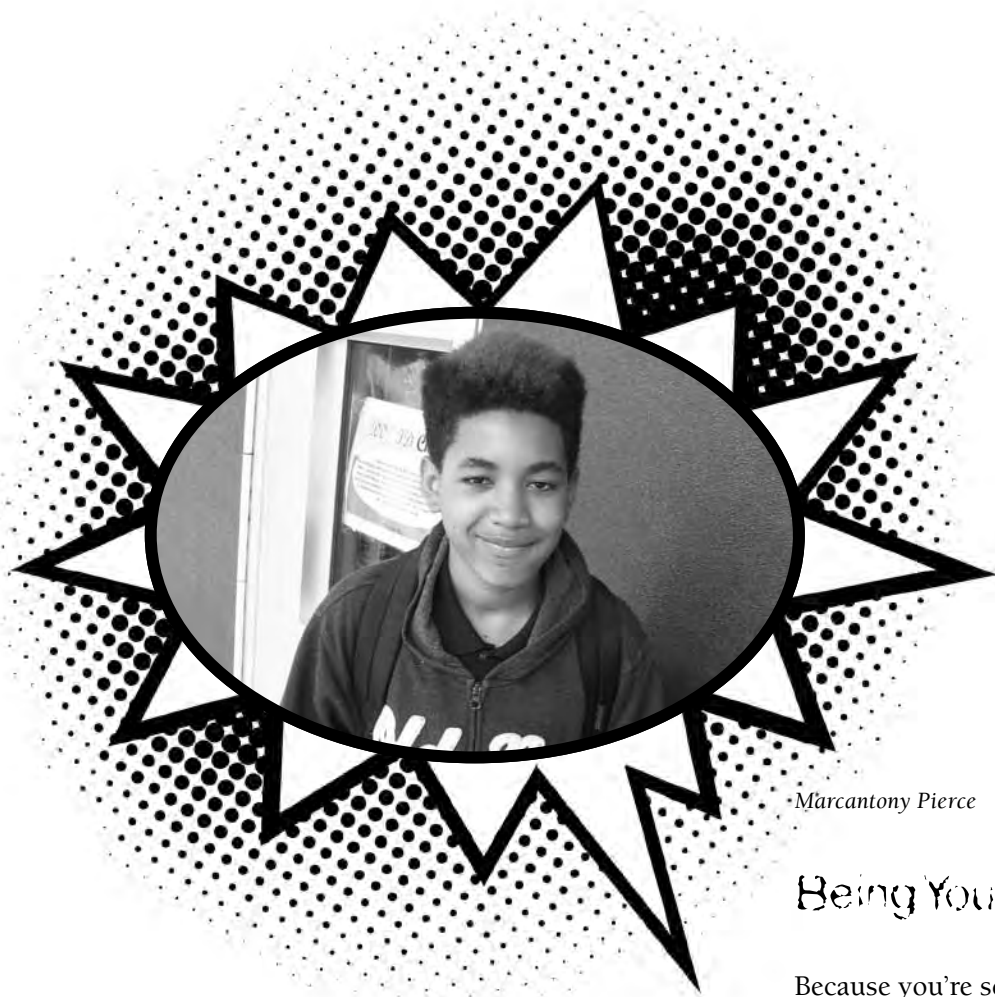
*Shaki Knight*

## Squirrels

Squirrels in the ghetto  
I'm making my song about squirrels  
It makes me happy and  
I dance at every party  
Brown squirrels are the best  
Squirrels, squirrels, squirrels  
Their voices are so squeaky  
and broken  
Older squirrels have more wisdom  
Hey, let's do the squirrel dance challenge  
Swallow your acorns and dance with us!

*Tamia Moyd*





*Marcantony Pierce*

## Being Young

Because you're so old

You've forgotten:

How to smile

youthfully;

How to imagine a possibility.

You say we're too young to understand:

The beauty

of an inexhaustible earth;

The joy of living.

But surely we understand

what you don't:

The difference between now

and yesterday;

The abstract tension of tomorrow.

You say we're too young to understand

what we don't know, but

we're old enough to understand

what you have forgotten.

*Christa Madikaegbu*

## Painting With a Man in It

I will make my body out of memory

Life of the afraid, unwanted

It makes me shout to the imagined,  
to the thumping heart.

The vision to be a rainbow  
is a lonely thunderstorm.

*Saquan Short*





## Hood

Dear hood,

Under my hood is a melting lock  
waiting to let free a caged animal

Under my hood is a powerful mind with scars

My hood is dark black

My hood has a spiral window without a soul

Then my hood fades and I see a bright afternoon sky  
outside of the hood

I move forward out of darkness  
into light

I now regret being under that hood

At one point in time, I never knew  
outside of the hood existed  
but now I will say farewell  
to you,  
the hood.

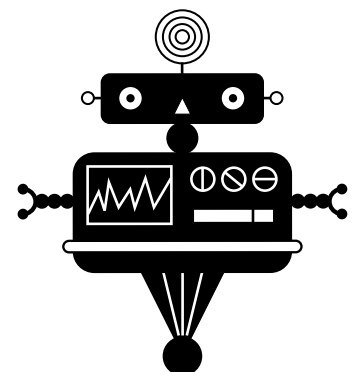
*Albert Gordon*

*Mavelli Jones*

## Blank

Inside of me is blank  
like no water under the bridge  
like fire without rain  
or joy and no pain  
or twisting but not shouting  
or crashing and not burning  
and this thought is killing me softly  
but I am who I am  
so if the inside is empty  
who do you think  
I am on the inside?

*Albert Gordon*





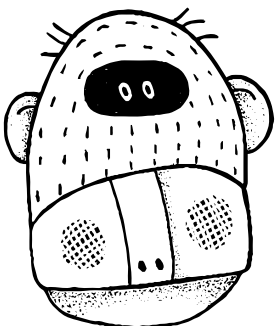


## Unknown

*l-r: Jahir Gray, LaBrea Carter, Wayne Rhodes*

I see a hand beginning to dig in the ground.  
 I see a rainbow door and I think  
 when you go through  
 you shall have happiness forever.  
 I see a polka-dot house  
 that has a mountain-looking roof.  
 I see a green window,  
 but is it green on the inside?  
 Are the clouds going into the ground?

*Saebian McKnight*

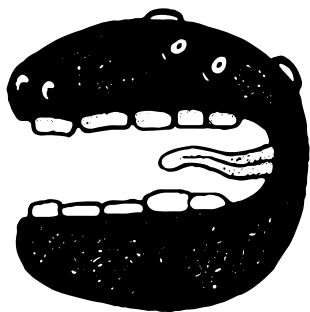


## that world

This world  
 where the grass is actually green  
 on the other side of this world,  
 where people's skin color and emotions  
 are like Skittles, the dark side  
 and the sky is blue, actually blue  
 and everything is ordinary  
 but ordinary is not natural to me:  
 This  
 is  
 her  
 world.

*Andrea Staples*





What?

The moon gives us darkness.

Darkness is the absence of light.

I see fingers deformed  
like a chicken finger;

the arms are long  
the feet look weird;

their moon is too close—  
It's red and jagged.

If I were on a mountain  
that would make someone  
think of what's going on.

*Anthony Martin*



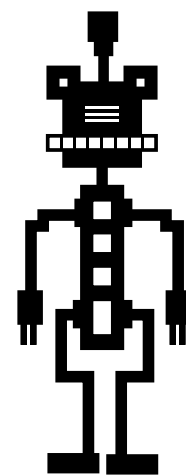
*Jamari Carter*

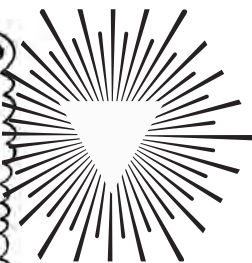
## The President of War

The president of war has his rising voice  
at the top of his kingdom.  
The president of war was untouched until  
that afternoon.  
He was in his uniform.  
His kingdom was filled with silence.  
The outside was freezing with barbed wire  
everywhere.  
Every awakening, never-missing but forgotten  
was seen, with eyelids through  
windows protected with wooden boards.

The president was forgotten until this day.

*Vincent Wingfield*



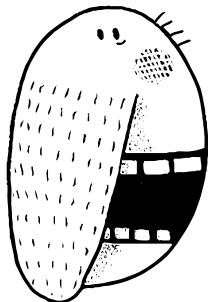


*l-r: Armani Thornton, Christa Madikaegbu*

## The Mirror

The duplicate self-portrait mirror,  
alone in the darkness,  
imagined with a fearful memory  
that was forgotten.  
Broken thumping heart  
like a crying scared river  
with a hard-chilled thrill  
unwanted, but touched.  
Strong but broken fingers  
rub it with a crying shout.  
The mirror remains hidden forever  
with a scary broken story.

*Vincent Wingfield*



## May God Strike Me Down

I said a prayer that reduced me to tears;  
God gave me all the steps I need to take  
to remove me from here.  
I had a vision of this young man  
homeless, so hopeless,  
I passed him at L'Enfant Plaza.  
To get to work was my focus  
but in my head, I hurt for him so badly;  
On his face was calm  
but on the inside, he was terrified.  
A homeless single father looking for food  
for his youngest child who hadn't eaten in days.  
They are battling hunger,  
you can hear it in his voice  
that he is struggling to survive.  
Everybody walks past him;  
My heart is crumbling  
from hearing his cries:  
"Please feed my son, he needs to eat!"  
All I can think of  
is how hurt he is.  
I couldn't help but cry.

*Aaron Henson*



## Who Knows What

Who knows if snails have names?  
 Who knows how feet grow?  
 Are feet violet?  
 Who knows if feet are blue and red?  
 How are clouds not in the sky  
 or a sun?

Some people wish skyscrapers  
 will come sometimes.  
 Do people live there  
 because of the look  
 and the funny laughter?

*Jacoby Jones*

## Melody of Me

I celebrate my strength  
 I leap out of bed in the morning  
 Perfection for breakfast  
 Prancing to begin a school day  
 The sky above me is clear  
 My head is clear  
 Thoughts of softness  
 I know I am cared for  
 and I shine.

*Tommy Fridle*



*LaBrea Carter*

## Self-portrait of the walking dead

Who knows where the dead man's walking?  
 Who knows who the dead man's stalking?

Walking across the forest of darkness  
 through the field of houses,  
 the nagging of spouses;

Trudging through little houses  
 on the mountain—  
 Don't look at me  
 I ain't countin'!

*Jahir Gray*

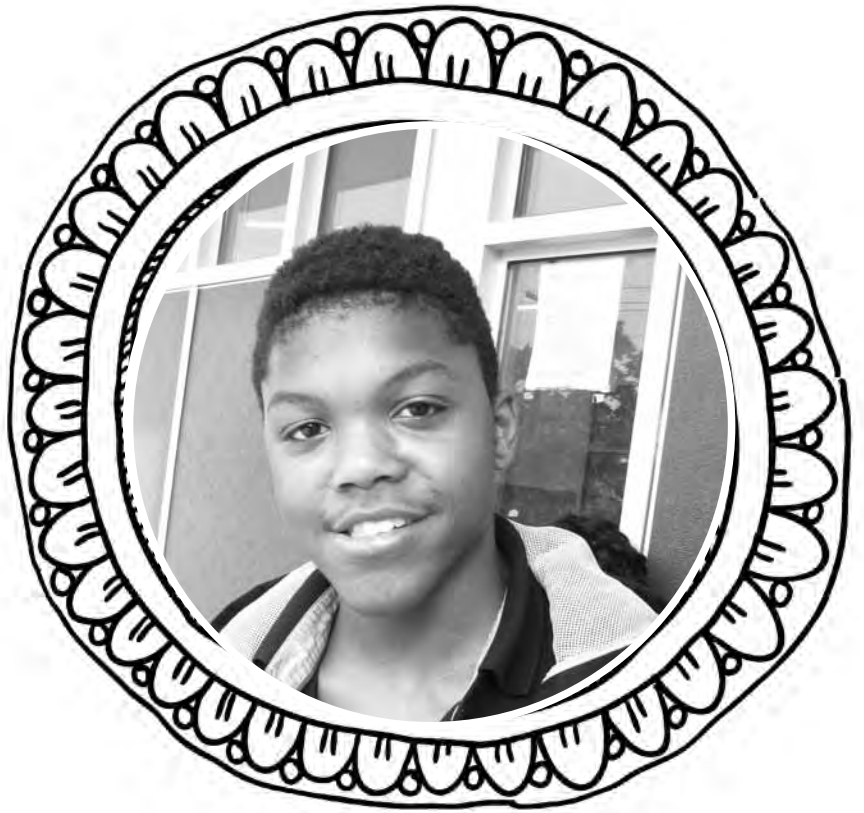




## Who Knows?

Who knows if that's a person  
under the tree?  
Who knows if that is a tree?  
Who knows if that is a person  
who is yellow?  
Who knows if that is the sky,  
and who knows if it is blue?  
Who knows the name of the things  
in this picture?  
Who knows if it will ever be dark?  
Who knows anything  
about this painting,  
or the green grass, or  
if it's even grass?  
Who knows?

*Reginald Lampkins*



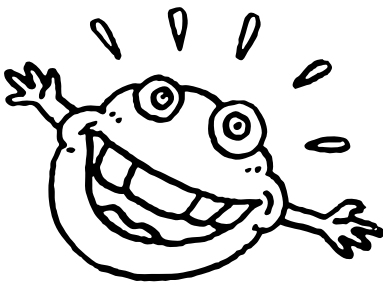
*Saquan Short*

## Unknown

That woman who looks out  
the transparent window into a soulless world  
of change and separation,  
she wonders what society has to offer.  
She stands at the same 90 stop every morning  
with a lit cigarette, waiting for that 9:35 bus.  
She always seems to get off  
at the corner of Georgia Avenue,  
silent, still, as she gets onto and off of the bus.

Through all the mothers who fight with fathers,  
and all the rowdy children,  
her expression always stays nonchalant and gloomy.  
The weather always seems to be  
a sun shining when she gets on  
but when she misses one ride,  
the sky is gray and dull  
like the bus ride is nothing without this woman.

*Christina Taylor*



## Lesson Learned

Yesterday, mighty death invited me  
and I was scared  
I didn't know what to do  
so my heart started to beat real fast  
It was dark, and there was a full moon  
There was a big skyscraper in the sky  
Now, I have learned not to be bad  
No more  
So death just taught me something

*Jeremiah Prince*



## Thanks for Nothing

Thanks for support and time,  
Thankful for love and appreciation  
I'm thankful for those things because they showed care.  
Thanks for those fun times we have and still will cherish  
Thankful for our past, uniting our present and future lives  
I'm thankful for these things because without them  
memories and goals wouldn't have been created.

Thanks for kindness and collaboration  
Thankful for our powerful indifferences  
and troublesome imagination  
I'm thankful for those things because they make our relationship work.  
Thanks for your beauty and grace  
Thankful for those things that can't be replaced  
I'm thankful for those things because of the way  
it changed us, thanks to you  
Thankful for your love and long silences  
I'm thankful for those impossible moments to forget.

*Remington Crawley*

*Jamaree Martin*





*Earl Bullock*

## Solo

I need to trap in the hallway  
to keep myself safe  
to be cool and play with my family too  
It's a struggle in this world  
It is so hard  
I can't do nothing  
and that's worth something  
There is strangeness in people  
because sometimes they act weird  
I have a lot of kin  
Some are family, and some are friends

*A'Quise Thomas*



## Lost

I am the president of my childhood  
and I am trapped in silence  
In a dream, and my head empty  
traveling to a forgotten island.  
I am all alone but I hear  
rattles of voices in my head.  
It is so freezing  
that you can see the steam coming off your hands  
snow melting during this morning  
as the sun is rising  
then pop, suddenly I'm awake,  
unmoved from the couch.

*Emir Battle*



## Who is real/fake?

Who is real or fake?  
Poets are such geniuses  
with their wordplay  
and their clichés,  
but some are frauds  
who steal someone else's creation  
and disguise it with their creation  
while all of their fans are  
blindfolded by their trickery  
covered with their blanket of achievement  
while other unknown discoveries aren't noticed.  
Then they get their work mistaken  
from someone else's  
not knowing their past work,  
then years later, the real poets get more fame  
and fake poets have regrets, feeling bad  
and no one has sympathy for them  
and there is always a lesson  
for real poets:  
Don't give up.  
Keep trying.

*Isaiah Hunter*

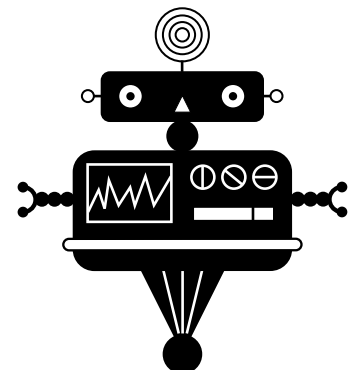


*Jailyn Smith*

## Real Illusion

This illusion almost seems real  
and it's scary, but it is  
an illusion, like a vortex  
in a vortex, inside a vortex—  
Does it make sense?  
That's the whole point—  
This illusion is meaningless  
with no point, like paying for something  
you already have.  
It is like a nightmare  
that I can't wake up from.  
If I had a chance,  
I would have left this world, but  
you've got to make the best of your struggle  
when times are hard.

*Isaiah Hunter*







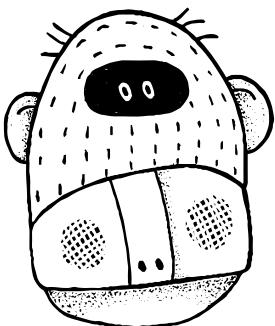
*Destiny Rhodes*

## Thirst of Blood

First, trap him with a word of wisdom  
 then surprise him with your high intellect  
 then demolish him with your overwhelming strength  
 then capture him with his past of horror  
 then dissolve him with his own stupidity  
 then leave him abandoned, never to be found.

He's missing, will be silenced,  
 like he never existed.  
 Then start the process over  
 with a new victim that comes for me.

*Isaiah Hunter*



## Outer Limits

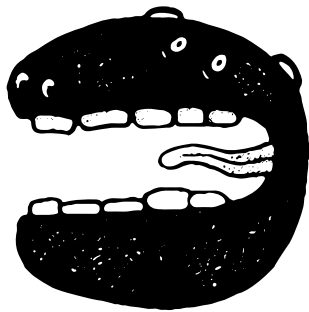
The earth travels in elliptical formation;  
 Galaxy tours, starlights and even zero-gravity sensation.  
 Interstellar universe, to be a multi-culti-verse:  
 Missions kind of joy,  
 rocketed airbags to deploy,  
 fusion jet packs set to hyperdrive.

Automatronic airwaves  
 as it is to have some lives  
 Indiscriminate, the dominance of your choice  
 Telekinetic powers, using only of the force.

Rejoice from within,  
 embrace the voice of the sin.  
 Hear the call of the slaughter—  
 Is it mother or daughter?  
 Hear the force say  
 I am your father.

*Jayden Gray*





## Big Boss Man

I am the big boss man,  
smoke you with a tan  
defeat you like the Ku Klux Klan.

You aren't frightening—  
I'll storm on you chumps  
like I'm thunder and lightning,

Like a volcano.  
Tell me something I don't know.  
I'm someone they all know  
will get the final blow.

You're restless, you're reckless;  
You're downright feckless.  
Finally, you're done.  
I'm not playing—shoot you with a gun.

Your eyes are bloodshot,  
then it's in Hell, you'll rot.

*Jahir Gray*



*Marcantony Pierce*

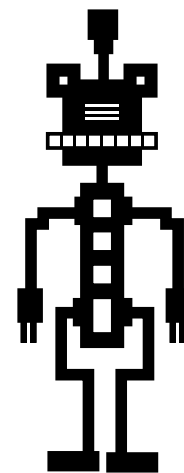
## Revolution

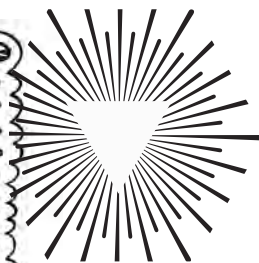
Revolution is freedom.  
Evolution is kingdom and queendom.  
Revolution is not violence.  
Revolution is not war.  
It's peace.

In revolution, revolution is said to be victorious.  
In revolution, it's said to be glorious.  
But revolution is a country of opportunity.  
Whenever it isn't, it's complete insanity.

Revolution is all's fair in love and war;  
Complete resistance till it's not like before.

*Jayden Gray*





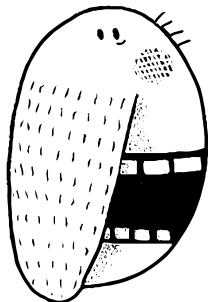
*Armani Thornton*

## The Life of Green

Green grapes  
remind me of innocent \$20 bills  
jalapeno green eyes  
on thick females  
the fresh smell of green grass  
keeps me sane.

Restless green paint  
to create pictures of lonely reflections  
Warning!  
Let's not forget to wear your green hat  
in the shadows of the leprechaun.

*Shanay Lesane*



## How to get in trouble

If you want to get in trouble,  
don't try to do a good thing;  
express your aggressiveness  
write on the walls  
and make fun of the feeble;  
Turn your words  
into a poison arrow.  
Smash what you have  
Steal what you want to have  
Don't be on your best behavior  
Put others through a constant struggle  
turn your sorrow into anger  
break forbidden rules  
Be sure to keep this in mind  
as what not to do  
if you want to stay out of trouble.

*Christa Madikaegbu*



## Love Hurts

People see girls walking through  
one girl shows up, pulling moves!

Boy crushes on girl,  
girl blushes on boy,  
so freaking coy.

Girls fake, guys dig it  
for goodness sakes;  
Alternatively, girl sees boy,  
she likes boy, boy likes girl.

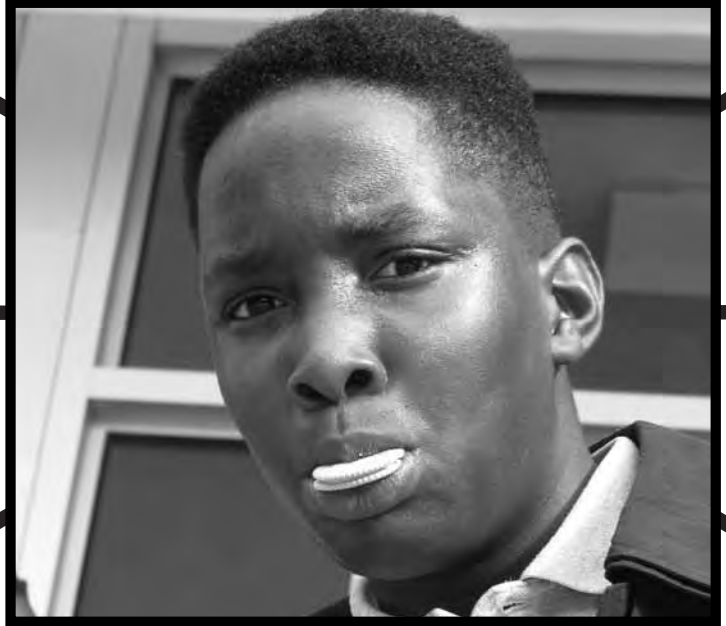
It's bad blood,  
it used to be mad love.  
It hurts, it's fake from below to above .  
Why, who cares? It's fake love.

*Jayden Gray*

## Untold Mystery!

I am invisible  
and I appear in the dark  
I'm afraid of the light  
People have seen my shadows  
but never me  
I'm kind of bitter, but sweet  
I shiver in the cold  
and melt when it's gold  
I'm platinum, just like my soul.

*Jermia Joyner*

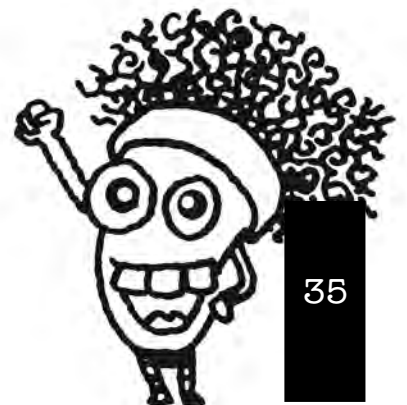


*Mavelli Jones*

## The Controller Struggle

When I return  
as a game controller,  
I will let the person play the game  
while using me.  
I will let the owner  
throw me around  
while he rages at the game  
when he loses.  
I am a PS4 controller.  
If I break,  
he will have to buy a new one.

*Tariq Richardson*





## My Darkness Memory

My darkness memory is  
me sleeping next to a dragon  
with flame coming out of his mouth,  
as I dream of the countless sheep  
jumping over a haystack  
to get their food,  
as I change my wardrobe  
to get ready for a battle,  
the troops ambush my base  
and kill my dragon. As I take the last  
breath of my childhood days  
my photograph disappears  
in the light of a fragment  
killing the soldier  
as they restrain me  
from committing suicide.

*Gregory Nickens*



*Christa Madikaegbu*

## When I return as a basketball

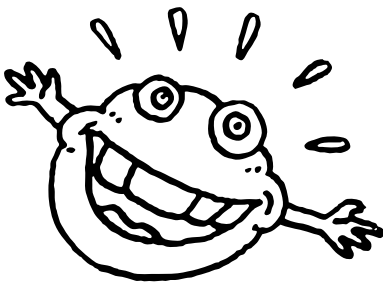
If I was to be reincarnated,  
I would want to come back as  
a basketball, because  
I would be one of the objects  
of someone's favorite sport.  
That object is  
for the person to get the ball  
in the hoop for a point.  
It hurts when I get blocked,  
thrown away.

*Denali Marshall*

## Kaleidoscope

Bears eating green hearts  
circles and squares  
fragments of gray  
twined in squares and circles  
green inferno flying  
jogging with bears into a pond—  
All you will see  
in a kaleidoscope!

*Jerry Campbell*



## Who Am I?

I am made out of strength  
I open my eyes to see colors  
of green, flowing throughout the jungle  
When the shadows fall,  
the jungle grows quiet

You might find me swinging on a vine  
headed for Jane  
I dream in shades of red  
like the flowers in Jane's hair  
My heart jumps  
when I see Jane's smile

I fear that I may disappoint  
the animals of the jungle  
as they trust me and look up to me  
My very best friends are the animals  
They are like family to me  
The sound of my laughter  
is deep, as it echoes through the jungle

I feel like I can do anything  
when Jane's around  
There is nothing quite like  
the smell of her perfume  
When it is time to rest  
I replay the memories of today  
as they are what I live for

*Isaiah White*



*Earl Bullock*

## What I'm sick of

I'm sick of people turning on each other,  
people giving up on each other;  
I'm sick of people getting shot  
and killed.

I'm sick of mother  
and father arguing  
and getting in trouble in school,  
and people faster than me  
so it makes it hard to catch them.

*Savion Makle*





*D'hani Rišpus*

## Mirror

Mirrors are a game.  
They confuse you and they  
are a game, so confusing  
I give up, good day.  
So confusing he forgets his name.  
So confusing his brain  
was tucked inside a suitcase.  
So confusing my surroundings  
are whirling around, so  
confusing my sanity twitches  
and cries out for help.

*Bernard Holmes*



## A Hole in Forever

I burn past the memory  
a train whistles for me to come back  
I saw a dog once, and fell in love with him,  
he wasn't savage around me.

His foot skims the floor  
like he has a grudge against these walls.  
He counts birds...says it's  
a way of concentration.

The money was screeching,  
and sirens were ringing  
but knowing me, I gotta hold it down  
for what's mine. Before  
he put his foot in that car,  
a slow collapse of words  
crept to his tongue, quiet hands  
reach across that courtroom gate...

Whispers in my ear, "Can you keep  
a secret?" "Yes, of course I can."

His last words, in my room,  
top closet floor box...  
My last savings for ride or die.

Then the latch clicks closed.  
My pain twitches and cries out,  
I let him fall...

Now you can never say  
I ain't a rider, because against a sharp  
light rests the definition of  
#staydown, find really the way  
we ride and die, I'm willing  
to sit at the edge of a hole  
in forever.

*Myniah Sweetney*



## Almost Lights Out

As the clock strikes three,  
children get out of school  
all rushing to the bus  
to get home before it reaches  
the point of no retracing.  
Outside, the bitter smiles of  
the kids sitting in the window  
hearing in the depths of their minds  
“Dinner’s ready.”

The mother stands in the doorway  
counting her child’s sighs  
which seem endless,  
mother and son sitting at the table  
as he stares out the window  
watching the sky change  
from play to PJs.  
As the changes hit,  
it all seems enchanted,  
like a dream that never dies.

*Aneshia Whitney*

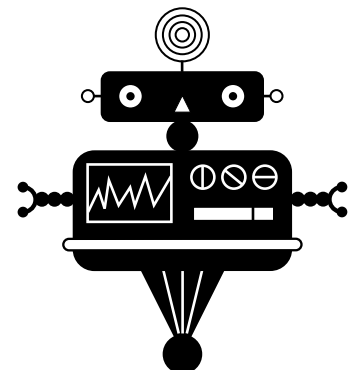


*Marcantony Pierce*

## Alliteration

Irreplaceable ignorant inside injustice  
Long leather laughing ladder  
Smooth scar struggle separation sickness  
Disappointment discarded drama  
Evil empty eyes emphasize  
Wasabi window wildfire  
Behold burned blue-green birth  
Chopped citrus candles  
Aniya’s anonymous anger arrives  
Franchise fragrance fully frozen  
Violence vigils violent  
Rich rolling rotten  
Together throwing tomorrow’s testimonies

*Ashley Stevenson*



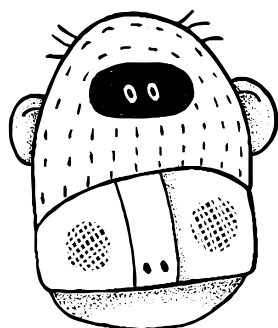




## Might, Might Not!

I believe in my hero, and my own failures.  
 My own god and my own religions.  
 I observe my own failures,  
 I'm suffering but I'll feel better later.  
 I am a mystery, I might be under  
 Your nose, or I might not!  
 To love is to be equal, and have  
 Observations of yourself.

*Armani Thornton*



## ART

Mystery creation uprising to the world  
 But nobody sees if you take  
 The path to innocence in the dark  
 It will exist in the sunset  
 And I'm capable of observing its spiral  
 Golden soul in its unknown presence  
 And its dark shadow is the destiny  
 To its homeland.

You cannot defeat, change or spin around  
 Its creativity like an orbit, you can't  
 Change its gesture, you can't conquer  
 Its colorfulness that it brings to the world.

To love is the creativity and passion  
 of beauty in this world.

*Tavon Berford*



## Alliteration

Saquan, silent as a skyscraper  
all shy.

A full moon falls to  
Flame.

We saw a hymn is a him  
or her.

Some are wordless, too windy.

*Saquan Short*

## Destroy, Build, Destroy

If I wasn't this angry, I could  
destroy a whole lot of things.

I'll destroy anything the guy brings.  
Ice is my main element, it'll give you lice.

I can destroy rocks, bricks, blocks, tick-tock,  
tick-tock, blow up the clock, you're stone cold,  
I'll give you ten-fold, psych!

A bright star in the sky, in the galaxy,  
a constant struggle tells me otherwise.  
Gotta rise above it, a swarm of dandelions  
won't be flyin'.

If you're lying, I'm dying, forget it, this poem's  
written, it's smitten. Get rid of her.

A conquistador, take no prisoners. I'll destroy  
and build the people you killed. Your alter-ego  
starts playing people from the get-go.

I can destroy friendships, go ahead and scoff,  
if you get to sneak-dissing, I'll pop off.

The only thing I can't destroy are fake  
relationships, friendships, what a rip-off.

*Jahir Gray*

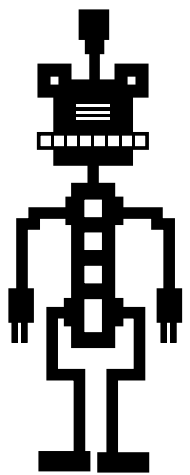


*Tavon Berford*

## Gazing into the Universe

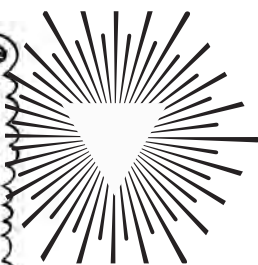
My gaze is like a mystery of creation  
that's observed from an ancient  
but regrettable journey,  
and sometimes looking behind me,  
things get pretty weird.  
When I see at this moment,  
destiny is outside of its shadow  
and justice tranquilizes darkness  
with a bloody arrow, but  
the world as we know it will have an  
effect with the universe again,  
and all the creatures in the world  
may never know.

*Vincent Wingfield*





*l-r: Armani Thornton, Arman Thornton, Christa Madikaegbu*



## Almost Everlasting

Things last, things don't  
time never goes away,  
but imaginary friends  
stay until you make  
real ones. People  
take their  
lives like it won't  
end, but some are  
filled with misery  
and broken delight.  
But welcome to  
voices of encouragement  
so make  
a moment of the heart  
like an intact photograph,  
a lasting delight,  
like, it's almost everlasting.

*Christa Madikaegbu*

## Friendship

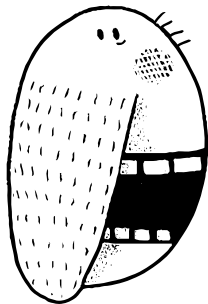
Everlasting friendship, what I thought for the moment  
When it ended it was just a thought in my head,  
Friendship never lasts, it's just like a sample  
It never lasts, it's just like a scandal,  
Inspiring people to be careful of who they hang out with,  
I felt bad vibes and how it makes me feel like a  
Snitch. Impatience on finding good friends  
But the only find is disappointment.

*Isaiah Hunter*

## All of My Imaginary

Imaginary things for me are planets  
that I name. Another one is  
toys. Imaginary stuff is shoes  
with wheels, something else is  
a 200-inch TV. Mostly everything  
is imaginary. My dreams are imaginary.  
One time I asked my friend  
what he wanted, he said, all  
imaginary stuff. But, I said, Why?  
And he said because it's  
way way way better  
than real.

*A'Quise Thomas*





## Non-Existing

My philosophy is a mystery  
and I don't regret that  
but I do regret that it has no  
chance of existing.  
My non-philosophy  
is eternal, and that won't change.  
I believe philosophies are  
difficult to explain.  
Sure, I'm capable of having one.  
I speak as myself, not as a group,  
in my own words is how it is.  
Philosophy is just a big word  
that makes you sound smart,  
but that's my opinion.  
I don't know how I think,  
but do you?  
The world wasn't made for you  
to have everything.  
What I see is unnecessary  
and my gaze is clear,  
wouldn't you agree?  
Sure I have no philosophy,  
but I'm living perfectly fine  
without one.

*Albert Gordon*

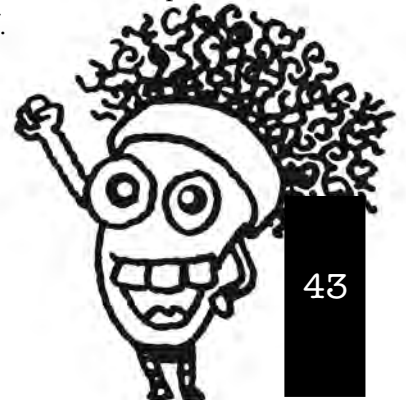


*l-r: Jayden Gray, Jahir Gray,  
Marcantony Pierce, Arman Thornton*

## A Monotonous Beauty

My gaze is narrow yet unfocused  
I step outside into a beautiful wind.  
Looking down to where my inner conscience is in control  
The presence of this overflowing makes my outer conscience  
Say, "What a beautiful wind! If only it would  
Stay like this." I leave every moment in my inner conscience.  
Everyone, monotonous but so beautiful. They wonder, how can I  
Observe everything with delight, while I'm  
Unfocused on said everything? If I speak of mystery  
It's not because I love it, but because it triggers  
Tranquil monotonous moments, or perhaps  
It's a gesture of mine. What a beautiful  
Thing life does, almost as that same rose that I noticed  
Seven years ago. As we grow older, the beauty  
Never ceases to change. To love is to have certain respect.  
Respect is to love while loving yourself.

*Christa Madikaegbu*





## Loneliness

Does it leave a mark when you  
Come back to me?  
No, because I'm stuck with you for eternity  
Always there for me when degraded  
Just the sight of me with you  
leaves people elated  
You and I both know to be sane  
is to be wrong  
Maybe that's the reason we get along  
You've stayed with me till the end  
Who know that loneliness would be  
My best friend?

*Christa Madikaegbu*



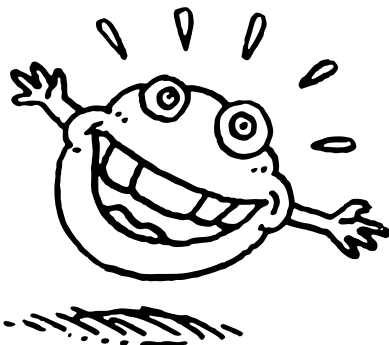
*Writing Club!*

## Fear

Fear is like barbed wire coming at you  
like death hollow in front of you  
from hunger of eternity to forgotten death.  
A dust devil will haunt you till you turn  
into dust—Shark-tooth trolls will eat you inside  
empty rooms filled with darkness forever.  
Giant mosquitoes will strike with their  
dangerous, pointy tusks—  
Fear is death.

*Vincent Wingfield*

## President of War



The president of war has his  
rising voice at the top of his kingdom  
The president of war was untouched  
until that afternoon—he was in uniform  
The outside of the kingdom filled with silence  
the walls freezing, with barbed wire everywhere  
Ever awakening, never missing  
but soon forgotten with eyelids  
his windows protected by wooden boards

*Vincent Wingfield*

## The Secret Night

I was born in a dark nailed river  
Entangled in the water and  
closed in the black.  
I climbed to the secrets of a  
locked & broken mind.  
What was buried in my bones?  
I believe in the entangled and blessed  
road to be broken,  
there I was left in the dark  
and light was just old dirt.  
Now tell me what you remember  
from the broken one, when I was  
nothing to the gods.

*Christa Madikaegbu*



*Wayne Rhodes*

## Darkness

### What is a Poet?

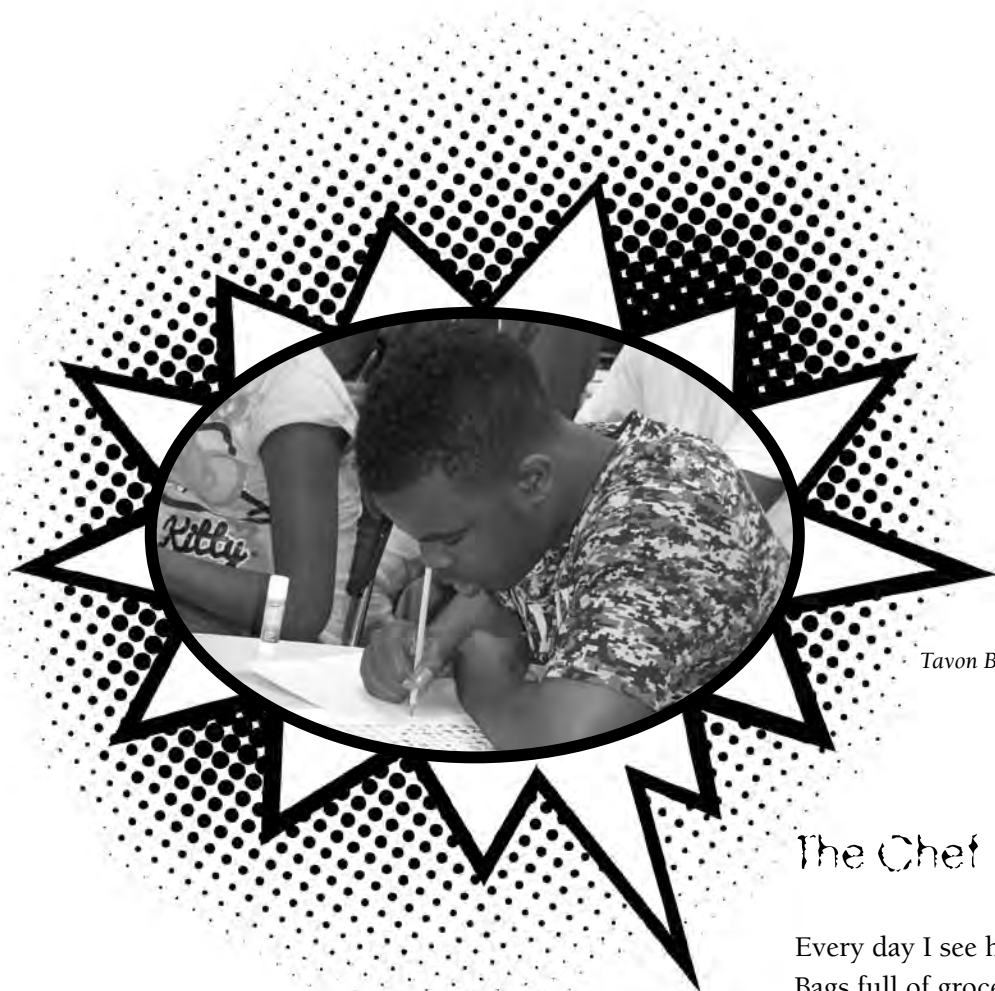
A poet is one who can write poems and  
one who can't write poems;  
One who mistakes words and  
one who mistakes himself.  
A poet is one who believes and one  
who can't make himself believe.  
A poet is one who has told lies about  
himself and one who can't tell lies at all.  
A poet is one who whispers, saying that  
he is trapped and not knowing that  
he can leave from a tower.

*Vincent Wingfield*

Darkness is like childhood but without the truth  
It's like being tossed around like a puppet  
It's like being ambushed by an impatient person  
With shards in their back from a trash can  
Blown up at 360 degrees  
Darkness is countless & hard to escape  
With its bitter cut weight like scraps of paper  
It is the essence of eternity untouched  
And unfocused with tremendous force

*Vincent Wingfield*





*Tavon Berford*

## Dream a Dream

I'm the president of dreams  
 Dreams give hope & inspirational thoughts  
 to people and dreams give life purpose  
 but some negative dreams are what we call  
 nightmares—however, those dreams are overtaken  
 by those who turn broken dreams into ones  
 full of triumph—our minds are windows of opportunity  
 So dream a rising dream for the future!

*Christa Madikaegbu*



## The Chef

Every day I see her  
 Bags full of groceries  
 A meal waiting to be prepared  
 But the expressions on her face are not those of hunger  
 or eagerness  
 but of anxiety and concern—she looks scared

When her phone lights up, the message that seems  
 urgent doesn't seem to phase her  
 She has bruises on her face like she's been in a fight  
 Her wedding ring scratched  
 She bounces her leg up & down  
 She can't seem to sit still  
 She's nervous

Her phone lights up  
 It's her husband  
 He expects supper to be ready before he gets home  
 Wouldn't want another "accident"  
 She replies faster than her hands can type  
 like she's excited  
 but the pain in her eyes says otherwise

*Daizha Chism*





## Anxiety

*l-r: Arman Thornton, Jayden Gray, Jahir Gray*

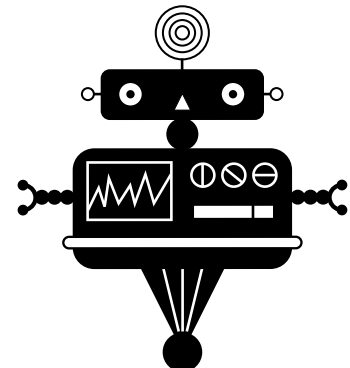
It walks with quiet steps, watching its surroundings  
 Anxiety thinks the worst before it has a chance to come alive  
 Anxiety lives by steps—anxiety doesn't stand tall  
 It walks, head down with hunched shoulders  
 Walks as if it carries the world on its shoulders  
 for fear it will tip  
 Anxiety talks with a nervous stutter like it has  
 ice in its shirt  
 Its eyes hang low, filled with glossy tears that don't fall  
 Anxiety bites its nails to the skin  
 It wears headphones so people won't talk to them  
 even when no music is playing  
 Anxiety's nightmarish words are yesterday, today  
 and tomorrow  
 Anxiety is always jittery like someone is out to get them  
 Anxiety lives in silence out of fear that the loud noises  
 of the world will tear away their peace and sanity

*Daizha Chism*

## Grey

Underestimated. Misunderstood. Misused.  
 Such a segregated color, put in placement  
 to describe things impure and hollow.  
 Grey, the lead within the pencil of the  
 greatest masterminds,  
 but forgotten when the Nobel Prize is won.  
 Grey, the color overhead that drips rain to  
 feed our crops or the snow to feed our spirits.  
 Grey, with its many shades, walks behind the tall  
 a shadow to mirror your greatness.  
 Grey, like a uniform you wear, other opinion, but  
 continue to do more without question.

*Daizha Chism*

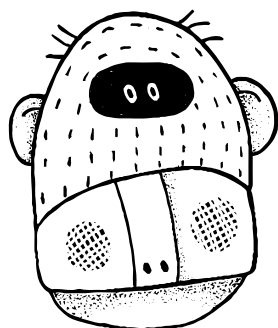




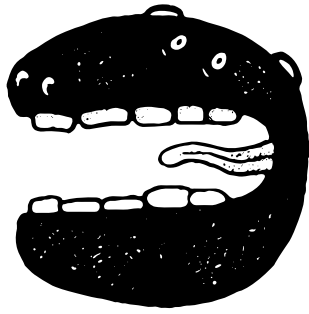
*l-r: Christa Madikaegbu, Jailyn Smith,  
Destiny Rhodes, Elijah Douglas*

## Donald, O Donald

I am made out of greed, pride and anger towards  
My own insecurities  
I open my eyes to see a disrupted planet we live on  
& how do I wish to fix it?  
“Make it Great Again”  
When the shadows fall I come out to bring fear to those who  
oppose my authority—You might find me  
Destroying homes & ruining lives  
I dream in shades of red, white and blue  
My very best friends are inner hate & false hope  
My biggest fear is failure to show the world I can  
do it alone  
The sound of my laughter brings nightmares  
to your children—I feel like I can do anything when  
money’s in my pocket  
There is nothing like the smell of destruction when  
done by your own hand  
When it’s time to rest, I don’t.  
I’m too busy planning to make “America Great Again”







## Nigerian Princess

Up and down the rails she rides  
Shaky hands & jittery eyes  
Up and down the aisles she walks  
Begging for change from strangers  
Jagged and rustic shoes  
Eyes with enough past to tell a great novel  
Hands covered in ash  
Fingernails black like nail polish  
Hair wrapped like a Nigerian princess  
She's not from here  
Staring at her reflection through the dirty train windows  
She talks to herself—I hear an accent  
She's saying a prayer  
Her small sweater won't protect her from the winter ice  
What a way to spend Christmas

*Daizha Chism*

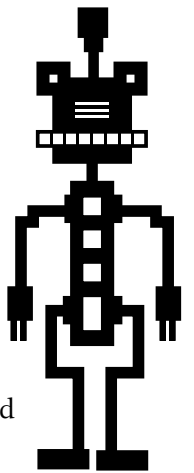


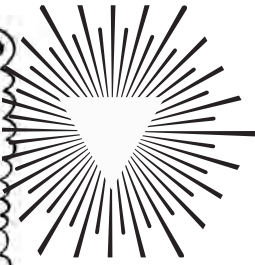
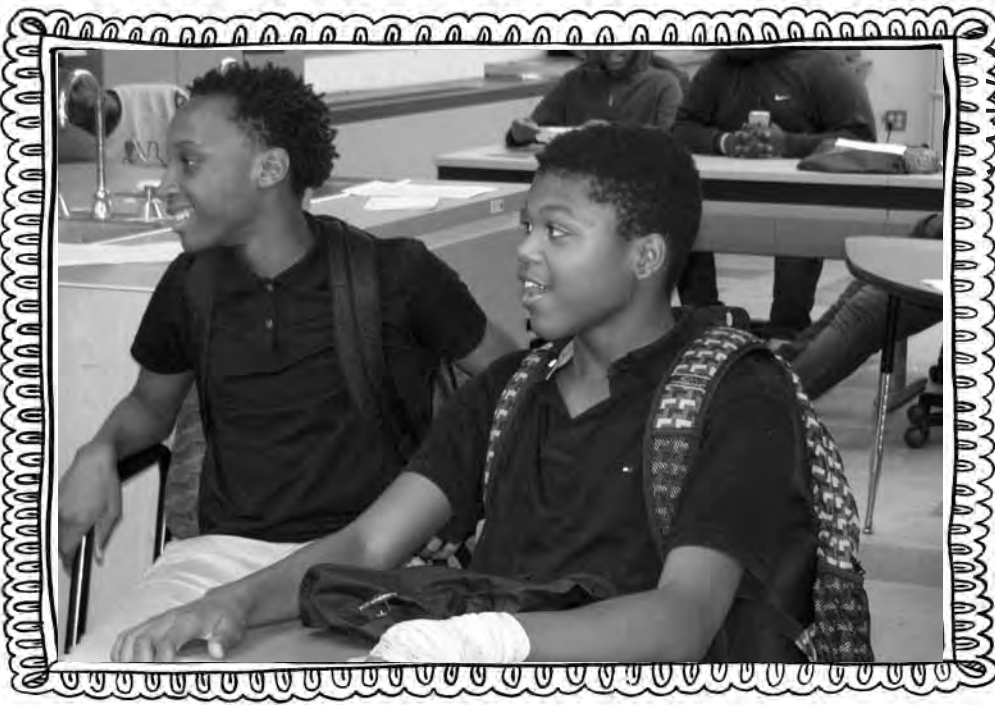
*l-r: Jamaree Martin, Abbey Chung*

## Hate

You make my skin crawl without saying a word  
You apologize like they haven't already been heard  
I just can't fathom the hate I have for you—putting  
this metaphoric spit together for you  
I despise your very walk  
I hope you choke on your words & lose the ability  
to talk—I'm tedious with this rhyme  
taking my precious time to describe the demise of your lies  
I'm fortified & you tried, but you're trying to murder what died  
Look with your eyes open wide  
Letting the world know of all your games—this game  
Of life you decided to play  
You drove me crazy with all of your lies  
Go back to an embryo, unfertilized

*Daizha Chism*



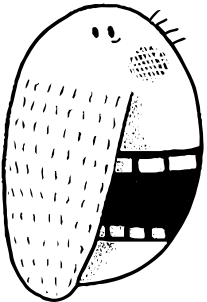


*l-r: Jamari Carter, Saquan Short*

## I'm Sorry

I'm sorry I don't fit your pharmaceutical  
standards for what a woman is  
I'm sorry I'm not your spitting image of success  
I'm sorry that my big lips, bold eyes and broad nose  
aren't your ideal type  
I'm sorry that every word I speak feels like a speech  
from a prophet—I'm sorry  
That my voice isn't girly and gentle—instead it's  
rough and sometimes stammering  
I'm sorry I'm not average or mainstream  
I'm sorry I'm original & that it's killing you  
Sorry that you now have to pick out a casket  
because me being me is all you're going to get  
Sorry. Not sorry.

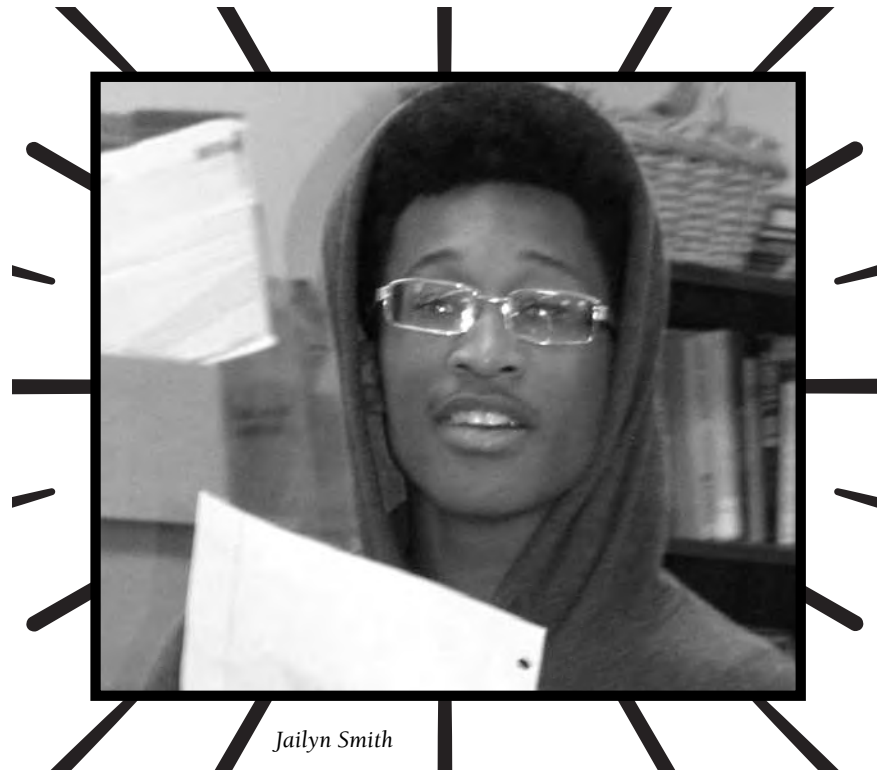
*Daizha Chism*



## The Artist

Shoes scuffed like he's had them for a while  
He gets on the train with the other kids  
You can tell he doesn't want to  
They push him—call him names  
Talk about his clothes and shoes  
“Can't you afford new ones?”  
His mouth wants to say yes  
but his eyes say no  
They're about to burst into tears  
But he holds back  
They take his backpack  
tearing it open, leaving his drawings flying around  
the train—they step on them  
stomping them out  
What did he do to deserve so much pain and hatred?  
No one on the train even looks in his direction  
Avoiding eye contact to avoid the obligation to help  
What a society  
All he wanted was to draw.

*Daizha Chism*



## Hell Games

See, now I am angry  
So I'll spit flames like these are the hell games  
I burn with an eternal flame  
I spit fire like a dragon  
My veins course lava—the lava is my blood  
I am the original of my kind  
So I suffer in my glory  
My thoughts are immortal & will live forever  
From my first word to my last  
I exist beyond the devil—I just can't help it  
I burn like wildfire  
I have the bravery of a honey badger  
I am hotter than a jalapeno  
Hotter than lightning—untouchable  
Look me in the eyes and know  
You cannot run.

*Jaymir Wise*

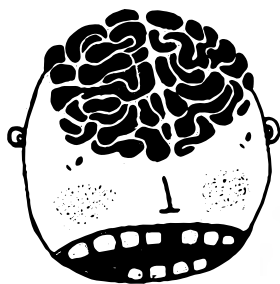
*Jailyn Smith*

## True Story

I remember when I was younger, looking up  
to my older brothers, till  
One got locked up and things got rougher.  
The one who started stressing was my Mother,  
Smoking & drinking her life away  
Didn't even have the time to say  
I'm gonna be clean the next day.  
But things are better now & I'm really proud  
of my Mom—she didn't just raise 1 or 2,  
but 4 of her sons—she's the real MVP  
My Mom is a champion.

*Louis Morton*





## Toilet

One thing that wouldn't be fun  
To become is a toilet  
As a toilet you become rusty, dirty  
And stinky—as a toilet  
I would wish that people didn't use me  
I would be crying every night because  
People would come to you just to pee or poop  
All over you 24/7

*Jamari Carter*



*Saquan Short*

## Sorry

I'm sorry for yelling across the room  
I'm sorry for having an attitude all the time  
I'm sorry for being mean to everybody  
I'm sorry for everything,  
for not writing a poem and  
for not reading out loud to everyone every time  
But every time I come here, I always  
Get yelled at like I did today  
What did I do for you all to yell at me  
Every time?

*Shaki Knight*

## Sadness

Paint first a person's memory covered  
in darkness, hurt and pain.  
Remove a smile from your face.  
Pull your hood over your head.  
Slouch down in your chair.

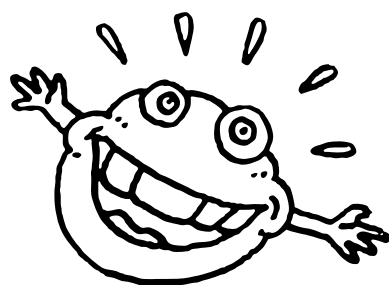
Confess my deepest fear,  
Prisoner of my own thoughts, wishing  
happiness could set me free;  
The rain hitting the window pane  
helping me disappear with every drop  
that I hear.

*Kevin Franks*

## Nice Man

I met a man once on the bus  
who was nice to me.  
He showed me how to catch a bus  
and even gave me money before he  
got off the bus, but  
I don't know his name.

*Kevin Franks*



## Lonely

Face  
Mouth closed—Not smiling  
Eyebrows down  
Looking from side to side  
Walking around the living room  
Everything is quiet  
Stay in the house  
When somebody is behind me  
I just jump  
It's going on all the time  
Raining on  
wet slippery streets  
empty with no people  
Someone says, "Do you need help  
getting down the street?"  
I say yes  
I feel like when it's dark outside  
when the lights are out  
and you hear gun shots far away

*Kevin Franks*

## Music Mirror

First I paint on musical notes  
In the basement on the wall  
Sitting on a camel's back  
Musical experience is necessary  
Next I would like you to paint birds and humans  
Near a heartbreaking  
Noiseless motion—I'm in the bathroom  
And it's pink—I look in the mirror  
And it's me—my room is red and blue  
There's another person in my room  
I don't know who it is, but I know  
She's got a good personality, like me

*Shaki Knight*



*Tavon Berford*

## You Do Not

You do not have to do your homework  
every day—you can stay after school  
and do your work.

When you get home you can play games  
after your homework—You have  
all the time when you get home  
but don't get a D+ on your report card  
or your butt will be grass

*Shaki Knight*





*A'Quise Thomas*

## A Poet is a Prisoner

A poet has short black eyelashes  
A poet has a thick moustache  
A poet is thankful for security at prisons  
A poet stays in the darkness in his cell  
A poet is sitting alone filling the walls with lines  
A poet dances to Kriss Kross

*Shaki Knight*

## My Auntie

I sat in my Aunt's living room  
on her big comfy couch eating Cheez-Its  
She asked me do I like funny jokes & I said yes  
So we started telling funny jokes & laughing  
until my Dad said it's almost time to leave  
I got my coat and I said bye  
She said, "Bye honey, see you next time"  
That is my favorite memory of my Aunt

*Shaki Knight*

## Beyonce

Beyonce's voice is so loud that  
the whole world can hear it.  
Beyonce sings so lovely that flowers  
grow in the garden whenever she sings.  
She gets her magic from a pink and blue microphone.  
Her songs are so sweet that people hear her  
and turn into chocolate candy.  
Her voice is shiny, happy and smoky.

*Shaki Knight*





*Saebian McKnight*

## Vision from a Rare View

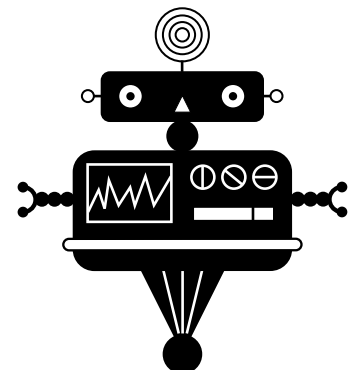
When they sit on you  
Your feelings are not broken  
Unspoken—before I sit inside a bus  
I have to pay a token  
I abuse you in school because I'm bored  
looking at my teachers wig  
but I didn't choose you—my teacher  
chose me to be with you  
so I scratch you up when I'm bored—I'm sorry  
kick you when I'm mad—I'm sorry  
Sorry I've been a fool by not understanding you  
Just thinking that you're a chair to sit on  
But I realize that you've been with me since the  
first day of school & every day since then  
You are an unappreciated thing that prevents me  
from being on the floor—Cold.

*Mavelli Jones*

## Three Things I'm Scared Of

I'm afraid of spiders, snakes & centipedes  
They creep me out to my bones  
Spiders have long legs  
Snakes are slimy, and  
Centipedes are long and just look weird  
Some spiders are big, with skinny legs  
Snakes are long & scaly  
And centipedes are long with 100 legs  
I'm also scared of thunder, because it's loud

*Shaki Knight*







*l-r: Jayden Gray, Jahir Gray*

## Shark

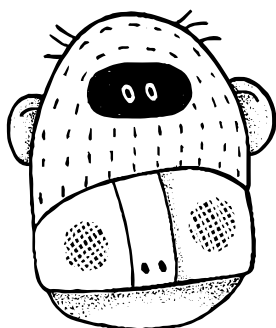
I would like to come back as a shark  
 Sharks are big & strong & in real life  
 I'm a small and weak person, but  
 When I'm a shark, people would fear me  
 There would be free food everywhere  
 I would have thousands of teeth  
 I would be hard to kill  
 I would like to be a shark because  
 I think it would be fun

*Saebian McKnight*

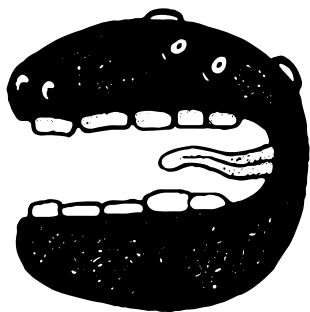
## I've Walked the World

I've walked the world, but I've never seen Paris.  
 I've walked the world, but I've never seen Antartica.  
 I've walked the world, but I've never seen Taylor Swift.  
 I've walked the world, but I've never seen a talking tomato.  
 I've walked the world, but I've never seen a tap dancing peanut.  
 I've walked the world, but I've never seen a breakdancing walrus.  
 I've walked the world, but I've never seen a sword-fighting swordfish.  
 I've walked the world, but I've never seen a unicorn.

*Saebian McKnight*







## Leaders

The president of rising knows how  
 To uplift people and himself  
 The president of travel moves  
 Forward with his people  
 The president of barbed wire knows  
 How to harm you when you try to  
 Leave his site  
 The president of silence knows how  
 To act without sound  
 Like a 1940's silent film, and we are all trapped  
 In it until the end of their first term  
 No one, nor anyone, can speak  
 Their truth or falsehoods  
 The nations are all destroyed, because  
 All nations were not free—they had to  
 Follow the leader  
 No, nothing, but one person can fight  
 And turn nothing into something

*Mavelli Jones*

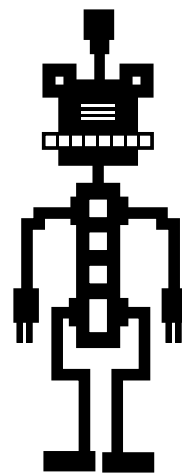


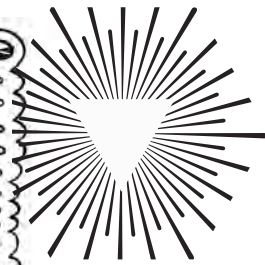
*Troy Chaney*

## Feelings

When I am gloomy, my feelings  
 dry up like the desert.  
 For some reason it's always a  
 gray day when it happens;  
 My eyes get filled up with tears  
 reflecting on my love to others and  
 their love to me, my achievements  
 and the many bad things I did.  
 My hands shake just like an earthquake.  
 My body feels hot, just like sleeping on  
 an oven that's 400 degrees.  
 I feel like I'm walking on a bed of needles  
 bare footed, with blood everywhere.  
 When I'm gloomy, people say Why are  
 you pouting like a little kid? and  
 I hold my body like just like  
 my Mom did when I was  
 first born.

*Mavelli Jones*



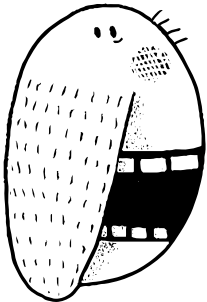


*l-r: Anthony Martin, Khiddell White*

## Heights

I fear heights because  
 The distance from the ground makes me scared  
 I fear heights because  
 When I'm high in the sky and I look down  
 I know if I fall I would be a goner  
 I fear heights because  
 When I see everyone shrink below me  
 It makes me realize how high up I am

*Saebian McKnight*



## Alienation

I hate being a human having these emotions  
 I hate waking up to go to school  
 People got me feeling alienated—un-powered  
 I hate guys trying to figure me out  
 I hate being noticed for nothing—I hate  
 tall boys—they make me feel sad  
 I'd rather be tall as a tree—It would be lovely to see  
 I'd like to be different—I'd rather be a publisher  
 or famous—I'd rather hibernate than go to school  
 I hate when boys act fake around me  
 I'm a planet, and have no one to bother me for a week  
 I hate school when students want to get your  
 attention by being annoying to you  
 I'd love to be a shadow—no one would bother me

*Christina Cook*



## Who is a Poet?

I am a poet  
 I am thoughts in the darkness  
 I conjure the world with every rhyme  
 That comes out—it breaks like ice  
 My worlds shadow everything it does  
 It holds me like an umbilical cord  
 My poems are a mystery of creation  
 It's frozen into separation of memories  
 Like a waterfall, it comes to me as a dream  
 Echo in the distance—it takes a solution of  
 Ashes, dirt and darkness to know who is a poet  
 Everyone is a poet through creation

*Christina Cook*

## When I Was Born

When I was born  
 there were wonders around me.  
 Balloons with all the meaning of ache  
 and sorrow filled the atmosphere for breathless  
 moments of the unexpected.

Darkness stands up like a stature of brothers  
 filled with bitterness. I wanted a boy,  
 No a girl—as tension grows louder;  
 Regrets showing as shadows of the spirits  
 and from the unknown silence of  
 an old lullaby's soul—there I was  
 at the depth in the orbit of nowhere.

*Christina Cook*

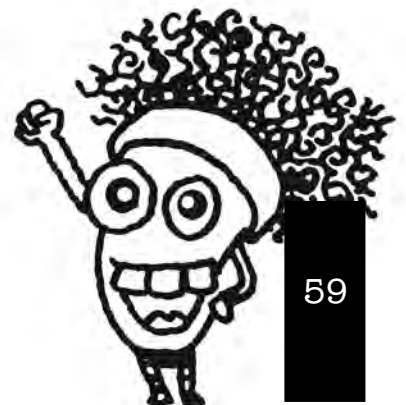


*l-r: Jahir Gray, Vincent Wingfield, Marcantony Pierce,  
 Troy Chaney, Jayden Gray*

## Pride

Pride is a fistful of evil—Pride has a blood vein of  
 unknown suffering—Pride has wounds that are  
 covered up  
 by fear and loneliness—Memories of scars that say  
 «Listen!» —Departed from falling leaves bred with  
 weeping  
 silence and emptiness, filled with darkness for  
 eternity  
 broken glasses, the bone-crushing feeling of pride  
 is a common revolution over & over again.

*Christina Cook*





## Outside

Pink, orange, blue, black, purple kids

Square

Triangle

Trapezoid

Run, walk, skipping, fighting, eating

Deer

Squirrel

Wolf

Daisy

What can be found in nature

Grass

Mud

Trees

What is not in nature

Fences

Mailboxes

Bricks

I get half of a land of nothing

Less with a spirit showing

And the other half a house with a heart

*Christina Cook*



## Me or Difference

*Isaiah Hunter*

I want to be remembered by my pride

I want to be remembered as someone who

Showed bravery—who is cut to pieces of

Regret, and dissolving promises, and shattered

Emotions filled with memories dangling

In the balance

I want to be remembered by the sun and the moon

Paper and wind moving out of sight going through

The storm as fire burning inside liquid

Turns into gas transforming into a

Necklace of planets

*Christina Cook*

## Grass God

All day you step on me

But I'm here for that

I help you breathe

I help dogs when they're sick

I'm green and clean

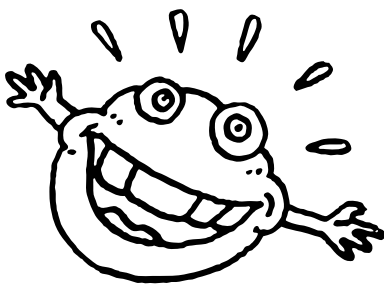
I stay along the street

When you step on me I feel it

I cry in silence

I'm called the Grass God

*Arman Thornton*



## My Love

Let it be cool  
Let it be love  
Let it be fun  
I am hope—I am fun  
I share love, but not my name  
Our love is like a brick  
You never make me angry  
Our love is not ordinary  
My love is like no others  
My love will not run out  
My love is romantic

*Arman Thornton*

## Myself

My shadow shivers in the sun  
It's nervous in the sun—I get mad  
I turn into an ox, like a boss  
And if you hop, that means  
You were in the way  
I make my dog go into a frenzy  
I like my steak medium rare.

*Arman Thornton*



*Jamari Carter*

## Drifting President

Smoke everywhere—eyelids cloudy  
But I'm headed towards the line  
The clock hits 6 and a big gold trophy  
I play until I get the trophy  
I go home & take off my uniform  
Make dinner and go to sleep  
The next day I start drifting and  
Keep going and going and going

*Arman Thornton*





*Anthony Martin*

## My Own

I make my own habitat  
 I make my own spot  
 I make my own food  
 I have my own mood  
 But I do not drool  
 What I do is rule  
 That's what I do, now  
 How about you?

*Arman Thornton*

## Poets are

A poet is someone who wants to but can't.  
 A poet is someone who has a mind.  
 A poet is someone who likes his life in his own skin.  
 Poets would rather sleep through the night.

*Arman Thornton*

## Letters

Diligent dogs devoured Dunkin Donuts  
 and coconuts, corn & candy.  
 Randy ran and rolled across a rock.  
 Mandy makes more money than Mark.  
 The handyman is here to help.

*Arman Thornton*



## The Book

I am a hard-back book and there is  
 nothing on my cover—It is boring  
 I was tired and wanting  
 someone to read me—I want to be  
 noticed. But enough about me—  
 How about some Burger King?

*Arman Thornton*



## Presidency

I am the president of Voice  
I speak up for people who can't  
I will make people who are wrong say  
the truth even when they try to lie  
The truth is rising already—everything  
that was towered over and untouched  
is coming out,  
and to the girl or boy whose heart is broken—  
Even if you feel unloved  
deep down you are still loved.

*Armani Thornton*

## Magic

Magic can be heartbreaking even though  
It's cute—Listen carefully to the spells  
When the person casts over you  
Feast upon the questions  
The person can be considering  
Sadness is blue, though it is my favorite  
Green is disgust—Yellow is happiness  
The feeling is nicer if you share it  
Red is anger that builds up when  
Someone messes with me  
Mix it all together and it  
Makes you confused

*Armani Thornton*

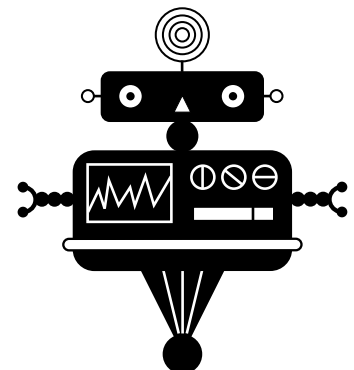


*l-r: Saquan Short, Earl Bullock*

## Stranger

I see a man in a suit—He looks suspicious  
I think he's going to work  
I imagine he's bankrupt even though  
he looks like he has a mansion  
He might be a weird person—He looks  
happy and bored at the same time  
I bet he robs banks  
Before I get off the bus, he looks at me  
with a cold grin

*Armani Thornton*



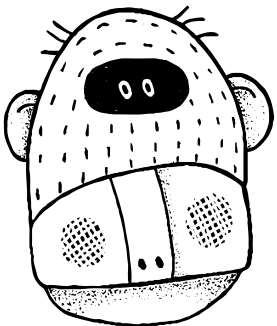




## Summer

Summer time is near  
 Strange fruit grows from bushes and trees  
 on the sunny side of the street  
 Everyone comes out to play  
 at the pool or the park  
 That's the solution when you get too hot  
 The tide is high when you go to the beach  
 Faithfully, there are trees all around  
 I twist & shout to get out of the house  
 to have fun once in a while  
 It was a good day today.

*Armani Thornton*



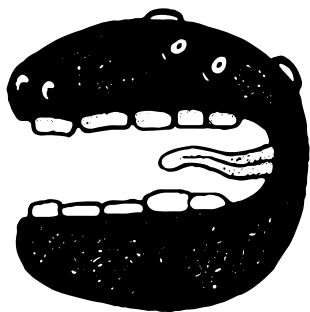
*l-r: Braxton Mathews, Anthony Martin, Khiddell White,  
 Blake Mathews*

## Not Sorry

I'm sorry not that I had so much energy  
 that I jumped to Alaska.  
 I'm sorry not that I bought a white-winged lion  
 and released it in the school.  
 I'm sorry not that I turned all the paper invisible  
 so now we don't have to work.  
 I burped twice and farted—I'm not sorry.  
 I'm sorry (not) that I brought mortal food into  
 the movies—By the way, I'm a goddess.  
 I'm sorry (not) that I got caught up in the fun and  
 missed out on the free food.  
 I'm sorry (not) that my windows are so clean  
 that birds run into them.  
 Remember—it's not that I'm sorry—it's  
 I apologize, ok?

*Armani Thornton*





## How to Win

Paint a picture of your life  
 Talk about your 12 years in school  
 Talk about how school was hard for you  
 But you kept trying  
 Say they did not think you would make it  
 In school or in life  
 Say that I listen more, and say  
 I will make it out of Southeast

*Travis Young*



*Marcantony Pierce*

## Big Buh

Her favorite place to be is her childhood  
 Her laughter is a blizzard of happiness, but  
 Her anger can become a strike of lightning  
 She had fun working at the Redskins football stadium  
 Her favorite kind of people to be around are  
 Exciting and creative  
 Her saying is, "Get it how you live"

*Armani Thornton*

## How I feel

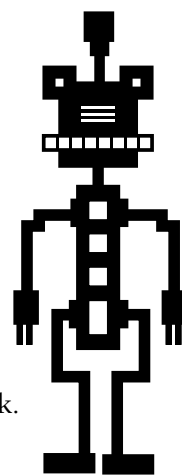
I feel sad about how people throw things  
 and break them—Some people  
 use me as a target.  
 I feel like water dissolving when they  
 break me down; My tears are like  
 a river going downhill  
 flooding the town like a thunderstorm.

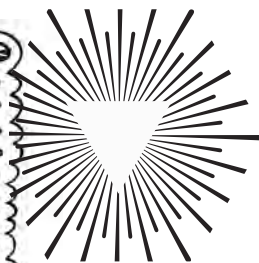
*Travis Young*

## Hungry?

Did you hear that sound?  
 It's the emptiness inside myself.  
 There's an empty canyon in my stomach.  
 Sometimes it fades away, but other times  
 it sticks to me like glue.  
 It drags me around until dinner,  
 tugging and pulling me around like a potato sack.  
 My engine stops in the middle of nowhere.  
 The hunger is very powerful so  
 pull yourself up.

*Armani Thornton*



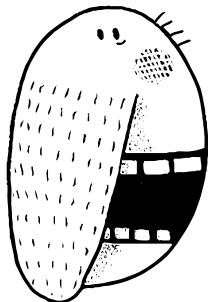


*l-r: Jayden Gray, Jahir Gray*

## Poltergeist

For some, they look alive  
 But me—I can see the supernatural  
 People see clouds and planes  
 I see floating coffins and bats  
 They see adults riding cars & trucks  
 I see people riding werewolves and  
 Giant spiders  
 They eat burgers and salads, but  
 I see them eating slimy brains  
 And human feet  
 And from the look of all of this  
 I may not even be on earth  
 Or am I?

*Troy Chaney*



## Fist

Tired of being weak  
 Found in the mist  
 If you want me to fight  
 Feel free to feel my fist  
 My fist feels like a king  
 All covered in blood  
 I'll break your skull  
 And smash it in the mud  
 It's not just hard work  
 I also show dignity  
 But unlike you  
 Who shows your stupidity  
 So now you know  
 And here's a candy cane  
 Now run and scam  
 Before I put you in pain

*Troy Chaney*



## Dr. Seuss

*(A loving poem to my favorite author)*

In the ashes we know  
To the spirit of love  
We miss you so much  
Like a lost turtle dove  
I miss that guy  
Who liked to relax  
I miss the orange moustache  
Of my friend Lorax  
When reading this poem  
Filled me with hunger for lamb  
But that changed my mind  
To eat green eggs and ham  
I miss you so much  
And because of that  
I will always remember you  
With the cat in the hat

*Troy Chaney*

## What Does a Poem Do?

People come up and ask me  
What does a poem do?  
I ask them—What do you think?  
In fact I will say this to you to  
Influence others too  
Because you can make your poem  
Do something to help you  
To care for others  
To change things  
And to feel important to yourself  
That's what poetry can do

*Troy Chaney*

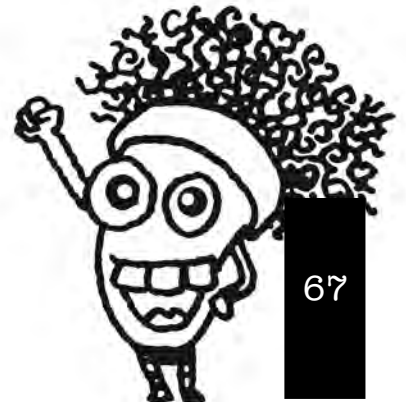


*Wayne Rhodes*

## Man of Steel

I'm made of strength—strong enough to  
Create beams of light—I open my eyes  
To a criminalized city  
When the shadows fall my rivals & enemies rise  
You'll find me serving justice to my foes  
I dream in shades of family  
My heart jumps when no one assists me  
My biggest fear is a crystal that brings darkness  
My very best friends are the greatest detective,  
An Amazon queen, and the king of the ocean  
I can do anything when filled with determination  
There's nothing like the smell of justice served  
Extra crispy  
When it's time to rest, I think of a thoughtless past

*Troy Chaney*





## The Lonely Table Story

Once upon a time  
 there was a lonely table  
 with no friends  
 no food on it—no nothing  
 The table man is the loneliest  
 table in history  
 Flies flying around him, whispering  
 that he was never made with you  
 On the table is a pitcher, and if you  
 look closely at the pitcher, real closely,  
 in the picture is gravy  
 and it's white.  
 The truth hurts, doesn't it,  
 Ms. Nancy?

*Marcantony Pierce*

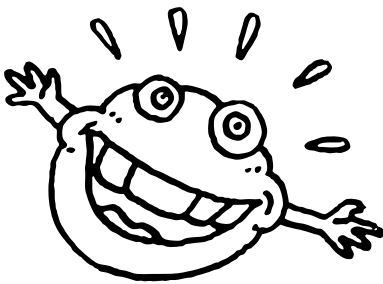


*Jayden Gray*

## If a Dinosaur comes to Hart

Let me tell you what I would do  
 First thing I will do is look at it  
 because you don't know what  
 it is about to do  
 but if I see it running towards me  
 I'll be gone like the Flash  
 Dinosaurs are dangerous  
 Better get a sign to warn people  
 But if it's not there, you're eaten  
 I wish I was like the Power Rangers  
 Because dinosaurs are unstoppable  
 See you later. Hope you don't get eaten  
 by a T-Rex.

*Marcantony Pierce*



## The New Change

I come from true stories,  
like light bulbs glowing  
and I see grandmother.  
She is blessed like the river.  
I come from pine trees changing;  
Born, a season to grow.  
I wanted to go home.

*Marcantony Pierce*



*Leroy Bailey*

## Who's That Poet?

The poet is me  
Looking for graduation  
Writing out blizzards of ink  
And this ain't a tank  
See, being a poet takes hunger  
But be careful, some people may hurt you  
Some people may fire you, but  
If there's one thing my Mom taught me  
That's to never give up  
The one and only poet, Marcantony  
Has the power of memory  
I take this seriously  
I want to be the best poet  
I am that poet  
Because I mean it

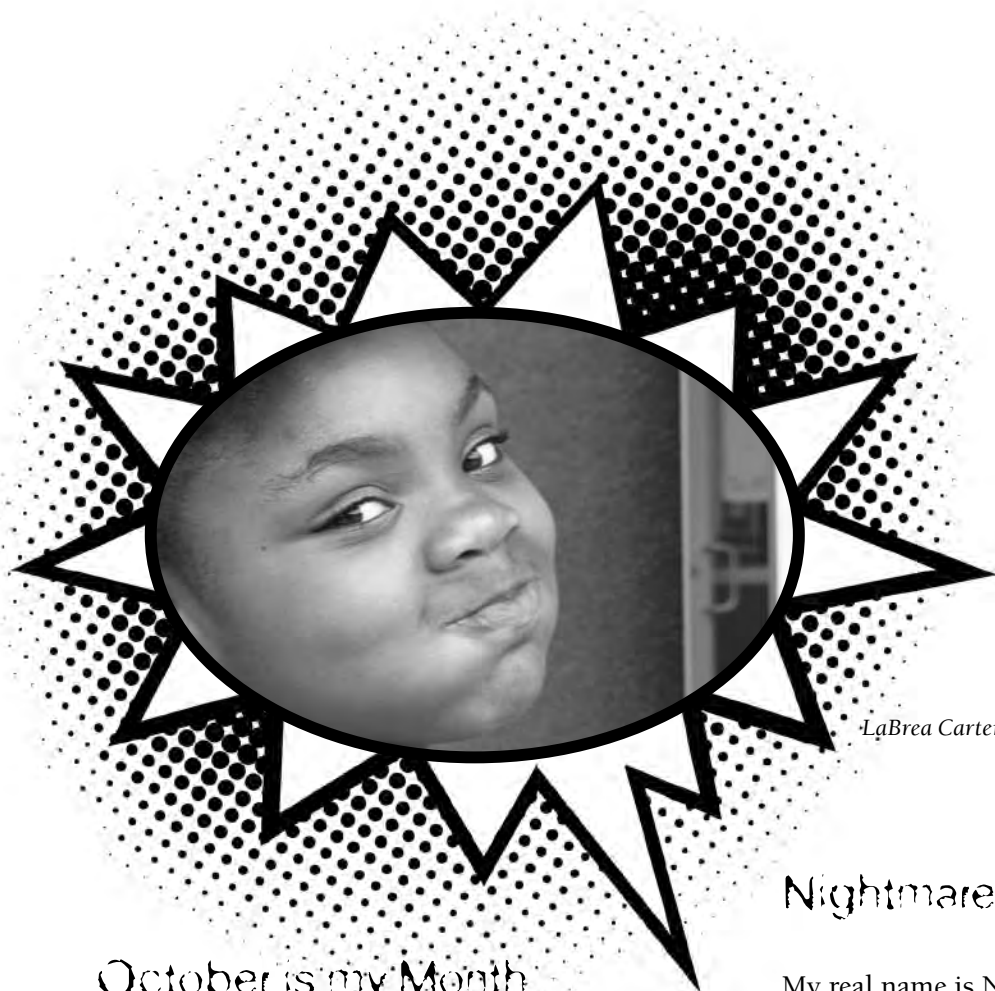
*Marcantony Pierce*

## A Bad Day

A bad day is every day for me  
On a bad day I will not hold my rage back  
On a bad day, don't say hey, or  
you will just have a really bad day  
I'm happy when you're gone  
like listening to a favorite song  
A bad day is just terrible pain, but  
like I said it's every day  
It will never end.

*Marcantony Pierce*





*LaBrea Carter*

## October is my Month

October is my month because it hits  
like a hurricane—creating memories.  
I see shadows of people watching Empire,  
but I'm not a fan of Empire—I'm a Skywalker.  
So get with the beat, or get with the heat.  
You can't defeat me.  
Oh here we go again—I win again.  
I'm undefeated on one day—  
My special day, which is my birthday  
In October.

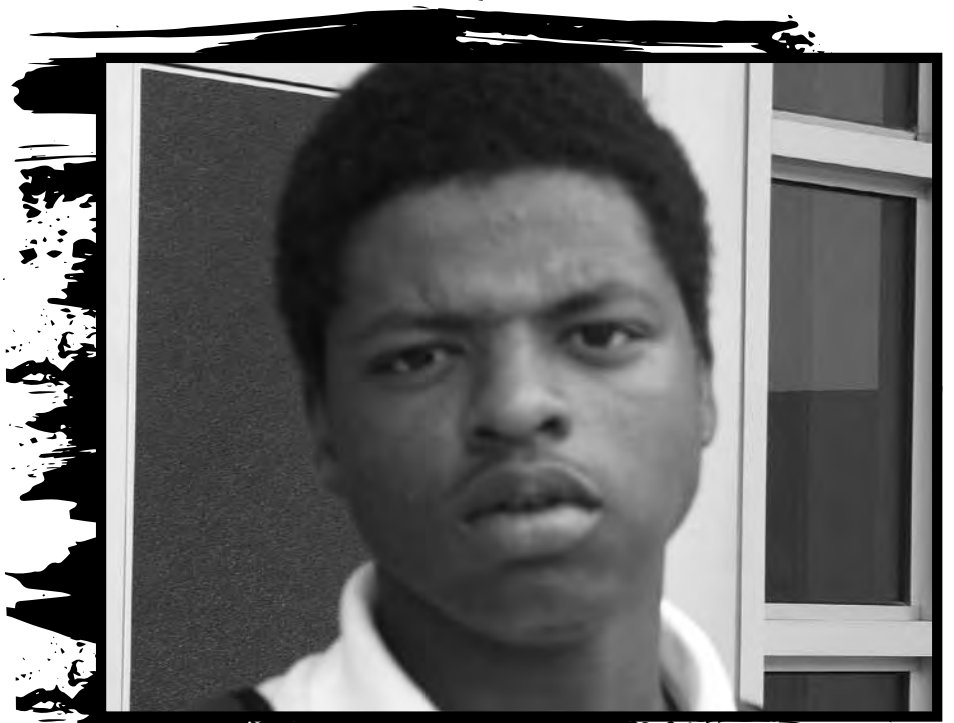
*Marcantony Pierce*



## Nightmare

My real name is Nightmare  
And with you I have a problem, so  
I will give you a nightmare  
I see the fear in your eyes—you're not  
Moving—you're shaking like freezing  
No one is here to help you  
Trick or treaters banging at the door  
You don't open it—so they come in  
Through the window—you think you're dead  
I'm so scary that even the haunted hallway  
Can't scare me—I make them scared of me  
I'm in the valley looking down on your family  
It's not my fault they can't see the sunlight  
Happy Halloween

*Marcantony Pierce*



*Elijah Douglas*

## Cool Kid President

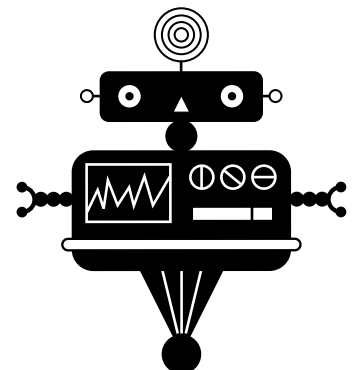
I'm the president of the cool kids  
So when you see a kid that is cool,  
Thank your president, Marcantony Pierce.  
Why am I the president?  
I am because I'm the coolest kid  
in history—J's on my feet  
So get like me—but let me get something  
clear—I'm not Donald Trump  
& I'm not throw up, so catch up  
President Marcantony is here,  
So prepare to be cold.

*Marcantony Pierce*

## Thankful

I am thankful for not just the big things  
But also the small things, like air  
Because without air we will die  
And for clouds and trees  
I am thankful for all the small things  
People love the big things, but  
Let me tell you, small things count  
If you never talk about the small things  
It may just get ready to ruin my Thanksgiving  
And if you do that, then I might just leave  
Then I can be thankful for that

*Marcantony Pierce*





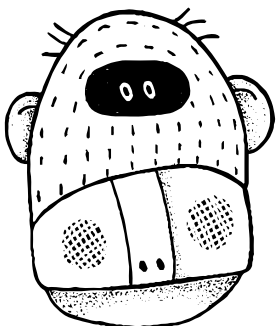


## Peace

*l-r: Richard Walston, Xavier Spruill*

Peace is when people want to be cared for  
 When people want to love instead of pulling  
 Each other's hair—Killing children  
 That's the opposite of what I'm trying to say  
 Peace is when people sit back & laugh  
 When people eat together, sleep together  
 Even trick or treat together  
 That's what it is  
 Now let me live in peace

*LaBrea Carter*

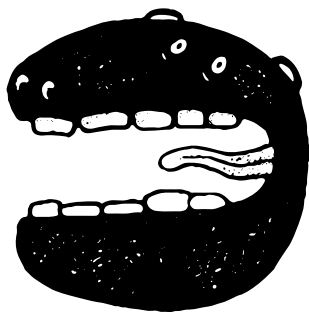


## Emotionless

Many of my friends have been  
 misdirected—Many of those ignoramuses  
 have been infected—We the people, the defenders  
 like Avatar the Last Airbender  
 Their downfall is their plunder  
 They'll be grounded from down under  
 They'll be soft as a sin  
 Should've never started to begin  
 We drove the streets to defeat  
 corrupted and courageous—take a seat  
 You'll pop and lock like the tickety tock  
 We're the hot shots from the boondocks  
 You're gonna get it, you stupid idiot  
 & leave the scene, you drag in skinny jeans  
 We're the twins, we always win—as for our friends  
 you'd be softer than sin

*Jayden Gray*





## WMD

I come from shining lightning  
onyx and brightening—a bottomless  
black rock—a class of hard knocks  
comedy Fort Knox—break their bones  
send them to Auto Zone.

I come from midair bludgeonings  
I come from impotent rage  
threatened to run away—a stay of  
black rage

Woke up sometimes, eternal wage  
seething cynical cage—you wanna  
take our dime, I'mma steal your shine  
while you whine—we see silver lines  
Italy, Rome—tell your memories stay home

*Jayden Gray*

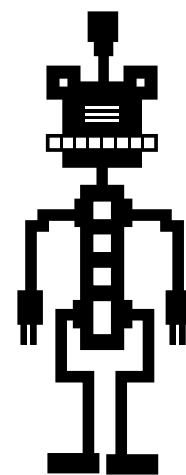


*Isqiah Hunter*

## Stinginess Apocalypse

We're the people who loot and plunder.  
We're the people who come from down under.  
Well it's blunder when stingy people come to  
take over and steal people's thunder, well  
it's takeover time—Go commit a crime.  
That kid's angry and he's mad—He ain't big and  
buff—he's short, chubby and sad—face looking like  
a floor mat—body built like a raft—dude's so fat  
he looks like he fell out of an elevator shaft.  
Stinginess? I can put up with that.  
Someone hit him with a golf club, hockey stick, bottle  
or a baseball bat. Hey trick slick Rick, go get whipped  
with a belt, a hose, a whip, a shovel, and a nightstick.

*Jahir Gray*





## Defiance

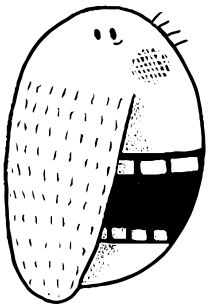
Lumpy lies  
 Acid washed fingers  
 Venom is bitter  
 If she finds a  
 Way to slither  
 Through me, that's amazing  
 She can't read me  
 The pain  
 Is complicated  
 Barefoot bruise  
 Foggy hands are  
 Uplifting with no  
 Peace—Far away a  
 Candle slowly burning  
 Why does our candle suffer?  
 She's comin'—She's comin'  
 Defiance is comin'  
 The sun's tears  
 Crawl with burns  
 Of acid—Reality stares  
 Into my shiny eyes  
 That were at war, and  
 Now at peace

*Myniah Sweetney*

## Unforgiven Misconception

I come from the black road—I wake up in midair  
 I come first in line—nothing but a road  
 heading four ways  
 I am above and beyond hunger and stupidity  
 What is the temperature of this humidity?  
 Like a god with ammunition  
 fully weaponized moods  
 Once again, floating in midair, I can descend  
 without despair—That kid is gonna get his  
 change of mind—Let a broken light go  
 through his head—This ain't showbiz  
 besides I'm a trendsetter, not a go-getter  
 and that's just how it is.

*Jahir Gray*



*l-r: Christa Madikaegbu,  
 Vincent Wingfield*

## Her house

I come blessed like a river  
 Or a door that is closed  
 Now that her walk is old  
 But not locked  
 I come from howls sent up  
 All night and all day  
 They say I climbed to the roof  
 Looking for a black road  
 Leading to my Mother  
 Tell me what you remember  
 From the light broken on the earth  
 Become the bird I wanted  
 The house of a Grandmother is a  
 Smell like sweat

*Saquan Short*



## I Am Me

I'm my mother's  
 Reflection—a million bees  
 Stinging one's emotions  
 Stay strong, take a breath  
 My Father's Tasmanian devil  
 An owner's grinning dog, just in time  
 For dinner—flex your intelligence  
 Knower of all—Throw his furious rocks  
 Into a tunnel & smash the broomstick  
 My Sister's words  
 Her necklace of plants grows  
 Based on my water words  
 The balance in our relationship  
 Her fire burning inside  
 My Brother's backfire—his hundred legs  
 Ginger and sizzling cries  
 But last, I am me  
 My words make you wonder  
 My voice makes you cry liquid gold  
 This time there is no imprisoned light  
 She is not shattered—the little girl  
 Who will always be herself is me  
 I conclude a constant struggle  
 I will make something  
 of the red rope

*Myniah Sweetney*

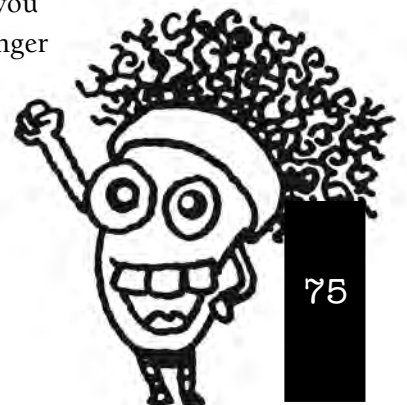


*Saebian McKnight*

## Caution

Farewell if there was actually true happiness  
 Gray is my bedroom wall color  
 Broken glass isn't the prescription that matches  
 That girl's heart –Caution  
 She has to watch herself when she says that  
 Love word  
 Listen baby, listen  
 If faces are scarred from barbed wire  
 Blue black wrists & twisted ankles  
 Twisted toy boxes & strangers weeping  
 Nightfall—ashes in repetition  
 It plays so many times  
 I've missed you for eternity, it seems  
 I've missed you—I've missed you  
 The voices, the boxcars & hunger  
 I swear you fear reality  
 Justice fears history  
 But I fear silence  
 We feel love with caution

*Myniah Sweetney*





## Happiness

Happiness is the key to life and to friends  
 Happiness is sunshine & brightness  
 With no clouds  
 Happiness is family  
 Happiness is freedom  
 Inside, it is kids & candy  
 Not being happy is rain  
 Storms, smoke and nightfalls

Wayne Rhodes



*l-r: Anthony Martin, Saebian McKnight, Saquan Short*

## Real Ones

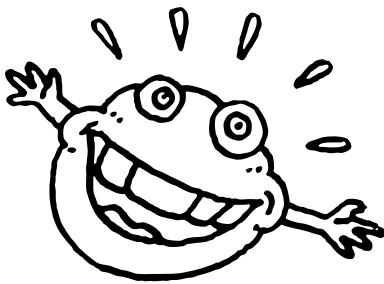
There are more fake flamingos in the world  
 Than real ones  
 One day I will have a Bugatti, one of the real ones  
 One day I will have a mansion to live in  
 And will have all my friends to visit from all over  
 The world  
 I will have the love of my family  
 And I will have lots of smiles—the real ones not fake ones

Saquan Short

## Stories

I will not return to the earth as if  
 I had never been born  
 I believe all the stories of who I was  
 A hard back book, a tent behind the house  
 of a grandmother who was not my  
 grandmother—the smell of beer  
 bone in her hip strains now that her walk  
 is old—What you remember of her now  
 is her walk.

Andrea Greenfield



## Remember

Remember Wayne  
He was the man  
Went to the NBA  
Came back to  
his hometown and  
helped the neighborhood  
the homeless people  
The greatest man in the world  
helped his family and  
got them out of  
the hood

*Wayne Rhodes*



*Jamari Carter*

## Destiny

Believe all the stories of who I was  
the first son to ever walk the moon  
I'm afraid of dogs  
I come from a grandmother who walks  
the dead & shows me the light of who I held  
Kiss the door, but not too soon  
Black Secrets told to a mother to never be born  
a god below the hoop  
They say he went to the moon

*Jamaree Martin*

## Portrait

My constellation was born on March 16, 2002  
I cried like a spoiled baby—the one boy  
On my Mom's side, the 3 boys on my Dad's  
I was unfocused but skillful  
Now I'm a shadow in the night or  
A kiss in the sky—Next time you  
Walk down the avenue, say  
I'm the boss

*Saquan Short*





*Marcantony Pierce*

## Full Moon

One dry night the first son was  
 Afraid of water and was afraid of dogs  
 Then they say I light up like a light bulb  
 I become kindness—I walk through a door  
 That is not closed and see nothing else  
 But road—I threatened my Mom that I  
 Would run away  
 Sometimes I would wake up with fur on my neck

*Morgen Bass*



## Life

I don't know poetry  
 I learned how to write in critical condition  
 I'm bored so I'm not gonna listen  
 Sitting here thinking and wishing  
 Poetry was not a gift  
 I'm at home now, needing a lift  
 Scared, wow, so frightening  
 Hoping one day I get my license

*Elijah Douglas*

## Stinky Story

I heard that somebody's children are  
 afraid of water—that their Grandmother  
 smells like bear and dead bird  
 they smelled like they knew death and  
 had a book bag break her back  
 She sat up all night & day with a box of light bulbs  
 beneath her arms—I believe the story  
 because it was a hot season that I heard from  
 a pine tree with a big tent behind her house  
 so now, that bone in her hip strains to heal the fracture

*Jamaree Martin*



*Jaleel Rush*

## Imagination

I saw Imagination  
he was tall  
brown skinned with blue eyes  
had dreads that go from 3 inches long  
to out the door  
Imagination comes into writing club every day  
and hangs out with everyone  
but he likes me the best

*Shanay Lesane*

## Kevin Franks

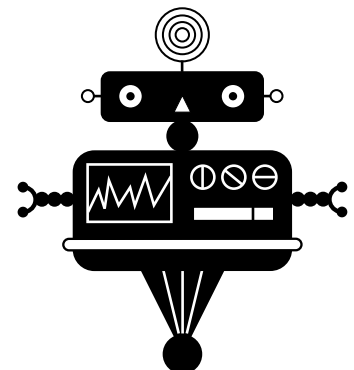
I come from a long line hollowed out  
on a dry night—The first son in a line  
Of someone else's children  
Hungry and afraid of the elderly and the new dead  
My mother said she would take me wherever  
I wanted to go—It was dark enough  
to bury myself.

*Kevin Franks*

## Glowing New Day

I come from a long line with a box of light bulbs  
Fractured in my hand as I wake up in the middle of  
The country along a black rock on a hot season  
Drinking beer and reading a hard back book on  
The roots of a tree as I get struck by lightning  
I run to my tented housed to grab my weapon  
Of nails and glass as I run away to play basketball  
And sweat in the hollow on a dry night

*Gregory Nickens*





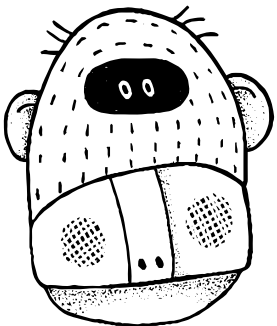


*l-r: Christa Madikaegbu, Vincent Wingfield,  
Arman Thornton, Marcantony Pierce*

## Snobbery

Snobbery is a stuck up person that doesn't  
care about anything.  
Snobbery is a dust devil living under the ground.  
Snobbery is a kid-less person.  
Snobbery is the loneliest person in the world.  
Snobbery is a human with a lot of courage.  
Snobbery is a reflection of a white wave.

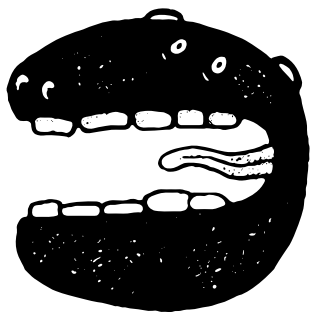
*Shaki Knight*



## Life

I have the good looks of my father and the  
hidden mind like my mother—I have a glow like  
my cousin and loyalty like my brother  
I have the boldness like my aunt, but I also have  
the struggles like an unopened window.  
I'm just like everyone, but we don't have to have  
the window closed—if we open it, we realize  
life will get better.

*Na'jee Ferguson*



## Entangled Words

They say I climbed to the roof  
Afraid of dogs without ethos  
Afraid of hunger and stupidity  
When I threatened to run away  
With a box of light bulbs beneath  
My arm—I come from a line of  
Someone else's children  
I come from hard back books  
And tents leading to my mother  
Yesterday I was glowing with no light  
To heal fractures  
I believed all the stories  
Nailed to a pine tree  
From my grandmother

*Ashley Stevenson*

## Yesterday

Yesterday I was nothing but a road  
Heading four ways  
When I threatened to run away  
My mother said she would take me  
Wherever I wanted to go  
I come blessed with kindness, like  
A grandmother from the new dead  
I woke up in the middle of the night  
With fur on my neck, like a black rock  
I'm from the hot season as if I had never been born

*A'quise Thomas*



*l-r: Chase Stroman,  
McKenzie Stroman*

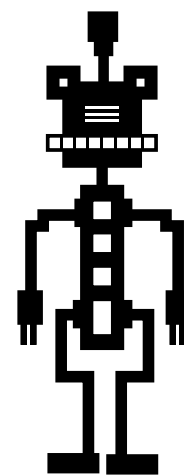
## Black President

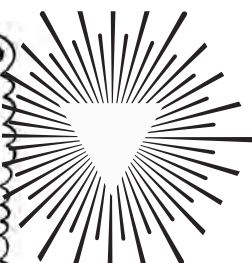
Oh, Obama is the first  
Black President  
of history.

At breakfast my family  
eats waffles with cream and  
grits and bacon.

So I eat breakfast and it  
was a trick, but I am still  
home, still hungry.

*Arnold Herring*



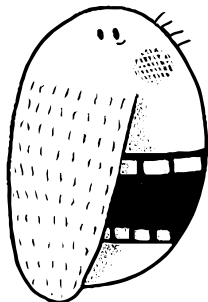


*l-r: Jayden Gray, Jahir Gray, Marcantony Pierce, Armani Thornton, Christa Madikaegbu, Arman Thornton*

## Martin Luther King Jr.

Born into a world knotted up,  
 He counts birds under the evening  
 sun.  
 He forgets his name until he realizes he's  
 a king.  
 He's narrowing down what should happen next  
 At breakfast he thinks quick,  
 the flick of the wrist burns anger like a stone to  
 a stick.  
 Just for a second a slow collapse of words  
 "I have a dream that one day,"  
 It changed a lot through time

*Renita Williams*



## Prediction and Contradiction

Everybody knows that whenever you  
 sit still, it makes people go insane.

The opposite of skipping class would be  
 galloping the hallways. And some people

be fighting.

Some kids don't listen to teachers.

Because if that was respectful, we'd be  
 preachers.

*Arnold Herring*



## Collision

I land on the sun  
 I burn up on the moon  
 I freeze on the sun  
 The moon is so bright  
 The sun is so dark  
 The moon is a star  
 The sun is a heavenly body

*Arman Thornton*



*LaBrea Carter*

## When You Are Young/Old

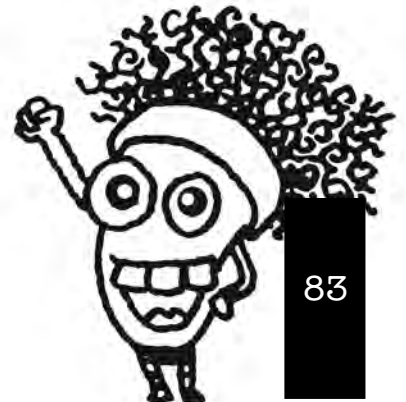
Young people like cool new cars  
 Old people like classic cars  
 Old people like classic music and say it's good  
 Young people can go fast  
 Old people go really slow like koalas  
 Young people go to sleep slowly  
 They play their games until 12 or 1  
 Old people go to sleep in a snap  
 Young people don't remember nothing  
 They are not as smart  
 Old people remember everything  
 Back to the beginning of time  
 When baby Jesus was born  
 I would rather be old  
 My brain explodes like a volcano

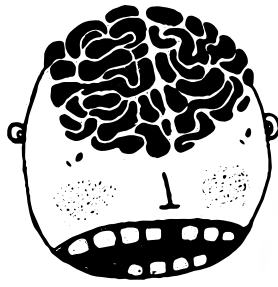
*Arman Thornton*

## What Lasts

Chicken lasts for half a minute  
 Life does not last forever  
 Earth lasts until somebody presses  
 the button to blow it up  
 Family lasts until they die  
 even when you argue with  
 them, they're still family  
 Slavery does not last  
 we already broke it  
 Love lasts forever  
 like I love my family  
 even if you don't show it.

*Arman Thornton*





## Dancing

A power line falls  
as I spin around, boxes of leaves  
remind you of a ballerina.  
Spotted by a sharp light  
I tripped just for a second  
It was only a trick.  
I faced the camera  
to pose for a picture.  
She leans across to  
show first one shoe  
then the next  
tiptoeing, singing songs.

*Shanay Lesane*

## Opposites

Everybody thinks I'm mean  
Being nice  
My whisper sounds like a scream  
I'm hungry and full  
I remember to forget the unknown  
Sometimes it's hard to listen, but easy  
My poem turned into a short story

*Shanay Lesane*



*Secret Campbell*

## One day

One day I was sleeping  
and my back did not feel the same  
and it was weird  
I thought it was the way I was sleeping  
but a few minutes later  
I looked in the window  
to see if someone was inside  
but I saw my reflection in the window  
and I saw a wing so I did not tell no one  
it was growing at a fast pace  
so I found a high place to jump so I jumped...  
then

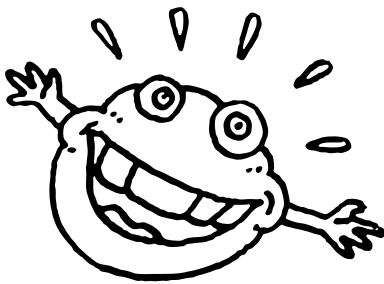
I

did

not

fall to my death, I flew.  
I was amazed. A few months  
later I told my family I can fly  
and found out my parents know  
all about it, and they can fly too.

*Na'jee Ferguson*



## Current Feelings

Angry, mad, frustrated  
Just want to punch someone  
So much tension  
Throw a chair, a box, or rocks  
Immediately switched up on me  
I feel so separated  
No friends  
No one to have my back  
Have you ever lost yourself  
to get what you want?  
Well I have  
I realized I'm in this alone  
Missing the breathless laughter  
the steady playing  
and volcano of happiness

*Shanay Lesane*



*Aniyah Stevenson*

## Unexpected Darkness

My gaze is unexpected darkness  
It is my custom to fight back  
Swinging to defeat  
And sometimes kicking and biting  
I'm very good at connecting punches  
I'm capable of ancient creations

I believe in myself  
Because of my triumph  
The world wasn't made for unremembered fights  
I have no regrets  
If I speak of justice it's not because  
It's negative, but because it's tranquil.

To love is to suffer unwittingly.

*Shanay Lesane*

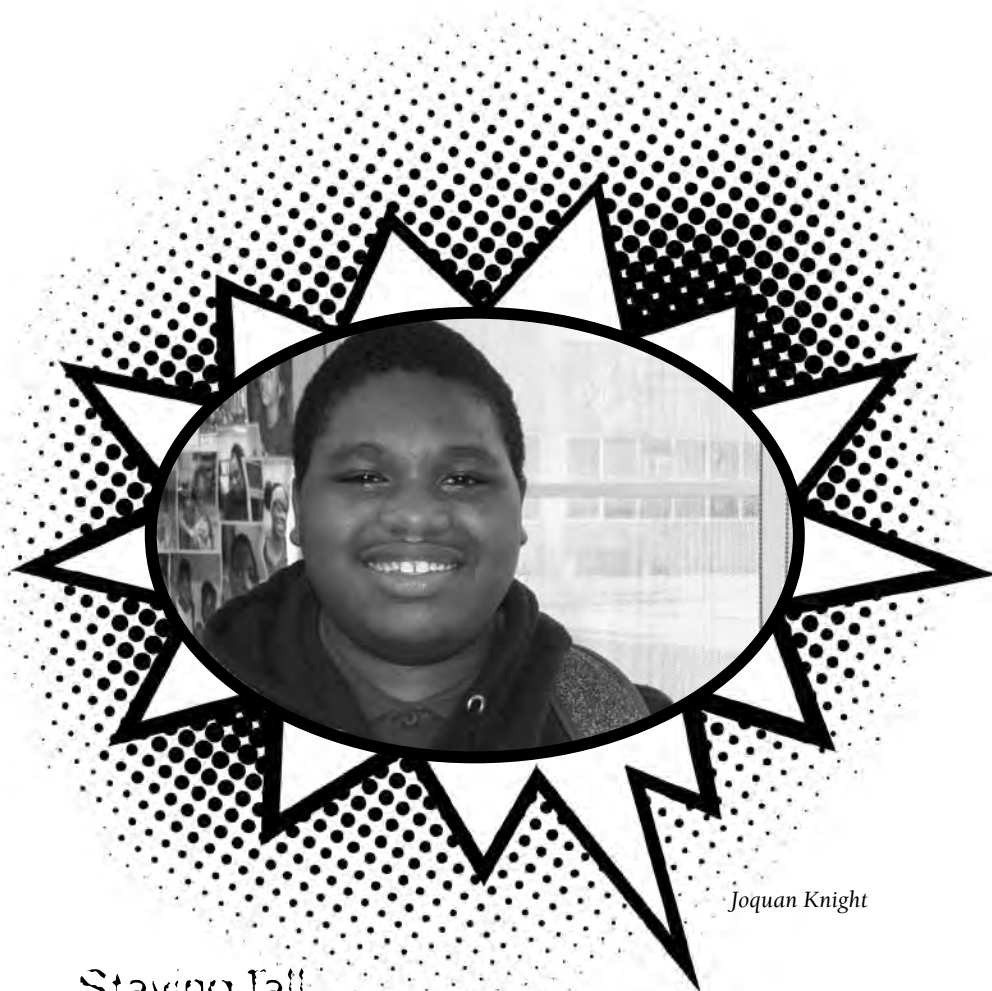
## Hopeful

When I feel hopeful  
My head starts to bow  
and then my legs go down  
My hands start to get in a near position  
then my face starts to come down.  
When people see me do this,  
they ask if I am praying  
I say no, I am hoping  
and they just go away after that.  
And when I feel like this,  
this is what my body does.

*Na'jee Ferguson*







*Joquan Knight*

## Staying Tall

I want to stay a warrior  
 I want to be truthful to my mother  
 I want to stay tall, because I have a big appetite  
 I will always be fresh and clean  
 I will never be betrayed by family or friends  
 Because I won't say nothing at all  
 Never told a lie but seem to be a liar  
 I hate the rain, but I love the sunshine  
 it brings, after a storm.

*Kevin Franks*



## Opposite Opinion

Anger is happiness  
 Hungry is not hungry  
 Whisper is being loud  
 Remembered is unremembered  
 Gentle is being mean  
 Fighting is talking  
 Rain is water  
 Smooth is hard  
 Window is a door  
 Ancient is young  
 House is school  
 Roots are boots  
 Destroy my phone  
 Hidden from mom  
 Soul food everywhere

*Marcantony Pierce*

## What Old People Don't Know

First of all  
 I read your poem talking  
 about us young folks  
 and what we don't know,  
 what we're not talking about.  
 It made me mad as red.  
 You want to make it seem like you know everything  
 but you don't.  
 I know someone that does—God.  
 God is everything to me  
 but as for you old people  
 don't get it twisted,  
 When you talk about us young folks  
 you're talking about the one  
 and only Marcantony

*Marcantony Pierce*





*Armani Thornton*

## 31 Flavors

Strawberry, vanilla, chocolate, chicken,  
beef.

All kinds of flavors that make up me

Chocolate, for my skin,  
soft and smooth it may be.

I shimmer like diamonds,  
too bright to see.

Chicken for my tenderness  
not salty or dry

catch me in the summer

I'm even better fried.

Vanilla for my eyes  
dark brown is the shade.

Creamy and smooth is how they're  
made.

Strawberry for my sweetness,

I have soft spots too.

Even though I'm sweet

I'm a little bruised.

Although this isn't thirty-one

I'm not the one to blame.

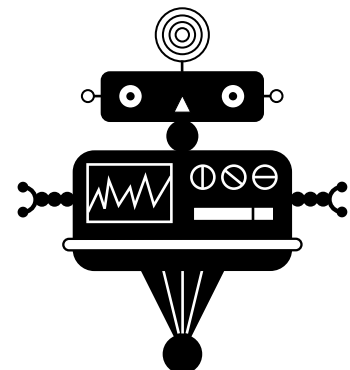
I just have too many flavors,  
too many to name.

*Daizha Chism*

## Shadows + Secrets

I burn the past with all my secrets  
but it also goes into another world  
where tomato vines feed the secrets  
up into autumn with just a whistle  
you can hear a dangerous voice  
that gets swooped up by a put-outer  
that is hurtful enough  
you won't be able to hear a voice  
with a shadow  
he forgets my name with every grief  
we go through  
comes passion and violence  
thrown like a stone  
through the church window

*Isaiah Hunter*



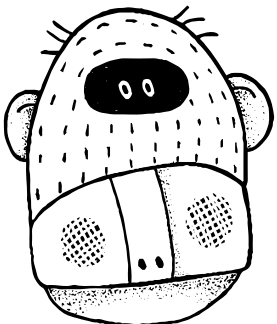


*l-r: Jenga champion Joquan Knight and the vanquished Patrick Washington*

## Transformation

All of a sudden, I can hover.  
 The hummingbird can sing a song to people.  
 A hummingbird has a short beak,  
 the neck is bright pink, the feathers are light blue.  
 Hummingbirds have long skinny tongues.  
 Hummingbirds are faster than a cheetah.  
 Did you know, a hummingbird  
 can sleep for twenty minutes?  
 Did you know a hummingbird can  
 stay alive for five years?

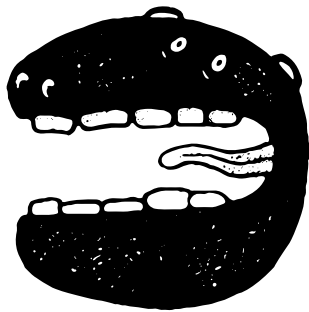
*Shaki Knight*



## The Mad Song (Part 2)

They look mean, you look buff, just to pretend  
 when you got whooped it was a disappointment,  
 when you hit with a fierce blow,  
 you went down, now that was a show,  
 just because you have nice clothes on,  
 I will knock you out and throw you out the  
 window, then I'll knock you out of existence  
 and make you decay, when you die  
 your death will be a mystery, no priest,  
 casket or condolence will appear,  
 you'll be knocked out so badly, no one  
 will know you were here, and last but  
 not least, I will knock you out so bad,  
 I'll knock you off the face of the earth, causing  
 your parents to have regrets of your birth.

*Isaiah Hunter*



911

I am in the kitchen  
I burn the past  
just like my hand.  
My hand was burning like the evening sun.  
My mom called 911.  
Since I'm black  
the ambulance was a no-show.

*Mavelli Jones*

Ninja

Whirling around in the air  
They hit you so hard you forget your name  
They use weapons you've never seen  
Move around so fast you believe in Flash  
They stay in the shadows  
to keep their identity safe

*Saebian McKnight*

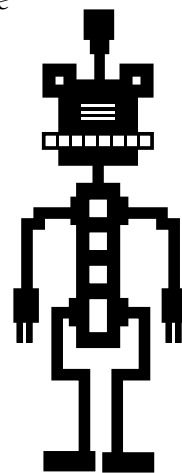


*Destiny Rhodes*

Fire

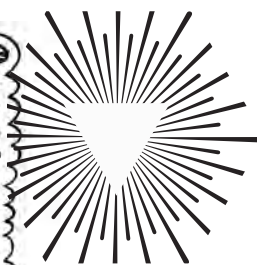
Fire, fire, fire  
You cannot destroy  
its desire, but its desire is to destroy you  
burn you, kill you, or destroy your image  
fire, fire, fire  
its boundless heat has no feelings  
but you will feel it  
Its wrath will let you hear  
your blood spilling  
your skin sizzling—  
you're grilled. You realize  
you're in hell.

*Mavelli Jones*





*l-r: Daizha Chism, Isaiah White*



## Letting Go

I'm happiness on Earth  
knowing that beauty is  
beautiful makes anger

like open windows that  
goodness is good  
makes remembered

Depend on each other;  
gentle note and voice  
make the no window  
together; before and  
after follow each  
other

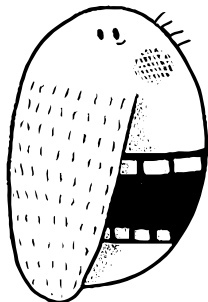
To bear and not  
trees to own;  
to act and not  
roots not lay  
claim; to do the  
work and let it go;  
destroy satisfied for  
just letting it go  
shout is what makes  
it stay.

*Saquan Short*

## Young People

Young people can do somersaults and older people can't  
Young people can go breathless longer than older people  
Young people can go to the NBA Finals and older people can't  
Young people cause more disturbance than older people  
I would rather be young, because when you're old  
You can't move quick and do exciting stuff  
Young people can do more extreme stuff, like  
Going hiking or rock climbing  
Young people have more imagination than older people  
Young people can actually remember what happened yesterday  
And older people can't  
Young people can do more impossible stuff than older people  
I would rather be young, because when you're young  
You're always hyped and not asleep  
And you don't have to worry about being close to death

*Saebian McKnight*





## Different World

Two days ago a half-man half-horse  
came into my room

It went into my closet

I followed it and it was gone

As I kept on going I fell in snow

It was a whole different world

As I walked through something was  
running in the woods

I looked all through the woods  
and I didn't see nothing

I turned around and a wolf jumped  
on me and bit my face

But I was still alive

My mother called me for dinner  
and I told her to look at my face

She said, nothing's wrong with your face

I just started crying

*Richard Walston*

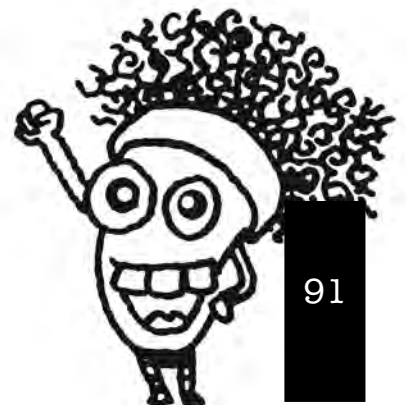


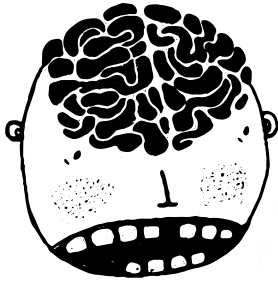
*Daizha Chism*

## Unexpected Sunset

I walk away from fights because they are bad  
Every time I beat somebody I feel sad  
I defeat that person and darkness starts to form  
Then I look in the sky and say one word,  
The sky turns golden.  
It was an unexpected sunset,  
I woke up and noticed that it was all a dream,  
Opened up the window, looked at the sky  
And it was green, I asked myself  
What's wrong with the sky?  
I blinked one time and I was woke.

*Richard Walston*





## Being Young

It's because you are so old  
people do not understand.

But we are the young people  
uncompromised forever.

Young people as the forgotten  
rivers, inexhaustible into  
the earth.

Surely we, whirling, know  
what you do not know.

*Saquan Short*



*Jailyn Smith*

## Above the Clouds

Catch the light, it's such a beautiful sight  
She counts birds in the sky as they fly by  
The clouds whirl around all downtown  
This past winter in school I'm a winner  
The sky is blue while I make stew  
and the clouds are wet

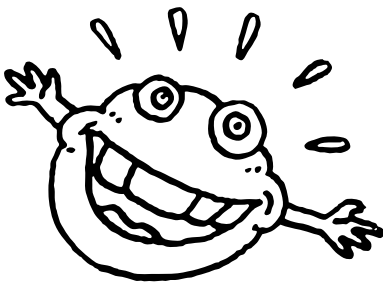
*DeMarco Randolph*

## Mysterious Poem

*(after Terrance Hayes)*

I was in midair  
my bones were entangled,  
I have light bulbs glowing like ideas,  
me sweating like beer,  
afraid of fractures  
and the elderly also,  
the act of kindness,  
like a bird with no expression  
the dogs with ethos are kind  
and blessed wherever  
I wanted to go,  
just like the rest.

*DeMarco Randolph*





## Reflection

I'm a reflection  
such a big mouth  
and now flutter

A few lonely hours ago  
you slept in traffic  
skin jack-o-lanterns  
now

Don't swoop, even try to explain;  
Racing wind, even tonight the  
trillion eyed shadow looks  
at me.

Because you're supersonic  
such a plummet mouth  
and energy, your eyes  
glow ecstatic

*Saquan Short*



*Joquan Knight*

## All About What Kids Do

Kids getting on the bus  
Kids getting on the bus to go to school  
Kids twirl around  
What kids do on the bus  
They're beautiful like the rainbow  
Kids jump  
Kids play too much  
They are funny but  
Sometimes they can be mean

*A'Quise Thomas*

## Life of Garbage

I'm the garbage can and I eat sandwiches  
but eating trash is far better than honey buns  
hotter than the sun, unfinished housework  
that's not done and I don't have a mum.  
I'm a garbage can that don't play in the sand  
can't blow me away with a fan, don't have  
no hands, or play in a band.

*DeMarco Randolph*







*Shannell Jones*

## Run Away

One time I wanted to run away  
 My mom kept insulting me and  
 Kept calling me names  
 So I got mad and I went to my room  
 Locked the door for a while  
 Then my mom came and asked  
 What I wanted, and she apologized  
 And she bought me a lot of stuff  
 And she gave me a kiss

*A'Quise Thomas*



## My Gaze

My gaze is clear as the eye can see  
 It is my custom to observe  
 and destroy negativity  
 And sometimes I regret the  
 creation of a shadow made  
 by the unknown me.  
 And what I see is the  
 arrival of overflowing Love  
 of my Black family.

*Jamel Pettaway*

## Philosophy

My gaze is full of regret.  
 It is my custom to observe  
 my conscious mystery.  
 And sometimes I change  
 the universe's sunset into  
 my own creation.  
 And I'm very good at unexpected  
 trouble that comes my way.  
 I'm capable of making the shadow  
 invisible.  
 I believe in change to destiny  
 but it doesn't exist in my time.

*Demarco Tucker*



## Closet

*(after Terrance Hayes)*

I was nothing to become  
of. They say fractured light  
bulbs gloom from people's  
afraid minds. Hung but  
entangled into the dust  
of the locked door. It  
was shut, closed growing  
from the roots of a half  
chopped tree. As I run away  
from yesterday's broken hip.  
I would take a board  
nailed to my closet door.  
And shoot a weapon of  
kindness into the net. How  
beneath my closet can I  
be?

*Demarco Tucker*

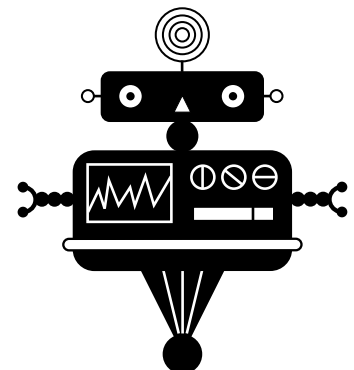


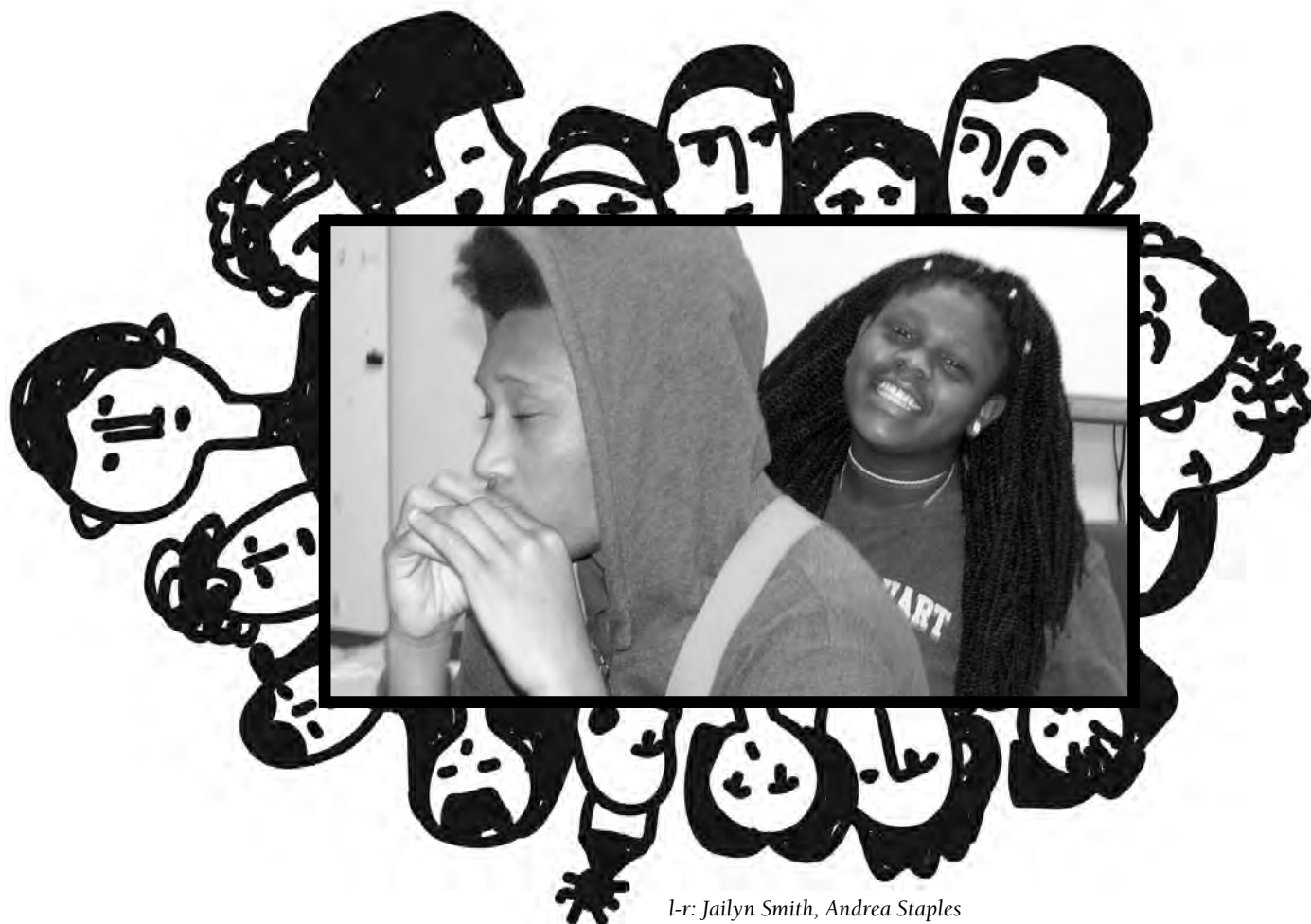
*Gregory Nickens*

## My Philosophy

My gaze on rap is that it's dope  
Mysteries come wit it, and you never know  
It's a lot of people dat need some soap  
But rap will get you money even wif da jokes  
Spittin hot barz and spittin hot rhymes  
And I'm very good at stoppin the time  
I believe the style of rap won't die  
My squad walk in and can't nobody decline  
If I speak up on da beat it gon get killed  
Y'all don't even know da beat gon get illed  
You can take my rhymes but you gon get stealed  
The world was only made for me and my peers

*Mykel Woodbury*



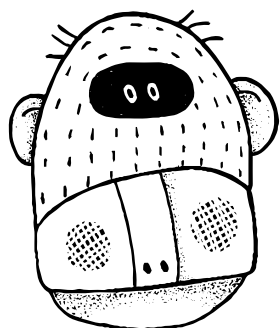


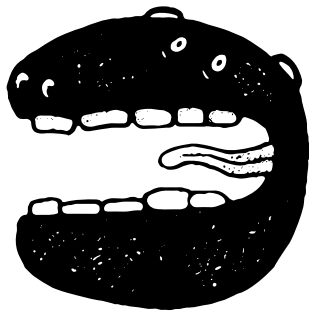
*l-r: Jaily Smith, Andrea Staples*

## Contradictions

I will be happy when Destiny is mad.  
 I will be full when Destiny is hungry.  
 I will whisper when Destiny is talking.  
 I will forget Destiny's name, when Destiny remembers mine.  
 I'm gentle when Destiny is hard.  
 I'm fighting when people are not fighting.  
 It's raining, why is New York dry?  
 Destiny's skin is smooth, why is this other girl's skin hard?  
 My glass is hard, while other people's glass is plastic.  
 I'm ancient while I'm young.  
 Destiny wrote a poem, while I wrote a paragraph.  
 I planted a root that became a plant.  
 I destroyed a school, and mama replaced it.  
 I eat soul food, but Ms. Abbey eats American food.

*Jamaree Martin*





## Destiny

I'm happy, you sad  
I'm mad, you bad  
I'm fly, you dry  
I'm hot, you not  
I'm living, you dying  
I'm crying, you winning  
I'm laughing, you made me cuz you  
choking  
Choking on food you can't swallow  
Ran to a pool I can't follow  
Followed you to the pool  
But I'm still startled

*Destiny Rhodes*

## After School

People all around me, laughing  
At a friend's house, playing the game  
Just for a second we go to the store  
I burn past the dog  
I told him, can you keep a secret?  
Into the stars cause it was night  
When I walk home it's quiet like a stone  
At home inside grandpa's arms

*Wayne Rhodes*

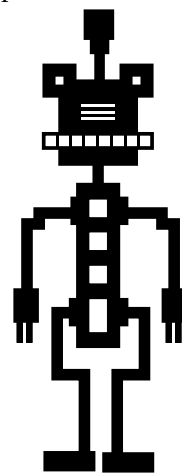


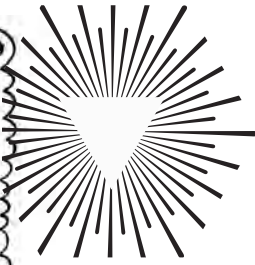
*Isaiah White*

## All About My Spiderbaby

I exploded with spiders  
My body turned into a daddy long legs  
My friend danced his way to the party as a spider  
I saw a bug that talked  
I said hey, and he talked  
The bug led me unto the wizard of bugs  
I asked, could you turn me back human?  
He said yes  
He told me the trick was:  
Crush a bubble, lick an unbroken heart,  
and follow your bumblebee dreams  
I did as he said and suddenly  
I began to change back to my human body  
I was happy  
And I was told never to talk to bugs.

*Destiny Rhodes*



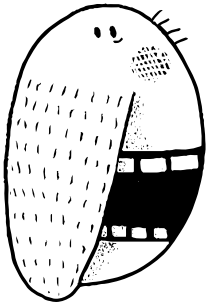


*l-r: Joquan Knight, Andrea Staples, Jayden Gray, Marcantony Pierce, Jahir Gray, Destiny Rhodes, Abbey Chung*

## Come Back

One time I walked away from home  
 I was lonely and in darkness  
 I left because it was darkness  
 I was forbidden to go back  
 and I felt left out  
 I felt I was not loved  
 I couldn't handle the struggle  
 So I came back  
 I felt confused because  
 I didn't know why I left  
 I should have told someone.

*Wayne Rhodes*



## Indestructible

People can hold you down  
 But never beat you down  
 Love is indestructible  
 It can overpower you  
 Like your ego  
 Like a broken leg  
 And like energy  
 It's defenseless like  
 a million ants.

*Wayne Rhodes*

## My Future

First paint the future  
 A basketball star in the hall of fame  
 Remember to use green  
 Use green to paint the feast of money  
 Abandon all bad friends  
 Listen to the important people in my life  
 I want people to witness my good skills

*Wayne Rhodes*



## Unbelievable

I'm riding a motor rat  
When I see traffic, it's crazy  
It's unbelievable, not real  
A gravity dagger  
I'm so fast  
If you try to catch me  
You are trash  
I'm like a buzzing bee  
Mixed with Lambo  
I'm driving on a planet  
Drifting out of the sky

*Wayne Rhodes*

## Giants

It was only a trick  
a trick play  
that the Giants ran in 1998.  
The Giants are good  
Super Bowl bound  
after they win a game  
in the locker room  
they clown.  
On January 7th, 2017  
the Giants lost to Green Bay  
but they thought it was all a dream.  
This past winter  
we had a good run,  
but as we moved on and lost  
we played for nothing.

*Anthony Martin*

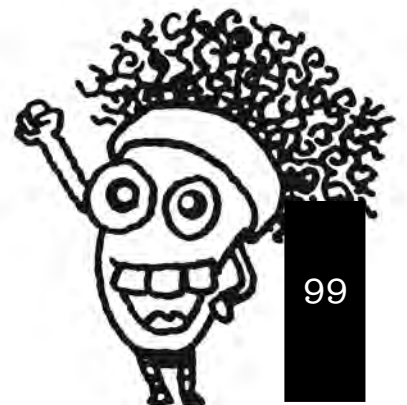


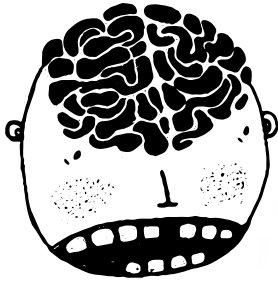
*Troy Chaney*

## Walking Home

Walking home  
I walked past a lady on the phone  
She looked mad  
So I knew she was not glad  
She was making a lot of noise  
I think that lady was screaming  
I think she was screaming at a kid  
She was having a bad time  
It looked like she was having a rage time  
Walking home I knew it wasn't great  
But all night long I was awake

*Wayne Rhodes*





## Proud

My face when I'm proud is happy  
 My hands are open and resting  
 I relate to a peacock  
 People say why are you so happy  
 I walk with confidence  
 I hold my body up and I'm confident.

*Anthony Martin*



*Daizha Chism*

## Who Is A Poet?

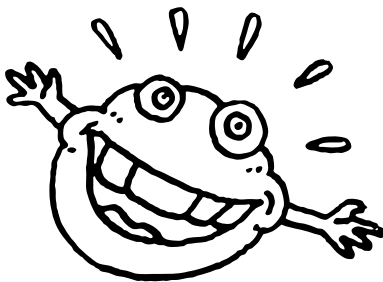
A poet is an athlete.  
 A poet can be anyone  
 all you have to do is  
 speak your mind.  
 A poet doesn't have blood  
 in his veins, he has ink.  
 Never invade a poet's space  
 it will be thunder.  
 Poets are the tower of a castle.  
 A poet is everybody.

*Anthony Martin*

## What Is Going On?

I woke up early, seen a cat, dog  
 I chased it around the house then  
 it hopped out the window  
 I was still chasing it but I don't know why  
 when I looked up Mars was there  
 The water turned white  
 Cars began to fly  
 Animals were mutated  
 I began to hear a song  
 but it was very low  
 Something was falling out the sky  
 but it wasn't snow.

*Anthony Martin*





## Destroyed

When things get destroyed  
you maybe won't get them back.  
When you look over your shoulder  
someone has your back.  
That's friendship.  
Most friendships never  
get broken.  
Most friendships don't  
get destroyed.  
That's how much they bond.  
When you overpower a friendship  
that's how they break.  
Your friendship should be fragile  
like a glass plate.

*Anthony Martin*



*Andrea Staples*

## Surprise

I walk away from the people  
that betray me, that hate me,  
that are just so disrespectful  
to others. I walk away from haze,  
I hate haze. I walk away  
from fiery walls of smoke,  
everywhere it's hard to breathe,  
all I smell is burnt crispy treats.  
I walk away from loneliness  
because it's sad, but boring.  
I run away from storms,  
thunder and lightning everywhere.  
It's kind of scary, because of  
weird people. I follow everything  
I am supposed to. I follow my dreams  
and no one can tell me otherwise.

*Armani Thornton*

## Hurricane

After the thunderstorm  
I come out with the blink of an eye  
A power line falls when I come around  
I'm slanting roofs in my neighborhood  
When the evening sun rises I fade away

*Armani Thornton*





*Armani Thornton*

## Weird

*(after Terrance Hayes)*

I come from a long line of dirt.  
 Afraid of running away from a weapon  
 My mother said I threatened nothing  
 But a paved road heading four ways.  
 Stupidity is afraid of expressions of kindness.  
 A pine tree is not like a river.  
 A line of gods awakened.

*Armani Thornton*



## Anger! (The Real Anger!)

Happiness is found when you are happy  
 Happiness is forgotten until you get happy  
 Filled with happiness and fun  
 Silkworms are the most beautiful  
 insects in the world.  
 The nicest kids in the world love to help me.  
 I'm going to be the nicest girl in the world.

*Armani Thornton*

## I.B.I.

I believe I will make a good world  
 and a life for people.

If I speak of god I will see him  
 out my window.

The world wasn't made bad  
 but people fixed it and now  
 they live in this world called Earth.

Sometimes the world breaks up  
 and things change.

*Dorian Buckner*



## Stupidity

*after Terrance Hayes*

I will not wait to become  
a bird dark enough  
to bury itself in midair  
flying over everybody  
that hated on you  
Just look at them with despair  
knowing that it's only  
a few people who care,  
that's stupidity,  
making people go on a killing spree  
seeing people get shot  
without receiving a master's degree  
it's stupidity,  
people robbing you,  
no matter what city  
it's not just the adults  
but also the kiddies...  
kiddos, kids, there we go.  
I guess I'm just a lucky so and so,  
smart but never show  
stupidity

*Jailyn Smith*

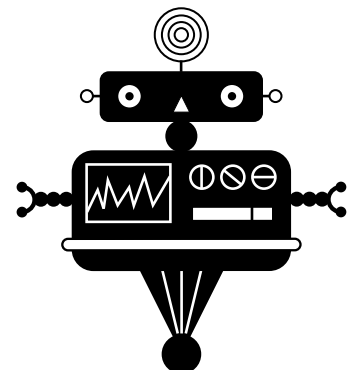


*Arman Thornton*

## The Unknown

My gaze is at a distance  
Even though I'm self-sufficient  
It is my custom to walk in a mystery  
This poem is going to go down in history  
and sometimes I observe the things around me  
and what I see is that the world don't revolve  
around you nor me, but us  
And I'm very good at stuff  
I'm capable even though I don't look tough  
Like a baby who was just born  
Like an eagle, y'all on the ground and I'm soaring  
I shine brighter than diamonds and pearls  
Knowing that now this is Big Jae's world

*Jailyn Smith*



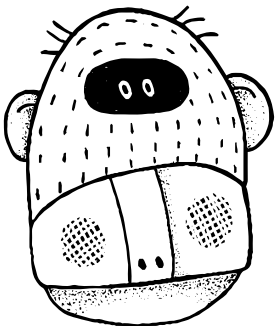


*l-r: Andrea Staples, Jayden Gray, Destiny Rhodes*

## Kindness

*(after Terrance Hayes)*

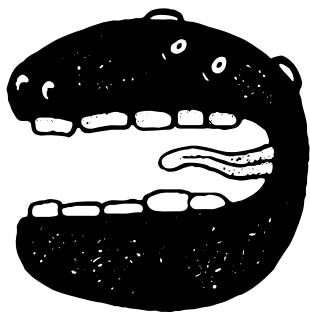
He was a lonely child in a dry night  
 first son of someone else's children  
 afraid of shallow things such as  
 water closets, weapons, & hunger  
 with stupidity, can't relate with elderly  
 or new dead, climbing through obstacles  
 hearing howls sent from all night & day  
 lights leading to my mother from  
 through the night, do you remember  
 her fractured bones, coming from the dirt  
 road leading to the paved one,  
 will not return as if not born, will not  
 be a bird to bury in midair, where did  
 you bury my dog, in what tree  
 are the bones entangled, come blessed  
 like god changing his mind, kindness  
 mother said would take me  
 wherever I wanted to go.



## What is Home?

Paint home, the  
 feeling at home.  
 What are your thoughts?  
 Home is more than  
 a house, a dark hole  
 or a place to relieve stress.  
 Keep a memory of  
 it. How do you paint  
 home? The same way  
 you think of it. If  
 family is there then  
 that's home, the power  
 to feel what you feel.  
 You own it. You  
 can put everyone  
 out.

*Cameron Deboise*



*Myrai Jones*

## Night

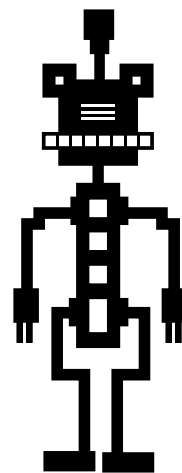
I was up all night  
Afraid of how my life might end  
Will I die with no love  
Or will I die knowing I had a friend?

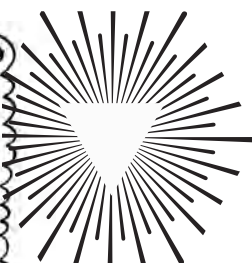
Never once had a father  
so I chose the wrong path on my own  
I did have a cousin  
But he sang the song in the same tone

I chose to play ball  
So I can make it out  
But I did wrong so much  
When people hear my name they don't even know  
what it's about

This isn't my life  
But I'm just saying  
You will never know  
Who might grow up not being a man.

*Robert Green*



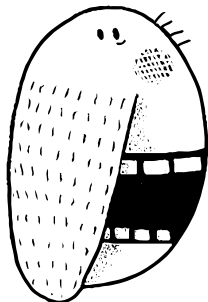


*l-r: Khiddell White,  
Wayne Rhodes,  
Richard Walston,  
DeMarco Randolph,  
Anthony Martin*

## Opposition is Better!

There is always a force or signature within the universe. But for every force in the universe, there is an equal and an opposite. For every matter, an anti-matter. Everyone holy, someone demonic. Have a dream house, looks like someone copied that one. Favorite amusement park? Re-new that idea. Greatest gaming weapon? Re-skin it. You get what I mean, there's guys and gals out in this crazy mixed-up world who are just being copy-cats. But besides, I can do that too... BETTERRRRRRRRRRRR!!!!

Troy Chaney



## Blocking

What does a wall do?  
It just blocks a path in your way  
I don't care who built the wall,  
Imma bring it down.  
That brings me to something  
else, pros and cons.  
It likes being a huge pain  
because you can't go  
through it. But you can  
bring it down with a  
wrecking ball, a huge  
hammer or a jackhammer.  
It's very weak to all of that.  
You can even say, "It might  
brick on ya!" Eh! Ehhh!

Troy Chaney



## Nervous?

I'm shaking, head to toe  
 leave me out or  
 leave me alone  
 Talking despite  
 Me and joy, we're not alike  
 Think hard or  
 think proud  
 People with me can't think aloud  
 Joy is off but I'm no fear  
 Most people have me for the year  
 I'm not furious so I'm...

*Cameron Deboise*

## B.R.A.I.N.

B.irth of a thought, able to create  
 the spark for the unit.

R.etroforming the unit, creating the  
 entity of its structure.

A.cknowledge the information given to  
 the brain, to use it in life's problems.

I.nformatize the knowledge, to create  
 more thoughts and form them to more.

N.ow for the finish, use your  
 ability to help the world become  
 a better place for all.

*Troy Chaney*

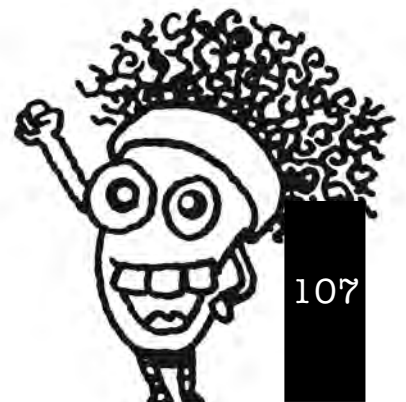


*Christa Madikaegbu*

## Rainbow

If I describe how a rainbow  
 can become your feelings and thoughts,  
 I can describe it in six ways.  
 Red, your own mini  
 volcano of anger.  
 Orange, an earthquake  
 of agitation.  
 Yellow, a mini sun  
 of happiness.  
 Green, your grassland of peace  
 and sense of calm.  
 Blue, your lagoon  
 of tears and sadness.  
 And purple, your twitchy  
 and crazy soul.

*Troy Chaney*







## Miscellaneous Impossibility

All of a sudden, these miscellaneous  
events kinda happened. When you jump  
you can fly. When you walk, you question  
why. When you turn, you can slide. And  
when you holler, you can glide.

The stroke of midnight,  
look in the mirror, self-consciousness.

You get stronger every night.  
Mesmerizing at sight.

Metamorphic, microscopic,  
Toss the topic, miscellaneously  
I'm anthropomorphic.

*Jayden Gray*



*Tyler Parrish*

## The Old, The Young, and Ms. Nancy

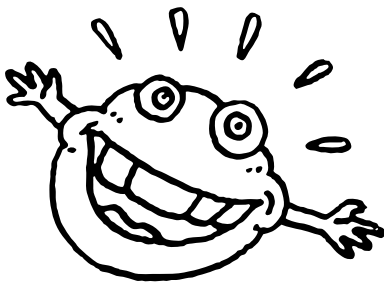
You are never too young to be old,  
You are never too old to be young,  
And you are never too old to be Ms. Nancy.  
Uncompromised, you are never too young to be fancy.

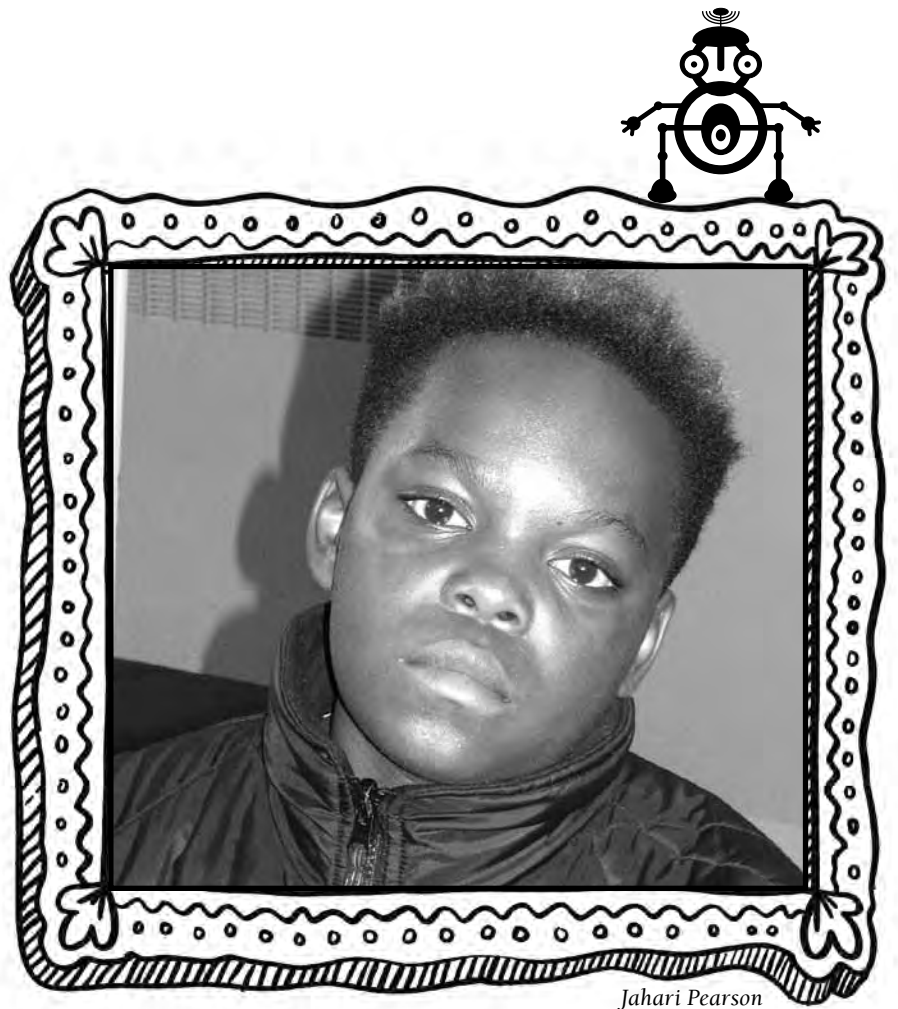
If young Dolph made it to falsehood,  
The likelihood would be the oldies into newbies,  
If you want that on your conscience, look  
for momentum, Confucius.

You old people say get off my lawn,  
We kids say after dawn.  
Methodical language, deaf vanquishes  
as we anguish with advantage.

The Young and the Ageless, or the  
Old and the Restless. Either option you're  
helpless. The elderly know this. You are  
never too young to fly. And you are never  
too old to question why.

*Jayden Gray*





Jahari Pearson

## Memory of Remembering the Reminiscence

Have you ever felt like you felt unnoticed  
or been forgotten? Well let me tell you the  
memory I've had, us being forgotten, left out  
of what the girls tell our friends.

It never ends! Attention, the recognition,  
outer dimension, the cosmology constellation  
from the ground up, but can't shut up.

Another memory I've had is being here in  
Writing Club, surrounded by the people I love.  
I may hate school, but I do love Writing Club.  
Like it's childhood, but the future world.

The best memory worth reminiscing is us  
hanging out. The worst is a school  
with fakes and bluffs. Go get that on  
your conscience now, you maroons.

Jayden Gray





## The Whole Picture

First of all, out of all the seasons, the years, the months, the weeks and the days, it's just one bizarre episode after another.

We all have our fondest memories from our past, present, and the future. In statue, from childhood reminiscence to laid back adolescence to memory lane.

We win some, we lose some, cheaper by the dozen. The longest memory of all time is us friends hanging out like Good Times. Forget the bad times.

All's fair in love and war, but one you shall never forget. You ruined our yesterday, the Past. You ruin our evening and morning, the Present. And if you ruin our good times, we'll ruin your future.

*Jayden Gray*



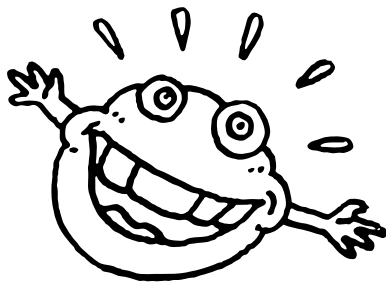
*DeMarco Randolph*

## Tattoo 2 Twinz

Riding down on my motorcycle dirt bike, about to take flight, I wonder at night. Seagulls, is this legal? With my knuckles tattooed with the right saying "COOL" and the left saying "TWINZ" What does that all mean? We win, that's how it's been.

Welcome to Life vs Death, minus the breath. Gold T chains, Denim Jackets and jeans, gloves and boots black. Twins are back, jack! It's the little things that don't last. Broken voices, blast from the past. Tatooless emerges ruthless. Highlights lasts in spotlights. Above all things that last, it's not the last life fast, ignore the past, to future yonder. It's all infinity and beyond.

*Jayden Gray*





*l-r: Marcantony Pierce,  
Arman Thornton,  
Christa Madikaegbu*



## The President of Imperviousness

I am the invincible. I am the invulnerable!  
Say goodbye to the Queen of No! and say  
hello to the King of Yes! I hear voices in  
my head, there is no rest, they cancel me,  
it'll be a pest.

I'm the President of Imperviousness,  
better known as the Ultimate Lifeform.  
Smarter like Obama, better than Donald Trump  
the know-it-all louse, if you step out of line,  
you gonna get housed.

In the Cool Kids Utopia, I make the  
rules of promotional jurisdiction.  
Yes to music  
Yes to phones  
Yes to video games and yes to no school.

We're the Kids of America of this Yes!  
Movement! From Hollywood to LA,  
Jacksonville, Mississippi to California, Texas.  
From triumphant Saints Row to Galaxy Wars  
Oppress. The Kids of America will rule with  
an iron fist.

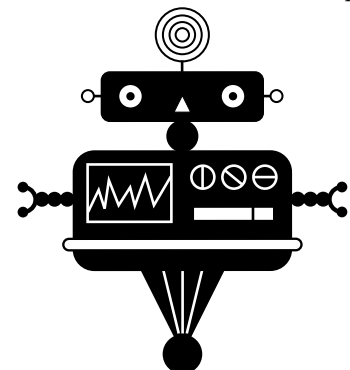
*Jayden Gray*

## Philosophy vs. Conspiracy

My gaze is as clear as the nighttime  
atmosphere. It is my custom to  
bust them to keep them from here  
I have a philosophy that no matter  
how bad things turn out, they will  
always turn good in the end. Conspiracy  
theory proves they will die like Big Ben.  
You can't judge a book by its cover. And  
sometimes talk crap about another.

What I see? I see eat, sleep, conquer  
defeat in my future, you know? But heck  
you know what they say, YOLO. As in you  
only live once. But you know, we ain't  
the dumbest of the bunch. Because of  
abstract thought. Not because of raindrop  
top drop. To love is to know when to stop.

*Jayden Gray*



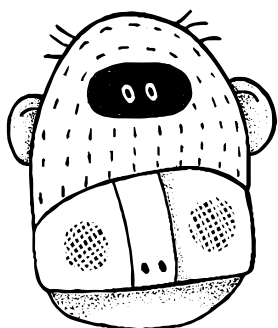


*l-r: Khiddell White, Anthony Martin, Wayne Rhodes*

## My Walks

I walk away from doubt of the emotions I see,  
 weeping children crying under a stone.  
 I walk away from the grieving  
 and replace it with hope.  
 I follow when the wind stops moving  
 you can hear like a moving of boots  
 but I'm also in a dust of hidden memories.  
 I walk away until the nightfall of silence.  
 I follow the souls of emptiness.

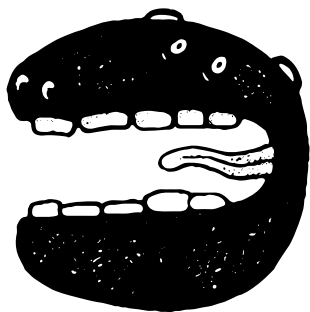
*Christina Cook*



## Changes I See

Things that change over time  
 the past changes through life  
 what else changes?  
 Our creation changes to what we see  
 Our voices change to our moods  
 As a flower changes its creation  
 An artist changes the view  
 of how we want to see things  
 A disappointment becomes happy and glorious  
 A sarcastic wittiment can turn into a joke  
 Or expressions of pain can turn into suffering  
 A shadow could be destiny or chance.  
 An unremembered quote can be  
 your favorite words to say.

*Christina Cook*



## Contraprediction?

Anger is joy, hungry is fed up when  
whisper is noisy to the power of ten.  
Remembered is amnesia, gentle is  
frictionless synesthesia.

Fight is pacifist, out rain is  
wistless mistfulness. Smooth move  
= groovy moods. Hidden = sound,  
lost = found.

Corrupted data lost and abound.  
Ancient ruins, fast and around.  
Destroy the build, if roots  
were stilts.

Icebreaker, poison, fire emblem  
antidote. Venom sacrifice makes  
the life of vice. To live is to die  
love is to learn. Why not once,  
but thrice.

*Jayden Gray*

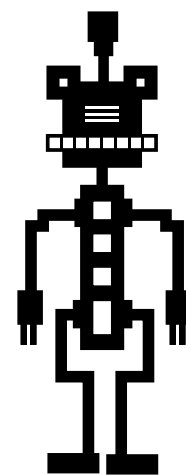


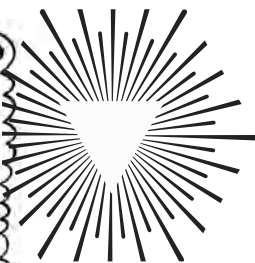
*Saquan Short*

## As I Walk Away

I walk away  
into the sweet,  
silent darkness of the night  
with a scar of regret.  
If you follow me, you'll  
be forever unknown  
to me, a person only  
knowing to deceive.  
An overflowing disappointment  
locks itself into my soul  
with only you forever with the blame.  
As I walk away  
with no farewell to you  
a gleaming happiness fades  
into my soul.

*Christa Madikaegbu*

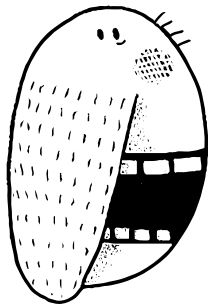




*l-r: Marquell Lewis, TyJuan Hogan, Justin Dodds*

## Wow We Are Too Old to be Talking About This

I can't speak for young people  
 I am old  
 I can't be hype for the excitement  
 I'm too old,  
 I could break a hip.  
 When we rock on to music  
 we move our heads back and forth  
 we think we are dying.  
 We young people can hear the forest  
 We old people need a hearing aid  
 We young people feel expressions  
 and are happy  
 We old people can't feel expression  
 and we are always bitter.  
 We young people can hear better  
 than the old  
 We old people need to yell  
 to hear what you say  
 When all we said  
 was "Hi."



*Christina Cook*

## Friends of Contradictions

You and I are like fire and ice.  
 Your joy is a changing flame,  
 yet mine is always the same.  
 You say the window is open  
 but the window isn't there.  
 Your beauty is class  
 while I'm fragile glass.  
 Yet the disturbances  
 never last, and pain  
 is abstract.  
 We saw the world together  
 but we've never been outside.  
 We are just two contradictory beings,  
 you and I.

*Christa Madikaegbu*





## Creation At Hand

I'm curious to create  
but it's a struggle  
to create a mirror  
that only shows a  
reflection of desire.  
A blue-green shadow  
made into a crystal  
spirals into a moonlight  
I created.  
It feels like I'm the  
creating player  
from Minecraft.  
Now life's a living game.

If infinite creation was energy  
I would be full of it. But why  
can't I create an unbroken  
earth? Maybe it's someone else's  
creation at hand.

*Christa Madikaegbu*



*DeMarco Randolph*

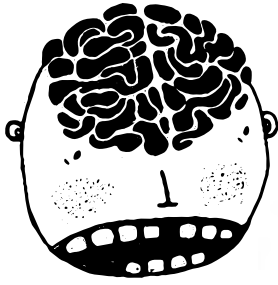
## It's Not Destructable, It's Innovatable

I know my knowledge is indestructable  
from addition and subtraction  
to 35—7. My teachers  
say that pink in Spanish is rosa  
while others say it's rosado.  
My knowledge is never  
being destroyed, it's  
transforming,  
evolving,  
in my mind, my memory  
is an abyss full of information.  
The knowledge I have lets me know,  
amber is not only a mineral, it's also  
what insects are trapped inside, and  
that George Crumb made potato chips.  
You can say my knowledge isn't  
destructible, it's innovatable.

*Christa Madikaegbu*



## Proof



The Devil is a lie and God is the truth,  
the truth ain't really no good unless you got  
the proof

See proof ain't the proof that shows all the  
truth. People tell you a thing and say it's  
the truth, but unless you see it or touch it  
there's no proof.

A dog is a duck, you don't got no proof.

A man is a fish, you don't got no proof.

We all live life, now that's the truth.

Obama was a good man and that's the truth.  
Trump says he's helping America  
yet there's no proof.

Truth lets us know what's going on,  
Proof shows us what's really happening.

Everybody can tell the truth, but unless  
you can show the proof, then it's a lie—

That's truth.

*Lawrence Offutt*



*Vincent Wingfield*

## The Following

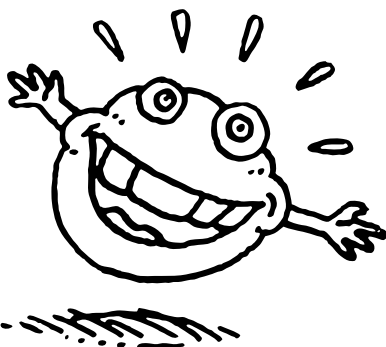
I follow silence into the dark sky  
I explore and realize that I'm beginning to  
be uncompromised with no difference of  
momentum. I follow magnetic energy upon  
my final slaying, with the fear of pride.  
I tear apart my silence, divergent matter of time  
I die long and hard, but as long as I die,  
I will slay the sky.

*Vincent Wingfield*

## Life

Life is restless, backwards, it's to be torn apart  
or not torn apart. Life is like sunrise and sun-  
set but broken twilight with life and death  
just fading away into heaven to meet God.  
Life is more of death, but less complicated  
with no patience, broken misery, and a bad  
and horrible sunset.

*Vincent Wingfield*





*l-r: Marcantony Pierce,  
Armani Thornton,  
Christa Madikaegbu*



## The Last of Us

Games will never last, cards will never last.  
Friendships will last, friendships won't last.  
Places will change, rooms will change.

Not the armor and range.  
Tattoos never last, birthmarks never last.  
Trees never last, plants never last.

What a delight, this ain't the sports highlights.  
Food never lasts, drinks never last,  
video games never last, desserts never last.

Lights change, twilights never change,  
fake people change, voice will always change,  
It ain't that strange.

Buildings won't last, houses won't last,  
cars won't last, trucks won't last,  
vans, bikes, scooters, skateboards, snowboards,  
motorcycles and other vehicles will and will not  
last.

Relationships always last, relationships will  
never last, relationships change, they won't  
change, it's just a blast from the past.

*Jahir Gray*

## Abstract Thoughts

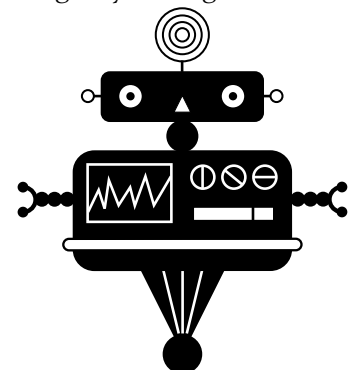
Abstract emotions to the left  
More abstract emotions to the right

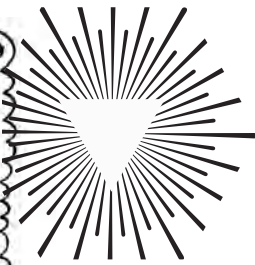
Cause they are left to be out of sight,  
and that the paint colors are more  
than bright.

Emotions of happiness, sadness, fear  
and anger, the abstract pulls you up  
a clothes hanger.

Purple jealousy and green envy.  
Blue, yellow, red, orange, brown, pink,  
magenta, lavender, fuchsia, shout out  
all the colors in your mind and leave  
'em empty. Technicolor, and multicolor  
and black and white'll give you a fight.

*Jahir Gray*





*l-r: Tavon Berford, Elijah Douglas, Jailyn Smith*

## How to Describe Your Personality with Feelings and Emotions

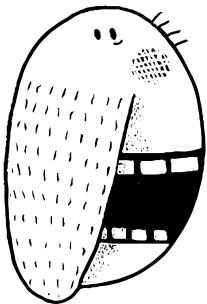
When you are feeling any kind of emotion, you could be stomping the ground if you're angry, drifting your arms if you're sad, or if you're happy or mad

People might say, "What's wrong with you?" or "Is there anything that I can do?"

You can relate to a ball of fire, or a thunderstorm or a bright sunny day, a snow storm, or blood dipped in deep blue sapphire.

You might be smiling or frowning or clenching your teeth whilst you are drowning.

You might hug yourself, pause, for a cause for applause, or kick yourself to the curb or grow some herbs, this ain't "Phineas and Ferb," your colors are of translucence and iridescence, so why don't you grow up and lose all your childhood adolescence.



## I Can't Be Destroyed

I can't be destroyed even if  
you tried to shoot me with  
a poison arrow on my chest  
cuz I'm a survivor and a hero  
walking through these obstacles  
and it's a little fledged I re-  
generate my body using tunnel  
vision.

I can't be destroyed in any type  
of shape, form, or pattern, I  
just put the pieces together  
like it's been scattered.

I can't be destroyed, I'm too  
hot on fire, I got the  
heart of a lion, the eye  
of a tiger, the constant  
struggle is my desire. I  
defeat these battles like  
I'm Floyd, and just like a  
cockroach I can't be destroyed.

*Tavon Berford*



*Saquan Short*

## Miscellaneous Activity

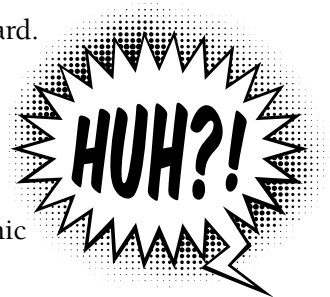
When the smoke cleared, I saw nothing  
but impossible strategy. Strategy, oh,  
what tragedy. If you walk the fountain,  
you can jump over a mountain.

Together we'll remain a story, powers and  
glory, rain showers live up to 24 hours.  
If I'm too overpowered, then you are a coward.

If I walk through walls, fly and can brawl,  
then get ready 'cause you're in for a fall.

I fight to eliminate and obliterate, super-sonic  
super-shadow. I'm the beast incarnate.

*Jahir Gray*





*l-r: Jahir Gray, Earl Bullock, Ashley Stevenson, Vincent Wingfield*

## Prediction vs. Contradiction

Anger makes people so weak, that they  
can't keep their heads in the game.

A whisper would sound like the wind breezing  
through a flame.

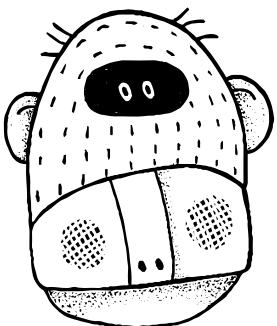
Water cannot freeze into stone, the fight I  
hate to postpone.

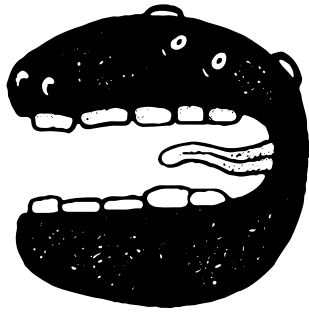
The glow keeps on glistening, your time is up,  
so start listening.

I hate to officiate, I'm the beast incarnate.  
I'm a little curious, I'm fast and furious.

Mess with me and it's gonna get serious.

*Jahir Gray*





## Busboys and Wreckage of Mass Destruction

In the middle of the background  
In the middle of nowhere, here and there,

lies an unwanted vehicle left out on its  
own, abandoned. Its eyes are two  
broken headlights. Its whole face is  
hidden, like a tornado hit it.

You've ridden it, it likes to sleep  
in the day and drive around at night.  
It's afraid of nothing. He gets angry  
when people make fun of him and throw  
rocks, he'll drive you away and run you over.

He thinks that most people who use it are  
awesome and cool. His greatest request is  
to be a regular, normal, brightly-colored,  
undismantled school bus. He is lonely, but he's  
very happy to be lonely.

Another one of his greatest wishes is to  
control thunderstorms and beams of heat  
and lightning, and to have the ability to  
clothesline you and pummel you and stomp  
you and crush you.

Does he have a reformer? No. Ladies  
and gentlemen, here's your newest transformer.

*Jahir Gray*



top-bottom: Saquan Short,  
Jahari Pearson

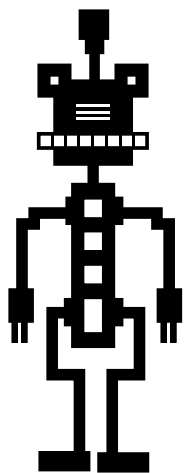
## A Poet is a Poet

A poet is a poet  
A poet is like a wizard  
who causes a blizzard

A poet might cause a blackout, beyond  
a doubt. He might light a candle in the  
fireplace and burn it down without a trace.

A poet might solve a solution with a  
resolution, and put an end to this evolution.

*Jahir Gray*







*Amir Green*

## You Cannot Destroy!

You cannot destroy a weapon  
 You cannot destroy my hope  
 You cannot destroy my joy  
 In these darkened times  
 You are the light that guides me on  
 The warmth that keeps that chill away  
 The sound that sparks my hope  
 The joy that fills my heart

*Xavier Spruill*



## Crazy Things

I gave people a bet but broke it  
 but it wasn't broken  
 A boy swallowed a comb  
 but he wasn't choked  
 I looked in the mirror but  
 there was no reflection  
 I went to see an action movie  
 but there was no action  
 A man was supposed to get a blood shot  
 but he got a blood clot  
 Your town gets melted because of a volcano  
 but it does nothing but mess up your brain though  
 You wish something on a wishbone  
 and all you get is a pile of stones  
 We all know how people smoke  
 and now all cigars are on a boat  
 Now people regret all this stuff.

*LaBrea Carter*



*l-r: Armani Thornton, Jayden Gray, Jahir Gray, Marcantony Pierce, Arman Thornton*

## Nothing Lasts

Everything in this world never lasts  
 Everything in dis world gets  
 broken up like glass, even your  
 family will turn their backs on  
 you, just like the past, so  
 I just move on forward but I  
 don't move fast.

Everything in dis world never stays  
 the same, I might as well call  
 y'all pennies, nickels and dimes  
 cuz everything changes

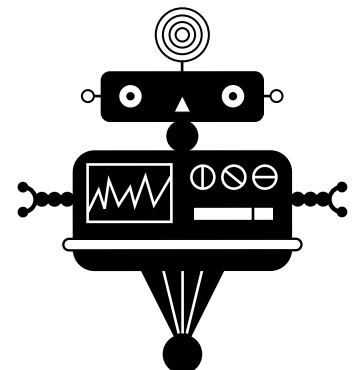
Everything in dis world never lasts  
 Everything in dis world  
 just changes so fast. Everything  
 in dis world never lasts, I guess dis  
 is boxing, but everything never everlasts.

*Tavon Berford*

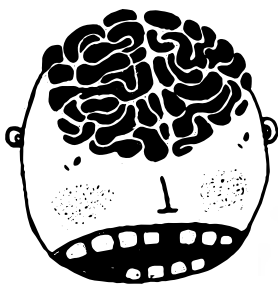
## My Philosophy

My philosophy is my dreams  
 And my dreams are to finish middle school  
 then go to high school  
 then graduate from high school and  
 go to college and play football  
 or basketball and then go to the pros.  
 Then when I graduate from college  
 I'm going to be a football or basketball coach.

*Xavier Spruill*



## War of Stars



Galaxies and bigger galaxies  
all fighting each other  
just to shine.

It's normal but unlikely for  
them to combine.

Galaxies floating all over space.  
They all have stars, lots of stars  
that play as the soldiers.

Boom! Crash! Boom!

The war is starting to  
really heat up. Every punch  
scratch, kick, and shot counts.

The war of galaxies, the war of stars.  
It's tragic how much damage they do and  
how much trash they leave behind.

Galaxies and bigger galaxies  
all fighting each other just  
to shine.

Stars and bigger stars all  
wanting to survive the war.

*Tatiana Pierce*

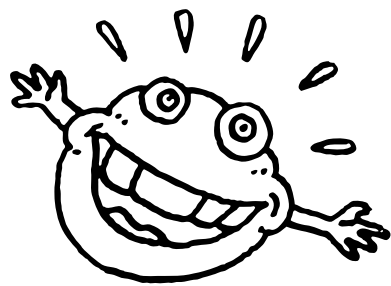


*Jayden Gray*

## Writing

My custom is to wrote and do things alike  
Sometimes I draw of things I saw.  
The world can change, but  
people still need their range.  
Leave the past behind and meet  
your destiny.  
To love is to care about your ancestors,  
because they made this world.  
You can only change this world.  
You do not own the world,  
it's not like you can loan this world.

*LaBrea Carter*



## Possibilities

Steady possibilities apart  
from troublesome people.

Impossible possibilities  
that reflect tension at times.

Windy possibilities that redeem  
durable abstract days.

Tender moments that make life more  
magnetic.

Possibilities that never quiver.

*Tatiana Pierce*



*TyJuan Hogan*

## She

She's Mean, mean as they come.

She's beautiful, as beautiful as a princess.

No wait, my princess.

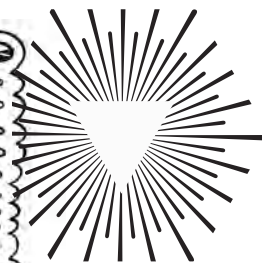
She's hard working, a boss in training.

She... She got her own, yeah I said it—her own  
and she ain't looking for no hustler...miss independent  
with the world's best smile.

Goofy with the message that says "you can't change me"  
Insecure but stable, able and willing. She's mine.

*Joquan Knight*



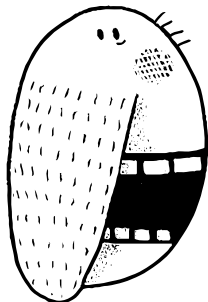


*l-r: Christa Madikaegbu, Armani Thornton*

## How to not get in trouble

No hitting.  
 No inappropriate language.  
 Do your chores.  
 Be respectful to everyone.  
 Go to school on time.  
 Do my homework.  
 Don't skip class.  
 Always be nice.  
 Don't talk unless spoken to.  
 Be a great kid.

*Joevon Smith*



## January, Part 2

V.

This is continuing from December

After New Years, some people are passed out, or maybe drunk.

VI.

To me, this is any ol' day.

You will wake up the same, get dressed the same  
 and do everything the same—nothing really changed.

VII.

January is supposed to be the month of starting  
 your new year revolution. "Eat healthy",  
 "Work out more", or even "Make more friends."  
 They say it, but only do it for a couple of days.

VIII.

I would call them liars, but they are just following the trend.  
 This is similar to December: You will wait for Santa, then  
 everyone will turn around and make a new year revolution.

*Daisha Wilson*





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*Inside back cover, l-r: Arman Thornton, Armani Thornton, Jaleel Rush*



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