

HARTWORKS

Summer 2018

\$10

The Charles Hart Middle School Literary Magazine



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Front cover, l-r: Arman Thornton, Isyah Joyner, Armani Thornton

Inside front cover, l-r: Phillip Williams, Kitana Williams, Vincent Wingfield, Octavia Johnson, Shanay Lesane

Introduction

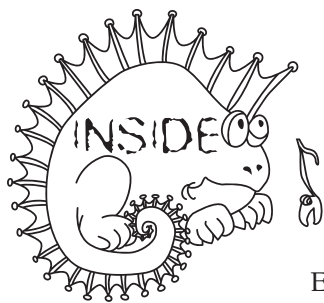
Welcome to *hArtworks*, the nation's only inner-city public middle school literary magazine, written and edited by the students in the after-school writing club at Charles Hart Middle School. *hArtworks* is published through a collaborative effort between the school and the D.C. Creative Writing Workshop, 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 2018 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 Bainum Family Foundation, Annie E. Casey Foundation, Children's Charities Foundation, the City Fund of the Greater Washington Community Foundation, the Clark-Winchcole Foundation, 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, Cathy and Mark McNeil-Hollinger, New York Avenue Foundation, Hattie M. Strong Foundation, Holly Syrrakos, Gail Oring and GO! Creative, LLC, 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 on Malcolm X Ave., 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, Gregory Nickens, Isaiah White, and Anthony and Annette Williams.

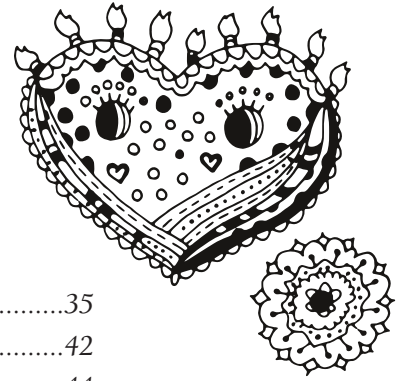
Special thanks for the hard work and dedication of the D.C. Creative Writing Workshop Board of Directors: Dr. John Walton Cotman, Dr. Susan Gerson, Brian Gilmore, Helen Hooper, Bernie Horn, Bill Newlin, and Nancy Schwalb.

We would also like to thank the following administrators, teachers, and staff who are our partners in this endeavor: Principal Charlette Strickland; Assistant Principals Ms. Samecia-Muriel Broussard and Dr. Sharon Armstrong; Ms. Sherry Dailey, Ms. Pamela Dixon, Ms. Latavia Drakeford-Allen, Mr. Craig Duchemin, Ms. Nijma Esad, Mr. Jamal Kennedy, Ms. Jasmine McGill, Mr. Derrick McRae, Ms. Rashimah Nixon, Ms. Sheranada Robinson, and Ms. Eleanor Seale.

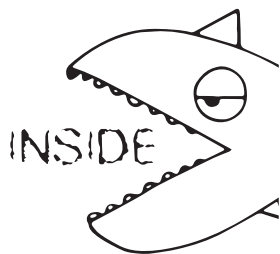


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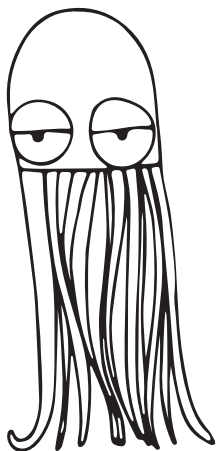


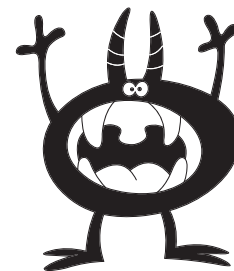


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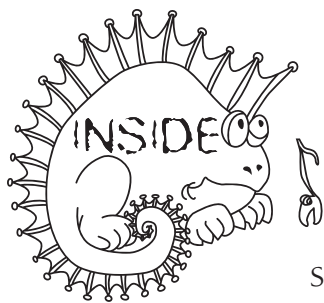


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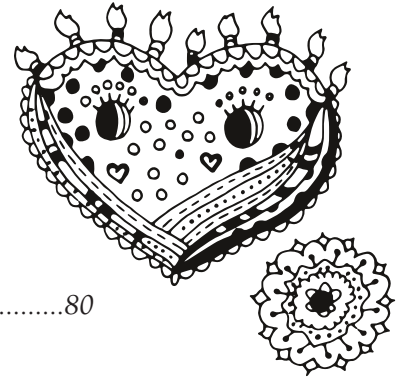
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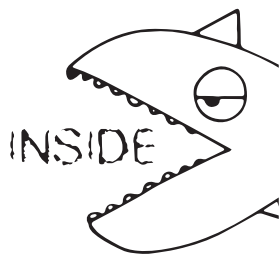
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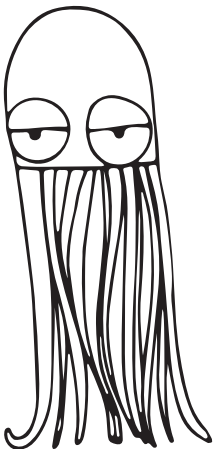


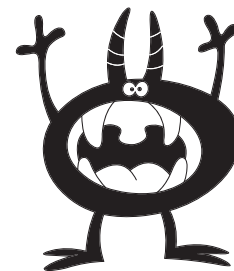


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Brandon Gatling



Word Puzzle

Life is a mystery:
I don't know if I stand or sit;
Do I go or stay?
Do I ride or die?
Do I make more money, or give money?
Do I go play or clean my room?
I wonder if life is a game,
because you get all this stuff
and then lose it;
And is everyone a robot but me?
Or is it a dream?

Arman Thornton

Across the night sky

Around the world
I can see it all, from Asia to Canada
and all the way to Russia;
The evening sun shining like harbor lights
fiery and bright for a certain path,
the world whirling around her as she lights the day.
Yet the moon, like a stone from a beautiful galaxy,
(beautiful but so far, far away)—
all the light in people's eyes turns into stars;
they catch the light of the moon.
But I'm not the sun nor the moon;
I'm a dying star, looking around the world
before I reach my hyper-nova

Christa Madikaegbu





Pastel to Rain

Pastel: Lightly showing off without knowing
 Pastel, like a rose quartz, just pure light color
 Pastel, light like lilac, cotton candy, and a cloud,
 often admired when embraced
 by spikes, crosses, and jet black;
 But rain, forever ageless
 and a clear monotone liquid;
 The pastel breaks down
 and can't hold off the breach
 from the light, lovely colors
 they melt into puddles of clarity;
 a see-through and depressing
 mini-flash flood of nothing but
 Rain.

Christa Madikaegbu

Marcus Hill, Samuel Hauser, Gregory Grinage, Steven Brown

Darkened midnight

Those unnamed emotions
 that are too complex for names
 always stick within us
 despite our demise;
 But we're not forcing ourselves
 to feel this sort of thing,
 just the brutality from the loneliness
 of our unending grief,
 forever beneath our skin.
 Unadorned pride leads to jealousy
 toward the admired ones;
 If you don't get it, then I'll make you see,
 clearly, that there is always
 an unspoken gloom
 that never leaves us
 no matter how high or low we go
 after we meet our fate.

Christa Madikaegbu





Jayden Gray



The Galaxy and Me

The darkness on my skin
is the darkness that I'm in;
The gloom on the moon
is the rule on the moon.
The sun is jealous
but the moon is stunting
the unknown planet called
Jupiter.

Arman Thornton

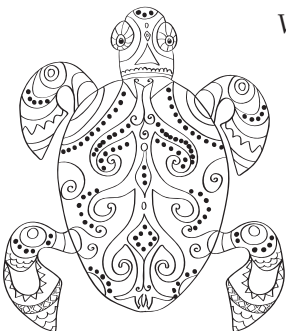
Yes and No Day

Everything says yes?
Some things say no.

Walk into a building
with dusty floors
yet no single trace of footsteps;

Pure souls orbit the earth
with destiny, which is a mystery
of creation, outside the universe.

Vincent Wingfield



Son of a Sun

I am one-of-a-kind!
Just like one of the many planets:
My mother is the sun;
She is a bright and kind.
Like the earth, I circle my mother.
I'm one-of-a-kind
just like the Earth.
Like us humans,
we have voices in our heads.

Roscoe Belk



l-r: Shanay Lesane, Octavia Johnson, Kitana Williams, Vincent Wingfield, Phillip Williams

My Sorry Hero

I am a parrot, repeating whatever
is the bluest thing I've heard;
Sometimes, I forget my slingshot
and have to shoot balloons
full of chocolate milk and scrambled eggs.
I like to fly through smoke and vapor
when I'm leaving the jungle that's
hidden in Times Square.

My wings taste like the sound of horses
stomping on seven flat tires
taken from a stalled school bus;
splash, splash, splashing in my bathtub
I jump up and down on my tin drum
whenever I am hungry for worms
and thirsty for sweat.

Tomorrow is the last day I will get a kick out of magic
My nephew is a clown
My cousin lit a firecracker, thinking it was a candle
and blew us all to the moon.

Ricardo White

Golden

My silence is golden
I already told him
My life is like a gold bar
Priceless like antique cars
I got bars for days
Just like my A's
Don't drop a dis track
Cause you'll get whacked
And that's a fact
I'm so powerful, my life is valuable
My bars are gold, like Fort Knox,
Don't like me? Kick rocks.
'Bout to get cooked
with my golden pan
I'll hit you so hard,
you'll think my name's Bernard
Peace, big fella

Trevonne Joyner





l-r: Saquan Short, Armani Thornton, Isyah Joyner, Christa Madikaegbu



The Lion

My soul is the golden window
 The depth of my soul is a lion
 When I come outside
 I see darkness
 It comes slowly; I come out
 but I do not know I exist
 I spiral out on the world,
 am hot like the sun
 but cold like the sunset
 Unknown, I observe
 I am not a planet—I
 do not orbit; I am a lion
 I am a good discovery
 I am a mystery

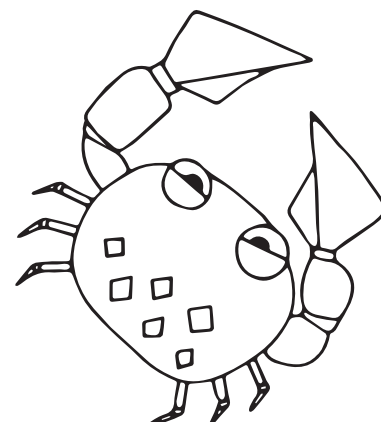
Kitana Williams

The Call of the Wild

You don't have to be mysterious,
 Just throw some shade on them.
 My creation of blue green regrets exists
 The darkness' arrival is not untold
 You sacrifice a soul.

You are suffering from the unknown presence
 Outside in the shadows
 You don't need a firewall just to conquer the world
 You are the only one who can change your destination.

Vincent Wingfield



Poetry Slam

Poetry is like a grinning dog:
Every time you write a poem
you are tackling an immortal being
but it is worth it in the end
and when you grow,
it sticks like crumbs on a spider web
just like a bright star
carved in the stone tomb.

Armani Thornton



Jahir Gray

Behind the Scenes

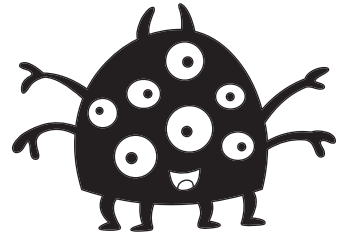
Behind the scenes there are actors
Behind the scenes there are pipes in the wall
Behind the scenes there are people who hide themselves
never showing who they truly are
Behind the scenes there's a bullet in the wall
which is bad
Behind the scenes kids wanna do trapeze
but they are forced to do something else.

Micheal Thornton

You are not welcome

Embrace the legend.
You are not worthy;
Go lurk in the shadows
with the smallest violin.
My lyrics have come to me
ever since I was a newborn.
Stay silent, present, and stay still.
The jester made the room light up in laughter.
The jester is You.

Armani Thornton





l-r: Shakira McPherson, Vincent Wingfield, Kitana Williams, Arman Thornton, Isyah Joyner, Armani Thornton

Poetry is not a luxury

Poetry gives me hugs and kisses
and cooks me soup.

Poetry drives me to school,
takes care of me when I'm ill;
Poetry puts clothes on my body
and shoes on my feet.

Poetry makes me laugh when I am down;
It gets me through hard times.

Nathan Bacchus



Always

There will always be a school bus of death
full of darkness

There will always be someone paralyzed

There will always be someone who's hideous

There will always be someone who's clumsy

There will always be courtyards...

Isyah Joyner

Avenge the day

My life

is screeching

like a slow collapse of words,

like a tiny red apple.

Follow myself enough and

since you gonna run those games,

I guess I'ma do the same.

A blessing is coming to you. It

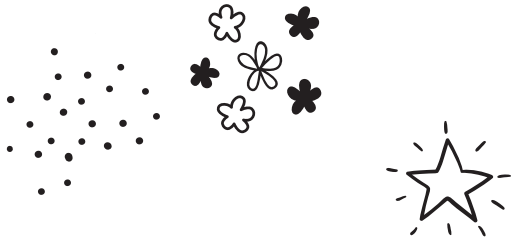
twitches and cries out like a slanting roof;

He's narrowing down

knotted tight

like catching the light.

Saquan Short



Listen

Tamia Moyd

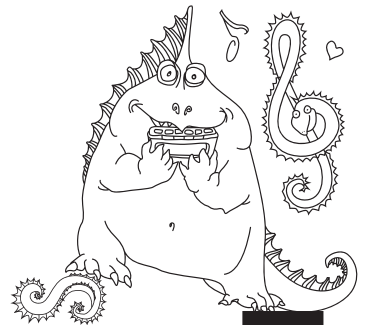
Poetry should walk loud and proud
 Poetry should say a bunch of words
 Poetry should conquer the page
 Poetry can't be shy
 Poetry can be seen through the depths of the world
 Poetry can say "Can you hear me?"

Arman Thornton

The Image behind the Mirror

Behind the fire is the ice
 Somewhere in the ocean is a whirlpool
 twisting with force
 The tangled outline of the haunted road
 in New Jersey
 spirals with blinded phantom trucks
 and a ghost boy that drowned in a lake
 under a bridge
 The imitation of the moon
 moves backwards with the high tides
 like a kingdom ruled by armored whales

Vincent Wingfield





Booker T. Whitaker



Yes and Show Off

Listening to Pandora music is my Yes Day
A Yes Day is doing art
and I like showing my artworks

My Yes Day is when people fall
and tumble
and I say "Are you okay?"
to be good

I like to show off my book
with it is a cool book
and it is fun to not be mean
Be good and happy

My Yes Day is funny videos
on YouTube
My Yes Day is going to school
and preparing for college

Kamari King

The Average Four-Year-Old

The average four-year-old
asks over 400 questions a day
The innocent mind becomes frozen in time
The powerful question locks itself
in the mind of the disappointed soul...

The unknown answer climbs to the crystal surface
Unremembered, you silently say
well, uh...
and as the decay of darkness drowns you
you smile and offer juice
to the confident, wondering
average four-year-old

Shannell Jones



Yes and No

Once upon a time,
there was a monster
who was defeated by Superman
which made me say “No”

Superman being pushed over
the edge
and broke his skull
No

Coming into a chaos school
doing pure work
and being blamed for everything
is a No day

Not being a morning person,
taking an invisible cold bath
sitting in an undefeated corner
upset and lonely
makes me scream “No”

Having an evening away from my brother,
listening to rap music,
and spending single time with my friends
makes me happy and calm
like the sound of the ocean waves
Yes

Shakira McPherson



l-r: Marcus Hill, Amari Knott

No Day

I said that I'm unbroken,
but not that I'm invisible.
My skull is a spiral—
I am happy and then sad
kill me, get me out.
Not single, but not happy
he is not my life, but he is my love
I can clearly see what is
in front of me
am at the edge
kill me
let me go
the ocean calls me.
Over and over, it is time to go
music will play when I go
the branch is broken
I am gone

Kitana Williams





No

No, I don't like darkness
No, I don't like you
No, you are pure darkness
Maybe your eyes are chaos
and I might get in trouble

You are invisible to my skull
The edge of the spiral is a force
not to be with
Everyone around me is dark

Blake Mathews

Sad Mother

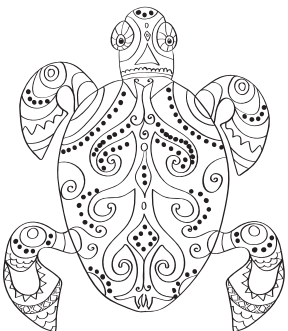
A mother that has a child,
that is single, with a broken heart
swirled to the ocean
with the music playing
while tumbling in the sand
so she could be invisible to her child.

Tamoni Onley

Invisible and Bored

I am invisible to my mom
when I talk like a baby;
My TV is unbroken.
When I hear music,
I become calm.
My evening was good;
The ocean sounds calming.
My playground gets dusty;
A branch fell on my mom's car.
My sister is single.
I draw swirls on the window when I'm bored.

Judiana Benjamin





l-r: Savion Lomax, Christian Harrison, DeAndre Jackson

Poetry's Heartbreak

She wore an impossible red lipstick that night
 Her walk was magnetic and her eyes were dull
 Apart from her breathless black dress
 and her slight promising blinks
 I spent each moment watching the ocean in her eyes
 and listening to the final click of her heels

It was windy that night
 and the memory of her vanilla-scented hair
 spread a wildfire in my heart
 Listen! She struggled to say

The fallen leaves buried her word
 and the next thing I knew
 I was listening to her footsteps
 Dusty, away in the somewhat silent night
 This is how poetry broke up with me

Shannell Jones

Sunset

As the sun sets,
 the afternoon begins to not exist.
 As the night begins to darken
 my soul begins to suffer.
 Darkness starts to overtake me
 so I plan to conquer the darkness.

Only the golden key can free me;
 I never tasted defeat,
 but the gesture begins to fill me
 with triumph, trials and tribulations.

Arrival is unexpected, unknown;
 My conscience overshadows me—
 Change of events...
 Farewell darkness.

Trevonne Joyner





l-r: Micheal Thornton, Kamari King

Crush

Poetry should sing to you,
creep into your dreams at night
when it's too hard to go to sleep

Poetry should be as light
as the laughter of a small child
and as jagged as the edge of a dagger

Poetry should be the first
and last language to be used,
and disappear into the night
like the sun setting in the West

Poetry should conquer the unknown
without fear
and whisper romantic gestures
as though you are the love of its life

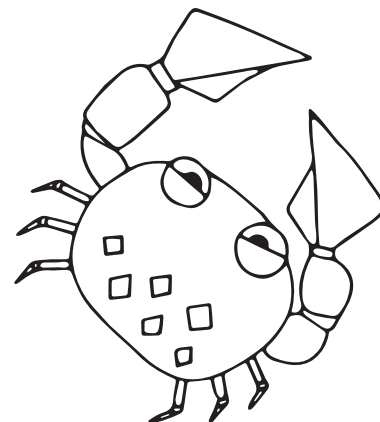
Taylor Martin



What's Underneath

About five years ago
an impure smile was cracked under false
circumstances...
It was forced, due to an empty heart...
Why smile anywhere except home
catch bullets to the soul
or become blind to the obvious?
Why lie to the people you trust
only to put your frown in solitary?
Don't tangle your emotions
Don't outline the negativity
Open your eyes and see
What's underneath...

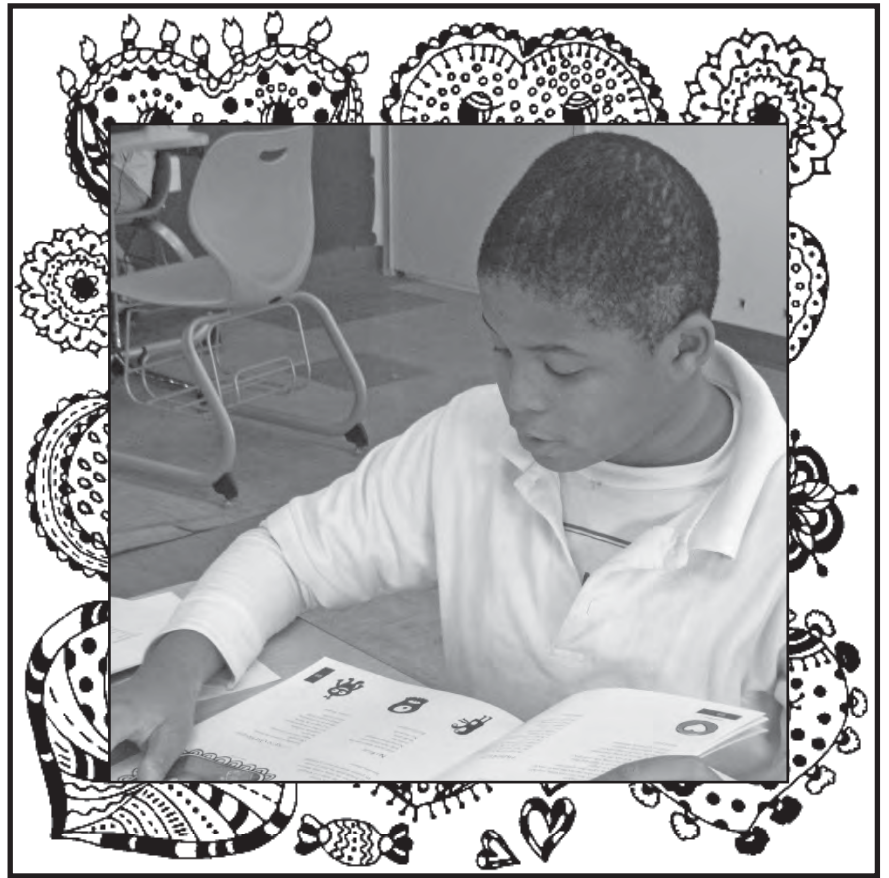
Shannell Jones



What's Inside

Honey never spoils
but my heart did.
A raisin never rots
but my mind did.
She thinks of me like a pretzel
nice and breakable
yet, oh so salty.
He thinks I'm like a tomato
bright red, soft, yet so disgusting.
They treat me like peach
They don't care for what's inside.
But I'm not honey nor a raisin,
not a pretzel, tomato, or a peach.
I'm blood cells, flesh and skin
but most of all, I'm alive.

Christa Madikaegbu



Steven Brown

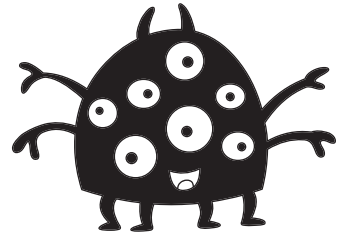
When I'm Feeling Sad

This past winter has been the worst.
I'm like a seashell, hollow on the inside to others
but for real, the only people that really get me
are my goofy best friends.

Just for a second,
I was happy,
but then I was covered in sandstone.
It was only a matter of time
before my happiness ran out
like a tiny red apple
after someone finishes with it.

Welp, now it's time to say goodbye
before my past finishes me.
It's time to say hello to my new self
the happy me;
But until then you are stuck
with the old me.

Armani Thornton





l-r: Kitana Williams, Christa Madikaegbu, Bunny Stevenson, Armani Thornton

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

Mean to Nice

I do not need to walk or talk
 I control that
 Try me and you'll get hit with a bat
 And that's facts.

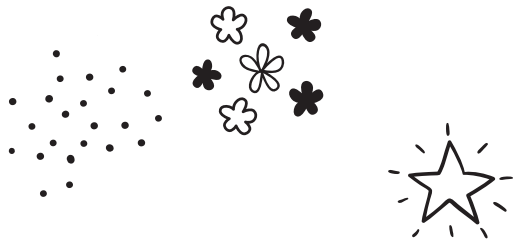
Don't bother me or you'll get got
 I'm mean
 I stay in the house, quiet as a mouse
 Feel my wrath: You stink, go take a bath.

I'm just playing, that's all I'm saying
 I'm moving slowly
 I won't regret it, wanna bet it.

When I'm an All-Star making gestures on the court
 I'm soon going to be driving cars
 Now I'm nice, I think that's right
 In a blink, that's what my friends think.

Isyah Joyner





Gloom

I've been buried
 breathless, in a skinny coffin
 alone with no sunlight
 just darkness,
 shattered mirror pieces all over my heart
 because all my life got sucked away
 with my hopes and dreams.
 The rhythm of strangeness
 makes me feel awake.
 My enemies make me speechless
 and filled with hatred.
 I know sometimes they
 make their parents want to disown them, too.

Armani Thornton



Akeera Jackson

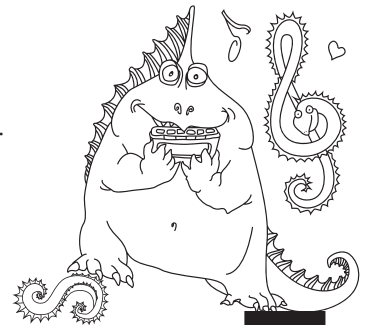
Sky Blue

Blue like Ballou,
 sky blue is my favorite blue;
 Blaring blue is powerful,
 amazed by the spoken wonder.

Perplexed, dramatic cowards
 betrayed by witty silence;
 cranky pockets, bubbling in the sockets,
 valuable historic memories alarm me
 monotone horror, cooked up drama.

Just look at the sky—
 It makes all the girls faint.
 Sunsets are my favorite set.

Armani Thornton





Steven Brown

Long Gone

Trees live longer than humans
Branches are shorter than avalanches
My ranch is longer than his pants
My poem is so long
that you don't notice
So long.

Arman Thornton

Raised by Poetry

Poetry made me macaroni and cheese
and played my PS4;
Poetry did it like no other
and took me to Safeway
and said "Shut up,
don't ask for nothing."

Daniel Barnes

Look Behind You

Beyond the bridge there is a car
Inside the car is a passenger
Behind the passenger there is a seat
Within the seat is foam
Around the foam is leather
Behind the leather there are some annoying kids
Behind the kids there is an empty trunk
where they belong
Outside of the trunk there is a beautiful world
Behind the beautiful world there is the universe
Behind the universe you go above and beyond
Behind above and beyond there is a spiral
Of lost souls waiting to find their place

Isyah Joyner





Life

There will always be enemies hating,
boldness and pride,
sweetness when my mom says I love you,
sunlight in the day and darkness at night,
and there will always be trust and faith in my future.

Christian Woodall

Omarion Butler

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





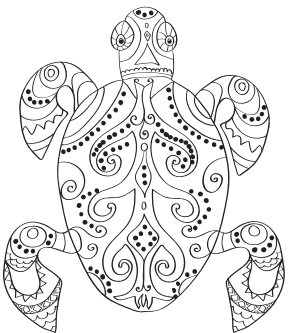
*l-r: Ricardo White,
Tommy Fridle*



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



Where She Really Is

They're screaming.
They're running in fear and terror.
The kingdom is falling apart;
They're bursting through the rooms,
townspeople searching room to room
until they reach her room.
While bursting through the door,
they're yelling for her to escape
but she's still there.

But her eyes have lost their moon-like shine
and they only look empty
like an unused canvas.
It's clear to see that her heart, mind, soul
are hidden behind her emotions;
So well hidden, they're actually lost.
Now she lies there quietly
on her sleeping bad
and in a matter of seconds,
it'll be her deathbed.

Christa Madikaegbu

Facts

On Jupiter and Saturn, it rains diamonds
Poetry is a skill, it's nothing but rhyming
Ostriches can roar like lions,
and mountain lions can whistle
Do you ever wonder why, when the sun hits your face
girls say it kissed you?
Honey never spoils, come to think about it—
It's kind of like aluminum foil,
Just sit honey in a pot and watch it boil
Will it be sweet then?

There are more fake flamingos in the world than real ones
They are pink, but people mistake them for penguins
Stranger in Moscow, I wonder what MJ mean by that
Maybe because for every human on earth
there are 1.6 million ants
Scotland's national animal is a unicorn
but they don't exist
Who made this? A strawberry is not a berry
so why do they call it a strawberry?
There are more stars in space than there are grains of sand
on every beach in the world.
Facts!

That's why they shine bright like diamonds and pearls
Nowhere in the nursery rhyme does it say
that Humpty Dumpty is an egg,
but they talk about how he felt
and bumped his head.
Not my fault, that's the monkey's
The stuff that I'm telling you is the truth, though
For example, Russia has a larger surface area than Pluto
Now that I'm done, you think about if I'm right or wrong
But while you do that
a king's about to go take a seat on his throne!

Jailyn Smith



Brandon Gatling

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





*l-r: Vincent Wingfield, Kitana Williams,
Octavia Johnson, Phillip Williams, Shanay Lesane*



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;
Mischievous smells like trouble,
so crash and burn under all that rubble.

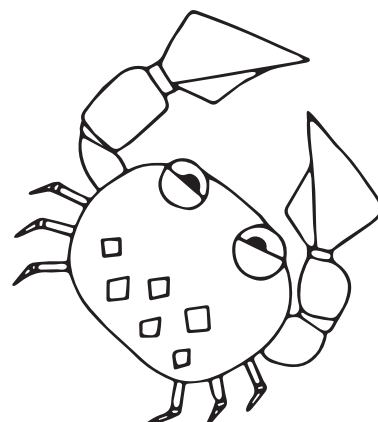
Trap you in a bubble: It's double trouble!
A new idea feels like gold, you are mold;
I'm the brave and the bold,
and everyone knows that we're all
tight and stone cold.

Jahir Gray

Full-life

I was born a leader
Like I was queen of the galaxy
My home was a cat
My dad was a horse
We lived in the biggest bug
We had 24 rooms in our house
I had 17 brothers and sisters
We had stars as cars
Our planet was the best
I had a lot of friends
We drank water that was red

Desiree Ignacio



Inside Out

The kingdom of boredom
lurks upon me with this poem.
I bridge over it and try to escape
but they always end up catching me.

Guessing by my appearance
you can tell I came from pressing
the fantastic emptiness in my brain
but impurity takes its spot.

Somewhere in my mind a voice
says that I'm a burden, so...
I'm gonna take my leave.

Armani Thornton



Shakira McPherson

Senseless Senses

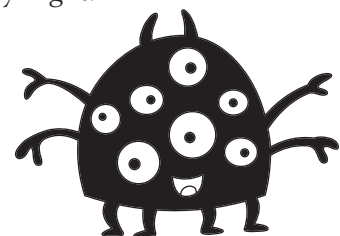
A star sounds like it's singing
to the other stars;
The howls taste of
a lot of madness, or a wolf.
A circle smells like Thanksgiving,
a lot of food that people like to eat.
Smiles sound like happiness;
White moves in a diagonal way.
A baby's cry is bright,
like a shooting star going across the black 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

Ray 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





l-r: Armani Thornton, Isyah Joyner

Like Black Panther

T'challa looked into the stars
at the edge of a hill in his suit.
When he looked down, he saw bad guys
so he ran down like a train whistles on a railroad.

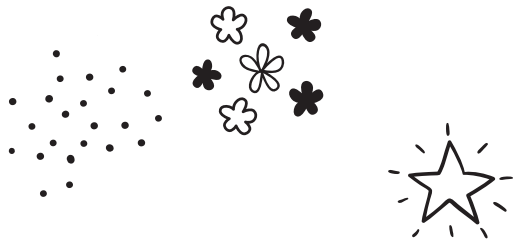
When he finished, he hid in the darkness
with his Black Panther suit.
As he counted, there were ten bad guys
and his sister was talking to him
with limited location.
As he waited, he took them out, one by one

In a few minutes, there was only the leader left
then Black Panther popped up in front of him.
The leader had an AK-47,
and he started shooting.

The suit was bulletproof.
T'challa walked up to him and did a combo,
and arrested him on the spot.
Then he went home and fell asleep
like he was inside of his Grandpa's arms
like a kid.

Micheal Thornton





A word to the wise

Walking through the tunnel
I finally see
a glimmer of sunlight.
Gathering my thoughts
is a sign of wisdom.

Tamia Moyd



Savion Lomax

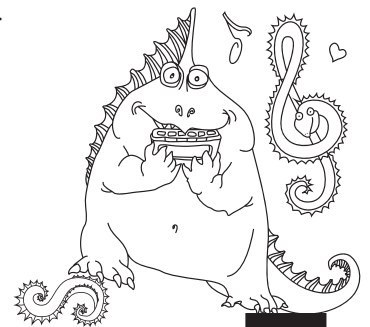
Quick Thinker, Quick Dreamer

They say she's uncreative and uninspired
but they don't know that her mind
is like a dark ecstasy.

My dreams are made of paint or stars
glistening so bright
the sun shines weak, like glitter.
My thoughts are divine fragments
from my unholy heart.
My silence, so quiet, my thoughts are all I can hear.

My soul, made from tragic one-sentenced stories
with a happy word at the end;
My joy, leaving me so happy
eyes shine like fireflies in fairy lights.

Christa Madikaegbu





Arman Thornton



Witness

I witnessed the intelligence of DeAndre
and the bravery of Savion.
I am the spirit of the group
like a singer in a band,
with anger like Christian
that resembles a demon.
But we all are brave,
like a black knight fighting a dragon.

Gary Imes

The Greatest

Poetry should always make the three-pointer
playing basketball
Poetry is lit
Poetry wins awards at the Grammys
Poetry can cook buffalo wings
Poetry has manners
Poetry is cool
Poetry is smart
Poetry can cut fades
Poetry is fast
Poetry is great

DeAndre Jackson



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

Playing for the Championship

Playing for the championship
I think of Mohammed Ali—
Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee.
My football tights are not loose
like my pajamas
I burn past the evening sunlight.
My sister squints as I sprint.
She leans across to watch me score.
I scored! Quiet hands roared!

While I run, my cleats skim the grass
like a dog chasing the mailman.
All hail the new champs;
Against the sharp light, I take a deep breath
and launch the ball; as he catches it
he begins to fall. We don't stall—
TOUCHDOWN!

They fail to score, my mom leaves to go to the store;
After the game, my body was sore
like we just went through war.
The team needs to work more.
Football is at my core.
We went to FedEx field,
took a tour.
Come on let's take a look
I got a book
about football.
I made it to the Hall of Fame
Championship; this season was the same.
Our team was underrated,
the Jaguars soon to be tamed.
The Jaguars said we'd be maimed
60-10 we win again.

Trevonne Joyner



l-r: Ms. Dixon, Amari Knott

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





*l-r: Savion Lomax,
Christian Harrison*



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

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.

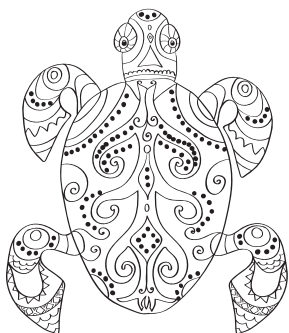
Saquan Short

Behind

Behind my face is my cranium
Behind my cranium is my brainium
Underneath my soul is the dribbling in the stadium

Behind my ears are things that
I've heard from the past
Behind my eyes are negative and positive sights, while
Behind my legs are the hurdles I've had to overcome
In my 13 years of life

Savion Lomax





l-r: Savion Lomax, Christian Harrison, DeAndre Jackson

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

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





l-r: Christian Harrison, A.J. Henson, Jada Kelly



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.

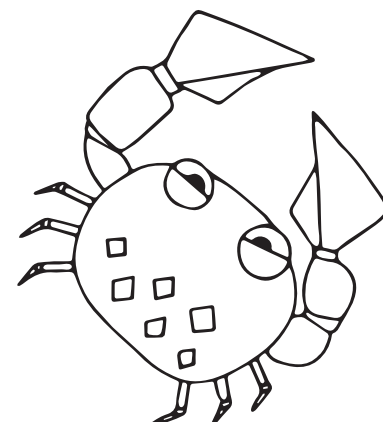
Revolution is all's fair in love and war;
 Complete resistance till it's not like before.

Jayden Gray

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

Bunny Stevenson



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
for 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

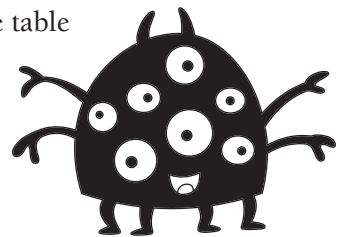


l-r: Savion Lomax, Christa Madikaegbu, Saquan Short

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





Savion Lomax

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

Who I am

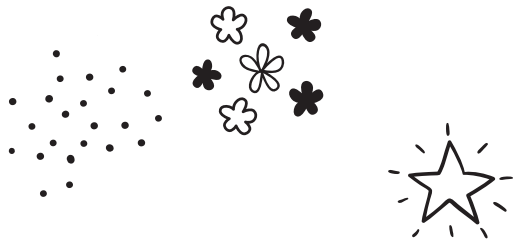
I am strong as a rhino
and as gentle as a lamb.
I am sharp as a tiger,
so sharp that I divided up the continents.

I am mystical like a unicorn,
so special, like an emerald,
but I feel like a fossil,
so old yet fragile.

My hunger can be like a hyena's,
so ravenous that
I can swallow up an island,
but I am who I am.

Savion Lomax





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

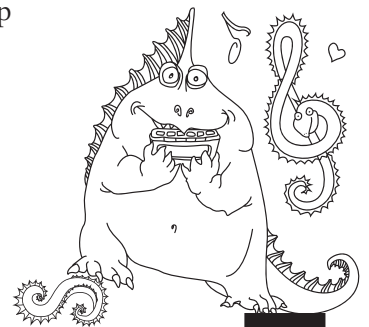


Christian Harrison

Legend

I was born in the sweet crazy parts of D.C.
I walked to my mansion
and gave money to the homeless.
I designed the best games in the world,
better than PS4.
I am a lion.
I am a King.
I can't be beaten by anyone.
I'm strong as a tiger
but light as a feather,
fresher than a bar of soap
and as cool as snow.

Christian Harrison





Shakira McPherson



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

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





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

l-r: Armani Thornton, Christa Madikaegbu

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

Prehistory

The earth is as old as history
 so old, it put the dinosaurs out of their misery.
 Mammoths rode on cavemen
 while pterodactyls had tea parties
 and T-Rexes were the rulers of Egypt;
 So old, that for every one human on earth
 there are 1.6 million little ants
 that build tiny houses.

Savion Lomax





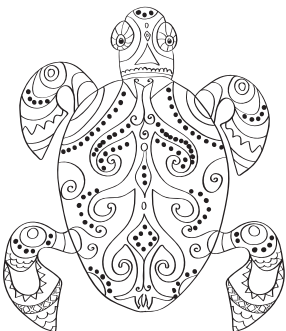
Isyah Joyner



Signs

When things come apart, it is a sign of loss of gravity.
When darkness comes, it's a sign
of an eclipse, or an abandoned city.
Knowing every riddle means sweet wisdom,
the wisdom to know a miracle is coming,
and sweaty palms is a sign
of nervousness from a familiar nocturnal shape.

Elijah Hamilton-Todd



Calling the Signals

Everyone gathered outside
to see the eclipsed moon
as soon as the sunlight went down.

The wind gusts through the alley;
It signals a sandstorm
that will blanket the streets.

A miracle signals
the hope of a better day, a new future,
the prayer that worked!

Gravity signals our limits as
the invisible ceiling that reminds us
that we are just humans.

Erica Bell



l-r: Armani Thornton, Christa Madikaegbu, Kamari King

Almost

I walk into my home
and the fragrance of
peppery pepperoni
drifts through the kitchen
and rests on my nose.

Tick-tock, tick-tock:
The sound that keeps me
from the delicious meal. I
anxiously await that
final exhilarating... ding!

On the old brown oak table
sits a single plate...
Oh no! This warm, cheesy pizza isn't for me!
In walks my brother, smiling...

Danai Corbin

The Sweet Discipline

What if we didn't have gravity?
Everyone would be looking at each other
like, "Why aren't we on the ground, anyway?"
A stranger came up.
I said, "Who are you?"
And then it was Eli,
who became my best friend.
He had wisdom, and that
will always be my best friend.

Ricardo White





l-r: Patrick Washington, Micheal Thornton



Signs

A stranger in the night
is a sign he may be here
to kidnap me.

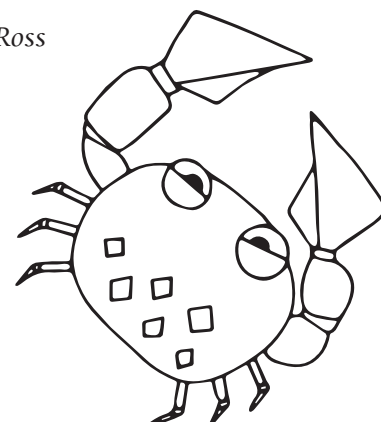
A person on the roof
taking aim is a sign
that I should run.

Coconut oil on the table
is a sign that my parents
are about the cook with it.

My sister got in trouble
and she blamed it on me,
which is a sign
that I am about to get in trouble.

My mother left me
in the house
which is a sign
that she abandoned me.

Tyion Ross



Read the Signs

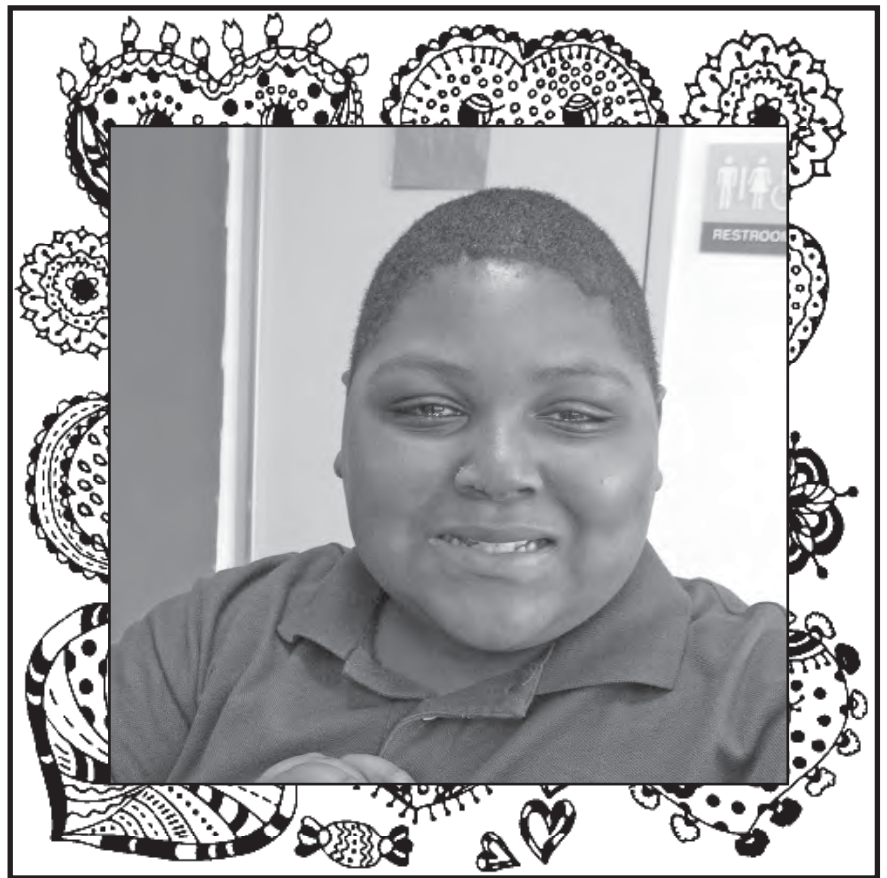
Sweat on my head means I was playing outside.
Sunlight is a sign that the sun is coming out.
Getting good grades is a miracle. All A's is a sign of the honor roll.
Being a part of a club is a sign of greatness.
The moon in front of the sun is a sign of an eclipse.
The sign of tidiness means a clean house.
If you see a stranger at night, that means they are stalking you.

Leondre Johnson

These ideal words

I am a slingshot
throwing drums at people
I sweat like a pig
on a farm
I live on a moon
with aliens
guarding me everywhere I go
I jump on my tin drums

Shaki Knight



Gregory Grinage

Observation

When I ball my fist, it means anger.
When the trees move, it's windy.
When I get goose bumps, it means I'm cold.
When I cough, it means I'm sick.
When I scream, I'm trying to get my point across.
When I'm sweet, it means I had a good time.
When I'm sad, I'm not feeling well.
When I'm in pain, it means something bad happened to me.

Christian Harrison

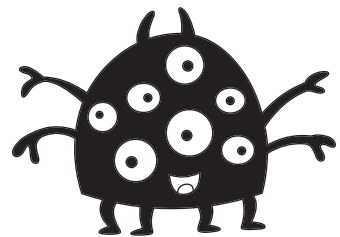
Uncertain

I am blueberry juice missing
from a slingshot; Black smoke
coming out of my square ceiling fan.

Maybe I'm a stomping gorilla
with seven hands
splashing Kool-Aid.

I am sweat from a sports player's jersey.
If I light a candle, I'll melt to death.
Nobody will ever know

Bunny Stevenson





Marcus Hill

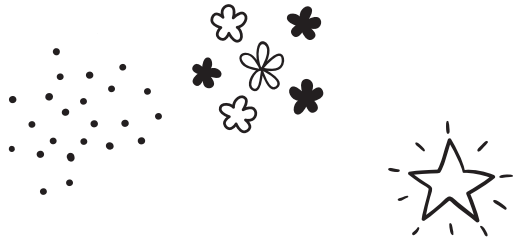
Internally Awakened

Open eyes, regained consciousness
 keep walking through midnight;
 Sense of direction
 colorful images, clashing in front of me.
 Open eyes, not open at all.
 Memories of what I experienced
 flood back to me,
 bitterness from an old broken heart
 replaced with a heart of sunlight
 due to the prayer from the disciplined, yet refined.

These torn bones covered in earthly dirt
 fixed by the wisdom from familiar strangers;
 These lungs of mine that are filled with smoke and pain
 cleared and now breathing in air
 with a slight sense of medicine;
 These eyes open and these legs and arms are able to move
 thanks to the grace from a miracle.
 I make my way out the door, looking back
 A final time to see that hospital,
 the place of my divine intervention.

Christa Madikaegbu





Akeera Jackson

Believe It Or Not

I am SpongeBob
 I am square
 I get stomped on by horses
 I slash the basketball into the net
 I also drum underwater, but I don't sweat
 I like to get a kick out of fun
 Once I got eaten by a crow
 but survived
 I once flew to the moon

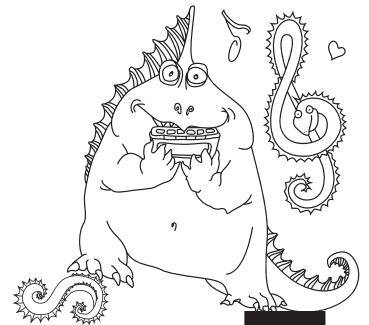
Joquan Knight

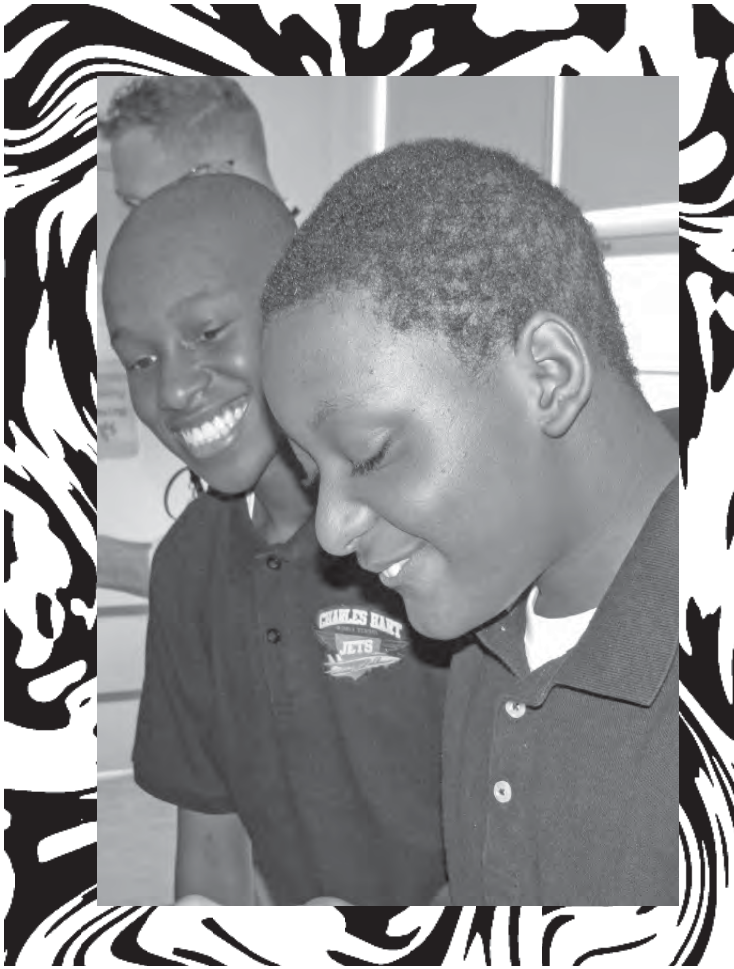


Your far, far away hero

I am the blue moon in the sky
 my stars are broken pieces from eggshells
 the misty smoke from Earth
 refuses your permission to see me
 I am the seven virtues, yet the seven sins
 the wolf's howl sounds like a drum
 the fear in your brain starts to kick in
 the crow is the color of my black, candle-lit eyes

Christa Madikaegbu





l-r: Mr. Duchemin, Tommy Fridie, Ricardo White



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

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





Mystery X Magic

What did he do to me...
Infected me with smile, style,
and the way he is
feelings and emotions boiling up inside,

so I stare stealthily at him
to find out how he used his witchcraft
to make me feel this way.

Infatuation filling my soul...
but he did the same to her
but she cares for him and so does he for her...
More than I thought and still
the effect from his magic won't wear off.

So I'll sit and observe...
no hatred in my eyes
no jealousy, only infatuation
hidden by normal tone and loyal, friendly attitude.

Yet still, desperate and craving for
these prayers to work and knowing
these playful interactions
fill my infatuation with him
with a false hope for a romance.

Christa Madikaegbu

Christian Woodall

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





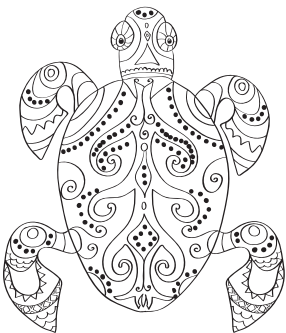
Tommy Friddle

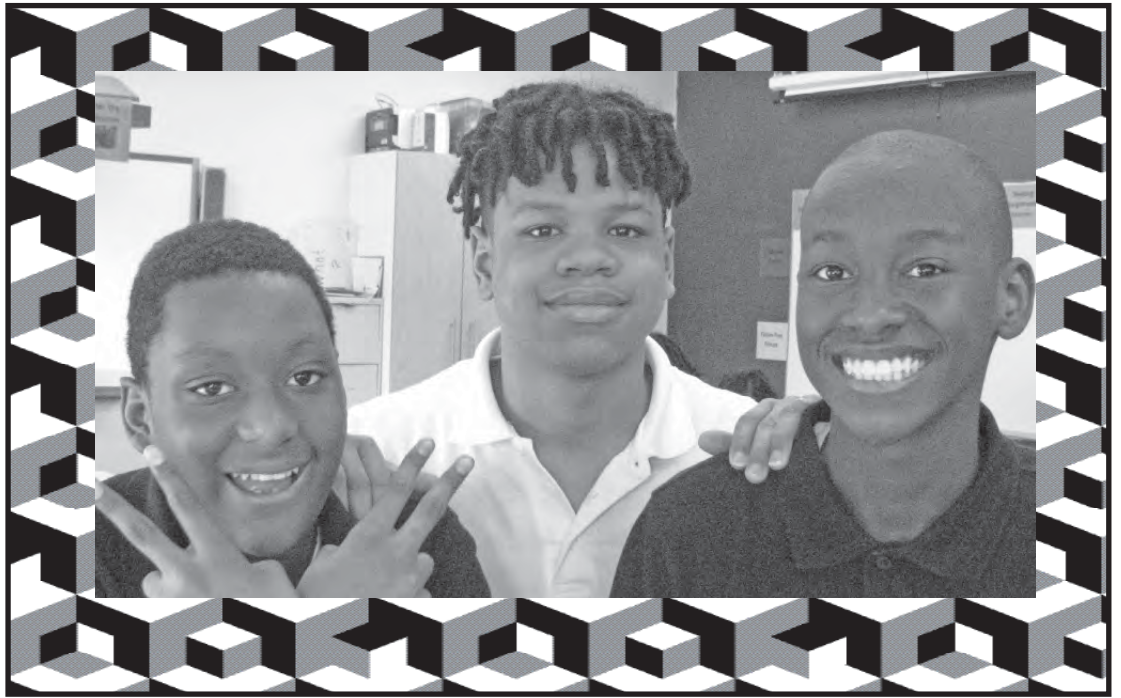


Anxiety

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





l-r: Ricardo White, Amari Knott, Tommy Fridie

Today

Maybe I will have a Yes day
 Maybe I will have a No day
 But maybe I might have a Maybe day

Maybe I might get in trouble
 Maybe I might get a reward
 Maybe I might make a friend
 maybe I might make an enemy

Maybe today is the day
 but I do know
 that maybe is just maybe

Savon Lomax

Golden Power

I have so much power, it's overflowing.
 I have 50 million people waiting for my arrival.
 Some people ask where my power comes from,
 but till this day it's unknown.

Got so much power, I could be a planet in orbit.
 It's golden, just like a sunset.
 I'm the beginning of any creation.
 How I do it is a mystery
 slowly being unraveled in the universe.

Perhaps, nah
 I can never admit my defeat.

Christian Harrison





Danai Corbin

Not So Fast...

I have the power to run fast.
When I found out, I was 13 years old
and I was racing my friends
and I was running fast,
as fast as a cheetah.

I think my new name is Dr. Fast
and my mommy doesn't know it.
But Dr. Fast (and she's not
going to know, because I'm scared
to tell my mommy)...
I don't know.

Kamari King



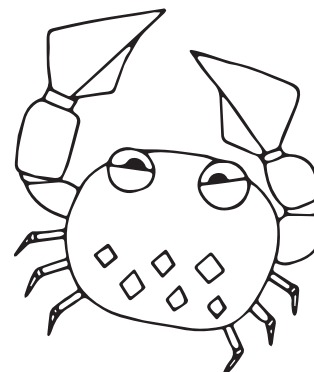
NO!

You tumble onto the dusty floor
with two broken bones
and a broken single heart,
allergic to the flowers
and it makes your skull spiral in your head.

Have you had a pure swirly?
It's like you are standing
on an invisible edge of Hell, and
on top of that, the worst songs
on my music playlist all evening.

This is the last straw.
You all put me on the outskirts
and the only friend I have is Christa.

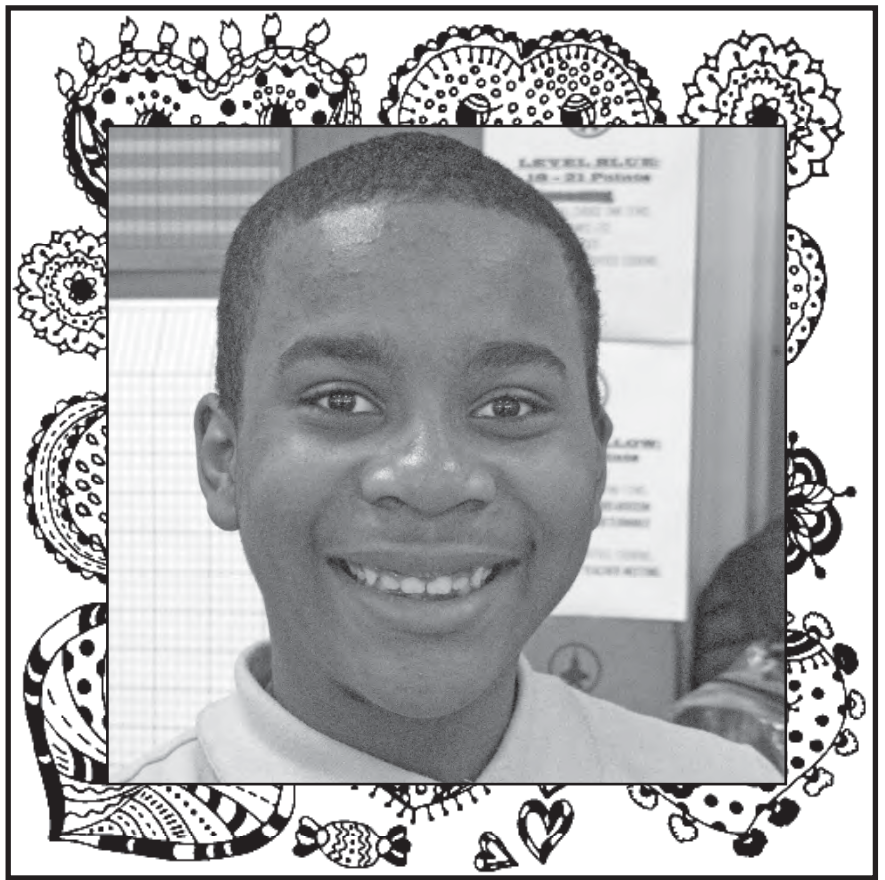
Armani Thornton



The Chaos

As I walk outside
I see buildings
tumble and crumble.
We see chaos,
some glass unbroken
on the sidewalk broken
glass in the trees and
the invisible skull
I see in my head
as I sit in class.
I close my eyes and
listen to music and
think of oceans and sea creatures
then think of branches on a tree
in a park, and think of
a pure swirl of vanilla and chocolate
that everyone likes.
Everywhere is chaos.

Amir Green

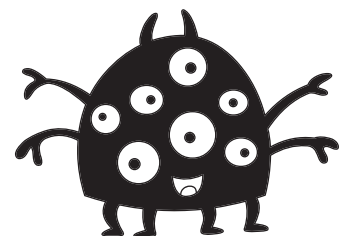


James Stewart

Magical

I began doing magic at the age of zero.
I started off with a magic phone
but then I lost it in the 4th grade.
That day I felt my magic come back.
That's when I questioned why,
and she came in with purple glasses
and a big binder
and I walked up to her.
I felt the magic
overflowing in my universe
slowly, it's a mystery,
how she had so much magic.
She became my BFF
We've been together since 4th grade.
Now we are listening to nice music while writing.
We plan to go to Ballou,
and then we plan to go to Maryland University.
So basically, were going to live together forever.

Armani Thornton





Phillip Williams

Yes/No

When I dance,
I always say yes. When I see
the ocean at the beach
I say yes! When
your music plays
you've got to say yes.
When I ask you are
you single, say yes. When
I hang out with my friend,
I say yes. When I get
in trouble, I say
no.

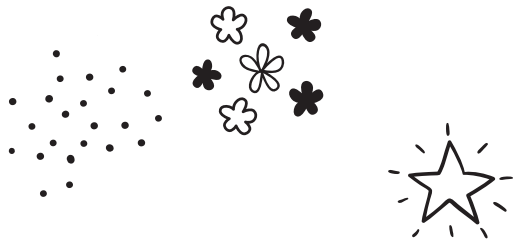
Ethan Akins

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





Micheal Thornton

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.

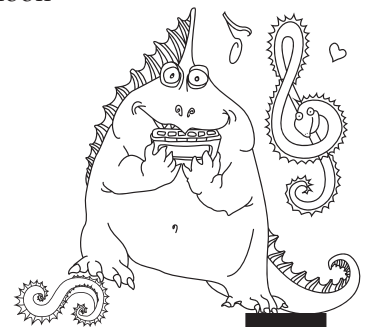
Christina Cook

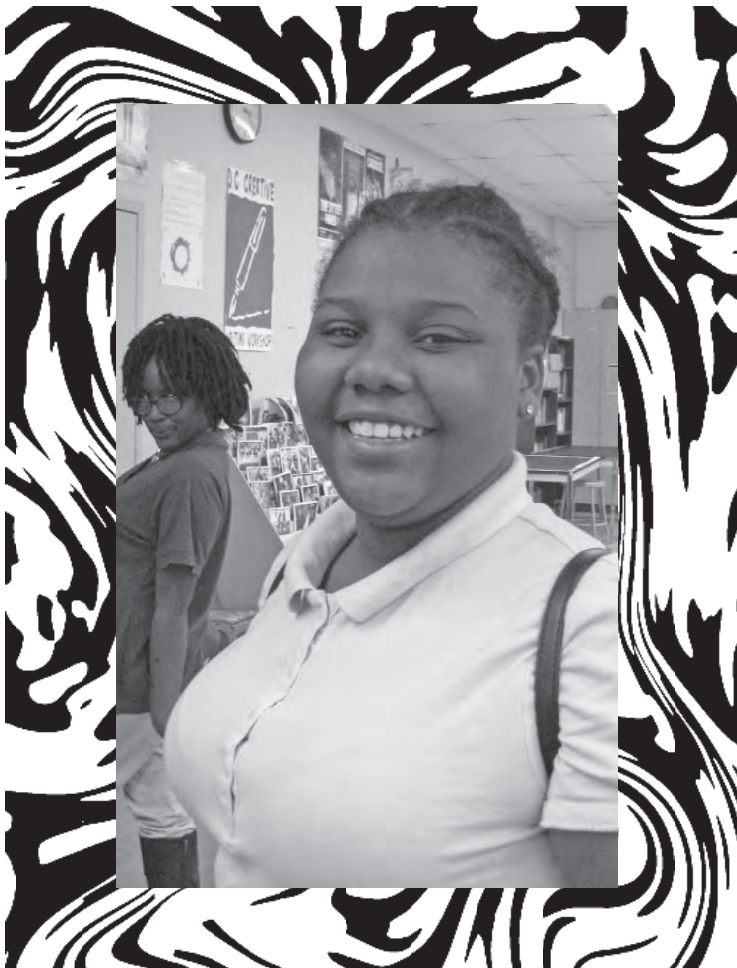


Destiny

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





l-r: Christa Madikaegbu, Kitana Williams



Zoom

My power is running fast and levitation.
I can make my brother float.
My mom can't reach something
and she knows I can.

The plane can't take off—
Oh, now it can.
The bird is hurt—
Oh, now it's back
in its nest. (WHOOOSH)

Do you hear that? (BOOM)
The plane is in the ocean—
Oh, now it's not.
My sister can't get her food fast—
Zoom, got it!
My friend needs a cake, quick—
Zoom, got it.
Me and my brother see a commercial.
We want the game on it—
Zoom, I got it.
I need to clean my room—
Zoom, I'm done.

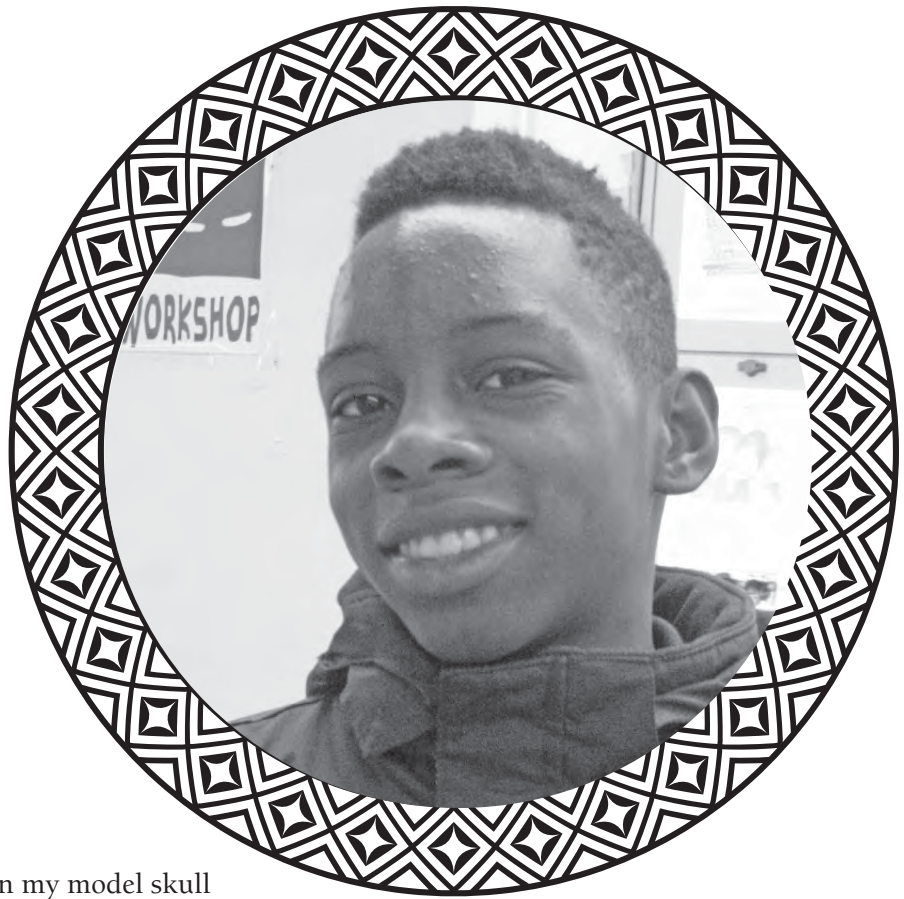
Arman Thornton

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





Trevonne Joyner

16, 17, 18

Another February,
16 days within the month;
The frost on my window falls on my model skull
the lovely scent of vanilla coming from a candle,
the only thing illuminating my dark room
quiet, all alone, sleeping in my bed.

Next day, I saw you, twice.
Maybe three times
but I couldn't help it and it was all your fault.
Now blood rushes to my cheeks when I see you.
Periodically staring for a while, so you won't notice,
and if this is my birthday gift,
I'm stuck with it now.

The 18th
Now I see what you haven't shown me,
her arms around you, and you doing the same.
I understand and know all I can do
is say a prayer and wait and wait
and wait... And still, sit down and
hide the feelings away in front of you.
I'm not very patient,
but I'm willing to wait for you...
And I still am.

Christa Madikaegbu

The Green Way

The green way is a way I wanna walk across.
It's like I wanna walk with positive things,
like making sure my grades are good
and golden things happening to me,
because the way I'm at now
is green mixed with yellow, and yeah,
it's not bad, but I know I can get better,
and see the Green Way;
I mean, I do see it a li'l, but
I want to really see it.

Jewel Jones





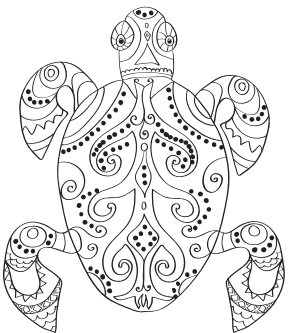
Gregory Grinage



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



Earthling Boy

"I discovered my powers in first grade.
My powers were fire, water, wind, and earth.
I only use my powers for good.
As I got older, my powers got stronger.
My soul didn't feel the same since first grade,
when I first figured out my power.
My destiny was to put all criminals in jail.
I got famous fast.
The people got me an ancient mansion."

His name was Timmy.
Now his name is Earthling.
So Earthling finished fighting,
and saved the world from everything.

Phillip Williams



l-r: Christa Madikaegbu, Saquan Short, Blake Mathews, Jalonnice Hawkins, Armani Thornton, DeAndre Jackson, Gary Imes, Nathan Bacchus

The Power of Super Speed

I started to feel some weird stuff in my hair,
 then it started to itch and it got worse
 so I went to the bathroom and looked in the mirror
 and my eyes started to glow with red and yellow electricity.
 After that, someone found me lying on the floor
 with froth coming out of my mouth.
 I was taken to the hospital,
 where the doctor said that I was
 suffering from a mysterious diagnosis.

Vincent Wingfield

The Golden Flash

I have the power of speed
 I can see all the people go slow
 I see a golden glare, and when I go so fast,
 people only see my shadow
 I fly so fast, I can orbit the sun
 When I fly, I can overcome darkness

Ethan Akins

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





Fire

*l-r: Christa Madikaegbu, Micheal Thornton,
Trevonne Joyner*

I began doing magic one evening
at the age of two.
I realized I was magical when, one day,
mysteriously unbroken
flames came from my right hand fingertips.

I only take my magic with me
when I feel like I'll be defeated.
It normally only comes out in a lab.
The darkness of the president's voice
makes my magic appear
Fire-rific!

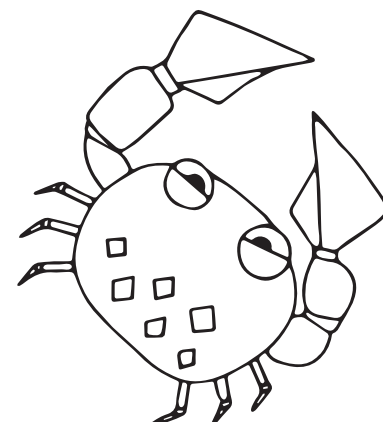
Don't put me near a plastic board
unless you want it melting in flames.

Shakira McPherson

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





Kevin Franks

Magic Me

I began doing magic at the age of 11:
I would like to have frozen powers
and run-fast powers
to save the world,
and I would like to have
a purple and blue hero suit.

I would save the world
from a slowly falling fireball.
I would fly up and then blow
breezy cold air, to freeze it
then throw it back over the sunset.

Ayanna Francois

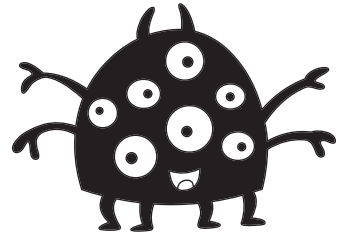
Future Past

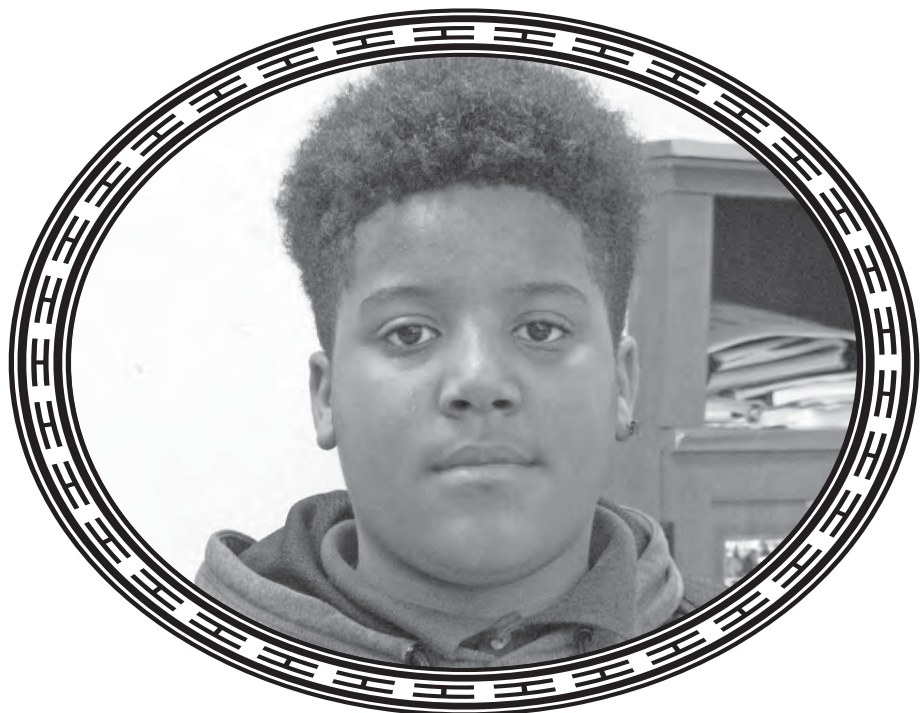
I like my power of tumbling;
If there were real-life magic
in my 9th grade skull,
blizzard of 2002—

I realized I was magic when
I was good at running fast.

I began doing magic at the age of 30 years old
and then I died at home in my sleep.

Saquan Short





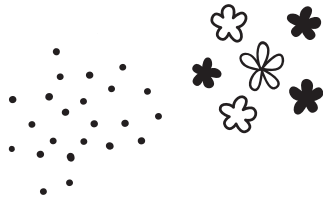
DeAndre Jackson

Bullying

Who knows when the bullying will stop?
Calling me ugly—saying I'm dumb
just makes me popular in the darkness.
Locked away, you'll never see it
but remember what's done in darkness
will come to light.
When I get home you'll never see me cry
long breaths, I try not to show how you hurt me
People end it all because of bullying
Imagine your family ending their lives
Why not just STOP?
I almost lost a friend to bullying
Isn't that something?
People think they know me and they judge
but it hurts inside
No words spoken; there's laughter outside but
it's not funny—silently,
I stay quiet wondering, *Why me?*
Will anyone else be floating away,
disappearing from the world?
I try to hang on, but who knows when
bullying will stop.

Trevonne Joyner

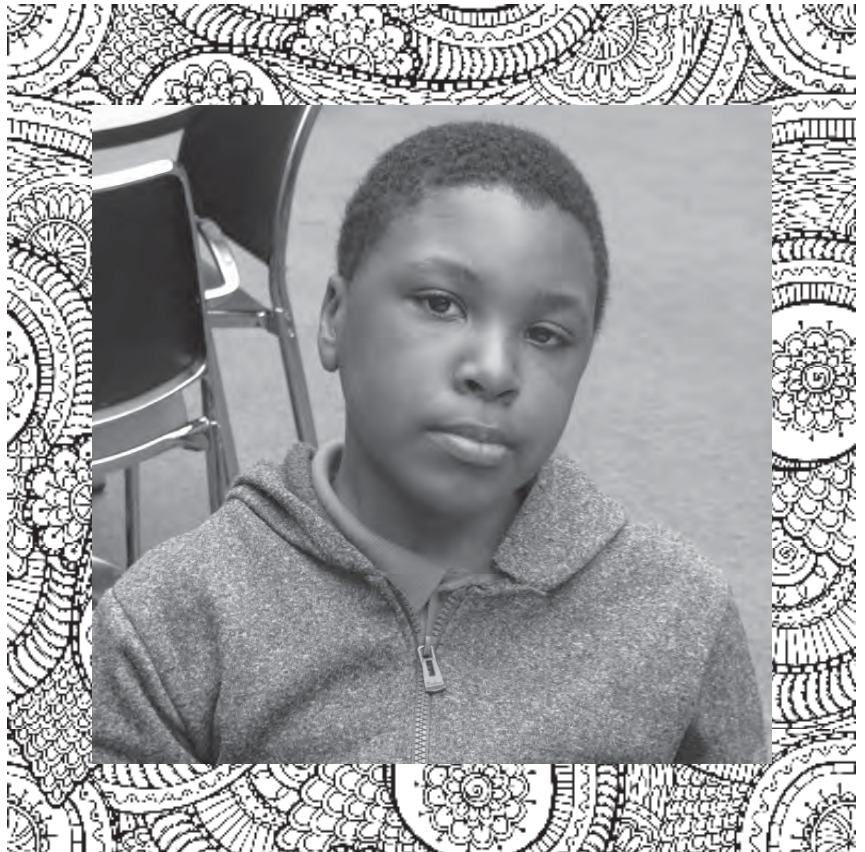




Entangled Words

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

Bunny Stevenson



Kamari King

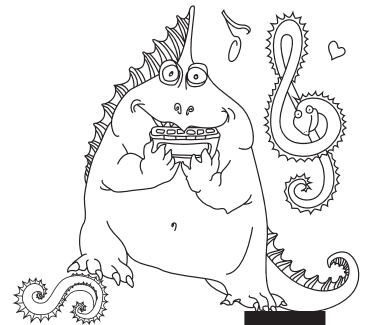
Not From a Squad of Saints

I'm from the underground, where all my demons lie
I'm from gasoline and the scent within a bakery
I'm surrounded by stressed-out heathens
with heavy, dirty souls.

I came from the echo of their screams
I'm made with sour candy and cinnamon
I'm filled with sarcasm and generosity
I'm the one person who writes sins, not tragedies.

I believe crazy equals genius, and I wake up
at four in the afternoon;
I was behind the death of a bachelor.
My name is Lucifer, but you can
call me Satan.

Christa Madikaegbu





Denahi McNeil



Where I'm from

D.C. is as dirty as a dumpster;
 I'm from apartments and baby mothers
 I'm from fried chicken and kool-aid
 I'm from parks and pools.
 No, I'm not from North Carolina—
 I'm from tall people, and no shorts,
 Except for girls

Trevonne Joyner

8 plus 4

One – you enjoy my dark sense of humor
 Two – your randomness and creativity make me smile
 Three – you make me into a kinder person
 Four – you inspire me
 Five – you make me believe, and bring out my creativity
 Six – you talk a lot, and it's always nice and positive
 Seven – the fact you can't dance makes me happy
 Eight – you act so hostile, when you're really wise
 Nine – you are wild and hilarious
 Ten – people underestimate you, but I know you are really strong

Christa Madikaegbu





Savion Lomax

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

A recipe for disaster

First you take three of my demons
and frost them each with an inch of pain;
Then you let them sit in a bowl
and add a handful of my darkest memories
and melt them in a cup;
After that you pour a cup of darkness over my
frozen demons, then you sprinkle some loneliness
and mix the batter with an ocean's worth of sugar
made from the soul of a saint.
Bake it in the oven for half an hour, and, Taa-Daa!
You have a purified soul, but this wasn't supposed to happen.
What a disaster!

Christa Madikaegbu





Armani Thornton

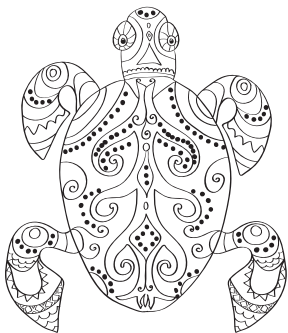
Rise

The world wasn't made to put me down
But I don't regret what I've done
I believe I can see the darkness in all the shadows
I don't believe in no one suffering
even the unknown.

If I speak, I'm fulfilling my destiny
but when I'm quiet, I admit my defeat.
To love is to live—now I must rise
and ride into the sunset—

Farewell.

Christian Harrison



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



l-r: Armani Thornton, Christa Madikaegbu, Saquan Short, Bunny Stevenson

I'm a King

I come from wild flames
I make my home the best
I see the future and I wonder:
Why am I so rich?

When I am alone I feast
I imagine that I can float on the clouds
Every day I see my sapphire birthstone
but if I look closely, I see my heartbeat

A voice inside me says poison him but I say, "No"
and I want to tell the world, but no one will believe me
Right now I'm crying
but someday I will stop crying and rise up
I wish all of this would never have happened

Christian Harrison

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





l-r: Vincent Wingfield, Armani Thornton

Thank You

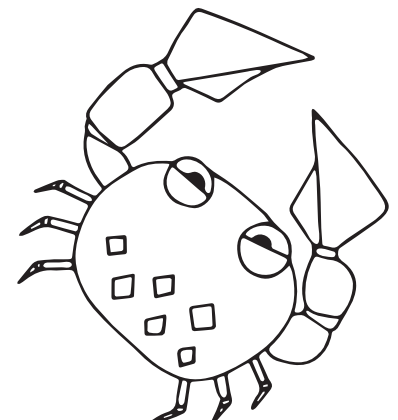
Shadows + Secrets

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

One – you've always given love to me
 Two – you've meant more to me than I've ever seen
 Three – you made me invulnerable to all pain
 Four - You've driven me wherever I want
 Five - You've helped me to do the impossible
 Six – I will never not be able to call you friend
 Seven – you've made me smart as a whip
 Eight – you taught me how to jone
 Nine – I love math because of you
 Ten – you've brought me wherever I needed to go

Christian Harrison



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



Arman Thornton

Me and my Fam

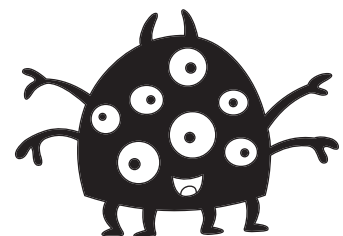
I'm from an artistic background
drawing anime when I'm in the house
thinking about Dragonball Z.
My sisters are athletes—the older
plays soccer and my little sister shoots
hoops so good it will make you cry.
I play both, but I can block a goal like no one else can.
My dribbling skills could make a dog wail.
My words are, most of the time, sweet
because when I talk, I always think.

Christian Harrison

Who Knows?

Who knows if this pillow is ripped?
Who knows that the sky is neverending?
Who knows that the darkness scares children?
Who knows the dark can be found at night time?
Who knows that I can be silent all day?
Who knows that the full moon is bright?

Judiana Benjamin





Vincent Wingfield

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.

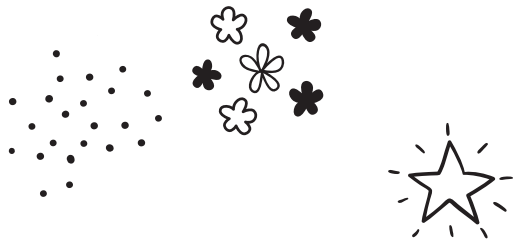
Jamel Pettaway



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 illd
 You can take my rhymes but you gon get stealed
 The world was only made for me and my peers

Mykel Woodbury



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

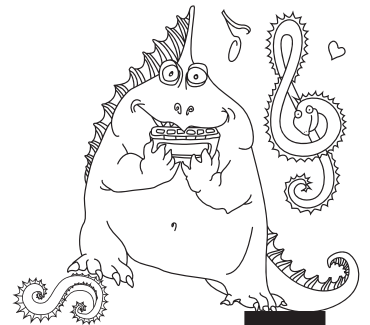


l-r: Jayden Gray, Kevin Franks, Jahir Gray

10 People

One – you are nice, like the weather tonight
 Two – you are loving, like a puppy
 Three – you are kind, like a bestie
 Four – you are positive, like my coach
 Five – you are uplifting when I am sad
 Six – you are nice when others are mean
 Seven – you are crazy in a good way
 Eight – you are loving, like a parent should be
 Nine – you are nice to me even when I'm mad
 Ten – sorry, I have nothing to say to you

Judiana Benjamin





DeAndre Jackson



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

About Me

I see the flames in the distance
The softness in my skin
If someone betrays me
I will slap them
The moonlight shines on my house
I sit in silence—the ocean waves are calming
I will forever love purple

Judiana Benjamin



My Regret

I regret ever talking back to my Mom
Perhaps if I didn't talk back
I would have been fine
My arrival to school is sometimes late
Perhaps if I got to sleep on time
I would be fine
I went outside yesterday, but I'm not
going outside today
Darkness makes me calm
I change my game in PS4
I look out of my window & when the
sunset comes, I know it's time for bed
so now my gesture when my mom talks
is good

Judiana Benjamin



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

l-r: Gary Imes, Saquan Short, Blake Mathews, Jalonnie Hawkins

Who Knows

Who knows the darkness is coming?
 It is very dark
 You can see the full moon
 People's moves are smooth
 and also they're silent
 The air is so bad you can't breathe
 Where is the magenta sun?
 People are disappearing
 Look out the window.

DeAndre Jackson





Shakira McPherson



15

Hope

I believe it is a wonderful earth I'm in.
It is amazing as a waterfall and
sometimes I feel like I could regret it
because Trump and the President of
North Korea may do something terrible
but I hope not.

DeAndre Jackson

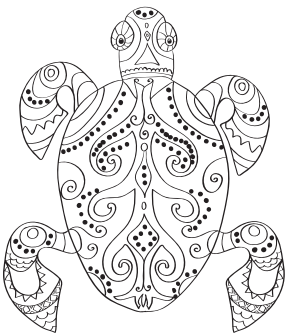
Who knows that you can do anything?
A mountain can become
as short as an anthill;
I love amber, but I don't know
what magenta means.

Micheal Thornton

How to make a cardboard train

Take 4 cups of glue
Crush 4 cups of glitter
Add a year's supply of stars & a day's worth
of cardboard
Fold in the sides—pour the glue and glitter over
all of the cardboard
Shake the stars onto the glue and
toss all the trash away

Judiana Benjamin





l-r: DeAndre Jackson, Nathan Bacchus, Gary Imes, Blake Mathews, Isyah Joyner

Ten People

One – you are my everything
 Two – you make me laugh like a baby
 Three – you’ve been there when I needed you
 Four – you make me tough like a man
 Five – you are very creative like a painting
 Six – you’re silly but I love you
 Seven – I really care about you
 Eight – I don’t get to see you a lot but I feel you in my heart
 Nine – you’re the best at Call of Duty and I like bonding with you
 Ten – you’re my nephew and my best friend

Isyah Joyner

Go Outside

I’m from my Mom and my Dad
 I hear yelling from angered people
 I feel tension in my body when I hear
 them shouting
 I smell fried chicken when my aunt is cooking
 I taste good food when I eat dinner
 I see kids playing when I’m outside

Micheal Thornton





*l-r: Christian Harrison, DeAndre Jackson,
Gary Imes*



No One Knows

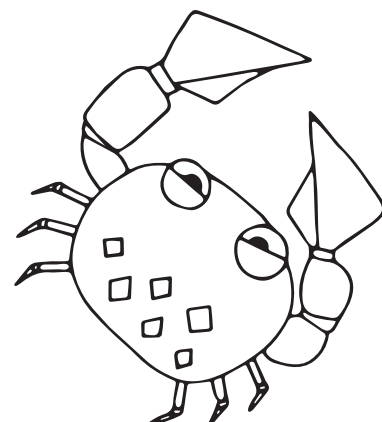
Who knows that you can climb a mountain
as tall as a skyscraper?
I can see the darkness and
the evil within the dark
Floating in the sky, not because I'm shy
or because of the old lady across the street
or, if the wandering kid across the hall is
hanging out the window, and
at night you can see the
full moon.

Isyah Joyner

My Thoughts

My gaze is unknown
like the universal sunset
It orbits and spirals
so my window opens to afternoon
Souls observe my love and exist, but
you still distance yourself
My love is overflowing
I love you, do you love me?
It is unexpected
When I look, my love
is owned and not taken
Love is a mystery, but today
is a good day to love

Kitana Williams





Blake Mathews

I am what I want to be

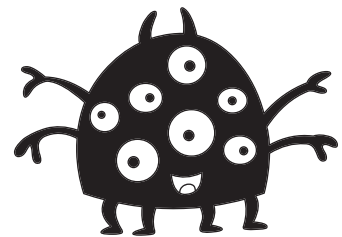
I regret some things that I do
 It's like a mystery, but people make me mad
 because the things I do are my creation
 If it is my creation, then it exists
 and you will have to get over it
 because it's my shadow
 My back story is like my golden window
 I will never stop on my first defeat
 I will move forward, and won't change
 My life is mine & how I live it is up to me
 So back off—I won't let you rob me
 of my creativity or my imagination
 This is my custom—this is what I believe in
 What I see is in my eyes
 The world wasn't made for you to judge me

Isyah Joyner

Why we need things

Who knows how I dream?
 Who knows how a mountain is made?
 Who knows what we see out the window?
 Who knows why we need a pillow?
 Who knows why we need the sky?

Tyion Ross





Gary Imes

Who am I?

I come from nothingness.
I see an ocean
and I wonder about my heartbeat.
Every day I see shadows.
I wish I had rubies and gold.
Right now I am a wind.
A voice inside me says to
be successful in life.

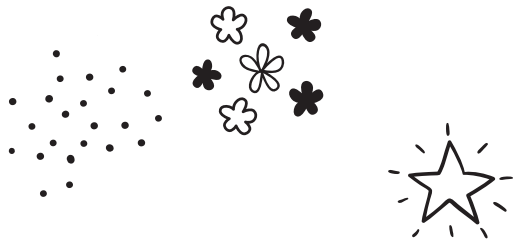
Who Knows?

Tyion Ross

Who knows if the mountain can speak?
Who knows if the mountain can breathe?
Who knows if the full moon is magenta,
When the whole time it can be green?
What if the spring was in December?
The child got amnesia so you ask her, "Do you remember?"
If you didn't get the joke, then you better start packing, like seriously
How could you forget the lyrics of the king of pop, Michael Jackson?
What if it was dark and out of nowhere you heard a spark;
You see a person floating—How can he do that
with no magic, no potion? You didn't see Casper
but you heard a bunch of laughter
Wandering in the darkness, knowing you're not part
of this—Who is this guy? Did he come from the sky?
He looks kind of shy—he just said goodbye
then disappeared—that was the beginning
Now it's the end—who knows what might be
in store next, my friend?

Jailyn Smith





My Life

I come from NYC and love
 I make my home loving and good
 I see my Mom, and she is love to me
 and I wonder if she has bones and a soul
 When I'm alone I see a lot of clouds
 I imagine that I can cry a rose
 Every day I see love and flames
 but if I look closely I see my Mom and Dad
 A voice inside me says to love all and be good
 and I want to tell the world to die and love me
 Right now I am flames
 but someday I will be nothingness

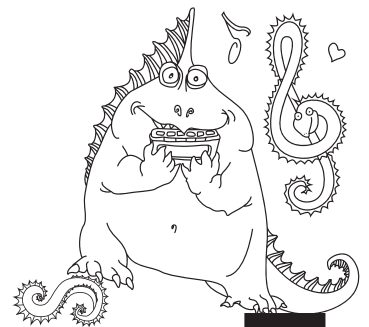
Kitana Williams

Kitana Williams

My Gaze

My gaze is a sunflower handkerchief
 I walk the roads, looking right and left
 unwittingly, and at each moment
 is what I never saw before, overflowing
 having that sheer wonder
 that a newborn child would have
 from the shadows

Saquan Short





Saquan Short



Violence

Who knows if the dark is smooth?
Looking out the glass octagon window
to see if the darkness will disappear
Who knows if climbing the skyscraper
will tell me if the moons full?
Who knows if the rain will turn
into aliens and sing lullabies to the babies?
Who knows if the floating planes
surrounding us will block the jagged streets?
Who knows if I will dream about
a mountain filled with lava, or my pillow?
Will I burst into flames?

Shanay Lesane

Some Day

I come from heartbreak
I make my home unbelievable
I see everlasting dollar signs
and I wonder if it will really last forever
When I am alone in my room I dream about my family
I imagine that I can have my own glittering daycare
Every day I see my afternoon friends
We play the Play Station 4, but if I look closely
I see crumbling emeralds
A voice inside me says, "No!"
and I want to tell the world I am inspirational
Right now I am nothing, but someday
I will have a fortune
I wish all my dreams would come true

Shanay Lesane





Born in New York Raised in D.C.

l-r: Nathan Bacchus, DeAndre Jackson

No I'm not from D.C.
 But I was raised here
 As you get older in the DMV, you see things more clear
 Where celebrities are barely known here
 Only people you'll ever hear
 Are Taraji P. Henson, Wale and a few others
 Right now I can't think
 The difference between New York and D.C. is
 D.C. is not a state, but the President resides here
 The only thing I don't like about the big apple
 is that Donald Trump lives there
 D.C. is not a bad place to grow up
 The number one rule—watch your back
 D.C. is not as big as N.Y. but it's okay
 I'm glad to be born in New York but raised in D.C.
 Now you know my story
 What's the next state?
 Tennessee?

Jailyn Smith

Washington D.C.

I live in a neighborhood where beef lives
 It is called Third World
 People get robbed every day
 People get into fights every day
 People get shot at every day
 Fourth and Third Streets are not a good hood

Omarion Butler





l-r: Vincent Wingfield,
Armani Thornton



Ewwwwww

How to make Jade:

You start with a hand full of lazy
and then a half an hour of letting it bake;
After that's done, put in a pinch of lit and
a cup of dry and spread some love and
hate over it, then mix in some ugly
and you will have a lifetime supply of Jade.

Na'jee Ferguson

Ugly Faces

Parents look so ugly when they make
a face that balls up to let you know that
you're in trouble.

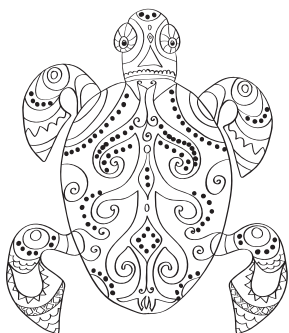
Sometimes, people smile to show that they're
happy, but their faces look so ugly that I
just smile back so they think the same.
It's like their face is held down by gravity;
It's just so ugly.

Na'jee Ferguson

Super Me

I come from outer space with super powers that
I didn't even know I had
I make my home out of gold
I see birds flying around me through the air which
I've never seen better
and I wonder why I was sent to earth
When I am alone I wonder what my planet is like

Micheal Thornton





l-r: Vincent Wingfield, Arman Thornton, Isyah Joyner, Armani Thornton, Kamari King

The Hood

I'm from the hood
where stop signs are yield signs
and 5 year olds walk to school alone

I'm from the hood
where noodles, hot dogs and beans, or PB &J's
weren't a struggle meal, or
where middle school kids
can't act like children

I'm from the hood
where every other corner is a store
or a drug dealer
I'm from the hood
where living and having fun is drinking and smoking

I'm from the hood
where neighborhoods two feet away from each other beef
and where communication is not key
and no one can argue without guns being involved

I'm from the hood
where there can be 12 feet of snow and school is still open
I am Bunny
I am from the dirty south
I am from the hood of D.C.

Bunny Stevenson

Thanksgiving

I wake up in a good mood,
smelling the good food
plus there is no school
so I am cool.
I get out of my bed
and my Mom is cooking
Thanksgiving dinner.
She said come and sit down
so I sit down with a smile.
I turn on the Turkey Bowl
until Thanksgiving dinner is served.

Omarion Butler



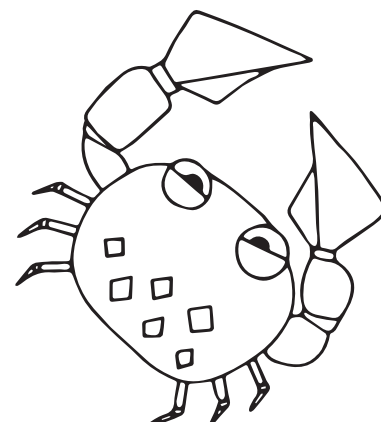


*l-r: DeAndre Jackson, Gary Imes, Saquan Short,
Blake Mathews, Jalonnies Hawkins*

13

I come from my Mother's place.
I make my home over eyes.
I see flames inside a fireplace
and I wonder how big the ocean is.
When I am alone I play fortune.
I imagine I can build a tower out of legos.
Every day I see different eyes but
if I look closely I see cotton overhead.
A voice inside me asks, "Hey, do you have any grapes?"
and I want to tell the world, "Good Afternoon."
Right now I am playing GTA
but someday I will own GTA.
I wish that I could move my Mom
out of the projects.

Arman Thornton





l-r: Bunny Stevenson, Arman Thornton, Kamari King

My Home

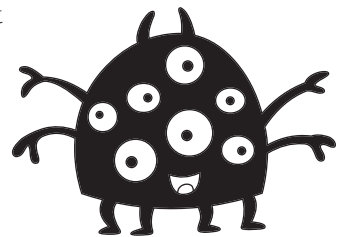
I come from a palace with flames
 I make my home out of purest cotton and silence
 I see a cave with emeralds, rubies, topaz,
 sapphire and bronze
 I wonder when I am asleep
 I wander in a hurricane and clouds
 When I am alone I go someplace for
 a special memory that I like, from
 back when I was little

Shaki Knight

My undone life

I came from a far village out in the west
 I make my home with unbelievable power
 I see a palace in the moonlight, looking with my eyes
 I will never forget the fortune
 and I wonder if the clouds are where God is at
 When I am alone I think the tower is full of
 unbelievable strength
 I imagine that I can fly above the clouds
 and I feel the wind
 Everywhere I look I see people with babies
 but if I look closer, I see just me

Leondre Johnson





Savion Lomax

My Mystery

I regret my not
being here for the
last writing club meeting.
I observe how
people feel when
I say I will stay
but end up leaving
outside to go into
the unknown and
I have to say
farewell to writing
club. Someday there will be
no injustice, and no one
will be unremembered.

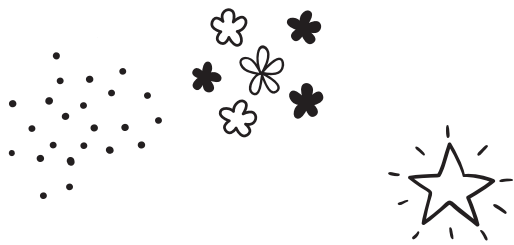
Amir Green

Silence and Strength

I come from emeralds within my skin
I make my home in my heartbeat
I see poison in the darkness
and I wonder when my eyes will meet the antidote
When I'm alone I watch the wind blow the flowers
I imagine I can become the inspiration I want to be
Every day I see whirling moonlight in the sky
but if I look closely I can see glittering sapphires
I want to tell the world that silence may one day
become my strength
Right now I am drifting in my thoughts
but someday I will cradle the twilight to sleep
I wish silence will one day become my strength

Aubrey Miller

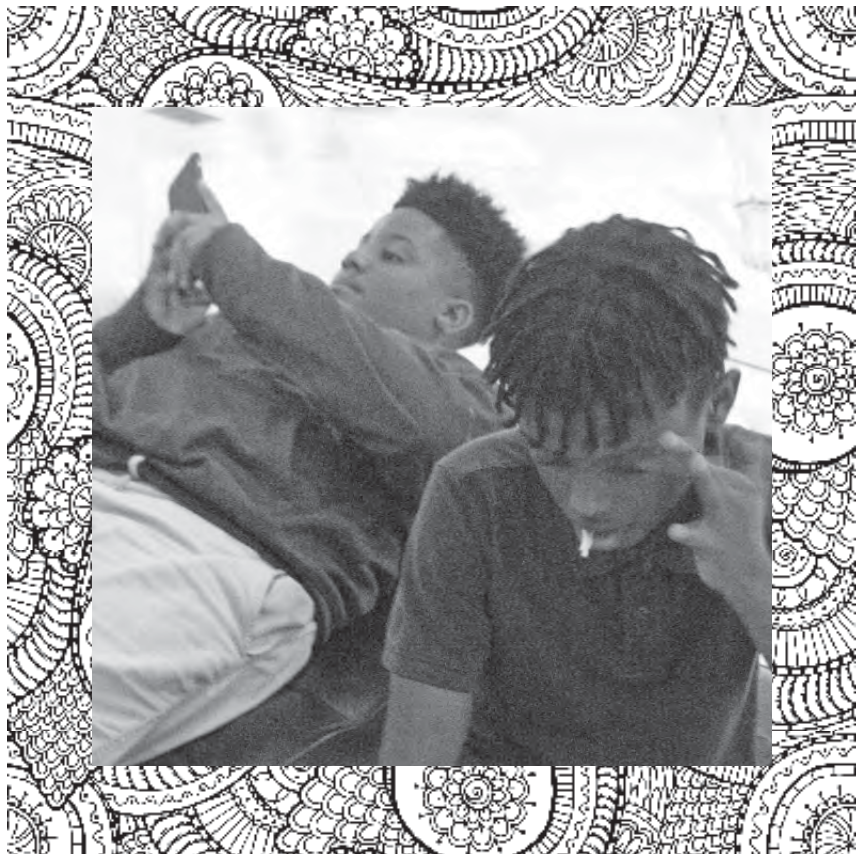




I Am From D.C.

I'm from my Mom and Dad
 I was raised well
 I'm from crackers and cheese—
 They taste good
 I'm the controller,
 and I control the game
 I'm the exhaust
 from mom's car in DC.

Amir Green



l-r: DeAndre Jackson, Nathan Bacchus

I Am from D.C.

I am from candy red
 gummy bears
 I am from Art and
 permanent paint
 I am from Math Books
 from school
 I am from my Mommy
 I am from cool cars
 of King Industry.

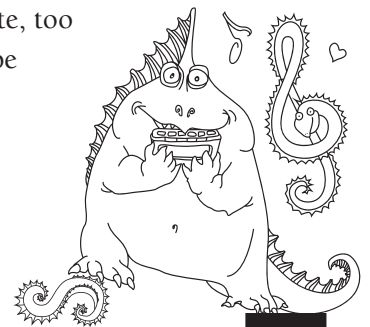
Kamari King



Majestic I

I come from cash
 I make my home into a palace
 I see the future and I wonder if I can see the past
 When I am alone I meditate and collect my inner
 energy and chi in the softest breeze
 I imagine that I can punch through the clouds
 of heaven and talk to God himself
 Every day I see through my haters and keep walking, but
 if I look closely I can see the people I love and care for
 A voice inside me says to meditate for more strength
 and I want to tell the world they can meditate, too
 Right now I am bronze, but someday I will be
 majestic diamonds

Joquan Knight





Jalonnie Hawkins

No One Knows

Who knows if the sky is smooth?
Who knows if dreams are going to happen?
Who knows if the sky is silent?
Who knows if the sky will disappear?
Who knows if skyscrapers are going to
be gone? Who knows that we
are darkness?

Ethan Akins



My World

My gaze is like
a sunset and
sometimes defeat.
I believe that the
sky is green and blue,
that it wasn't made
for me, but
if I want to
speak I can
exist, and
the life of
regrets means
I have no darkness,
not because of shadows
but because
of friendships.

Ethan Akins

How to Make Best Friends

A pinch of cool
A bunch of Dad
A handful of neat
and a pinch of goku hair
Stir with a bunch of cute girls
Sprinkle laughter on the keyboard
Chop up the code
You got Leo,
Tyion and Grace

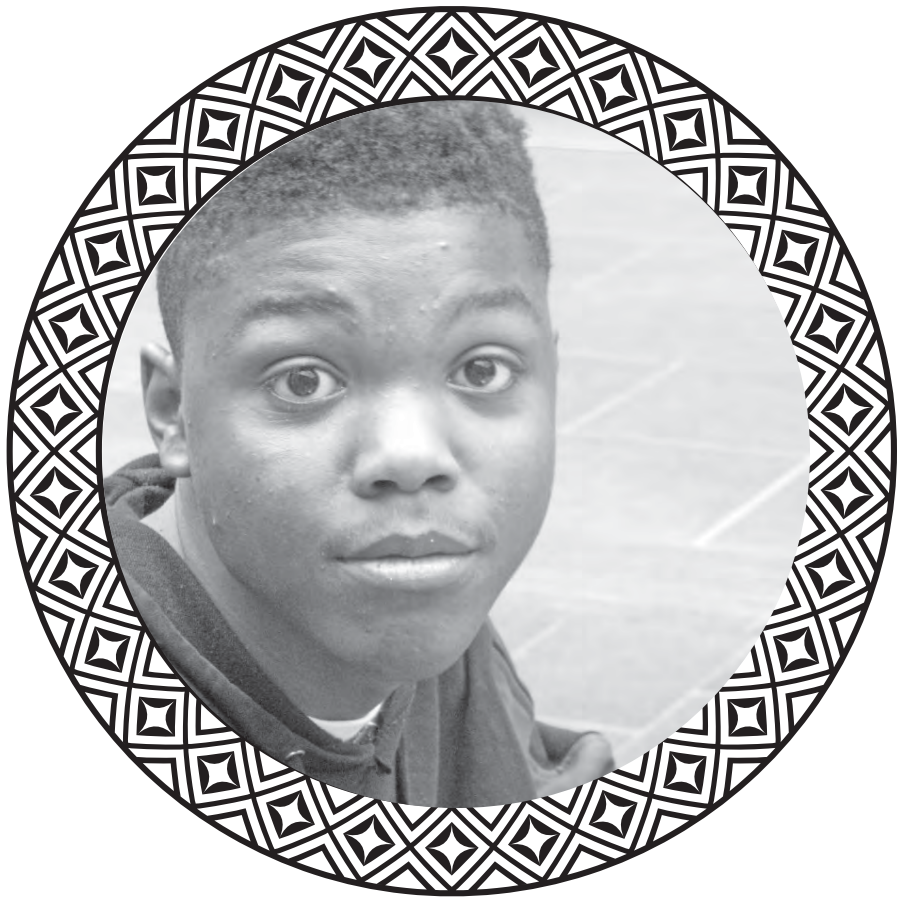
Ethan Akins

The End?

Who knows if a full moon
will fall from space into
a volcano while water spills
over a dark silent skyscraper,
wiping out half of the
world?

The wandering sky,
floating over a mountain;
Kids having amazing dreamy
dreams in darkness.
The end.

Vincent Wingfield



Saquan Short

My Gaze from History

My gaze is like a mystery
changing by time, passing by
souls from the underworld.
I believe in unwitting triumph
over bad consequences of
bad people.
I have no ancient creation
that once conquered and defeated
the gods and goddesses of
ancient Egypt.
If I speak of
suffering the unexpected, it will
be an honor to serve injustice and
the good people that exist
from now on.

Vincent Wingfield

What I Believe

My philosophy is good
and my philosophy is art
and my philosophy is food
and my philosophy is caring
and my philosophy is my phone
and my philosophy is be a good brother
and my philosophy is cool cars

Kamari King





Christa Madikaegbut



Buildings

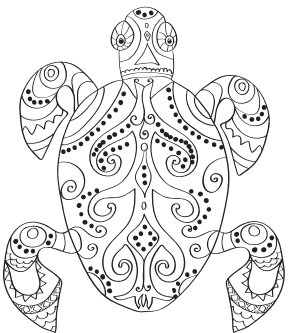
I'm from 37th Place, where trees
fall on school buildings.
No, I'm not from Maryland, where
people get evicted.

Vincent Wingfield

Ten People

One: She seems dark and crazy—She's not
Two: He's all bark and no bite sometimes
Three: He's tough on the outside, but soft
only for the special someone
Four: She only has anger problems
when she gets mad
Five: She has the best name ever
Six: She is helpful when you leave your phone... sometimes
Seven: She is hilarious when it comes to anything
Eight: She sometimes connects to me
Nine: She is heavy handed a lot, but the best
Ten: She is the boss lady in the bunch, but funny

Armani Thornton





l-r: Gary Imes, Jalonnie Hawkins, Blake Mathews, DeAndre Jackson

How to Make a Clubhouse from Couch Pillows

First, put four cups of
Creativity while adding a pinch
Of sweet ol' beats
Second, use a heaping tablespoon of excitement
With some Niagara Falls syrup
And blend
Mix with cotton while
Using a year's supply of
Magnetic chocolate

Vincent Wingfield

Recipe for a Healthy Relationship, NOT!

A year's supply of lies
4 cups of hatred
A heaping tablespoon of anger
A handful of nastiness
A teaspoon of resentment
And a handful of anger issues
Stir it all up and you get a bad relationship

Armani Thornton





Bunny Stevenson



Ten Favorites

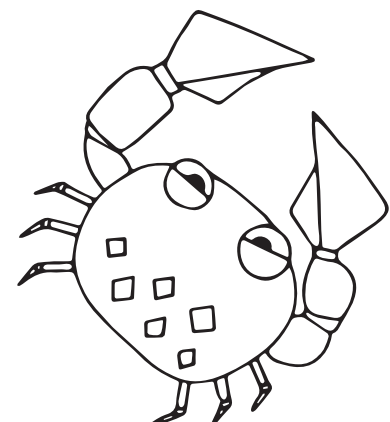
- One - You are the something in nothing
- Two - You're the strongest, funniest man I know
- Three - You're my favorite aunt
- Four - You're my favorite sister, a lil psycho
- Five - You make me laugh
- Six - You're my favorite niece
- Seven - You're my favorite nephew
- Eight - You're my favorite brother
- Nine - You stay by my side and you look after me
- Ten - You're ok and fun if you don't be a jerk

Arman Thornton

Don't Know

I'm from D.C.
 I'm from my mom.
 I'm not from Dubai.
 I want to be in Dubai.
 I wish I could say I
 woke up in a new Bugatti
 but the truth is I woke up in my bed.
 I'm not from the north.
 I'm from the south.

Arman Thornton



Universal

I wish to go to space
once in my life so
I need to become
an astronaut when I grow up
and become a space pilot
and go to space and
see the universal system.
It took me one million days
to get to earth, but I died.
I believe that space is a
cool and calm place.
To love is to become one with the
universe. I have no worries.
I died, but I am not worried.

Leondre Johnson



Isyah Joyner

Bravery

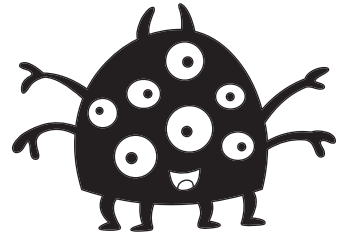
Who'd go down the long dark road?
The sky is orange-purple
Jeff's mom sings him a lullaby
She fluffs his pillow
He takes deep breaths and exhales
He looks out the window, he
looks at the darkness and the
silent skyscraper, smooth all
the way up. He was shy.
The beginning disappeared.

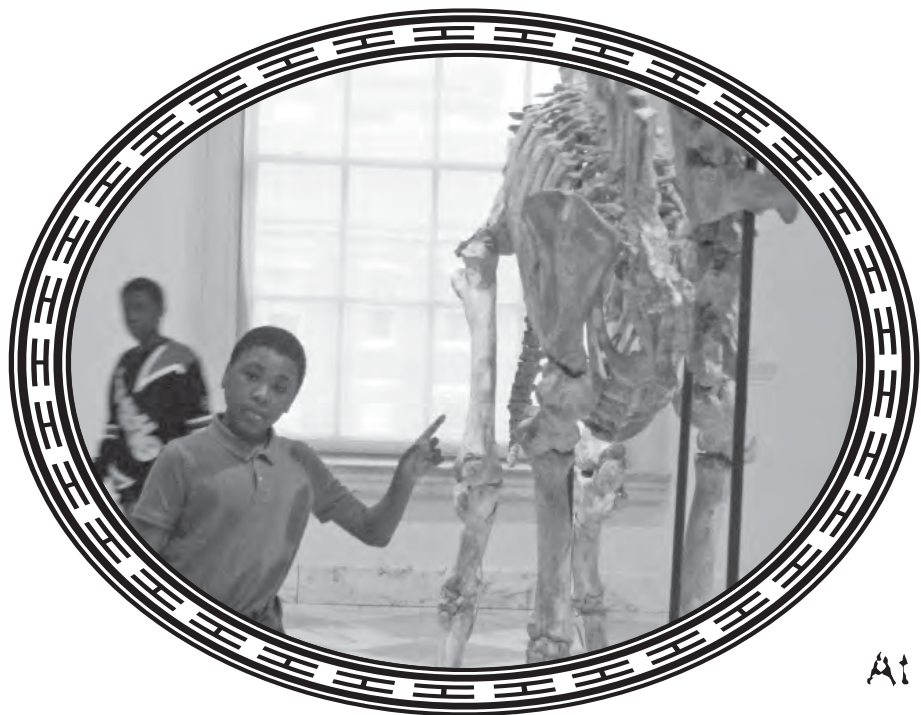
Armani Thornton

D.C Childhood

We used to play pretend, give each
other different names; we would build a
rocket ship, then we would fly it far
away, used to dream of outer space.
Now my Mom laughs in my face, saying
"Wake up! You need to make money!" Yeah,
born in your imagination and died
the day I grew up."

Arman Thornton





l-r: Gary Imes, Kamari King

Sidetracked

My gaze is the gaze you have never seen
and sometimes it's brighter than the sun.
I believe in magic.

The world wasn't made of
cotton candy and gum drops.

Life is hard and rough.

The ancient unknown still exists
but never existed at the same time.

Armani Thornton



At 3:15

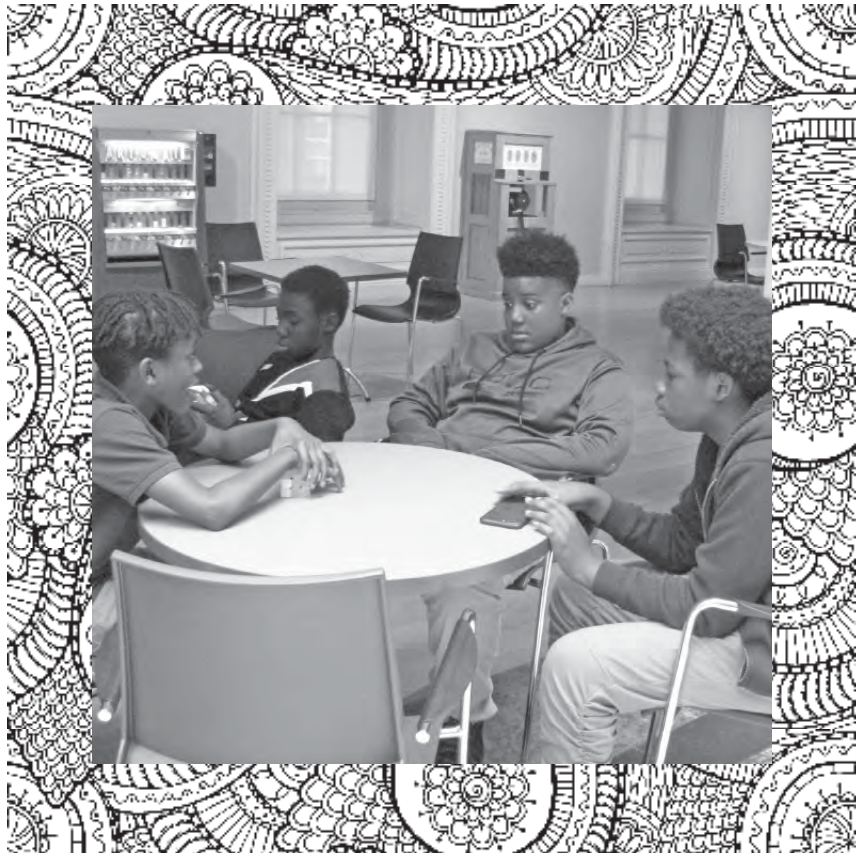
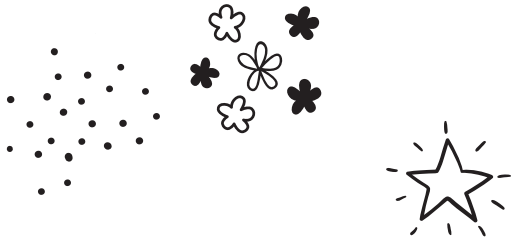
When I get out of school I hear
honking horns and crying babies.
When I get in the house, I feel
safe and ok. When I open the
window I smell smoke and
cookout food. When I try
to eat, I taste cookies and
pizza. Also when I go outside
I see people and cars.

Leondre Johnson

Watching Cars

My gaze is clear as a Lamborghini
Car spotting is my hobby
Looking left and right is what I do best
If I speak about not knowing cars, it's a lie
I do
I don't know any words
Wait—that's a lie
but I don't like to lie

Arman Thornton



Who Knows?

l-r: Nathan Bacchus, Gary Imes, DeAndre Jackson, Savion Lomax

Who knows if space is dreamy?
 Who knows if mountains are boulders?
 Who knows if amber is gold?
 Who knows dark is darkness?
 Who knows if pillows soften?
 Who knows if silence is silent enough?
 Who knows if laughter gets louder?

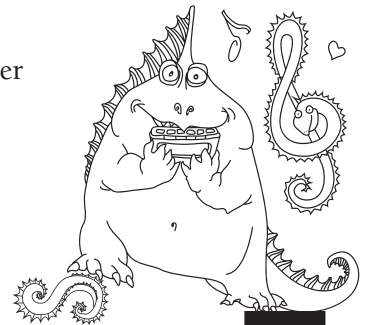
Savion Lomax



The Darkness Adventure

When the darkness brushes his teeth
 they are shiny and bright
 and he dreams of military school
 and he dreams of being out of the country on a farm.
 The darkness is hard like a stone.
 It has magic,
 setting things on fire
 turning everything black.
 The darkness swims underwater
 and covers the Earth.

Steven Brown





l-r: Saquan Short, Jalonnie Hawkins



Lead #2

Inflexibility of pencils:
 The orange part of the pencil
 is wooden, the ink is in the pencil.
 The pencil has an eraser
 in a metal part on
 top of the pencil.
 The pencil can't bend.

Amari Knott

I Am a Blackbird Ahhhhh!!!!

I get free from boredom
 when my mom tries to beat me
 I beat the system and throw
 legos all over my room
 so she can step on the legos
 and sometimes I get angry and
 go ape and meet me up on
 boulevard street to play on
 my Xbox ones and
 I am a blackbird
 Never forget it
 Ahhhhhh!!!!

Ricardo White



How to Make the Ugliest Person

Two cups of continuous hatefulness
 Four sprinkles of pettiness
 Five half cups of dark matter
 One cup of jagged ragged edges
 And six cups of shut up

Joquan Knight



l-r: Barack Obama, Kamari King

How to Make a Healthy Relationship

To start off, you'll need 4 cups of a day's worth
Then you'll add a drizzle of love
Next you'll add a pinch of gifts
The third step is to freeze
all of the negativity and drama
Then you'll add a dab of ranch
Mix all of the ingredients all together
to shake a year's supply of a big happy family
The last step is to add a teaspoon of commitment and passion
To add the topping
you'll need to add a basket of loyalty and trust
mixed with kisses at the end!
Happy wife makes a happy life!

Jada Kelly





*l-r: Jalonnie Hawkins,
DeAndre Jackson,
Savion Lomax*



Fluffy Doggy

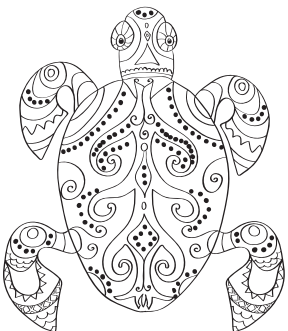
The white fluffy dog attacks evil people after doggy paddling in the triangle pool. Fluffy glanced at the evil people in anger and went home unhurt.

Tamia Moyd

Perfect Place

I came from a palace
I make my home a place where I can feast
I see flames in the distance
and I wonder if someone I love will betray me and
not love me anymore
When I am alone I wonder if I will live forever
I imagine that I can calm oceans
Every day I see emeralds and rubies
but if I look closely I see sapphires glittering
like the moonlight
A voice inside me says my eyes shine like bronze
and I want to tell the world that everyone is beautiful
Right now I am happy as a cloud, but someday I will be majestic

Laniyah Johnson





l-r: Savion Lomax, Nathan Bacchus

About Life

I come from a faraway village
 and I make my home out of gold.
 I see people every day.
 Sometimes I imagine that I could rap
 and that I would be rich.
 A voice in my head says that I am thirsty.
 I feel like I am a far distance away from people
 but some day I will have forgiveness.
 I wish people would be silent so I could work
 and students could hear instruction.
 I wonder when we are gonna have an
 actual hurricane around here.

Andre Hicks

The Scared Bird

The scared bird was named Chip because
 he was a chip off the old block
 Chip fell out of the tree
 because he was attacked by another bird
 who was named Chucky
 You can tell he's a bully
 That's when I heard this other bird named Ben
 He said, You know what happened
 to the last bird Chucky saw?
 Chucky pulled the bird by his beak
 When Chip heard the story he moved
 out of his nest immediately and he
 never saw his friends and left
 The end

Marcus Hill





*l-r: Christa Madikaegbu, Arman Thornton,
Kevin Franks, Jayden Gray, Jahir Gray,
Armani Thornton*



11

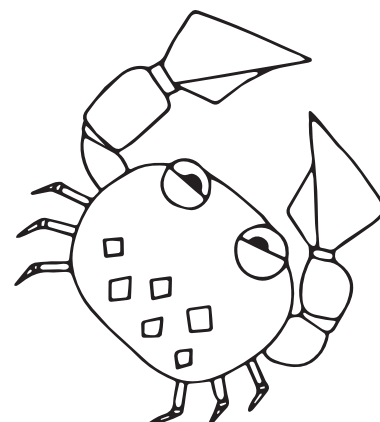
Who knows if the sky is full of
darkness inside of the dark?
Remember when the full moon happened
in the middle of the long day, when the sun
was shy – beginning a silent scary day?
We all thought the sun disappeared
so we sang a lullaby.

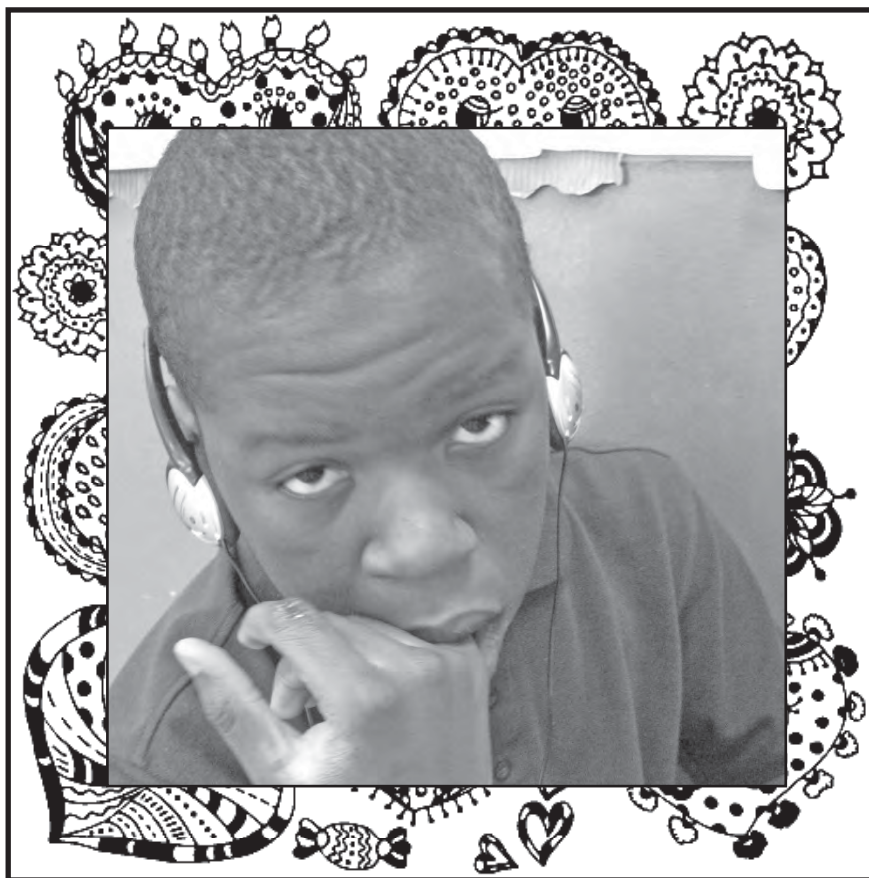
Tamoni Onley

Be Anything

Who knows you can breathe through a full moon
Who knows you can fly like a full pumped up balloon
Who knows you can be as tall as a skyscraper
Who knows you can be a window made of rocks
Who knows you can be as soft as a pillow
Who knows you can be as dark as my heart
Who knows you can disappear from the dark
Who knows you can be as dark as the sea
Who knows your emotions can be as blue as the sky
Who knows you can sing a lullaby to a cranky baby

Blake Mathews





Booker T. Whitaker

The Magical Man

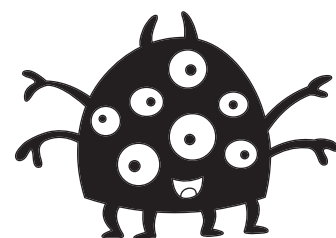
Once upon a time there was an unhurt
man who had magic powers.
The man saw darkness all around him.
The world was so dark that you couldn't see anything!
Then the man saw a blackbird.
The man was startled and
the man attacked
the blackbird.

James Stewart

Where I'm From

I come from Mississippi Avenue
When I'm on the streets I hear kids playing and
I feel the wind when they run past
I smell the hot chili cooking from houses and
I start to taste the homemade chicken from my Mom
When I walk in I see all the people in my house
Are happy

Phillip Williams





dc creative writing workshop

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Inside back cover, l-r: Shanay Lesane, Octavia Johnson, Kitana Williams, Vincent Wingfield, Phillip Williams





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