Featured Writer: Naomi Ayala
The hArtworks Editorial Board

Writers-in-Residence: Dwayne Betts, Aisha Brantley, Omekongo Dibinga, James Saunders, Nancy Schwalb, Venus Thrash, and Jamila Wade

The Literary Magazine Club: Luqman Abdullah, Maryum Abdullah, Shannon Allen, India Bell, Terry Bennett, Antoinette Better, Stelita Better, Danielle Blake, Denisha Bolden, Ashley Boston, Antonio Bower, A. Montel Brooks, Jada Brooks, Steven Brown Jr., Tomika Brown, Jamal Buggs, Jamal Clark, Kiera Coleman, Reginald Conway, Ashley Cooper, Dominique Courtney, Nefertaria Crawley, Markiya Davis, Martanaze Dew, Cherish Gaines, Dai’Juna Gales, Bruce Gibson, Andrea Hermans, Shamia House, Markus Johnson, Shaiski Johnson, Yasmin Jones, Damon Kee, Nichell Kee, Symone Kennedy, Jalencia King, Debra Lewis, Marvin McDowell, Shambriel Metts, Aasiyah Muhammed, Kiana Murphy, Jasmine Murray, Ja’Quan Newsome, Ashanti Paylor, Coletta Paylor, Keyosha Richardson, Marché Shields, Bryonka Simpkins, Monae Smith, Beatrice Smoot, Jessica Smoot, Ashley Stevenson, Danielle Stover, Wendie Thomas, Tierra Thornton, James Tindle, Tionna Wade, Devonté Walker, Jamie Warren, Brittany Watkins, Jamal Whittington, Deshaun Williams, Jamal Williams, Renita Williams, Beverly Wright, Taniek Young

front cover, l–r: Shamia House, James Saunders, Yasmine Jones
Welcome to *hArtworks*, the nation’s only inner-city public middle school literary magazine, written and edited by the students of Charles Hart Middle School. *hArtworks* is published through a collaborative effort between the school and the D.C. Creative Writing Workshop, an independent non-profit working to create a literary renaissance in Southeast Washington. Now in its sixth year, *hArtworks* gives our young writers the opportunity to exercise their creative energies, speak their minds, and be heard by an audience throughout the city. The 2006 edition of *Poet’s Market* recognizes *hArtworks* as “an outstanding example of what a literary journal can be (for anyone of any age).”

This year we welcome four new writers, Dwayne Betts, Aisha Brantley, Omekongo Dibinga, and Venus Thrash, who join Nancy Schwalb and Jamila Wade as senior writers-in-residence. We also celebrate the return of James Saunders, a 16 year old junior at Ballou Senior High, for his second year as junior writer-in-residence. And the 2006–07 school year marks the start of our college internship program, bringing us the capable and committed service of Meilani Clay, Maricia Herron, and Katie Hinden.

We have many friends who have helped to make *hArtworks* possible, and we would like to express our gratitude to them. Our sincerest thanks go out to the Herb Block Foundation, Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, Children’s Fund of Metropolitan Washington, Commonweal Foundation, Community Foundation for the National Capital Region, Fannie Mae Foundation, John Edward Fowler Foundation, Harman Family Foundation, Hitachi Foundation, International Monetary Fund, Junior League of Washington, Mattel Children’s Foundation, Moran Family Fund, Meyer Foundation, The Tom Lane Fund, Wachovia Foundation, Wendling Foundation, Weissberg Foundation, The World Bank, Anonymous, the friends and family of Anna Su, Michael Joy and TSCJoy/Monterey, LLC, Sarah Booth and Bloomberg L.P., Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, Karibu Books, Holly Mansfield and GO! Creative, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Arena Stage, the Shakespeare Theatre, McGuire Associates, Joyce Page and Ms. Printing, Tollefson & Gustini Investment Management, our friends at Popeye’s on Malcolm X Avenue, Gregory Auger, George and Lenore Cohen, Fritz Edler, Tom and Carolyn Grey, Mark Hollinger and Kathy McNeil Hollinger, Frances Horn, Betsy Karel, Gay and Charlie Lord, Judine Slaughter, Raina Rose Tagle, friends of the late Meyer Saul Taubman, Juanita Wade, Vera M. White, and Martin Youmans.

Special thanks for the hard work and dedication of the D.C. Creative Writing Workshop Board of Directors: Mary Ann Brownlow, Dr. Susan Gerson, Bernie Horn, Kathleen Huston, Michael Joy, Joan Kennan, Bill Newlin, Nancy Schwalb, Kirsten Tollefson, and Jamila Wade.

We would also like to thank the following administrators, teachers, and staff who are our partners in this endeavor: Principal Willie Bennett; Assistant Principals Ms. Kimberly Douglas and Mr. Shawn Pelote; Ms. Katherine Bucholtz, Ms. Gloria Fergusson, Ms. Carolyn Jackson, Ms. Terrie Spann-Tchama, Ms. Joan Lusaka, Ms. Eleanor Seale, Ms. Pamela McKinney, Ms. Ann Brogioli, Ms. Trenia Wilson and Ms. Maevern Williams.
hArtworks presents featured poet Naomi Ayala

Brujo No. 28 for Drawing Your Ancestors ................................................................. 40
Magnolia ..................................................................................................................... 41
Hole ......................................................................................................................... 45

Our student writers

Luqman Abdullah
I am? ......................................................................................................................... 25
House Kid ................................................................................................................. 25
All over the inside of me ......................................................................................... 26
I read my palm ......................................................................................................... 26
I Know Why ............................................................................................................. 70

Maryum Abdullah
More than you think ................................................................................................... 28
Ode to the Moon ....................................................................................................... 28

Shannon Allen
Nature’s Kaleidoscope .............................................................................................. 65
Untitled ..................................................................................................................... 65

Antonio Alston
Untitled ................................................................................................................... 78

Lathan Armstead
A Stranger ................................................................................................................. 37

India Bell
A note to God ............................................................................................................. 66
I am India .................................................................................................................. 66
My Life Is a Wild Ride ............................................................................................. 67

Tylia Bell
Dancing ..................................................................................................................... 18

Terry Bennett
Alliteration ................................................................................................................. 28

Marquell Bethea
School Time ............................................................................................................. 76

Stelita Better
Better Shadow .......................................................................................................... 39

Antoinette Better
My Shadow .............................................................................................................. 54

Denisha Bolden
Life and Wisdom .................................................................................................... 70

Danielle Blake
My Life ..................................................................................................................... 53
My Moody Days ....................................................................................................... 54
My Inner Shadow ................................................................................................... 54
My Life Is ................................................................................................................ 55

A. Montel Brooks
Think .......................................................................................................................... 21
Montel Reads His Own Palm ............................................................................... 22
Sleep ......................................................................................................................... 22
Winter ....................................................................................................................... 23
Prince ......................................................................................................................... 23

Jada Brooks
Firefly ....................................................................................................................... 50

David Brown
Chaos ....................................................................................................................... 73

Jamal Buggs
Chaos ....................................................................................................................... 26
Loving Moment ....................................................................................................... 27

Almus Bush
My Name .................................................................................................................... 13
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kiera Butler</td>
<td>Real Music</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suffocating</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darell Caldwell Sittles</td>
<td></td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curtis Canty I Am</td>
<td></td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dearah Chappell October</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herman Clark</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ode to the pencil sharpener</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dangerous girl like a gun</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamal Clark</td>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.E. Congress Heights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiera Coleman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>blank boy</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>an ode to shoes</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reginald Conway</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am, I am</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My Life Is a Car</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dream of the Oceans</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cleaning Grandma</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamal Conyers</td>
<td>On a hill of gold</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley Cooper</td>
<td>Linda Reads Her Own Palm</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giovanni Copeland</td>
<td>Giovanni</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nefertearia Crawley</td>
<td>Where I wanna be</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markiya Davis</td>
<td>Waking Up, Unity</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clas Duncan</td>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demetrious Foreman</td>
<td>October</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherish Gaines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ode to the box</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Waking Up</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce Gibson</td>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherita Grady</td>
<td>I Am</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tywain Greene</td>
<td>In those days when my father was still big</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiauna Hamilton</td>
<td>Close Your Eyes</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jevin Hampton</td>
<td>Silent Storm</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martha Hardman</td>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrea Hermans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poematic: Taste for Tomorrow</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hear My Words</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jasper Hicks</td>
<td>Sleep</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameron Hilliard</td>
<td>A School Desk</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shamiya House</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>December</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kaleidoscope</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Angry Sea</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shamiya Reads Her Own Palm</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devon Hudson</td>
<td>Valley of Death</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quanika Jackson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wooden Heart</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tempest Jackson</td>
<td>From Sunrise to Sunset</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trevon Jackson</td>
<td>A Poem for Myself (or blues for a North Carolina boy)</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earl James</td>
<td>My Poem</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open the Door</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryant Jenifer</td>
<td>December</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brittany Johnson</td>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Homes</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominique Johnson</td>
<td>She Is</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcus Johnson</td>
<td>My Name</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markus Johnson</td>
<td>Being 19 years old</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shainairie Jones</td>
<td>My Family</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yasmin Jones</td>
<td>Her Own Palm</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dreaming of the world</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My emotions</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damon Kee</td>
<td>The Dark</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sleep</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unfinished</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Destruction</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What did I say</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nichell Kee</td>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My Winter</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fly!</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manaiza Kelly</td>
<td>Who Am I?</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dancing to Go-Go</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiara Mason</td>
<td>Unfinished Business as a Child</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jannett McKoy</td>
<td>Dreaming</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shambriel Metts</td>
<td>My Ode to Pink</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aasiyah Muhammad</td>
<td>through my kaleidoscope</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiana Murphy</td>
<td>The Sleeping World</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rollercoaster</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Haikus: Why?</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Misty World</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jasmine Murray</td>
<td>My Kaleidoscope</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destiny Myles</td>
<td>The Struggle</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Neal</td>
<td>Another Monday</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colletta Paylor</td>
<td>My House</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiarra Payton</td>
<td>The life of love</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evan Phoenix
  Untitled ................................................................. 36
  My Friend ............................................................... 38
Latia Pimble My Special Wisdom ........................................ 72
Eric Quarles
  Untitled ................................................................. 78
  My Pain .................................................................. 78
Raymond Reynolds My Life .................................................. 13
Lequonte Rhones Cool Fire .................................................. 37
Keyosha Richardson My Crazy Friend .................................. 50
Myah Robertson Untitled .................................................... 74
James Saunders
  When I am like the world .............................................. 9
  Slave Haikus ........................................................... 9
  His Future ................................................................ 10
Brittney Savoy Joy Inside My Tears ........................................ 71
Marché Shields Ode to the Moon .......................................... 28
Johnetta Simmons Hyperbole .............................................. 22
Keishawna Simms My Poem ................................................. 72
Bnyonka Simpkins
  Homeland .................................................................. 67
  Summer .................................................................... 68
Dawayne Singleton Commander-in-Chief .................................. 36
Demarco Singleton Braids ..................................................... 75
Monae Smith
  Intense Personal Color .................................................. 63
  Monae Reads Her Own Palm .......................................... 64
  Pathos ..................................................................... 64
  Kaleidoscope ................................................................ 65
Jessica Smoot Colors .......................................................... 29
Antonio Spencer
  Nervous Breakdown ...................................................... 10
  December .................................................................. 13
Jemaroco Spencer A New Republic ........................................ 37
Jakeia Steele Like Dancing on the Moon .............................. 36
Ashley Stevenson
  A Poem for Myself ...................................................... 46
  December .................................................................. 59
  Kaleidoscope ............................................................ 60
  Shadow ..................................................................... 60
  What I think at night ................................................... 60
Danielle Stover Breathless .................................................... 27
Wendie Thomas
  Mother .................................................................... 50
  Joyful ...................................................................... 73
Tierra Thornton
  Open Mind .................................................................. 51
  My Shadow ............................................................... 52
  Ode to Candy ............................................................. 52
  I’ll Tell You ............................................................... 53
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poet/Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James Tindle</td>
<td>Falling Star</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>April</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Every Definition Entry (Tree)</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Crimson</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DeJon Tucker</td>
<td>My Amazing Wisdom</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I Write Fiercely</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tionna Wade</td>
<td>Dewayne reads his own palm</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devonte Walker</td>
<td>I Am</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamie Warren</td>
<td>My Heart</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the voice</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Da'Shawn Washington</td>
<td>Ode to the heart</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaniece Whitaker</td>
<td>delicate</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amber Williams</td>
<td>Poem</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deshaun Williams</td>
<td>Katrina</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole Williams</td>
<td>I know, I don't know</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emotions</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renita Williams</td>
<td>Dreamer</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Angry Mood Days</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Haunted Haikus</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ode to the Trees</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am, I am</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Great Life</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimitrius Winters</td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day'Quan Wright</td>
<td>The Me No One Sees</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wild Style</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joylin Yates</td>
<td>Pathos</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confused Is She</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emmanuel Youman</td>
<td>Inside</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When I am like the world

Ironically, it is when I’m most self-conscious; it is when I care what everyone else says. When fatigue is festering and I won’t die until I’m gently burned by the gracious sun in the morning.

Lying in the bed, fresh out of the shower
my belly is filled with food, my homework is done.
I’m in my PJs, and these late-night re-runs effectively sedate me.
I’m ready.

Lying in the bed, I fight this impending darkness.
I have the world to blame for this fear.
It’s their fault.
Every night it comes.
And when it comes, I am like them.
I am then concerned with their humanist notions of life.
I am then fearful of going to sleep, to die, and not to wake in the morning.

I’m no longer this outcast, rebel-type of guy but I’m one of them.
I’m scared, just like them.

James Saunders

Slave Haikus

I
Fettered together
Packaged with malevolence
like fresh frivolous sardines

II
Barefoot and bound tight
This great peregrination
was far from the end

III
Alienated
In this inhuman hospice
my fear can’t be tamed

IV
I sat and pondered
Fathoming what my crime was
and couldn’t find one

James Saunders
His Future

He comes from bologna and government cheese sandwiches, and juice, just juice.

He comes from corruption. He has been blinded by the myths that promise him dope boy status if he is true about gettin' this money. Senile senior hood-rich celebrities tied the blindfold real tight, didn't they? Ironically, he's otherwise insouciant, until he's filling his mind with false dreams of hood stardom.

Corrupted, thoughtful, consumed, anxious. He thinks of his future; it's like he's reading his palm. And the doom that he experienced left him in awe. Now he has this moment to choose: Life, or death.

James Saunders

Nervous Breakdown

My feelings are as vivid as a blank memory. Pointedly, I've forgotten my faithful love for you. I'm losing my mind. Beyond that, I think I'm losing my soul.

Antonio Spencer

In those days when my father was still big

On a hill of gold near the big palace overhead and at the bottom is an ocean with wind blowing hard Sudden moonlight pops up out of nowhere like there's something crazy going on I was on top of the hill and cried over the rose It was a pretty little rose

Tywain Greene
blank boy

When I watch him sit there
blank in destruction
as the day goes by
I see deceit in the young boy’s eyes

His character is like a shadow
of humiliation
sittin’ on the street
bitter, mishandled, so much chaos
insane, he thought

The battle for friends, he lost,
and, broken,
tossed around, tumbling, and full of commotion
but the flame of dignity makes him stand
and everyone realizes he is alive

Kiera Coleman

Unfinished Business as a Child

My life as a child was like
a palace crumbling.
My schoolwork was majestic.
My social life was a hurricane.
My inspiration as a child was my mother,
she was my only friend.
The school year was life,
a never-ending staircase.
In my music class, my song sounded.
That was my life as a child.

Tiara Mason

Summer

I
You can smell flowers
You can taste ice cream
You can feel sweat when you are hot
And you can hear people at the swimming pool

II
You hear a crowd of people
You smell breath and
you feel hands moving everywhere
taste blood, and spite, and tears

Dimitrius Winters
Poematie: Taste for Tomorrow

Hear my words, forbidden clouds
In my time, it becomes
a time of drowsy vision.

For you it comes, a wild weathered wind
a feather that plays the violin
with the unlit rubies
that are in my room.

Invisible candle that will do as I say once again.

Andrea Hermans

Hear My Words

Someplace, forget strength,
rattling memories, drowsy songs,
wild oceans that are a haze.

A shadow of a rose
that is velvet, and cotton
that will crumble
and glittering flames.

Staircase, heart beating,
like a sound of the rain
beating, candle twilight
in the zone.

Hear my words!

Andrea Hermans

Another Monday

Another Monday at school, so normal and plain.
I get to class and fall asleep, and I drift into a corner
where my heart beats so loud
I calm my soul and forget wild and crazy hurricanes,
strong and wild, to see so much on a Monday.
I drift into a deep sleep, like last Monday,
the same dream, but a different surrounding.
I hear a sudden song that I heard once before—
It begins to rain lightning from the sky,
tornados and hurricanes destroy many homes.
The bell had rung, it was time to go,
I wandered up and up until I reached the door of forgiveness.
I went home and lay down and the day was over,
and my eyes closed, and Monday was over.

Mark Neal
December

I can see all the children shine as they’re playing in the snow.
I can hear the laughter of the children as all the things beyond them are forgotten.
I can smell the smooth white snow like a scented candle.
I can think of my bad days, move on, as I go along.

Antonio Spencer

My Life

My life as a child is like a hurricane blowing a strong wind over the clouds.

It’s a man that cried for forgiveness when he stole something.

My life is like a velvet rose getting ready to be put in water.

My life is like my memory climbing a staircase to my future.

Raymond Reynolds

My Name

My name is like a crazy darkness hidden in the deep center of my closet.
My name is evil, it kills me inside;
I’m scared to say my name out loud.
I hope my name dies.

Almus Bush

October

October—its plangency, its glow
In October, you can smell rain
You also can taste rain
Feeling that rain makes your hands soft.

You can feel the cold white snow.
Feeling fire makes me want to cook hot tea.
Hearing those little coins makes me want to go to church and hear them shake those bells.

When the cold rain comes down it brings back good memories of what happened in my lifetime.
The way I dream, it feels like I’m going to be a good actor.
When I feel the sun, I can see my own ghost a bright, shiny light.

Demetrius Foreman
On a hill of gold

On a hill of gold,
I feel like I had one million emeralds
and I was in the palace, and when it’s dawn
I will be king of the world
and every wild animal will be mine
and every person will be forgiven.
Suddenly, a strong heartbeat, and someone poisons me
I slowly fall asleep
my bones are feeling hazy
it is all silence.

They think I was dead,
they say I was gone forever.
my eyes were in the back of my head,
they dumped me in the trash
and they found a new king.
And he led them badly,
he made them pick cotton
and made them build towers.
They cried, praying for a new king
and they ran away.

Someplace, there was a big thirst for water
and I woke up, and they came back
and they saw me awake, and we had a feast
and everyone was happy.

Jamal Conyers

Wooden Heart

His heart is so wooden, it burns in the flames,
The afternoon has hit and it’s harder than the rain.
Tumble down upon me like bricks,
Wooden hurts like this splinter I can’t forget.

Quanika Jackson

Winter

December—
howls like the wolves in the woods
it sleeps like the bears, so we hibernate
and they dream of white nights
where the snow and everything will be alright

Stand over the fire so we don’t freeze up
drinking hot cocoa, now that’s the stuff
As laughter comes upon us,
we fade into the dark
It’s nighttime, a couple more days
when the mysteries will start

Our eyelids close,
beyond the secrets and grins
knowing tomorrow is another day

Quanika Jackson
October

LAUGHTER
Laughter is what I hear,
this is the best time of the year,
maybe not the best month,
but October is my month
because you hear laughter, sometimes sorrow
many secret comforts and a lot of dreams
about hot chocolate and hot tea
and how your Christmas will be.

SORROW
In laughter, there is sorrow
some people are dying of the flu and illness
but some people love the month October
because you can just be comfortable and sit back
eating grandma’s special home made cookies
and think of when she used to make them, now not here
why cry, you know Jesus will take care of her
why cry, why cry?

STRANGE
I write because her birthday just went past
how she used to put her cookies on the table
and tell the grandkids go on, dig in
soon you won’t have none at all, so dig in
Love, peace, no violence, that’s what she always told me.

COMFORT
I just remember how we used to laugh,
have fun, comfort, when I came home from school
you used to ask me
How come you home so early?
and I’d say, it’s 3:30
Oh, I thought it was 4:55,
ha, ha, ha, ha,
just laughter and comfort.

Dearah Chappell

Giovanni

My name is Giovanni Copeland.
My name is like a star that shines,
Like a sun, and
when I say my name,
everybody can hear me shine
and when I walk down the street,
the sun shines on me
and the trees and the grass and the birds
and when the sun goes down,
my name stops shining
but to me it shines all day like a star

Giovanni Copeland
December

I love December, the month of Christmas,
I can sense it coming near.
When the sunrise and December 25 comes,
I just want to cheer.

But on December 24, I don’t want to go to sleep,
I just watch the moonlight because it’s a beautiful sight.
I hear footsteps coming toward my door,
Oh, it’s just my mom coming to say goodnight.

Christmas is back for another year,
I can hear the sound of bells in my ear.
The story about Santa Claus is always a mystery,
But I guess when I get older he’ll be history.

Christmas is gone, memories fade,
like clouds in the sky.
I could smell Christmas coming this year,
but this time I don’t want to say goodbye.

*Bryant Jenifer*

Dreamer

Beautiful, peaceful
Mother sleeping in the universe
my best friend
so soft and gentle
the open eye
unity in the world
a lovely home sits there thinking,
dreaming.

Her people scream with terror
They yell out Stop! Stop!
The blood sinks through the soil in the tree roots
All you hear now is pow, pow, boom!
I wake up and see a man lying there
not opening one eye,
but he is fading in the sky
a future father is gone, Bye bye.

*Renita Williams*

Angry Mood Days

Open, mined heart; broken glass burning,
so deep, cold hearted, driven to destruction
on earth’s core, tarnish;
firefly burns, splinters
in memory, tempests raining rage.
Sores upon their faces,
the arrival of the evening star,
dissonance, self-defeating liars,
toxins mellow, hurting the inner soul
Please stop the madness.

*Renita Williams*
Haunted Haikus

Landmines

The kids cry and fall
They are hurt by it all, bombs
the missing leg gone.

HIV

Young women, young men
Hop to bed and then again
the clinic sees HIV.

Death

Heartbreak burns softly
Sorrow screams loudly, pain aches
death of human cries.

Holocaust

Stuffed up train reeks, smells
Shower filled with gases, burned ashes
cries out for help, scream.

Renita Williams

Ode to the Trees

Sister of the planthood
Why do they treat you that way?
Growing above peoples' graves.
You are so strong, you can
knock down anything in your way.

Cut into millions of pieces,
blood dripping so much it can make a puddle,
So heavy, it burns. It’s almost like magic.
Don’t you feel like the world is invading your space?
But we need you to make paper
we need wood for fireplaces.

You are a sunrise,
you keep it cool when it’s hot
You can get elderly
to the point you have to get cut down.
Don’t you feel invisible?
Nobody knows your name, nobody cares about you.
But the world need you so much that
If you did not exist, there would be nothing to touch.

Renita Williams
I am, I am

I am the footsteps of tomorrow.
I am the legend of morning trumpets.
I am the secret, grave voyage.
I am departed caution.

I am the breath of a 2 month fetus.
I am a coral forbidden backpack,
also opaque eyes.

I am the bang of a souvenir drum.
I am a decent speech of a breathless man.
I am ancient flutes during summertime.

I am... who I am... I am the woman
who stands above us, who breathes everyone's air
I am, I am Renita Williams.

Renita Williams

My Kaleidoscope

Stopping black and pink
yellow-gold and aqua roses,
skipping through a star-filled field,
turning into silver spoons and frying pans.
My octagon-shaped life is running on pink colored gas,
a deer hopping by a field of tiger-orange stemmed black-eyed susans,
a rabbit with periwinkle and black polka-dots somehow,
and in some strange way, turning into cones of all colors.
Finally a turtle with a star on his shell,
and insects with a sense of pushing them toward something,
they turn into the most beautiful roses you have ever seen,
and the prettiest stars that ever gleaned.

Jasmine Murray

Dancing

Dancing is like a fast beat to a song.
Dancing is a math problem
you’re trying to solve.
Dancing is like you’re on your own
land and you can do whatever
you want.
Dancing is a car speeding across
the street.
Dancing is the sound of your heart
beating fast like you’re afraid of something.
Dancing is the taste of a spicy
piece of candy.
Dancing feels like a hot bubble
bath where you can relax.

Tylia Bell
The Sleeping World

So lovely and peaceful
So gentle and beautiful.
The universe is different.
It wakes with no unity
The mothers are dreaming?
No, they wake up
Sometimes to a stressful life.
Doesn’t want to be home
Is so lovely, but her life isn’t
Being put under pressure
Don’t know which way to go,
Left or Right?
She doesn’t want to be here
So she leaves the universe
With one eye open
To look at the universe that is destroying itself.

Kiana Murphy

May

Fresh trees blossoming
Blindness beyond the horizon
Plants blooming, the sun slightly askew
The fading fall of the sun holds a dream
The fragrance of the strange, exotic mist comes at random

A salty, bitter taste from nature
Flying left to right
The memories of dawn,
holding a blankness
only a slight laughter might see
The forgotten glow of a ghost
holds a secret of many disbeliefs
The flight of feathers blowing backwards
beyond a hurricane of eyelids
wanting them to fly away

The mystery, howl
almost a blur, behind the secret
rhythm of a guitar
which is a comfort, by a candle
of an exotic empire.

Kiana Murphy

The Dark

A dark destructive time is at hand
An illusion of a scarlet end of being
The tempest destroys all
The earth’s core, driven to destruction
Thunder is crashing through the air
Mankind is going down
Into the burning fire of a firefly
Driven down into the abyss,
Where death is certain, the biggest fear
oO all fears is ourselves
The destruction of earth is now
Fear the darkness.

Damon Kee
Rollercoaster

My life is a rollercoaster.
Sometimes I’m happy and sometimes I’m sad.
Sometimes I’m up and sometimes I’m down.
The thrills are sometimes like taking pills
Having to throw up, but can’t really get it out
Having to scream, but know doing that will be the wrong route
Knowing someone’s gone and you can’t bring them back
Knowing that the railings and bars are the only things keeping you on track
Sometimes you’re under too much pressure and would just shut down
All of this will just make you frown
by hearing the sounds
that keep you moving up and down
The sounds go cling, cling, pow
but the sounds don’t keep my uncle
from going down to the ground
Hearing the cling, cling sounds again
but it’s not the rollercoaster,
it’s the ambulance coming to get him
Never wanting to hear that cling, cling sound again
but just wanting a friend
to stop this rollercoaster.

Kiana Murphy

Haikus: Why?

You should speak your mind
Don’t hold everything inside
Let your insides out

Within a rude world
Want to come out from within
Leaving the bad outside

Eternity come
We have been waiting too long
For the worst to come

Today we wonder
Why are blacks killing each other?
Forever death waits

The last breath of life
The wicked voyage beyond
Drags the lifeless loss

Kiana Murphy
Think

Explore your mind, not just your brain
take the time to think of the things you can gain
when you think…
about the things in the back
the back of your mind where
you wrapped your thoughts in a box
a box with chains set on fire
never to be set free.

Think so that you can smell your mind burning
in the back of your mind,
smoking so much you can see it out your ears.
Think so much that it becomes
a rollercoaster of a natural high
taking you high, higher, highest…
until it gets you to the point
where all you want to do is…
Think.

A. Montel Brooks

Misty World

The evolution of a misty world
Impossible morning of footsteps
So breathless
That a flute’s voice may secretly
Depart you from the fog

The eccentric sizzle of an ancient drum
Hypnotizes a trumpet
To secretly stay on beat

The loss, beyond a grave
Speaks for itself, within a speech
That no legend may hear

The windswept voyage
Within a wicked prism
The glimmer of a brightly lit caution sign

Telling you
To never walk out of the evolution
Of a misty world

Kiana Murphy
Montel Reads His Own Palm

Blinded to his own future
doomed within his own life
growing old, impatient, and senile
as he wanders into the galaxy of nothingness

His talents are growing old
the cheese has gone bad
and the leaves have gone purple
in the salad that he calls his life

Beaten down and stomped on
and trampled and choked
till the point where he wants to end it all
by the slit of his arm

A. Montel Brooks

Hyperbole

I am as tall as 1,000 books stacked on
top of each other. My skin color is as brown
as 2 brown crayons put together.

My hair is as long as a 50 foot
extension cord. My hands are as soft
as baby lotion.

My eyes are as big as 4 polar bears,
my feet are as long as 100 yardsticks.

My socks are as small as 3 ants.

Johnetta Simmons

Sleep

Now I’d lay me down to sleep
but no one’s there for my soul to keep
within the blackness and the light of the candle
in the back of my mind
resembling the life of a fragile fragment of flesh
I have left burning the rose of my mind
petal by petal
as an angel hovers above
that rose quivering and wondering
as the darkness in the cloudless sky takes over

A. Montel Brooks
Winter

Winter—
It’s the time for me
watching the snow fall
having the miraculous feeling
of just knowing that it’s coming

Feeling—
The snow in my hand
bringing kids joy across the world
laughter and happiness
moonlit rooms watching movies with hot chocolate

Hearing—
The wind behind your ear
following up with an ice cold snowball
to chill your mind and body
listening to your mother yell at you
at 8 o’clock in the morning
Montel, get outside and shovel that daggone snow!

Smelling—
The cold sweat of
when you’re outside playing snow football
smelling cookies in the oven
and hot chocolate on the stove
Smelling love from families and friends
that care for you
I wonder how that feels.

A. Montel Brooks

Prince

Arrogance beyond belief, the child of greatness
Royalty among degeneracy,
Instead of the shiny gold and silver
He wilds out with a color of his choosing
Puts his power to use in sinful ways
Kiss the royal rings, as he says
Besides all hail him, it’s
Awww man, it’s him
A crown of thorns, robe of fire
and advisors twenty deep
He never fights his own battle, but his people bring that heat
Strength of a million
within a whisper of his voice
His father will pass down
the prize of his choice

A. Montel Brooks
Sleep

Before I sleep, I think of
What will happen the next day
Light is what I see,
The burning candle,
Guarding a cloudless sky
The royal corners of my room,
Providing endless darkness
And a secret door filled with amazing things
Outcropping of shadows on my window
Trees are scare for the time being
My eyes close and I drift into dreamland

Damon Kee

Unfinished

July is a heated summer month.
I feel the heat radiating on my skin.
It burns my body like a volcano.

I don’t hear a silent moonlight
when the sun goes down into a secret
almost secluded place

Evening is a neon eyelid
filled with the sounds of an empire
I see a child…

Damon Kee

Destruction

I am a cup of death
Filled to the top with hatred
The anger boiling inside of me
Like a kettle of hot water
It rages like a black tornado
Destroying everything in its path
My red hot angry knife
Slices the last bit of light and love
The darkness covers everything
And chokes the life out of life itself
Red and black covers all the earth
With slaughter and murder
Destruction is my name and
That is what I am

Damon Kee

What did I say?

My world is monochromatic
In black I see an abyss of anonymous thirst
A pack of newborn prophecies to be revealed
My universe is a legacy of wisdom where I am king
My cursed world is a gift for people
Who understand what life is all about
The things are complicated, so
Now
What did I say?

Damon Kee
I am?

I am trying not to be what I think I am
hiding every day from people, not thinking I'm a man.
I am probably a superstar inside, trying to hide
from paparazzi who try to make who I am.
I guess I'm just paranoid because people pass me by
staring like I'm not there and thinking I'm not nice.

Come to think of it, who says I can't make myself out to be
who I want everyone to be, just like me?
I am the person who is transparent, stuck in a verse like this
trying to be everyone else.
Well, if that's true, I try too hard
to be a carved monkey in that monkey suit.
If that's true, I am the moon, full of no emotions
looking at the one guy everyone and me tries to be.

I am trying to hide, trying to hide with everyone
and I'm dressed and hidden into what you're doing
and what's new, hey, but if life was the same
who would be the leader, tough guy everyone follows
in the fast cars, superstars,
and his kid who is going to be just like him
not because he's good, but because he's cool in school
and all the kids he knows are just like him.
I am exactly who that guy is, or him, or her,
Just like you.

Luqman Abdullah

House Kid

I'm a house kid,
ever touched by the outside world
a little late, if not for the TV
no one asks if I want to go out or
to take out the trash till I get ready
yep, just sitting in a basket of clothes
until finally my parents grow old
and throw me out unprotected and naked
for the corruption and
life of a real man and
they will kill and destroy that house boy
now that is the reason
I don't think of the real world of murders
of every house boy or
momma's boy, just like me
getting an expiration date
just to be the bob or bill or catherine
that murders my house kid

Luqman Abdullah
All over the inside of me
All over the inside of me
it seems empty and
full of organs
all over the inside of me are
no rooms for friends or emotions
only one emotion, of distrust
that leads into a fake sense
of being on a cliff
with a hill over top of
every false person or blade of grass.
The only one that follows what I do
is my shadow
which is also beneath me
all the arrogance of leaves
and birds hanging off of me
But I can’t survive without them
the only people it can’t overcome are not there
and it is all over
the inside of me
Luqman Abdullah

I read my palm
I wake up in the morning
quarter to ten
waking like I was from
dawn of the dead.
I got in my car
did the same thing every day
had no future.
Life didn’t seem that great
blinded by the work life
Like rats eating at cheese
they eat and eat
it’s gonna run out eventually
Once it does, I’ll be doomed.
And see the light
that my job ain’t right
It’s too late,
running from my own fate
I might be young
but I’m not as senile as they think
Once you’re born, you’re gonna blink.
And once I do, I’ll realize
life doesn’t go in a straight line
They tell me that zombies are a myth
but the things I’ve seen, it’s true as this.
Luqman Abdullah

Inside the body
Atom in the body, descending through the human
doing impossible missions, reaching the heart
passing through the throat
the foggy organ that plays like a symphony
including flutes, trumpets, and drums.

This is the way to the heart:
Saying the secret password
and buying a souvenir by the artery
that looks like a prism
Thus get going through the body
when it breathes out, the body rests
till the morning, till doing
his wicked journey again.
Jamal Buggs
**Loving Moment**

I would go out when the sin dies
and go see some people
get into a stream of water with cleaning products
I would write something in a secret compartment
outcropping the floor with my guards
and back-up angels that shield me from the dark light
into the summer, allowing me to sleep
having a loving moment

*Jamal Buggs*

---

**Breathless**

I feel like I’ve been flooded
with all the ancient history
held inside
I follow my footsteps
in a repeated form,
the sound of an off-beat trumpet
with a pair of busted drums I heard
I pictured myself as grave material
what a bad loss
so I use my past as an unfinished story,
so I depart from that
I feel wicked
It’s impossible, it’s like a filthy hurt
I am without a breath, almost breathless.

*Danielle Stover*

---

**My Shadow**

My shadow wears a blue shirt and leopard shoes.
She has a red hat and she knows everything.
Her hair is black and brown.
She loves to talk to me.
I love to talk to her.
My shadow does not like to wear dresses
because she thinks it looks ugly.
My shadow likes to look at people.
When we play on the playground, we have so much fun.
She lives in me.
She loves people and she loves my family too.
My shadow is nice and good to.
My shadow does not like bad people.
My shadow likes to do things with me.
My shadow is a ghost.

*Stelita Better*
More than you think

My brain is this bridge with deep thoughts
My heart is the trees, used a lot
The water is my eyes, farther than you can see
Saying, “There is more to me than you think.”
The water’s reflections are my soul.
The black sky is dark emotions I show
And the little land is what’s hidden about me
Saying, “You don’t know that much about me.”

Maryum Abdullah

Alliteration

A vivid vapor comes to my nose
while the
cool air covers my face, colors
all around, like black and gold
Vicious and vile
football players surround me
Running away from
the dangerous destructive players
I find a hole big enough for me to fit
I break away, bouncing through the hole
350 yards total,
uh no, said the players
Touchdown, game winning point.

Terry Bennett

Ode to the Moon

The brightness that lights up the stars
centered in the middle with ostentation

Vivid as it is exquisite, surrounded by
its azure admirers. The night sky.

It is a sculpture of brilliance,
created by no human.

The way it glows, blinds us, it cannot be
reached. For it is an untouchable beauty.

The moon remains young, and still pretty,
notorious and wondrous every night.

Maryum Abdullah

Ode to the Moon

Twin of the sun
light for the sky
beside the stars
and has many scars

Without its luminous light
it would be a lunar eclipse
With the light you shine off
you give us all a favor

We all travel safely in the night
Bright like the sun
and nice to my sight.

Marché Shields
Where I wanna be

I'm stuck at the bottom, but I want to be at the top
It feels as though there's no way
so I guess I should stop everything
It's so cold and rocky, I wonder if I get there
will they like me?
It's such an emotional whirlwind
wondering if I'll ever fit in
I don't care about them, that's the thing
It's who I wanna be
that makes me wanna scream
I wanna be at the top of the mountain
without getting trapped in an avalanche
Will I make it? I don't know.
I'm so scared and it's so cold.
I'm scared to face them at the top
I wish I could put my life on hold.

Nefertearia Crawley

Dewayne reads his own palm

As he predicts, his grandmother's going blind
She gets cataracts and he leaves his mind
His feelings are tossed, like an old country salad
yeah, with cheese, and as he begs please,
Lord God, give her her eyesight back
because I don't want my grandma to be
blind to cataracts.
She helps me to plan out my future
Lord God, I really don't want to lose her.

Tionna Wade

Colors

Sepia
Mold,
Spreading around bread
Smelling like stinking cheese.

Fuchsia
Night sky,
Setting on a beach
Reflecting light on the ocean

Emerald
Diamond ring,
Sparkling while waiting in its box
Surprising people with a smile

Violet
Leather jacket
Making people stop and stare
Glaring at them with evil eyes.

Jessica Smoot
The Great Life

Well, mom,
Let me tell you
Life for me has been like a sunset on the beach.
Sometimes it's hard, but I'll just keep on going.
My life had some dark times, but as I turned around
the morning light hit me.
All of the roses and daisies are blooming,
and the rain is coming down so fast,
but pure, and the satin sheets cover my heart
as I think about you at night.
The love I have for other people is bare
My love for you will last for a lifetime.
There's only one way you can go, and that's up,
looking at the sky.

Renita Williams

December

December, laughter is in the air
and we're feeling good,
because it's Christmas Day.

We opened gifts and ragged appliances
but forgot about the lost child
knocking on the door
asking for some more.

Before that night, a ghost
walked through my house with a candle light
thinking that she was the boss of my house.
My eyelids opened and I smelled
the peach fragrance of exotic soap.

The blindness of
a lonely guitar, feeling sorrow
because its strings won't pluck a note right.
A mystery is not yet solved,
but the smooth hurricane comes backward
hitting the island.

The blankness on the sheet of paper,
wanting a pen to hit it.
December is the best.

Shamia House
Kaleidoscope

Jumping, running, playing
in a field full of daisies.
Wishing and watching earrings on sale
hoping they’ll be hanging from your ear.
Sleeping for hours,
dreaming of what could be
instead of what is.
Bugs biting, wood cutting,
taking every piece of feeling you have.
Dancing the night always,
because you know what you want in life.
Leaves falling from trees dying,
wishing they had nine lives;
Dogs barking, cheetahs attacking,
S's falling in threes.
Homeless peoples' teeth rotting
because they have
no money to buy a toothbrush.
Wolves protecting their young.
Feeling lonely at school
because people think you’re square.
What if you had a yellow,
orange, tan, white and purple rose?
Having to imagine the future, it’s hard, isn’t it?
But the life you live will always have adventures.

Shamia House

The Angry Sea

As pretty as the sea is
something's always being thrown into it.
Just like a whirlpool of bills
sucking up the best credit cards
you want the most,
or like banana peels
being washed away in its divine waves.
Legends of trash
being polluted into its happiness
The sea's unhappy ways are getting angry,
so just like the stopper, it holds everything you love
away and you never see them anymore.

Shamia House
Shamia Reads Her Own Palm

Sometimes she’s blind.
Sometimes she spills
Slowly drinking a healthy apple smoothie
I dream of what my senile ages are going to be like.
My future is what is in me,
And always on my mind.
I never forget the talent in me.

When I think of cheese,
I think of the sun that’s probably
Going to burst in a million pieces
In about 3 billion years.
I think of books I’ve read
And see whether they’re myths.
Is that what I wanna believe?

I’m insouciant when I get yelled at
Cause when I do, it makes me stronger.
When look at a salad, I think of the lettuce
Which reminds me of the fresh green grass
Or the carrots and the purple cabbage.
I wonder when the rainbow is gonna appear.
The tower that doomed me inside
my life
is what I have, and I don’t plan on wasting it.

Shamia House

---

Falling Star

A little bit of life swiping victory in the air
while she screams for the children to stop
we shoot, we score, as the lesson of life falls
to a deepened hole of anxiousness and anger
She screams! We cheer!
As her voice goes hoarse,
we feel as good as any rising star
As any rising star, she screams
the last little breath she can spit
until no longer can we hear her
She’s drowning in that
depended hole of anxiousness
and sickened emotions
Can I be appreciated for once
is the last thing she could say
before the hole of deepened thoughts
of emotion
of unappreciation.

James Tindle
April

April—
Its smooth fragrance,
Its random howl

I can hear the fascination in her tone
By the silent guitar
And the fading laughter
In the distance.

I can see the gathering
Of the crimson wings
Beating their exotic colored rhythm
The glow in their moonlit eyes
The risen dawn or
The ghostly blankness
That comforts my shadow.

I can feel the unwritten thermal
Beneath my ragged unstable skeleton
Falling under the rain
Pouring down,
Breaking my every bone.

James Tindle

Every Definition Entry (Tree)

Every branch means a new entry.
A new definition, an unspoken word.
No moaning, just another page
And another night of vocabulary words.
A bush is a meaningless bush,
But a branch is a new path,
A forgotten shadow, a neon hope.

James Tindle

Untitled

Through…
a thought, a hole, a bittersweet memory,
a spiked collar, a yellow boy running down the hall,
chains galore, transmutations circle and
iPods, Mohawks and tattoos carved into his right arm
black pants, red and black fingernails, mascara,
lip balm, black sugar, barbed wire
and dark sunglasses, and back
through
a wired fence
out an open door and on
to a chain wired with spikes and dubs.

James Tindle
Crimson

Crimson
Chain
Tying down the deep desires
Scratching the glass stops

Fuchsia
Cloak
Draping the everlasting sun
Burning the tresses of our culture

Ochre
Flower (rose)
Blooming from a sea of lilies
Mingled in with colorless candles

Ivory
Slipper
Mooning the naked legs
Scraping the fancy carpet

Lavender
Dress
Covering the bare woman
Forming a whole new fashion

Vermillion
Pen
Filling every line of my paper
Scratching down my every thought.

James Tindle

Valley of Death

As I walk through the valley
of the shadow of death
it is peaceful
until an accident

As maximum teardrops fall
I can't believe it
I see the black rainbow
I weep and weep
The air blows me hard
My spirit decays
My insides shine
but I refuse to go

As I see a dark light
my vision has spoken to me
It is my time

Devon Hudson

From Sunrise to Sunset

Orange birds chirping outside my window
Voices to sing with symphony
from the geometric song
A bell to ring heaven and earth
The pink and yellow sunshine slowly rising
and falling from the fiery cloud
Watered with tears
The wind of the world with peaceful warring
Like dancing on the moon blinded by beauty
I am dining among stars, so graceful in number
Into a bittersweet memory.

Tempest Jackson
Silent Storm

It is a silent storm,
the soothing noise of rain
against my window,
the sight of lightning
across the late night sky.
I open my window to smell
the scent of the rain.
As I walk back to my bed
I think about
how long the storm will last;
I go to sleep and when I wake up
the storm has passed.

Jevin Hampton

Pathos

He is running out of breath
Low oxygen
So small to do anything
Yet so smart to think
As I held something so precious
With such innocence
Mom’s gone, left alone
Wondering how I have held
Someone that’s alone
So frail with brown eyes
Wondering how I could see
Someone all alone
The person who may be a baby
Is a reflection of me
He is my newborn yet to come
But for now I’m all alone

Joylin Yates

My Family

I’ve known my family. I’ve known them
long enough to tell that they have
deeper
darker
secrets
and no one can tell me otherwise.

My family business
stays with me,
nobody else. I’ve known them too long to
bring
them
down.

I know when my mom or relative’s not
playing when they say, “Focus on your
work
and be a young lady”

Shainairie Jones
Like Dancing on the Moon

Dancing on the moon will be a dream come true.
The moon brings light in darkness.
When the moon rises, sometimes colors of pink
and yellow sunshine appear,
a red line in a blue sky.
When the DJ’s record scratches of music
sometimes you can hear the bell ring
between heaven and earth
while dancing on the moon.

Jakeia Steele

Commander-in-Chief

I come on stage
To tell the truth
But I lie to everybody
When I leave the stage.
I won the election twice
And I sent Americans to Iraq
So they could die
While I stay alive.

Dawayne Singleton

Untitled

My father used to pick me up
Throw me in the air
My mother had just got off work
At home in Atlanta
Angry, saying
"Your father is dead"
I cried and cried
Was he really gone?
“Yes.”

He vanished into the night
They searched and searched
And finally found him
Shot, on a curb until 1:45 a.m.
I am missing him every day.

Evan Phoenix
**A New Republic**

I was a powerful black man in Montgomery
All the white people hated me
Some loved me
I marched for civil rights for all black people
One of my civil rights companions is Rosa Parks
She helped me end and start the bus boycott
They used to beat on us and wet us with the water hose
We had separate schools but one day
we will all become one
Because one day we will all be free.
Free at last, free at last
Thank God Almighty, we are free at last.

*Jemaroco Spencer*

---

**Cool Fire**

A fire is hot when you’re cold
A fire is cool throughout the snow
It’s like a breath of smooth wind
That you can’t hate
Cool fire is fire with lots of faith
I love the warm and sunny heat
Cool fire is like fire that can’t be beat
It’s one-on-one weather
Like heat and wind put together.

*LeQuonte Rhones*

---

**A Stranger**

Low elevation means a poor person with no life. They live on the streets with no roof over their head. The weight of weakness is on the person whose life is lonely and short.

I see him every day on the streets asking people for money. I always wanted to know why a red line is in the blue sky. But in the stranger’s eyes I see him frozen in a cold world yet leaping for joy.

*Lathan Armstead*
**A School Desk**

It is short  
Not very tall  
It has four legs  
Just like a dog  
I put books in its mouth  
To save them for school  
My, oh my  
I didn't think a desk was so cool.

_Cameron Hilliard_

---

**The Struggle**

Today is the day  
She is happy, cheerful as can be  
But she must do things to earn it  
She must wash the beast of dirt  
Cut the fiery plains  
And it's hard

She's dying of thirst  
And starving for fun  
But she must work until her body  
Breaks down  
The hours passed, at 2:57  
She is done for the day  
And happy as can be  
But when she goes to get her prize  
She realizes that the clock was wrong  
And now her last chance for fun is gone.

_Destiny Myles_

---

**Close Your Eyes**

I can smell the new beginning  
And feel the old going away  
I can taste the great life coming right at me  
Then I hear nothing  
The sound of silence  
Then a loud boom out of nowhere  
Things start to move quickly  
I get scared and realize  
It was only my imagination

_Kiauna Hamilton_

---

**My Friend**

When I’m with him, I feel safe  
His hazel eyes sparkle in the dark  
His teeth are sharp like a shark  
With golden fur  
He's warmer than the summer  
He's like my guardian angel

_Evan Phoenix_
Confused Is She

To question God on a journey with no path
Searching for answers with such emancipated hands
And a poor uplifted soul staring at the delicate rock
Beside the white rose
Lost in mind, lost in self
Wondering has she ever felt

The bittersweet memory makes it hard
To focus
The weight of weakness won’t go away
Like red dirt and black sand
Life comes and will certainly go
Deep down she knows something is missing
But what?
Time awaits—she’s still questioning God

As she finishes her journey she sees a man
Blinded by beauty into her head
Not until I find my inner soul
She thinks
Days go by—as she drowns with glory
She imagines dancing on the moon
She loves herself
A bell to ring heaven and earth
“Let justice rejoice,” says she
While dining among the stars
She whispers, “I can finally be free”

Joylin Yates

Shadow

My shadow, my black shadow why are you so scary golden.

I wonder is ink blacker than my shadow
I stand to shiver.

My shadow why are you so quiet you answered with body movement.

I wonder what do shadows look like with golden and silver chains.

Antoinette Better
Naomi Ayala works as an education and evaluation consultant, freelance technical writer, and teacher and, until recently, she served as a Visiting Humanities Scholar for Hermana a Hermana/Sister to Sister.

She is the author of two books of poetry, Wild Animals on the Moon (Curbstone Press, 1997), and This Side of Early (Curbstone Press, 2008).

Her poetry has appeared in numerous journals; most recently in Ploughshares, Poetry Daily, Saranac Review, Hostos Review/Revista Hostoniana, MARGIN: Exploring Modern Magical Realism, Saheb Ghalam Daily (Afghanistan), Gargoyle, and Tiger Tail; and in several anthologies of contemporary Latino writing, including Boriquén to Diasporican: Puerto Rican Poetry from Aboriginal Times to the New Millenium (University of Wisconsin Press, WI, 2005), Latino Boom: An Anthology of U.S. Latino Literature (Longman, 2006), and First Flight: 24 Latino Poets (University of Arizona Press, 2006).

Naomi Ayala’s translations of poetry have appeared both in the U.S. and Switzerland, and she has reviewed books for Feminist Teacher and The Washington Post’s Book World. She has also been the recipient of several awards and honors, and of two artists’ fellowships from the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities. She lives in Washington, DC.

On Monday, December 4, Ms. Ayala met with students in the D.C. Creative Writing Workshop’s after-school program to read and discuss her work.
Naomi Ayala: First, let me tell you that I’ve been a writer for a very long time. I started writing when I was young, around twelve years old, the same age many of you are now. To me this is important because I think that around your age you know exactly what you want and you know your dreams. Your dreams are important—you don’t have to be a certain age to have them. They don’t have to be realistic all the time, they can seem impossible, and you can still have them and this is okay. So, I want to start with a poem called “Immigrant’s Voice”

I heard an immigrant’s voice.  
It rubbed the walls of downtown buildings clean,  
wiped the glass of steamy truckstop windows with its breath  
& o.d.’d on caffeine  
& cigarettes dawns before work. 

It cleared a fog in January  
with its whistle in its jeans.  
It climbed the flagless pole on the Green & shouted,  
itsl amast recited  
from the dollar  
e pluribus unum e pluribus unum.

It prayed in front of the gates  
of Union Trust,  
climbed city hall steps, kneecaps to concrete  
during unemployment  
& asked the mayor, please, a shot of whiskey  
or dope, or a dollar, a mighty dollar.

It cut open its forearm six inches  
at his machine operator’s job  
cutting steel-  
his words deep-blue-purple  
but he had to be grateful,  
had to be grateful  
for the work.

It pounded on its lover’s breast,  
this voice  
demanding where is the dream?  
where is the dream?
It broke into tears at public urinals & spit on statues on the way home until sweat poured from the contour of their stories.

It gargled the news nights after suppertime & crawled shivering into its sleep. What sleep there could be. What dreams.

**Shannon:** How did you feel about the poem?

**NA:** When I wrote this poem, I had a whole lot of things to say about what it’s like to be an immigrant. And I didn’t think I was going to be able to do it, so instead I wrote a poem about a voice, and the voice became all these people I was trying to represent. It was kind of a hard thing to do. And I felt good that I was able to do it, because when I write, even to this day—I’ve been writing for so long you think you can do anything, which I could. We all can do whatever we can do, right? But you don’t know for sure until you get it done. So that’s a good feeling, that you can do something that you can imagine in your head.

**Jamal:** What does the poem mean?

**NA:** A poem sometimes—and this is good—is going to mean different things to different people. Like the general idea, everybody will get it, but it will mean particular things to different people. I don’t want to tell you what it means because it’s like, if you were getting a surprise, and I’d tell you what the surprise is before you open it.

**Jamal:** I like that better.

(Laughter)

**NA:** It’s also exciting to guess or to find out. Can somebody tell me your general idea of what you think, and there’s no wrong answer, because that’s what it means to you as a person. It’s not a math problem, where one plus two will have to equal three. So, what did you see in this poem? What did you hear?

**Jamal:** Immigrants asking for whiskey?

**NA:** Aha, you heard that. What else did you hear?

**Shamia:** Dreams.
NA: Asking for dreams? Anything else you heard? Anything that sticks out?

Jamal: That Spanish word you said? E Pluribus Unum?

NA: That’s an interesting phrase, it’s actually Latin. Can somebody tell me what that means? You’ve seen it—you’ve had it in your pocket.

Yasmin: Money?

NA: Yes, it’s written on money. (After much discussion) It’s the motto of the United States, it means, “From many, one.” Any other ideas about what this poem might mean?

Jamal: I guess it’s about people who come to the United States having dreams, and their dreams not coming true.

NA: Yes, that’s the main idea of the poem. And you get there and people tell you you’re going to get this dream, and you get to this place and there isn’t a dream. It didn’t exist. Everybody knows what that feels like, right? Do you have any more questions?

Shannon: What is your worst fear?

NA: Oh, you are good, aren’t you? Do you do this to people all the time? I really have a great deal of respect for people like that, who’ll ask a question like that. What is my worst fear? It’s not death. I am at peace with my death. I think when I became a brave person in my life, from all the things I had to overcome, I decided that the worst thing that people can do to you is hold your death over you—you could be tortured and then you could die, and all your worst nightmares—then people will try to oppress you, to enslave you, to force you to do things against your will, to take things from you, whether it’s your pride, or your dignity, or your body, or your money, or whatever you want. In the end, the worst that can happen is that you die. That’s our worst nightmare, so if you’re not afraid of your death, can somebody do anything to you that you don’t want them to do?

So I’m not afraid of death, I’m afraid sometimes of getting lost, but inside myself, like in my journey as a person. Not getting lost physically, because I like to get lost for fun. (Laughter) I do, I love adventures. Like in the woods, I’ve gotten lost—sometimes the most for, like, ten hours, and not been able to get out. And that was scary. I don’t know—can I get back to you on that? Oh, and cockroaches for sure. If there’s a cockroach anywhere nearby, I flip out, I scream; I’m a complete chicken. Just the look of it, it looking at me, the antenna, it moving where it wants to move. I love bugs, I don’t have any problem with bugs, but I do have a problem with cockroaches. I have actually decided to get over my fear so I wrote them a poem this year, I wrote two roach poems.

Jamal: Does “la cucaracha” mean cockroach?

NA: Yes. It’s kind of like a joke, that song. It comes from a stereotype—Latinos used to be called roaches, Puerto Ricans in particular. So it plays off of that. But the song is, I believe, Mexican.

(Jamal reads one of Naomi’s poems aloud)

NA: What a great honor. Thank you so much. You did a great job. So what about this poem, do you have any questions about this poem?

James: What’s your favorite image in the poem?
NA: “My history is glass I walk on with my soul on fire.” I’m proud of that. If you can imagine, it must be a painful history—your soul’s on fire and you’re walking on broken glass. That’s like two major things going on at the same time, to me that captured how I felt. The glass is itself your history being broken. I think, when you’re trying to figure out what your history is, it’s like your personal history, your people’s history. You’re putting all this stuff together. Some people will tell you “This is your people’s history, it belongs to you.” Right? But your people’s history is also your family’s history, it’s also your own personal history, all that stuff mixed together.

And then you get the history you read in books, which isn’t always accurate, and you’re piecing all these things together, but your history is also what you see of your inheritance. For me, it’s the stuff I’ve seen Latinos go through, and women. In this poem I’m talking particularly about women. And somehow, it’s 2006 and we’re still living part of our history that the people who came before us lived, right? And sometimes that really hurts. And it’s surprising that we still have to go through that same history in our lives. To me, that was like walking on glass. But I’m always putting it back together, it was this poem for me to tell myself get it together—like put it back. It’s empowering. You feel good, and strong, and courageous when you can bring those pieces back. Or you can be that somebody who sits around and just sees broken glass. And just stare at the broken glass, and you just keep stepping on it and bleeding. What do you do with that? How do you move on from that?

For me, an important part of this poem was that “learning to be free.” Do you think anybody needs to learn to be free? I think we all do. I think we get used to being in boxes and put in places, and because we’re used to it, we don’t realize it. And when we start getting out a little bit, then we realize, oh, I’m inside a box. And the more you step out, you see how big the box is, and the box behind you is like this huge building, and that’s where you’ve been. You have to learn to get out of it. I think your history and your determination help you do that. Where are you? You have to know where you are, so that you can go where you want to be. Other questions?

James: As a young writer, I already know that writing won’t be the most lucrative career. Do you think that your passion for it makes up for not having all the money in the world?

NA: I think wealth is a very subjective thing. I think that wealth is what you think wealth is. And everybody thinks wealth is very different things. Wealth isn’t just money. To me it’s like your health, your joy. I know people who are monetarily wealthy, and they’re not very happy people. For me, wealth is a balance of many things. So, I don’t look at as a sacrifice, I look at it as an investment. I like being happy. If you do what makes you happy, you will draw happy things to you. From the time I was your age, I couldn’t think of doing things that made me unhappy. Life was pretty unhappy for me already. And I’m kind of glad because it made me learn really fast that that’s not what I wanted, that I wanted to be happy. Happiness comes from inside. I love learning more than anything. I like writing because I could do it forever and still be learning. I don’t get bored. I don’t like to be bored. That’s it! That’s my greatest fear in the whole wide world, to be bored! I feel like I’m not living life when I’m bored. It’s the most horrible thing in the world, that’s what I’m afraid of. And I think I could write poetry for the rest of my life and not be bored. When you do what you love, the rest will follow. I really do believe that.
Magnolia

You are
another planet’s daughter.
a he-she, a different kind
of Aphrodite,

in me my own woman
placed on my hand
when I expected
a weighty river stone.

You smell like sleep walking
at the edge of the world
before dawn,
a sip of water,

will mean even more
when I am old –

hair peering from my nostrils,
a moustache
well-defined and dark –

arching to kiss the ground
before I leave,
one with bones,
one with flowers.

Previously appeared in Saranac Review.

Hole

One morning they dig up the sidewalk and leave.
No sign of the truck,
only the large
dark shadow digging and digging,
piling up sludge with a hand shovel
beside the only tree.
Two o’clock I come by
and he’s slumbering in the grass beside rat holes.
Three and he’s stretched across a jagged stonewall,
folded hands tucked beneath one ear –
a beautiful young boy smiling,
not the heavy, large shadow who can’t breathe.
Four-thirty and the August heat
takes one down here.
He’s pulled up an elbow joint
some three feet round.
At seven I head home for the night,
pass the fresh gravel mound,
a soft footprint near the manhole
like the “x” abuelo would place beside his name
all the years he couldn’t write.

Fire

Fire is deadly
fire is a life
saver. Fire
can burn you.
It can keep you warm
when you’re
stranded in the
middle of
nowhere.

Fire can turn
a dream house
into a pile
of ashes. Fire
can keep your
dream warm
as fresh
toast.

Clas Duncan

My House

Big as the planet Jupiter, my house
stands tall as a tree of youth. Beautiful
as an angel, wider than a football stadium.
My house stands in that place of my own,
a place I will never be alone. My home.

Colletta Paylor

A Poem for Myself

I was born in Washington
DC. I was born black in
DC. I walked barefooted
on the concrete, but
when I reached the
age of 5, I moved to
Maryland. I left on
a Friday evening. I was
mad because I
knew I was going
to miss my friend
the day we was moving.
I was talking on the
phone outside, sitting on
the steps.
I done strolled through
Virginia, Pennsylvania and
New Jersey
Going back to Maryland
to stay with my friends.
Going back to Maryland
to stay with my friends.

Ashley Stevenson
I Am

I am a sprout or even a seed
I am a flower growing between.

I am a child of a family
that loves me

I am an inspiration
I am an inspirer

I am a person of
many things

But soon as I want to be any
thing

I will be a whistle in the
breeze

forget it, I am just me.

Devonte Walker

Poem

I think a poem is like the President
he do what he feel, a poem expresses
what you feel.

Amber Williams
**A Poem for Myself**
*(or blues for a North Carolina boy)*

I was born in North Carolina,
I was only a toddler.
Smelling cigs and weed when I wake up.
The smell from my cousin’s room.

Then my family and I left that place.
We finally came to DC.
My first school I attended was the X
From DC to Maryland.

From Maryland to DC.
The we finally stayed in Congress Park.
My family lived around there,
shooting mostly every night.

Since I was 1-13
8 people already killed around here my hood.
That’s where I was born and what hood I live in right now. Congress Park

Smoking crack selling weed
Sold heads drinking so much they can’t even breathe.
That’s where I live, the park, and you can’t stop me.

*Trevon Jackson*

---

**Waking Up, Unity**

Sleeping peacefully, wake up opening my eyes, first dreaming looking out my window looking at the universe

Hearing my mother’s lovely gentle voice, seeing my beautiful room and thinking of the world and what I will be doing next, one eye open in my home I am… dreaming.

*Markiya Davis*
an ode to shoes

shoes are unique
wondrous like magic
so exquisite, they light up my day
they are like sculptures in my closet
so numerous and heavy
during the summer, so comfortable
shoes are beautiful
cozy and warm in the winter
all different colors
blue, black, red and more
so many outfits you can style them for
as many as words spoken for poetry

Kiera Coleman

My Ode to Pink

Why is pink disrespected?
Is it the way it is feminine or
the way it makes you look little?
Whatever the reason is, it
should be respected more than blue.

Pink makes me feel amazingly fun or goofy.
Blue makes me feel sad. Pink keeps me
calm and laughing. Blue is rowdy
and makes me mad.

Pink makes me happy when
I’m sad and brightens my day.
Pink makes me lightweight
in the sky. When I look at you,
pink, it’s like magic in my eye.
I come down from the clouds
and fall on my pink plush pillow
and my fluffy pink bed.
So to whomever disrespects
my pink, just take one minute to think.

Shambril Metts

Untitled

the bull is trying to fight a
blazing rose blocking his path
diamonds are being formed by
the lion
claws cutting through cubes,
running until the horns of the
bull just become dark red,
then a great white shark
comes with a mind swept of
impossible odds

Bruce Gibson
My Crazy Friend

She sometimes feels unappreciated.
She has a complexion of caramel brown.
But, it’s not her looks, it’s her personality.
Inside she’s like a sister,
we stick together, like cling.

She is silly in three different kinds of ways.
She sometimes smiles, her cheeks puff up like cotton balls.
When she is sad, she leans on me and says she has a problem.
When somebody passed in her family, she shivered and cried the blues.
I tell her it will be all right. They will walk God’s path,
He will lift them up and they are in a better place.

Keyosha Richardson

Firefly

I saw a bright light in the sky.
My memory said do not kill it.
But I did it anyway.
And I reigned over the world and I was in charge of the world.
Then, I was full of wrath and destroyed the world.

Jada Brooks

Mother

Oh lovely mother
that sleeps so long at home
while she rests her feet.
How peaceful she looks
while I walk around the house wondering when my mother is going to wake up. But, as I wait
I lie down and start dreaming about the universe, I don’t know why.
I go out in the world, I am scared and by myself. But don’t know why.
As I wake up again, I hear a noise.
I go to my mother as fast as I can.
I am standing over her, I gently check to see if she is breathing. I go in the bathroom,
I look at myself in the mirror and say,
I am beautiful, I am beautiful, I am beautiful.
I close my eyes for a minute,
I open my eyes nice and slow,
I turn around and my mother is there with her eyes open and I know she is alive and we are unity.

Wendie Thomas
Katrina

people running jumping
a circle of tulips flying in the
wind, oak leaves fly in the
storm as trees blow and
form into octagons
lions and monkeys and
turtles swarm in the
wind like a rhinoceros
trying to bum
rush everything I see,
visions of xboxes
playstations flying
as clouds form tornados

Deshaun Williams

Linda Reads Her Own Palm

Life is blind.
This may be a myth to you
but true to me. Doomed like a
carrot in a salad, as if everyone looks
insouciant while I struggle for relief
empty as a juice box, which lies in my
future. I am now senile, I don’t
remember the smell of cheese.

Life is blind because you don’t know
what’s going to happen. Doomed like a
carrot. This phrase knows how it feels
to be in debt. Insouciant eyes, look
but don’t help. I’m thirsty for wealth
that can fit in my hand. I feel old
like I can’t do it myself. My
senses are gone, left without any help.

Ashley Cooper

Open Mind

My open mind has 9 planets
the stars, moon and the sun.
But it’s kinda cold and
it has no gravity.
So in other words, my words
are harsh and they only float in the air.
But only one star shines so brightly.
Well that means my open mind might
not be as nice as my 9th planet
and the 9th planet is sensitive and caring.
It might shine so brightly but it
doesn’t get any attention.
So when the meteor shower hits,
I really don’t care unless it hits
someone I love.
You know what? My open mind
isn’t so good, nope,
not so good at all.

Tierra Thornton
Ode to Candy

Oh candy, you bright and beautiful thing! You brain tease the minds. You’re sweet, sour, tasteless. But you tend to be an addiction for some. Oh candy, sweet sweet candy! When I’m down, you’re up. You brighten my day. Teachers, parents, and dentists don’t understand that I can’t get enough of you before and after and in between breakfast, lunch and dinner. This is my ode to candy, my sweet sweet candy!

Tierra Thornton

Being 19 years old

I don’t know what it is like to be 19. But I really want to be 19. I mean, it’s the best. You’re not underage, old enough to live by yourself. You’re able to drive, get a job, have privacy, no curfew. You would have your own rules. But, I’m not gonna say everything is gonna be perfect.

Markus Johnson

My Shadow

My shadow has never been noticed. Its light is dimming down and time is running out for my shadow to show. But most of all, my shadow may never get time to show that it can shine like it’s a star.
My shadow has always worn dark blue, for some reason it doesn’t want to jump into pink.
Why don’t you want to show? Maybe if you show for one day I’ll leave you alone.
If I can be free, you can be free too.

Tierra Thornton
I’ll Tell You

I’ll tell you,
life ain’t no joy ride
for me neither.
And yes, there have been
some mud holes and humps
in the long road away from home.
But from time to time, I
did have some rest stops
that helped me get past
the intersections and get to
the next one.
There was one time that I
really needed your help getting
up a huge hill.
This road in life is
timed, you have to finish before
your time runs out.
Although there are roads
in life that are as smooth as
words that flow out of your mouth.

Tierra Thornton

My Life

My image is like a
souvenir sitting where nobody
sees me.
Sometimes I think of myself as a
precious flute blowing out precious
sounds.
My life is a legend that lives
on forever.
My life is like a star
shining brightly in the sky.
Sometimes I picture myself as
a dirty, filthy rag never being
seen and thrown in the trash.
My life is like a breath full
of ice.
My life is like a secret story
when you have to figure out
who I am.
My life is like love when love departs from
me and goes to someone else.
Sometimes my life can feel like
the loss of my best friend.

Danielle Blake
My Moody Days

My mood on my good days is sweet as candy. And I can be good and generous and sometimes, my attitude can be like a raging tornado crushing everything in its path. Some people look at my attitude as celestial. And some worship me for my attitude. And I put my life in principles, little categories to see what I'm about. Then, when I look into the sky, I look upon the evening star and wish that I have a good day the next day. And when I get upset, I feel self-defeated. And, then when I look at myself, I'm semi-precious. When people talk about me, it's like I'm under a bridge and it fell on me. Then, at the end of the day, I feel delicate again.

Danielle Blake

My Inner Shadow

My shadow is a splitting image of me. And sometimes, my shadow has her own mind. My shadow has sneaky ways. Sometimes she tells me things that I shouldn't do. Sometimes she tells me, “stop and think for a minute.” My shadow lives deeply inside me. She comes out when she feels like it. I can't help what she says. Sometimes my shadow is an imitation of me. She's sensitive, pleasant and sweet and she doesn't cause any trouble. She respects people and she listens. Sometimes she gets her way with everything and at the end she always wins.

Danielle Blake
My Life is...

My life is a matching game
When you have to find out who I am
Some people take me for a joke
Because they think I’m weak
People think since I’m so nice
So they take it for granted
But no matter what they say
I still believe in myself
My life is when someone picks
A controller up and starts
To play with me
My life is when the game is over
I’m over
My life is when someone goes through
The channels and has nothing to watch
It’s a basketball game
When the buzzer goes off
The quarter is over
My life is a computer
When you turn it off, it’s over
My life is when my grandfather died
I just started to recently cry.

Danielle Blake

Untitled

Who am I . . . I am black
I’m strong, I am intricate
but also decent. I am the drums
to my heartbeat.

I am a glimmer in the dark.
I am an ancient legend who’s slept for too long
and is now awakening. I am my own souvenir.
I am my own breath that I breathe in the morning.

I am a long, never ending speech.
I am my own little secret that can get
loud at any time
I am my own footsteps to greatness.

I am a dream that everyone thinks is impossible.

Nichell Kee
My Winter

It’s a miracle that winter’s finally here. It’s snowing and as I go outside, it becomes quiet . . . it’s soundproof.

As I sit outside with my eyelids shut, I sit and think . . . I think it’s strange that when it snows, it becomes silent.

So silent that if there was a tornado going on, you most likely wouldn’t hear it.

But as I keep walking in further toward this wintry wonderland, I start to think again, I think of it as my own little secret . . . my own little hideout.

I start to hear the laughter of my family and it breaks the silence but warms my heart.

As I start to go beyond my hideout it starts fading . . . fading into spring. I try to run back but darkness covers over me and I start to think I’ve become blind, so I open my eyes and my face is being covered in snow.

Nichell Kee

Fly!

my soul is flying
soaring in the sky real high
just want to be free
free to soar the sky
not wanting to breathe in dust
to just be ahead
be smarter and brave
for the things to come ahead
fly to reach the sky
fly to get your dream
fly to hear the beating drums
fly to the footsteps
fly to see morning
fly to the breathing uncle
take a souvenir

Nichell Kee
Her Own Palm

In her blind eyes
she will see her insouciant
future.
She’s ready for
her doomed life as
she gets old and senile while
reading an old myth.
Her life is described as
a tossed salad with a glass
of juice on the side.
Her heart is like melted cheese
on top of a great piece
of pizza.

Yasmin Jones

Dreaming of the world

As I’m sleeping
I’m dreaming of
this peaceful world
that’s beautiful
gentle and lovely
I’m the mother
of this universe
sending out unity
to all homes with
one eye open
ready for any thing
I will wake up
with unity on my mind
just dreaming of
a world of peace.

Yasmin Jones

I am

I am impossible
walking in my mother’s
lost footsteps, I’m a
legend, my soul is
a witness waiting to
be heard
I’m like a souvenir
that will never be forgotten
from wonderful voyage
I am Yasmin Jones,
an eighth grade student
I am a voice of a mother
I am a pop star wanting to be
heard
I am whatever you say I am

Yasmin Jones
My emotions

Floating in polluted water like leaves in the rain

Blood dripping from the sky in the evening when the sun is fainting

Sitting in my room daydreaming of random mysteries and miracles thinking of all the heat from the blistering sun

I imagine neon colors all over the exotic night sky and the shadowing of the moon reflecting through my window glowing

Underneath all of these emotions I feel special

Yasmin Jones

Ode to the box

Friend and protector keeps everything together If I put something in it I know it will be in the same place when I come back.

It may be brown, black or blue but it is something that you can use. It may be dusty with 4 corners but have respect.

People kick it throw it rip it but it still should be treated with respect.

If it was up to me I would keep and cherish it forever.

It was given to me by someone special.

Cherish Gaines
December

I
December
it's cold, it's sometimes snowing
it's sometimes green,
sometimes red
sometimes you
have to go to bed

II
The candle burns
upon the moonlit
sky

I dream of what
I am going to
get

III
I get up at
the crack of dawn
to see what's under
the tree

IV
There was nothing
under there

Ashley Stevenson

Waking Up

When I go to sleep I wonder
if I will wake up the next morning
or if the gun shots I hear will
go away, I wonder if
my mother will be
there for me or when I die
if I am going to fly in the
cloudless sky
I wonder if my life will be the same
some people think life
is a joke but I don't
I want to live, do you?

Cherish Gaines

Secret evolution

My souvenir came from the heartbeat of the drums
The footsteps of a brightly lit voyage
The blasting trumpets over the soft melody of the flutes
Going along with the windswept morning sun.
I also got it from the glimmer of the soul passing its grave
The ancient departed person who is now breathless
The filthy fingers running over the wet coral
The secret evolution of the world soon becomes a legend.

Nichell Kee
What I think at night

Before I go to sleep, I think
of lying on the soft clouds once
I put my head on my soft pillows,
it feels like I am born in a
cloudless sky. I was thinking of
when I was born, I heard a
secret name saying Ashley with
two burned fingers, it lit a little candle,
I heard the flames scattering, then
I saw a blown rose.

Ashley Stevenson

Kaleidoscope

It is red
spinning like
a tulip being
thrown up in
the air inside
of the
red spinning
thing it has a
maple tree
feeling. That's
how strong
it is. It has
beds, shoes,
daisies, dandelions
board games, horses
and a guinea pig.
They all have
multiples of colors
such as red, pink,
blue, orange, and
purple. The dandelions
were walking, the
guinea pig was jumping
while running.
An upside down “A”
without the dash.

Ashley Stevenson

Shadow

My shadow has orange hair
she has red eyes
wears purple and loves plaid dresses
and blue shoes.
She wears snake skin shoes,
when she walks past me, it sounds
like the ocean waves.
She scares people when
they walk past.
She hurts people
when they ignore her.
Sometimes I want to tell
my shadow to change the way
she is and not do some of the stuff she does.
Secretly my shadow lives inside of me.

Ashley Stevenson
I am, I am . . .

I am the writer behind the poem
I am the first breath
of the newborn baby
I am an inspirational leader
I am the grave of the
deceased
You may think I am losing
but I am gaining
I am the secret of the legend
I am the souvenir in
the gift shop
I am the trumpet that
makes the music
I am the rhythm
that keeps the band marching
I’m the caution behind the sign
I’m the microphone
which projects the voice
of a speaker while saying a speech
I am an impossible challenge
I am the calm blow of
the wind
I am

Reginald Conway

My Life Is a Car

My life is a car, it is a Range Rover SUV going down the
95 interstate, with red color coming off the car like red
bursting flames.
Sometimes I’m confused like I do not
know which way to turn left or right.
Sometimes I might cruise around not
knowing where I’m going,
following the rules and regulations like
stop signs on an empty highway.
But when I’m mad, I
feel like I’m in control, passing all the signs
going over the speed limit, running from the police.
And sometimes I could be nice,
putting everyone in the seat of my comfortable ride.
Sometimes I might be peppy,
but just run out of gas.
I would build that gas back up by
laughing at silly jokes.
That’s how my life is a car.

Reginald Conway
Dream of the Oceans

Dreaming of blue oceans
swaying like a mother
rocking her baby to sleep in a gentle motion
the breeze of the ocean
sounding like the mother's lovely voice singing
trying to overpower the baby's cry.
Then the breeze calms down
and the baby goes to sleep.
Then the waves start to flow again
and the baby's eyes open
but he's calm not saying a word.
The ocean stops again
and the baby falls asleep
with him and the mother's dream
uniting hoping that the ocean won't
wake him up anymore.

Reginald Conway

Cleaning Grandma

This lady cleans dishes, washes
clothes, scrubs floors, and cooks dinner.
But there's something on her mind,
she's wondering, does she thrive enough?
Is she appreciated? Should she work harder?
Genice can give gracious gifts
to guys and girls, maybe she feels unappreciated.
But in my book she is an angel without wings and a halo.
I appreciate how she cleans dishes with her bare hands.
I love how she tosses the clothes into
the washer in a diligent fashion, I like
the way she does everything. She's amazing
and indescribable, and she is also my grandmother.

Reginald Conway
Intense Personal Color

Teal
eyes
watching over servants
giving unspoken orders

Teal
eyes
touching souls
pounding for eternity

Scarlet
minds
hearing and
seeing all

Cyan
ears
listening
and acknowledging

Turquoise
hearts
beating
like a drum

Lavender
nose
just had copious
smells

Azure
body
smells fresher
than an unkempt dump

Violet
faith
filled
with exhaust

Fuchsia
dazzling envy
loving
gruesome souls

Magenta
optimistic person
loving and
caring for all

Monae Smith

My Name

My name sounds like a wolf that just got
kicked out of the clan. My name taste like a cookie
without any flavor to it. My name is plain.
My name feels like grass, because it is ragged
and itchy and lumpy.
My name looks like a Playstation, old and out
of date. My name smells like McDonald's sugar cookies
and sweet vanilla milkshakes.

Marcus Johnson
Monae Reads Her Own Palm

I am living a life of an insouciant salad filled with cheese while juice squeezed from the cucumbers and tomatoes of my doomed heart filled with the myths of my senile almost blind shadow while I’m visualizing the future and how my life will be.

I am living on a vacant stoop searching for the right or maybe left trying to get a clear vision of who this person is in my future.

I am living an adolescent tragedy while my parents are trying to rush me to the insane asylum thinking I lost my head maybe I’m just dead.

Monae Smith

Pathos

During this journey wandering through the month of December, January, June, and July crying and sighing thinking about dying trying to have a graceful emancipation while hearing papa say, “hi girlfriend” and nana shouting, “why, why come on, I know you can do better Nae-Nae, get your head in the books and stop talking so much, you gotta make it for you, they can’t make it for you.” While mammy and daddy co-sign, saying “mmmm um.”

I’m weeping and grieving and eulogizing over the 4 family members who have died in the past nine months, while giving my own hasty generalization.

My mind is feeling and signing this paper anonymous, in my placid, fiery, fragile but glorious heart beating with teardrops of blood dripping dripping but all the time the blood was mine.

Monae Smith
Kaleidoscope

Shouting pink
and weeping clear diamonds
leap like frogs
computers downloading slow
like turtles
cell phones out of range
and flying like leaves
while having a windswept
blue triangle with orange knees
while white chrysanthemums
surround trees.
Televisions blank like
brother's mind
while cheetahs fast
like Lamborghini
swinging sticks
hard like As
yellow clouds
make a huge maze
while life is square
and very bare.

Monae Smith

Untitled

I have to follow my Godmother's
footsteps
It's impossible
to do a back flip and drink juice
at the same time
I play the drums sometimes. I have a
legend.
I have to be brave for my baby cousins.
The sky is foggy. Back in the day, I was
ancient.
I am luminous because I'm intelligent.
I have atoms, the smallest elements.

Shannon Allen

Nature's Kaleidoscope

Running like a baby cheetah
and turning into a beautiful
rose. Crawling is a lion
and windswept through the stars.
The wind is pushing the tree.
The streams are pink.
The turtle is in the water that is green.
A triangle looks
like a red oak tree. The water
looks like a light green
circle. A lion with
purple dots all over his body,
playing and eating food
and playing video games
in nature.

Shannon Allen
My Heart

My heart is a fire because my family won’t get together because of the bad things they say to each other, that’s why my heart is a fire. My heart is a fire because of the things that happen like my brother sleeping everyday and I tell my Dad, but all he says is, “Jamie, you have to walk your sister inside the school.” That’s why my heart feels like a fire because of the things I care about are a fire in my heart.

Jamie Warren

A note to God

If I wrote a note to God, I would speak what’s in my soul. I’d ask for wars to end and for peace to mend, for love. I’d say, give us the strength to make it through, help us find love, ’cause love is overdue and it feels like we haven’t got a clue. I need some help from you. Give us the help to carry on, if I wrote a note to God.

India Bell

I am India

I am India
I know I can
be what I want to be
if I work hard at it
I can be where I want to be.
I am a person who says something and means it, not a person who is wicked or a lost person, I am a decent person and a legend. You will never catch me saying bad words or negative things to someone or someone’s parent or any other child or guardian. I am India.

India Bell

the voice

the voice in my ear that keeps talking to me in my head that tells me to eat cookies, the voice in my head that tells that boy to stop, the voice in my head that tells me to dance, the voice in my head that tells me to smell roses. Get out.

Jamie Warren
My Life is a Wild Ride

My wild ride is like a bike and on that bike is like falling off of it and getting a scratch on my arm or knee, you can’t imagine how my wild ride is. If you were on my wild ride, you would see how it feels to be on my wild ride so don’t say you know how I feel because you don’t. Because that wild ride will hurt you. That’s how scary it is. I don’t even want to be on this wild ride, so why should you.

India Bell

through my kaleidoscope

I see black and brown goblins like meerkats leaping through the unique azures and tulips sliding into elephants, stampeding through the Amazon river, rolling into unique blue and black diamonds, hopping into fish circling the coral reef.

Aasiyah Muhammad

Homeland

I’m at home all alone then I wake up from a deep sleep dreaming about the universe of the unity with my eye open. Then my mother yells from the gentle, beautiful, lovely world. Then I come back from the peaceful land.

Bnyonka Simpkins
Summer

I
Summer
its shine, its island
with its beauty
of waves
as people come
upon its sandy surface

II
I swim with the dolphins
a rhythm, swim in
the ocean as the waves hit me
upon the sea
that summer morning,
we came upon the surface
with the sand, a sandy-like
beach place.

I say this
on a summer day
with the secret of its day
with the dream that people
will come

III
The waves are
shaking and it's pretty
People upon the beach,
bodies

The Me No One Sees

The me no one sees is hidden behind leaves
underneath these leaves are growing trees.
My tears flow like the river inside of me
sometimes I believe they can water a tree.
Behind my eyes are colorful leaves
they’re fallin’ off of very big trees.

Day’Quan Wright

IV
The different kind
of fish swimming
with their friends

I walk upon
the beaches
I sit on the sky
I sit with the sunset

Bryonka Simpkins
**Wild Style**

I am very wild.  
I try to keep a smile,  
while laid back in style.  
I learned to jog a mile  
as long as I keep a towel.  
my nickname is Quan, it came  
from my Mom, who got it from Tom.  

I am very short  
my Mom said I look good in skorts.  
Sometimes I wonder should I play sports.  
She’s always there when I go to court.  

*Day’Quan Wright*

---

**She is**

She is dangerous like a tiger  
Her skin is soft like the clouds  
A tiger is fast like a cheetah  
She is as fat as the Capitol  
She is as white as a marshmallow  
She is as black as a hawk.  

*Dominique Johnson*

---

**Skittles**

Skittles the amazing taste  
it’s like magic touching your tongue  
the puddle of flavors just  
boomerang back and forth  

*Darell Caldwell*

---

**My Poem**

My soul is blue, inside and out  
I have a lot of feelings without a doubt.  
There is more to me than what everyone sees  
Build to destroy, built by trees  
Extraordinary in many different ways  
In the middle of a field with many different rays  
I stand very tall, but looked on as small  
Guess I’m nothing but a standing wall  

*Earl James*
Open the Door

When I watch you
mishandled and misused
and through the day you get through
so young, but so mature
wishing you would open the door
let someone like me in
and let our new relationship begin

_Earl James_

I Know Why

I know, I know why I woke up this morning
Tryin’ to get out of this school soaring, rain shine or pouring
I know why you always try to follow someone bad,
Role model or your own gran’mama
I know what it takes to make you smile
Roses, chocolate and maybe a kiss, just to make it worth your while
I know what it takes to get out of the hood,
Maybe rob a bank or finish school and be good
I know what it takes to know some more
Either stay in school and try to be cool
Or call the hood your home and die tomorrow

_Luqman Abdullah_

Life and Wisdom

I don’t know my wisdom
I don’t know how girls work
I know that I am loved
I know that I can sing and dance
Sometimes I don’t know who or what I am
Sometimes I don’t know who or what my friends are
Sometimes I stop breathing so I think I am fake
Never fake as a person, but fake as life
Sometimes I don’t know what time or day it is
I don’t know my life
But I do know that I was made right
Only I can have my life
So tonight I’m going to live that life

_Denisha Bolden_
**Inside**

Inside is like the world is going to end.
My heart is pounding and sad.
Behind my eyes there is sadness.
The me no one sees is behind the doors.
The inside of me is happy.
My soul is joyful and happy.
Underneath this is my skin and fear.

*Emmanuel Youman*

---

**Joy Inside My Tears**

My tears are full of joy
I cry because I am happy
Tears of laughter, tears of fun
Tears of being with my family and friends
Tears of having fun, being loved and
Being around people you love
Tears of joy, this is my life of
Tears of joy.

*Brittney Savoy*

---

**My Amazing Wisdom**

I know my life is wonderful.
I don't know what will happen to me in the next few minutes.
I thought I knew how to be very friendly to people.
Sometimes I understand the ways of life.
I don't know everything about life though.
I know the meaning of love and passion.
I don't know the meaning of violence and force.

My wisdom is my conscience that's inside of me.
It's private and personal with love inside of me.
I only let my wisdom out when there's something special happening.
Everyone has their own wisdom. Some wisdoms are sad, happy, angry, or excited.

*Defon Tucker*
I Write Fiercely

Rain falls like the sunset going down.
Scissors are sharp like someone’s dressed up for a party.
If your mind is like a shining sun,
your eyes should shimmer like a star.
I write fiercely like a tiger,
and I’m dangerous like a lion.
Broken time passes like a day never ends.
But when I sleep, I dream as silently
as a baby sleeps.
His trust grows like a red rose
awakening from its hibernation.
You look out of the window and watch
winter pour in as water runs in a sink.

DeJon Tucker

My Special Wisdom

I know most of the things about my family.
I love my family like the beautiful flowers.
I know that God is watching me.
I know that my mother loves me.
I don’t know that people care about me.
I know that I always speak my mind to others.
I don’t know what people think about me.
I don’t know if I am special, because no one is.
I know I am a beautiful child
and I also have a lovely smile.

Latia Pimble

My Poem

Inside my heart
is passion and art.

Inside my heart
it’s very blue.
That’s my favorite color,
is it yours too?

There’s also blue water
and lots of fun.
There’s nothing violent
like knives and guns.

There are little coconut trees
and bushes with lots of leaves.

That’s what’s inside my heart,
nothing but passion and art.

Keishawna Simms
Chaos

Inside me is fire in the sky.
It’s burning and dissolving
I’m going to wake up
poisoned and insane.
My heart is burning like a flame
and my fingers are static.
I am going to battle
and it will be chaos.
No one will defeat me.

David Brown

I know, I don’t know

I know how to spell, read and write.
I know that I can use these things
to get somewhere in life.
But I don’t know where I am going tonight.
I know how to read directions,
I always read them twice.
I know no one can be me,
I know that only some one can see me.

Nicole Williams

Emotions

I feel upset
I feel a little angry
I feel okay

I am mad melting like a snicker
unwrapping out of a starbust
wrapper,
mad as a stray cat.
I am feeling okay
feeling real bored, mooing
like a cow, crying like a baby.

Nicole Williams

Joyful

Sorrow falls like rain from the stormy clouds
Your mind shines like the sun just coming out
I live as joyful as a non-worried person
She is dangerous like a pit bull that has been upset
Winter pours in as a cup of Florida’s Orange Juice
Broken time passes like a clock that has been set back
Silent eyes are watery like the ocean

Danielle Stover
Ode to the heart

You take over the body
when the mind makes mistakes
There are pieces to be found from being scattered
‘cause you are always broken.
You try to stay closed like a lost treasure.

Da’Shawn Washington

Saturday

Saturday I was happy,
like a white cloud full of shapes,
a dog barking for his bone,
a cake that was being baked,
a fragrance of new perfume,
packs of bubble gum that are chewed.

Da’Shawn Washington

Real Music

Singing the blue birds
Humming a sweet precious sound
The best tunes in town

Kiera Butler

Untitled

His trust grows like a small child’s hope,
but as his trust goes down he becomes
dangerous like a mountain lion.
Your mind shines like the moonlight in Ocean City.
Broken time passes like a bag
of frozen chicken trying to thaw.
We write as fiercely as if electricity
is passing through your body.

Myah Robertson

The life of love

The secret life of a broken heart
as the sorrow falls like a tear.
Your mind shines like a shooting star
as the ordinary pain slowly flows away.
I live in Loveland as a broken heart
turns into many pieces and
the birds of beauty come to light.
The screams come to silence
as the hips come to the dance’s door.
His trust grows like a burning fire
as I dream of love as ghetto pain.
Still broken time passes like a burning rope.

Kiarra Payton
Ode to the pencil sharpener

Chewer of lead
that is black, ugly
and sounds like a bag
of chips being crunched.
You’re the swallower of wood
like a woodpecker.

Herman Clark

Untitled

Peaceful, lovely
Caring about the world
Gentle, dreaming
Always in a daze
Helping, hoping, caring about me
Never a beautiful universe
Surfing in itself
Sleeping nervous
Scared of what you can be
Hoping the next day
You wake up to see

Brittany Johnson

Dangerous girl like a gun

She is dangerous like a gun
Her fist is made of steel
She hates like a tidal wave
She is boiling like an engine
She is as empty as a flat tire
She is strong and fast as a falcon
She shocks like electricity
She sticks like a magnet
She lights like a candle
She is as black as a burning rope

Herman Clark

I Am

I am a child of God
I am a scholar
I am the first round draft pick
I am the positive hurricane
I am a dreamer
I am the impact pf the future
I am the flesh and bones
I am the diagram of life
I am the prospect of college

Curtis Canty

Braids

My braids don’t make me
Do you like me for my braids?
I am who I am

Demarco Singleton
Untitled

Unity, togetherness
Is what I wish upon

A peaceful world
Why can't we live in one?

Gentle mother sleeping on air,
In her room
Yes, she's there

Without one eye open
She sleeps among the stars

In an evil world
This is what she calls home

But now she wakes up
One eye at a time
After dreaming about the universe
Then spreads her arms and starts to fly

But as mother seems to soon notice
Her life is a dream

Kiera Butler

Suffocating

I am suffocating
And I just need to breathe
I am suffocating
And I just need to be relieved

Nothing I do is right
Nothing they say is fair
I cry and scream and throw a fit
But no one seems to care

I can't do what I want
I can't stay out late
So now I sit here and write this poem
To release my pain and hate

No one will look far enough
Because I'm lost in my mind
No one will search beyond my looks
To see what they might find

I'm still suffocating
And I still need to breathe
I'm still suffocating
And I…must…be…relieved

Kiera Butler

I Am

I am a beautiful, Intelligent Black Woman
I am the hope for all black children out here today
You shall know me as Sherita Angelica Grady
Not as a nigga
I am a queen
Not a nigga

Sherita Grady

School Time

Test taking is cool
Kids learning in classrooms now
Class reading is cool

Marquell Bethea
**Who Am I?**

I am a scared girl
Trying to build a better future with my sister
I am a Queen who worships God
I am a poor girl trying to fulfill my acting career
I am a light-skinned girl
Who is always being called white
But I am actually a black queen
Mixed with a lot of ethnicities
I am a girl who is scared
To live because I am scared
Of getting shot
I am a lonely girl
Whose dreams might not come
Until I turn 40 years old
I am a loving girl
Who shows love to any person
Who shows me love
I am a ghetto girl
Who lives around fights
Who lives around drug dealers
Who lives around dope fiends
Who live around people who have sex for money
People who shoot at their own family
I am a girl who has family and friends fighting
A black-on-black crime
Whose fight aids it and they don’t even know it
I am a girl whose dreams have yet to be answered

*Manaiza Kelley*

**Homes**

People live in homes
Some live out in the cold street
Their dream is to be

*Brittany Johnson*

**Dancing to Go-Go**

I dance in the street
To the Go-Go beat ha-ha!
As I beat my feet

*Manaiza Kelley*
**Untitled**

My life is like a movie  
People always acting in it  
Faking it  
My life is like football games  
Me always running yards  
My life is like popcorn  
People always popping up  
My life is like a baseball game  
I’m always running home  
My life is like school  
I’m always working  
My life is like a clock  
I’m always ticking  
My life is like a jam  
It’s hard to get through

*Antonio Alston*

**My Pain**

My rage, my pain  
My loss, my gain  
The shirts I’ve stained  
People I’ve blamed  
The people that bled  
The blood, sweat, and tears they’ve shed  
Doesn’t mean anything—our lives are almost dead  
From the 911 “accidents”  
To the wars in Iraq  
And the tragic losses by “The Man”  
To the kids in the ghetto having problems  
To the grown-ups still trying to solve them  
My struggles, my pain  
Something I want to lose, but always going to gain

*Eric Quarles*
Untitled

I am like the sky
I get mad
I am like thunder
And strike people like lightning
I am like a flood
Just running through people
Like a mad person
I am like a mother bird
Who attracts people when the mess with her family
I am like a computer
That breaks down a lot
And it takes a long time to recover

Martha Hardman

Sleep

Sleeping so beautifully
She looks so peacefully
Dreaming upon the universe
Like she was put to sleep by a curse
As she’s dreaming of her mother
She looked so stiff as her brother
All of a sudden
She dreams she’s in a jungle
So scared she curled in a bundle
Then she closed her eyes and counted to ten
Then she felt a great wind
It was Hurricane Katrina
And the ground got wrinkled
Then she woke up at home
But still thinking of people in the superdome

Jasper Hicks
This magazine was made possible by funding from:

  Anonymous
  Children’s Fund of Metropolitan Washington
  Fannie Mae Foundation
  Herb Block Foundation
  Hitachi Foundation
  John Edward Fowler Foundation
  Mattel Children’s Foundation
  Meyer Foundation
  Moran Family Fund
  The International Monetary Fund
  The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation
  The Tom Lane Fund
  The World Bank
  Wachovia Foundation
  Weissberg Foundation

Naomi Ayala