# HARTWORKS

March/April 2001 • $1

## Special Issue:
## Reflections on the Holocaust

The Charles Hart Middle School Literary Magazine • featuring the work of Arnost Lustig

*Roosevelt Jones, Jr.*

# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the second issue of *hArtworks*, a literary magazine published by the students of Charles Hart Middle School, in southeast Washington, D.C. *hArtworks* gives our young writers the opportunity to exercise their creative energies, speak their minds, and be heard by an audience throughout the city. For the past six years, Hart students have had the opportunity to work with professional writers in a workshop that has brought them widespread acclaim and numerous literary awards. This year, the D.C. Creative Writing Workshop was incorporated as a public-private partnership to provide our students with a full-fledged creative writing magnet program that reaches all of the more than five hundred students who attend Hart. Our students are now writing poems, plays, stories and essays in their classes, and in three specialized weekly writing clubs. This special issue of hArtworks contains our students' responses to their six-week study of the Holocaust.

We have many friends who have helped to make the expansion of our writing program possible, and we would like to express our gratitude to them. Our sincerest thanks go out to the Arcana Foundation, The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, the Commonweal Foundation, Borders Books and Music, Free Hand Press, Betsy Holt and Ms. Printing Company, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Arena Stage, Andrew Chin and his colleagues at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, Bernie Horn and the Center for Policy Alternatives, our friends at Popeye's on Malcolm X Avenue, Esther Cohen, Chris Erlewine, Jon Gerson, Arnost Lustig, Paul Mandelbaum, Mark Simon, Henry Taylor, Vera M. White, Ruth Dickey, Venus Brevard, Ticora Jones, Michael Jordan, Daniel Yacykewych, and our dedicated volunteer Dennis Collins.

We would also like to thank the following administrators, teachers, and staff who are our partners in this endeavor: Superintendent Paul L. Vance, Assistant Superintendent for Middle/Junior High Schools Vera M. White, Principal Lee E. Epps; Assistant Principals Willie Bennett, Yvonne Davis, and Samuel Scudder; Ms. Molly Buckley, Ms. Gloria Fergusson, Ms. Shirley Grooms, Ms. Carolyn Jackson, Ms. Mary Johnson, Ms. Irma Morgan and Ms. Ethel Rivers; Ms. Eleanor Elie, Ms. Lisa Henry, and Ms. Neta Vaught.

Last, we thank you, the reader, for giving our writers the chance to be heard.

**Nancy Schwalb, Executive Director**
D.C. Creative Writing Workshop

## The hArtworks Editorial Board

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*Cover photo clockwise, from left: Dominic Garvin, James Thomas, Larry Robertson, Antonio Ashford*

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Many educators who teach about the Holocaust believe that its study assists students in developing understanding of the ramifications of prejudice, racism, and stereotyping in any society. It helps students develop an awareness of the value of pluralism, and encourages tolerance of diversity in a pluralistic society. A study of the Holocaust helps students think about the use and abuse of power, and the role and responsibilities of individuals, organizations, and nations when confronted with civil rights violations and/or policies of genocide. And the Holocaust provides a context for exploring the dangers of remaining silent, apathetic, and indifferent in the face of others' oppression. Most students demonstrate a high level of interest in studying the Holocaust precisely because the subject raises questions of fairness, justice, individual identity, peer pressure, conformity, indifference, and obedience – issues that young people confront in their daily lives.

In January 2001, Charles Hart Middle School students participating in the D.C. Creative Writing Workshop, visited the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum as part of the museum's partnership with Washington, D.C. public schools – *Bringing the Lessons Home: Holocaust Education for the Community*. Following their visits, a Holocaust survivor met with the students and shared her personal history. The writings in this magazine reflect the thoughts and feelings of these young authors in response to their experiences learning about the Holocaust.

**David Klevan, Program Coordinator**
Community Partnerships, Education
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

*Top: Chase Moore*
*Center: Donna James, James Thomas*
*Bottom: Theodora Walker, Shawntice Patterson, Sitembile Knatt*

*Shawntice Patterson, Sitembile Knatt*

Early in its inception, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum recognized the ability of young people to memorialize those who perished in the Holocaust and teach others about this watershed event through written and artistic expression. In the Museum, one way this is exemplified is through the *Wall of Remembrance* – a memorial of over 3,000 tiles, hand-painted by American students as a tribute to the approximately one and a half million children who perished during the Holocaust. However, it is through the Museum's partnership with local schools that we learn from our youth how the Holocaust is being interpreted today, where it resonates in our own lives, and what – if anything – we can learn from this enormous tragedy.

## Dream

In this dark I rest, wrapped up in a dream
not ready to be met by the day, to be
blinded by the sunlight. I have no choice—
the sunlight pulls me up from my bed.
I scream for help but it is too late,
I sit there, crippled and blind,
hoping that my dream will find me. There
is no more than shadow of a blind, crippled
person. My dream no more than a crime,
a slow evil looking for its next victim.

*Ebony Love*

*Chakia Chapman*

## These Things I Could Do

What if I could talk to dead people?
What if I could see them?
What if I had magic powers and could reunite people?
What if I could help save the world like supergirl and
wonderwoman?
What if we had a house?
Or could wake up to a song we like?
What if I could go back in time to make things better?
—just like the way things should be.

*Pamula Twyman*

## The Pie Seller

There's a guy who sells pies
makes a dime every day. He's
poor. Oh yes, he's poor. He
sells cherry, apple and grape.
He's always going to be poor.

*Milton Douglass*

## I Thank You

I thank you God for the yellow sun in the morning
The blue sky holds the sun in its arms and at
night it holds the stars.

The tall green trees are giving birth to leaves; the earth
is covered with green grass. And the sun and moon
play hide and seek.

*Milton Douglass*

## What I am Thankful For

I am thankful I was born.
If not, I would not be living this life I am living now.
I am thankful for a mother—some people don't even have a mom.
I thank my black and white teachers that I have respect for
For the white snow yesterday
I am thankful for blacks and whites who care about different colors
Everyone is special in their own way.

*Brandon Robbins*

## Night?

Dark, sad, lonely days of dark life,
seeing no one but a blank of darkness where
no life was ever formed or created. Yet one life
stirred and was the savior of life to each person.
That is why the day is bright and all of life, but
night,
is full of darkness, sadness, and loneliness.

*Ebony Love*

*Timothy Miller; Roosevelt Jones, Jr.; Antonio Ashford; Delonte Williams*

## Flying into a New Year

I am flying into the new year
eating a cold, soft biscuit
And I am bringing nothing but the clothes
on my back for you and me now.
I am flying into the new year
Watch me as the cold, hard breeze
smacks my face;
I think I am flying too fast

*Brandon Robbins*

## Body-Fire

What if my hands were metal?
What is my body was fire?
What if I could eat everything?
What if I could walk on the rainbow?
What if I could fly?
What if I could melt like butter?

*John Seegars*

## Dange Kee Ou

Dange Keep Ou of the 30s.
Boy-men are breaking in Harlem
Worn-out boards, worn-out fighting,
trying to get in a building.
Grandmothers scream come-up, come-here
Hands sticking out of windows.
It is a muddy, smoky-gray past.
Yesterday, the street was white
But now, cloudy and bloody, saying
danger danger
Kids dream of stage performances, their memories
blue-back and yelling c'mon future.

*Kala Taylor*

## New Years May I?

New Year, may I take a hundred steps back
so that I can see the beautiful trees again?
May I smell the air with no smog, no stink?

New Year, may I hug and kiss you?

*Nathaniel Nails*

## Fight It

I am fighting into a new year
the old years have lost again
I catch the new year and
jab the new year with a right;
jab all my old promises.
It will be hard to brag about it.
When I was two I got the old years bad
But now I am twelve and the new year's going
to pay.

*Kala Taylor*

## What About Me?

In a burning room with a cluttered dresser,
I am in a mirror, saying what about me?
day-dreaming into the future,
my memory twirling,
saying what about me?
In a building with a ceiling worn-out
from performing, saying what about me?
In a mirror, in a burning room, with a cluttered dresser
a white cloudy day, yelling what about me?

*Ashlee Owens*

## Dying

With a golden heart
and he was always bright.
I guess now,
you'll walk to the light.
I wish that you could stay here
but you must go, so take good care.
I really wish that you could stay
so these are the last words I have to say.
Don't worry and take good care
because sooner or later I'll be up there.

*Rodney Bean*

## Green Grass

I am thankful for the green grass
I am thankful for the blue sky
I am thankful for the colorful flowers
I am thankful for my brown skin,
for the soft white snow, for the yellow sun.

*Kameisha Skinner*

## Dying to You

I am dying into a new year
Rest in peace, everything is weak
Because we can't keep violence off the streets
I am dying into the new year
With drugs and beers,
Crying with tears in my sleep.

*Victoria McRae*

## In this dark I rest

In this dark,
I think about what I'm going to do.
When I hear gun shots,
I don't feel like getting up the next day.

*Lauren Craig*

## If U Win

There's a woman twirling in a Harlem stage,
performing in smoky-grays, she says, "I'm worn-out.
I can't do it there is no doubt."

There's a boy, he comes in with his muddy blue shirt and says
"You can do it. There is hope if you win. I'll sell you soap."

There's a grandmother, she comes in with her blood-black shirt
and says "If you win, you can work for me.
You can dance while I am sleeping."

The woman says, "I won't dance for wealth, I'll only dance for myself."

*Aleisha Hunter*

*On the bus, l-r: Jessica Calloway; Robert Dunn; Darrell Butler, Jr.; Lawanda Graham; Erica Leonard; Whitney Stuart*

## Flesh and Blood

Flesh and blood bind their hands,
A war that once cut off the ears and noses,
Nine heads; six of them were immortal.

Preceded arrows in the poisoned point
breaking through walls that were already shielded,
spirits of their rivals, unharmed.
Not seen. Not heard.

*Shawntice Patterson*

## Only If The World Would Change

I have spent years consuming
what was already assumed,

Days can pass into thin air
without using metaphor,

The world is a bubble that can never bust.
Only if— is a phrase that people use to think.

It's like a rainbow that's clear,
that shines without air:

Only if the world could change
It will be a better place.

*Shawntice Patterson*

# Allegiance

Yes, they were refugees,
And not from tempest rays that came through billows of azure.
Were they from the Ukraine, and multiculturally insured
by highly sophisticated breeze-woven flags?
And even given sweet bribes and
economic proclamations to engrave in their palms.
as they placed all five phalanges
over their hearts, silently, humbly, chanting,
humming I pledge allegiance.

It's extremely vital that you excuse
my antidisestablishmentarianisms,
But I suffer from vibes—
I'm having preconceived notions,
And yes, they are prophetic,
resembling synthetic black
aesthetic surfaces, the ones
with no friction.

And I am not slippin'
still striding, left right
bending bones
Extreme of consciousness,
Irrational, motional seizures.

Slim, olive oil thin, so
empty of antibiotics that you can
see their rib cages,
And without no x-ray machine.
They will never be exposed
to that type of radiation.

Even when they obtained
and abstracted domains,
imprisoned in their lives,
the ones they were born to.

Was it their purpose to
be part of a genocide to prevent
the first genocide from spreading across the planet,
and attaching itself to the soil,
including the equator and the prime meridian,
and getting into a viral enslavement?
To whom it may serenade,
my ebbs heal
without the white blood cells
and natural body instincts,
bandages and ointmented scabs.
I am your emotional penicillin.
Take it, please.
My mortal condolences.

*Larry Robertson*

## The Omega Season

It's here; it's been around the
carnation stream, sunbeam
azure embankments of vapor.

And he's been walking on three legs again,
and he wants to fulfill the cycles.
Like he was part of the cipher
that's been rotating near the orb, scorching ball,
part of the big bang.
Elderly brisk breath, chewing me
frost bitten spaces in between sheen, sheer
hydrocortisone tended blisters and cuts.

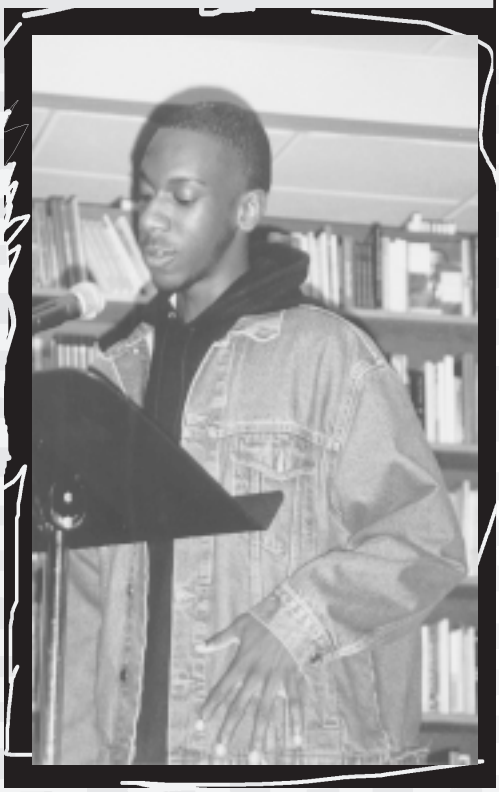
He will be manipulated, cuz
he's started an atmospheric warfare,
in April.

He has overstayed his welcome,
and it's hour for eviction. It's sixteen below
he's not aware that I'm mentally prepared;
I take off my skin,
lace my eyes in sunglasses.
Bones drenched in sun block.
Beach folding chairs on my patio.

It's spring, whether he recognizes it or not.
And I am going to adapt to its lateness.

And by leisure, to his chagrin
You see the break, the abyss giving him
a head start.
He flees.

*Larry Robertson*



*Larry Robertson*

## Self-Portrait

Congress Park runs away with a life of memories
The life of a sister after ten years
Been the only child for a time
Playground life is over
Zoo and Grandma remind you
T.V. and radio too busy to watch or listen
A mom asking embarrassing questions
A Dad moves away

*Carolyn Mozee*

# Genocide

The massacre, tar and feather the communist,
call in the legion armies!
Do you see it?
Fluid red, the bloods are flowing,
including the multi-racial ones,
lotus streams of rampages.

Pursuing times ten,
decaying corpses hung on tree trunks,
stenches stronger than rotting tangerines.
This exceeds the first degree of homocide,
murders now in motion,
Meeting acquaintances of scum.

Gritty, gunky, volcanic, temperate
fungi unable to be economically scraped.
Somebody in the state of paranoia,
somebody shivering, somebody itching, scratching,
eager to be surgically removed
from their preconceived destinies.

And this too is prophetic.
It was already written,
and I don't mean in black and white.
But purest ethnic bleached chlorine,
cleansed, gut-wrenching, antagonizing blood.
Elitist crimes in the motion,
But it wasn't sin,
cuz this time it was agony inflicted
on their mortal souls,
exposed outside the body.
Give me elixirs,
and I mean the pharmaceutically
therapeutical ones,
with the severe side effects.
I wanna be so numb that I don't even realize that I
have skin,
until I look at its color.

Make me mixed,
and that will suffice in racial warfare.
All I need are combat hats,
corrective shoes, and an epitome of
racially disrespected orally proof vest.

And I will be skipped, and
when they see me,
they will be so chaotically confused
that I will turn them color blind.

And soon all beige and brown people
will fear each other
because they will be seeing green monkeys
and burgundy cats.

Then will it cease to be extinction?
Because it was abnormal.
All the prejudice, all the hating,
all fused into one race,
the human one.

*Larry Robertson*

## Things

The things I see:
Ice covering rock and
stone breaking in pieces when it falls,
melting in hotness
into cold water.

Up in the sky
there are clouds in the morning;
there are planets all around the moon,
like it did something wrong.
It just lies there,
planets revolving for months and years.

At school, a struggling student in his uniform
in a dense planet, not knowing what to do.
Time rules.
He knows nothing.

Truth or dare, the dumbest chess,
the mind game monopoly,
the life game, not really funny
and amazing.

Grass, trees,
trees on top of grass,
grass holding trees,
miles away from the ocean.

*Antonio Ashford*

*Janay Treadwell*

## Window To The World

Everywhere at once
and not moving an inch,
hour by hour watching the world go by
from a seat in the living room.

China, Europe, Russia
and the old U.S. of A.,
the adventure begins and ends
with a flick of the switch.

*Jamar Myrick*

## Autumn Is Your Last Chance

Autumn this is your last chance to cheat you got to choose
while your muscles sound like music
and you have money from here to the moon.

Autumn I wonder when I look out the window
why you work so hard.

It's your last chance so let's go out
and play ball eating bananas
let's take this far from here to Mars.

The blizzard is coming.
They say it's Christmas
but I think it's summer or spring.

There is a storm
called "Twist"
because it talks and kisses.

*Anna Myers*

## Doors

There was a hallway with two doors
One door was very hot
The other door very cold

The first door that was hot
Opened slowly
Some heatwaves pushed me slowly toward the door
There was a little cliff
At the bottom a fireball
Started to shoot up
And I started to sweat very bad.

A wind blew me back out the door
Toward cold down
It opened slowly
There were clouds
And a very blue sky

Carolyn Mozee

*Darrell Butler, Jr.; Shertora Edlin*

## Stranded

Scrape your evanescence
that sees one stranded.
Its groping feet overturn,
spilling into black water.

Whipping the past, upside down
in your brimstone ways.
Dare in your dalliance,
voice thrashes behind shielded walls.

I am a victim of a sin
that never entered my mind.
Eagles soar in the summit of heaven,
but you soar in the summit of never.

*Shawntice Patterson*

## Hate

Hate eats fire for dinner.
Hate drives a broken-down sports car.
Hate has electric eels for pets.
Hate's favorite color is fiery orange.
Hate doesn't have any friends.
Hate trips strangers up.
Hate lives far away from neighbors.
Hate always frowns at people.
Hate doesn't celebrate his birthday.
Hate is saving his money up to buy some piranhas.

*Yasmine Knatt*

## Unseek the Angels

Hark:
Who enters the cool-sided figure of a true uninhibited man?
A man standing abruptly in his figure, feeling discouraged
by what is soon to happen.
Cross the borderline, darken the ocean, lose your wings,
mix the heavenly blue with the Scottish brown clouds,
and there you have it: your being,
your natural hallucination-type being,
the one like a ghost, the one who can be heard
and not seen.

Perhaps you manipulate me,
try to undergo my force, and make it yours,
claim the wind, open the door, satisfy your own being,
tell God to see me through my unbearable past,
and then make it new.

Why are you here?
What am I here for?
Can it be that I'm hearing things, maybe feeling worn?
Worn down, tired,
broken down in your own shoes,
not being able to insinuate your own thoughts,
but trying to put mine together.

No, brother. Incline your own dignity with power,
brush the warts off your face, and cringe,
cringe out the hurtful sorrow.
Put forth in the future upstairs,
link the fossils of your own skeleton together,
and decrease mine.

Feel the pressure of your heart, feel the love of my soul.

*Amani Al-Fatah*

## Is God For Real?

Is god really for real?
Is god really a keeper?
Is god really a merciful god?
Is god really a miracle god?
Is god really a true god?
Is god really what he says he is?
Is god really an awesome god?
Did god really make people?
Did god really make sand?
Did god really make the world
I believe in?

*Lalita Ward*

## I'm Sorry

I'm sorry Sarah B.,
that the wind couldn't give you your last breath,
that the sea couldn't bring your water,
the sun couldn't give you a vision,
tears long gone,
shed by the family you left.
I feel your coldness, your heart in a dune,
your joy in the sewer, and your dreams
falling into a shattered cocoon.

Cry in your fear, smile in your day,
carry the touchstone kindness
into the force of an army.
Blame the illness that you suffered,
burn the bundle in your heart,
to a glory mind,
mold the pain into a colored melody.

Fertilize another being and transform another you,
lick the burning paper, forgive
the erroneous lies that were told to you.
Your clover, your primetime story,
take it all back,
and know that I'm sorry.

*Amani Al-Fatah*

*Delonte Williams*

## Midnight Was the Earth

For all is calm, not a soul heard,
Because it didn't have a purpose.

You see, day wasn't even born,
So there were always street lights, but no noise.

Firing gun shots, and all this philosophy,
But wondering to yourself
What happened to the light?

The stars were dark,
But no one said that the earth was still.

They say man was put on earth for a purpose,
But if it is so, why doesn't the earth spin?

Like fire, like lightning, like eruptions
That seem to glow,
But earth stayed still, and for light
The world may never know.

*Amani Al-Fatah*

## Infamous

Please excuse my infamous thoughts,
and don't neglect my assumptions.
See, I believe in something called charisma.
Charisma is what I believe.
Being perfect into bravery,
and ending the white insanity.
Evilistic, egotistic
pounds corresponding to their own words,
and not having a clue of what they're discussing.

Held back from being able to collect dignity,
and trying to get their pride back,
losing hope, mixed in great smoke,
leaning on an axe, waiting
for someone to pick it up
and quench their thirst,
not knowing that what has been killed
is coming back to life
and killing itself,
its own self, pricking its back, poisoning its strength,
and ending the matter.

The unbreakable matter, the matter of which
the people who are hurt matter,
and enclosing their feelings.
I am clearly sure about you.
The axe that killed the tree,
the hurt that struck the wind,
the love that shattered two,
two families long gone,
and one hope to rebuild another life.

Perhaps my words of honor
and my dignity will incline.
I'll save another life,
and bring your joy into mine.

*Amani Al-Fatah*

## Echoes of Life

Echoes, chirping in my ears,
like birds on a warm summer's afternoon,
like pigs oinking and water splashing.
Echoes of the spirit,
washing your white swaddling clothes,
or the devil chanting devil's words
to make the soul low.
They encourage you to listen,
listen, listen to the voice of your mind,
stored in your cranium,
to the voices of your heart,
to mean sounds and good sounds
and hurting sounds and furious ones,
to echoes that weaken you, strengthen you
and specify your attitude,
to the echoes of life.

*Shari Jackson*

## The 30s

This building is smoky-gray mud
with blood bricks of the past,
sleeping windows of the future.
It is worn out
because it's twirling with rat-boys and girls,
dreaming of not being in danger.

*Milton Douglass*

## I Thank

I thank you for the colors
blue, yellow, orange, and black.

Thank you for the birds, the trees, the grass
the rain and sun.

Thank you for the earth, the moon,
and the island at the center of the earth
where a man is standing, waiting
for me to finish this poem.

*Ebony Love*

## An Old Guy

An old guy
looks like he was smoking
in the old blood street.
*Milton Douglass*

## I Am One

I am one, all by myself.
I am one, like a bush that sits by itself.
I am one, soul and fire, brought together as one.
I am one beast and one God.
I am one creation burning with a scream.
I am one ocean burning from sun.
I am one, me and me alone.

I am one, rain and snow to come.
I am one forest, growing like a piece of paper being burnt.
I am one breaker that will break the speed of air.
I am one who looks high, and never low.
I am one red and one blue.
I am one black and one white.
I am one house building one capitol.
I am one within one.

*Shari Jackson*

## Beyond This Horizon

End, fin, finish, it all means the same to me.
The sun is setting on the old age
and is dawning on ours. Who knows
what is beyond this horizon
or what it may bring.

The world is beginning a new age.
Darkness falls over the world
and our time as adults will come
and we will pierce the darkness to bring the light.

New life begins.
Boys turn to men as girls turn to women.
Everyone adapts on land as well as the sea,
our white lights turn to blue lights.
As the settings change,
the wind blows softly.

*Jamar Myrick*

# HARTWORKS presents our special guest ARNOST LUSTIG

Arnost Lustig is a reknowned Czech novelist whose works reflect his survival of the Holocaust. In 1942, he was sent with his parents to Thereisenstadt concentration camp. He was then sent to Auschwitz, where his father died in the gas chambers, and then to Buchenwald, another concentration camp. In 1945, he escaped from the train carrying him to his death at Dachau and returned to Prague, Czechoslavakia, where he participated in an anti-Nazi uprising. After the war, he worked as a radio reporter, screenwriter, and novelist. He was forced into exile after the Soviet invasion of Prague in 1968.

Professor Lustig has written thirteen books, eight of which have been published in English, and his work has been translated into more than twenty languages. His work has received many honors, including two National Jewish Book Awards, an Emmy for best film script for his documentary "The Precious Legacy," and a nomination for a National Book Award. Four of his films have won first prizes at film festivals in Europe. He is now a professor of literature at American University, where he was interviewed by Charles Hart Middle School students Ka'Trina Andrews, Charles Conway, Donna James, and Larry Robertson.



*Charles Conway, Arnost Lustig, Ka'trina Andrews, Donna James, Larry Robertson*

**Donna:** How does it feel to know that people are reading your books?

**Arnost Lustig:** I tell you, it's flattering, it makes you more responsible, and it gives you a kick!

**Ka'Trina:** The story of what happened in the Holocaust is very moving to me, and I feel it's important for our generation to know it. Do you feel that your books are an inspiration to others?

**Arnost Lustig:** They should be. You know, sometimes I'm wondering why young people like you read my stories, and it was puzzle for me, because it's not an easy reading; it's not even a happy reading. It's about man struggling, under pressure, in fear for his life, for no reason. Because he's not guilty of anything, and still he's going to be killed, only because he was born of a certain mother, of a certain race. And I came to the conclusion why, fifty-five years after the war, people do read them. (Because, look, here I have collected works. This year, in the United States five of my books will be published, in Prague six, in England one.) And I came to this answer: that young people feel threatened by an unknown danger, and they are interested in what they should do to survive. My stories are about how to survive, and sometimes it's better not to survive. Many people decided that they wanted to die with dignity rather than to live in humiliation.

So they should be an inspiration— that you are never at the end of your rope, that there is always some hope, that you should never give up, that there are always good people around who will help you.

I will tell you a story. In Auschwitz, when I was about your age, once I was freezing. And freezing in Auschwitz meant that you are going to warm up in the chimneys. (You know they don't even care for human life. They didn't value even their own human life, otherwise they wouldn't go into the war.) So I was walking across the camp and I was freezing. And I knew that this was my last day. And there were a group of men who were freezing too, and they said, "Come, we will warm you up."

And I thought these people must be crazy. They are laughing at me. I will be dead two hours later, and they are laughing at me. They said, "Come among us. We will warm you up." And they put me into the center of them, pressed me with their own bodies, because they didn't have anything else, and they really warmed me up. And they saved my life. I hadn't met these people before. I never met them later. Most probably they were killed the same day. But no one had to tell me about the goodness of man, about the solidarity of man. I knew that man can be bad, but man can also be good.

So this kind of inspiration, if you call it inspiration, this is my cup of tea. I know that people can help you. I learned in camps that you should not underestimate anyone or overestimate anyone. Because you never know who will help you. The man who looks like a hero will fail, as a coward, in the decisive moment. And the man you didn't expect anything from can save your life, can help you. So this kind of inspiration, I'm writing about pride of the humiliated, about the strength of the weakest. You know in the Bible is a sentence: "The last will be first and the first will be last." And I like it. Because this is the challenge of life. I can be the first; I can be the last. It depends on my brain, on my conscience, on my decisions. So this kind of inspiration, yes. If this, you think, should be inspiring, then I would love to be inspiring.

**Charles:** What inspired you to become a novelist?

**Arnost Lustig:** I'll tell you, I didn't have an education. I didn't have much school. I was a Jewish kid. For racial reasons, they said, "Look, Jewish kids don't have to know how to read, how to write. They will be only our slaves. For a slave, it's enough to count to a hundred." The average slave lasted ninety-two days.

I came from the camps, I survived, because of luck. One day, when an American pilot, by mistake, bombed our train, thinking we were soldiers, and killed two thousand Catholic women, I jumped from the train and escaped and made it to Prague. Whenever I tried to tell people where I'm coming from and what happened, nobody believed me.
I liked school. I really loved teachers. (Not that I was such a good student. Because I was growing up on the streets. My parents were unemployed, and we were poor people. There were days we didn't even eat. So I got this street education, which, in the camps, helped me.) And when I came back, nobody believed me, not even this beautiful teacher. He patted me on the head like I was crazy. Someone who is mad, who doesn't know what he is talking about. And I was exploding from inside. I had so many experiences that I was exploding. And there was only one way out, not to explode. And writing was my only outlet.

Of course, my writing was horrible, because I didn't know grammar, nothing. Still, they wanted to publish it. But then came a responsibility. I felt that those people who died were definitely more talented than I was. But they were dead. I felt that I was the last one (I was not, but it's a feeling) who could say it. So I wanted to say it better.

They said, "You are really crazy, young man. We'll pay you a lot, and you are telling us not to publish it."

I said, "So give me a few years, and I will do it better." And they thought that I was slightly crazy. Maybe they were right. Everybody who came from the war and from the camps is slightly crazy, but it's a craziness you can live with. So I started writing. And they started publishing it. I tell you, I was so known when I was eighteen, nineteen, that I had to do a lot of thinking not to get vain. But the moment when I thought about those who were dead, I knew that it would be obscene to be famous. For such books, you should not get famous. You should not even get rich from such books. When I needed money, I made movies, because they paid very well. But with my stories, I don't care for money. I don't care for fame, for nothing. Because it's about dead people.

You know, this is a strange streak in man... When I was a young reporter in radio, one day I saw a father, a mason, with his son. And he showed to his son, who was a small boy, he said, "Look, this yard of wall, these bricks— this is what I did." And he was terribly proud. And I thought: My God, it's beautiful. And I never forgot this mason and his child. Because I saw that everybody wants to be, in a way, immortal, to leave something that will live a little bit longer than we. Your mother, she is well off, because she has you. But to write means it gives you the illusion that something will remain even after you fly away.

**Larry:** Why did you choose to become a professor here at American University?

**Arnost Lustig:** To teach is beautiful. I tell you, I was a bad pupil, but I loved my teachers, and I loved school. Only I didn't know how to study, because my parents never had time to tell me. For instance, I never did my homework. I thought it was a punishment to work at home for school. I

thought that school is for learning, home is for being around, and to be on the street is to be on the street. So I was not a good student, but I loved it. And I loved my teachers.

You know, there is enormous pleasure in learning. To learn, to gain, to know. For instance, I was sentenced three times to death, to be shot. (Not to speak about gas.) And I found out that the most precious thing you have in life is life itself. That when they steal everything from you, which happened so many times in my life, you always will get it back, if you are alive. So whatever makes you stronger in life, you gain. And school makes you strong.

In school, they tell you what man discovered about man. It's beautiful. Learning is really beautiful if you understand it from inside, not because your mother or teacher told you, but because you feel that it makes you stronger, better prepared for life. You are better off with school. So I loved school, I loved my teachers, and this is why I became a teacher. I like students. I see myself in you, for instance.

**Donna:** When you came to America, did you feel that it was a new experience?

**Arnost Lustig:** No, it was nothing new. I really didn't want to come to America. I was here ten times as a film maker. I wanted to come only for a year. I told you, writing my books is a mission, but I need money, like your fathers and mothers, so I am a film maker.

I want to be honest, to be strong, not to ask for too much in life (because you will lose it anyway). For me, it's nonsense that people say, "America: everybody becomes a millionaire." I don't care to be a millionaire. I want to eat well. As much as I need, not more, because it's not good for my body. My rule is to be, not clever, but aware of things, and strong with my body, both.

But you ask about America. So I tell you, America didn't make a good impression on me. It was full of brutality. This politeness, just on the surface, I didn't like. You know I was here as a film maker, so I said, "Okay, boys, you have a nice country, but live in this country by yourself." I was in New York and Hollywood. But then I didn't need America. One day, the Soviet Union invaded Czechoslavakia, and I was without a home. And America told me: If you have what we need, please go ahead, do it. We will pay you. You will make a living.

So I saw that, if you need America, it's a very good country. With America, it's not an ideal country. It's an attempt. To build a country where all races will be equal. You know better than I do how equal it is. But the ideal is beautiful. The ideal, I tell you, for this ideal, you can go to war. This ideal is perfect. To create a democratic country where working people will live with dignity, where talented people would use their talent for the good of many, and all races will be equal, all religions will be tolerated. It's beautiful. America is an experiment. I hope that it will succeed, this experiment.

# ARNOST LUSTIG

## Rose Street

The breath of summer blew through the ghetto.

It carried Elizabeth Feiner, known for short as "Auntie," right up to the junk shop on L Avenue. The street, as you could see by looking at the sign on the corner by the barracks, used to be called Rose Street—it had not been an avenue, nor had this town been a ghetto, and the barbershop, "The Sun," shut down long before the war, could hardly have served for the sale of junk and castoffs.

The Star Fort was being smartened up. The German HQ building, where they were expecting a visit from Switzerland, had been whitewashed to resemble the other houses in the ghetto; beneath the scaffolding old women were scrubbing the pavement, and real roses appeared in the earth around the stone fountains.

There were no glass panes in the once wooden door of the shop, and Elizabeth Feiner had covered up the holes with greasy, brownish paper that looked like stretched donkey skin. From the dark interior of the shop she could watch the shadows and the heads flitting past. That was all she saw.

Ever since that morning, which had been hot and stifling, she announced to all comers that she had nothing really worthwhile in stock. Her slightly rasping woice, in which kindness mingled with irritation, suggested that the junk shop, of which she was in charge through no wish of her own, was no less a fake than the roses and the ostentatious L Avenue.

When the door of the shop opened, the old woman's ugly head had dropped down almost onto her chest.

"Good morning, Mrs. Feiner." The words came through the rustle of paper.

The door creaked twice.

The man who came in, ceremoniously taking off his hat, worn low on his forehead even now in summer, slowly placed two boiled potatoes on the counter.

"Perhaps you can use them," he said.

"Oh, Mr. Spiegel," protested Elizabeth Feiner. "What have I done to deserve this?"

Embarrassed, the old man closed his eyes hesitantly. "My dear Mrs. Feiner," he said, "that's a question we might all ask. But of whom?"

His lips, once fleshy, were now coagulated by the bronze-purplish coating of anemia into small, whitish clots; yet his smile was boyishly gentle.

"You are incorrigible," said Elizabeth Feiner.

"I suppose I am," nodded the old man.

She would have liked to stroke his veiny hand...

From *Night and Hope*, by Arnost Lustig, Northwestern University Press, 1976

## songs without titles

adjust them
a just sum

tonight i like to think just some
grains of broken glass
have escaped the street into the sky

when they take away your middle name

atop the high fence strung through the gills
fish along the tidal spiral of barbed wire

dirt and lime supposed to erase
but so little water

cleanliness brings freedom
*one louse can kill*

isnt it flawed to kill a flaw
to need a solution to this jewish question

what is the color of resistance

when they take away your middle name
the snow turns to hail
bluegray shoes glow into burn
the moon has a brightness all its own

*if we cannot work we will die*

is it the man of god they kill
or the god inside the man

when they take away your middle name
you hang on with one hand
let go with the other

*Andy Fogle*

*After a reading at Borders Books: Kerry Danner-McDonald and Andy Fogle are at far right*

## Grief sinking, settles

Winter-stuffing dragged, wrapped
curled, stuffed in bookbags, kids.

War, hair, bear, cold, fear, old—
things told. Treacheries, betrayals,
distortions heaped in piles; smiles.

Long before Jewish bodies, black bodies,
gay bodies, your body, my body
heaped in piles, bodies that breathed—
more than and yet still
jewish, black, gay, you, me.

Weep, sleep, fear, tears,
weary;
eye lids propped open with toothpicks,
wax cleaned from ears;
this is you, this is me, sister, brother,
only other in fear.

No matter color, butter,
creed, curl, slang, walk, wag, twirl—
Victim-oppressor are we
(even with eyes open, ears tended) –
hear
see, touch, tongue-taste, and be
healers of lies of brokenness.

*Kerry Danner-McDonald*

## Self-Portrait

A falling building, crumbling into the ground,
like tears falling onto the ground.
Almost nothing crushes the heart like a tree,
standing in the wind,
pushing hatred out of the way, like the wind.
A dark mind, like the color black.
A sad mind, like the color blue.
A raging anger, like the color red,
like a flower doesn't want to look pretty,
but be pretty in others' hearts.
Feeling corrupting the mind and heart.
Sometimes dirt, like people stepping
on the good minds and good souls and good hearts,
when non-loving souls come in the way,
like a burning hot star firing into the heart.

*Kiona Bean*

## To Black

There is a man on the stage performing
for black and white. The room is like a
smoky-gray. The worn-out audience
is burning hot, in there dressed in a closet
and the muddy memory of the past.
The men are describing the frightening people
The woman got hit and started sleeping into
a deep s-l-u-m-b-e-r. She started dreaming,
awoke and the man was in danger, danger, danger-r.

*Andrea Louise Cooper*

# Family Portrait

Memories, being frozen in a certain time.
Faces of this decade have changed
through-in and throughout the years.
Emotions run through these memories,
old people sitting together, seeing
that this memory will someday be lost,
then found.



Children smiling at the happy event,
children happy in the mind,
children frustrated in the mind,
children sad in the mind,
children lonely in the mind.

The weeping willow, also in the picture,
isn't weeping too much.
As the strong wind blows the branches,
the leaves don't look much as if they are weeping,
but as if the strong wind gave them life.

Flowers being stepped on,
which the wind has eaten up.
The life of the flower is crushed,
but the memory of the flower lives on.
The clear blue sky is full of puffy white clouds,
which aren't going to bring out the tears.
The sun shining upon the picture, gleaming
against the young black smooth hair,
which has now turned the old colors of gray and white.

Images will now change of these people.
Old people will die away,
their souls looking after the next generations,
the middle aged will become old,
the children of the new decade will be born
a new day, yet the memory is in its history.
As this memory will be forgotten
by the old and maybe older,
it may be lost into their history,
but it will be found by
and relived by
the newborns and young ones.

*Kiona Bean*

## History

All blown up
And covered with blood
My soul kiss in defiance of the world
I lie down slowly and count
As if I was in surgery
100, 99, 98, 97...
All the pain, the hurt
I can't go on
Substance of my brain cells
Pop, one by one.

*Jessica Young*

## Winter

It is when the weariness of the sky has disappeared.
It is when heaps and bundles of cold hate go hand to hand.
It is when gulfs and bays of fear flow overboard.
The dawns stumble, hours turn to stone and the orbit turns blue.
The forgetful dreams of beautiful work overcome me.
The silences raise up centuries and confuse what he has done,
And the risen hopes of heaven no longer see the outdoors.

*Jessica Young*

## Day of Rest

In this day I rest under the blue sky,
unready for the darkness coming to be.
I must prepare for the darkness.
It awaits me.
Does light await me, too?

*Damien Boston*

## Poem

I don't know who I am or was,
I know only my chaos.
Who am I?
What did I do to lose my memory?
As I stand up,
I wonder, can I walk, and when
I look at my hands
I only remember one finger,
And that is my gun finger,
That's what I see.
My existence is futile.

*Darris Taylor*

## "Red River"

Red river, red river is the blood
from my tears I cry. I cry
because I see my mom hurt,
my brother down—
I cry a red river.

*Matthew Bolden*

## History

History is what happened,
not what is
or what you're not doing.
It's what you are doing to help your people,
and all society,
doing it for your town, and
the people in it.
The adventures of the world
begin with you,
your family,
your people.
So please, help them
and care for them
and try to love them.

*Delonte Williams*

## T.S. Eliot's First Lines

"The Word of the Lord came unto me, saying:"
"in the beginning God created the world . . ." It was
"Issued from the hand of God, the simple soul"
saying "let us go then you and I." " . . .Father,
we welcome your words" "if the lost word is lost,
if the spent word is spent."

*Thaddaeus Teel*

## Somewhere

Somewhere, there are tennis shoes,
hanging on a powerline for weeks.
Somewhere, there are two red balloons
on the top of a car windshield.
Somewhere, there are kids fighting
with big boots in the dirt.
Somewhere, there is a box of pizza,
soda on a sidewalk.

Only one question
for these events that touch me:
Why?

*Antonio Ashford*

*Teresa Bryant, Shanequa Raphael, and Shertora Edlin study the Lodz ghetto*

## Dismantling the Sound

Take off its mouth first,
Slowly, so that the saliva won't drift over.
With your teeth, slit its bottom and top off,
If there is blood in it, turn away
And cover your face,
And collect it, whichever way the blood is squirting.
If there's a big puddle on the floor,
Grab the mop of blood and get it up.
When you reach the tissue,
And you haven't sneezed,
Quickly use your teeth and start cutting it out.
Next time you try to speak or make sounds,
You won't be able to,
Because you have dismantled the sound.

*Kevin Tindle*

## A New Year

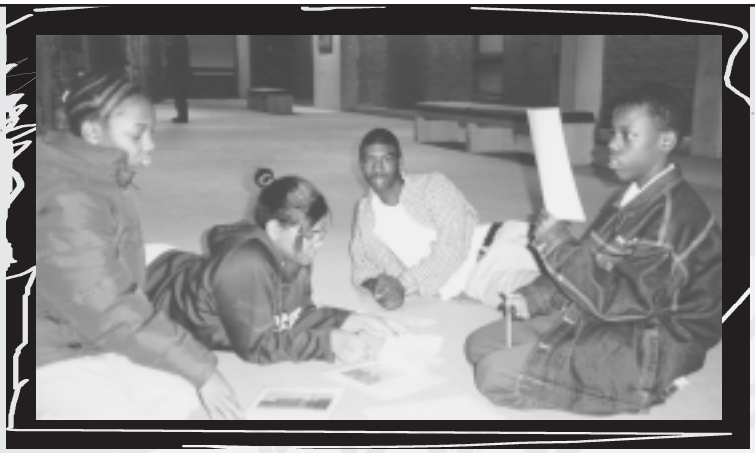
I think of it as a new beginning
for people, the poor people that need help,
for plants, kids, trees,
something to work at,
a new beginning
for me and my family,
trying to live for the good of it,
trying to live on a cold December day,
trying to live with no heart, soul,
no reason for trying to live,
for your culture,
who you are.
Try to live for your kids, family,
trying to because
you are your own person.

*Delonte Williams*

## Life Line

Lord of the simple soul,
We welcome you with your words.
Deliver me from the mean of excellent intentions
And I will deliver you with care and love
All over the world.
Lord, the Roman hyacinths are blooming in bowls
And let us go beyond the high mountains.
I will carry you off on my back.
We are in America now, we can deliver
Love and care around the world.

*Michael Young*



*Yasmine Knatt, Talia Brittingham, Darrell Butler, and Michael Young examine artifacts from the Lodz ghetto*

## Silver

Silver is the color of a sword
that pierces through my heart and soul.
Silver is the color of the pain I feel
when that sword is going through my soul.

Silver is the color of my tear drops
when I cry fiercely.
Silver is the color of my strength
that helps me get more knowledge
to become a better young man
than I am now.

Silver is the color of moonlight and the stars,
and every time that moonlight glows into my eyes
it would change to silver, and those stars would
give me the greatest message I have ever learned—
That I am not alone.
And silver is the color of my soul,
that when I die, my soul and a piece of silver
will make the greatest star from my heart
that was ever created in the sky.

*James Thomas*

## What if I was never born?

What if I was never born? Would my brother
be so mean or my mother be so loving?
Would my grandparents, my great
grandmother be so wise?

*Daniel Green*

# Somewhere

A chicken is laying an egg
in a barn on a stack of hay
in Tennessee.

Somewhere, someone is driving
a black Cadillac on their way to
the grocery store for groceries.

Somewhere, somebody is eating
fish, spaghetti, and greens in
a nice house in the country.
A spider is spinning a web
in the basement of an abandoned home.

Somewhere a bird is looking for
a worm to feed her chicks.

Somewhere, children are drawing
a hopscotch game on the sidewalk
of a street.

A mother is feeding her child
a bottle with fruit juice. Somewhere
a baby is crying for its mother.

Somewhere, someone is watching a television
show on their couch in the front room.

Somewhere, there is a car crash,
and people are wondering where their mother is.
A child is at home, wondering why he is all alone.

*Yasmine Knatt*

## Angels

Angels are not God,
but they help
him to help others.
A radiant glow
of light that carries
with them.

They help others mainly
when they are
low on God's faith.

Another way
of looking at them is
that they are
guiders, gifts and even
guardian angels.

God is not an angel
but he is
always going to be with you.

*Charmyonne Bailey*

*Pamula Twyman, Timeka Brown, and Chakia Chatman learn about the ghettoes of Europe*

## Belief

What I really believe in is myself.
I believe I can do most of what I put my heart to.
If I believe I can drive over a cliff,
Then I belive I can do it.
But of course, I'm not going to try it.
I know belief is what you think.
You can do what you, yourself think is true.
I love myself and respect myself and
I know I can do anything I put myself to.
I know I can do anything.

*Yasmine Knatt*

## Things Are Clear

Clear as day
Clear as night
Clear as the sky
Clear as the bright stars shine in the night.

Just as you can see,
I like everything that's clear.
Clear as clouds
Clear as crystal
Clear as glass being broken in pieces.

Clear as me being treated as a bright yellow star.
Clear, clear, clear as a diamond that can never die
Clear as the blue ocean waters
And clear as me.
A clear light in the dark that leads people home.

*Janay Treadwell*

## Sweet Monster

Eyes as rhinestones,
The pearls of your marble teeth,
The slime from your
Tall big broad body,
The squeeze of your hand
And the tingle of your fingers.
As you come, the world shakes.
You walk innocently as you are coming.
You come toward me and I am scared and in fright,
But I know you're a lovely sweet monster.

*Chakia Chatman*

## The Holocaust Museum

The Holocaust Museum was very nice, but the stuff inside was sad.
My favorite exhibit was the one about Daniel's Story.
The Holocaust was very sad, because they killed people who could not work.
The children were tricked that they were going to take a shower, but were put into a gas chamber.
Disabled people were killed.
The people were starving, and all they ate was stinky turnips for dinner.

*Sitembile Knatt*

*Alicia Harris, Chantel Wanzer, and Mercedes Johnson in a classroom at the Holocaust Museum*

## Bold Eyes

The eyes of darkness, the eyes of pain
that shallows against closed waters
of the oceans, bigger
than life can ever be.
I'm emotional,
and I can feel the bold eyes,
watching me step by step
because
cautious, inconspicuous, and alert,
they're never seen, and the person is never heard.
Bold eyes of existance
with eye contact of loved ones
better than enemies can ever be
or that the bold eyes,
bigger than the eyes can ever see.
Or maybe their eyes can see deeper
than eyes that we have.
Bold eyes can see more than we can.

*Chakia Chatman*

## Who Can You Trust?

Whose advice can you take?
Who will have your trust?
In a world where you're mistreated,
You're all on your own.

Does a voice call your name?
Do you believe in self-worth?
Just think about your life.
Why do you think you survived?

Think of yourself as one of the lucky ones,
For you have survived your struggle.
Believe in that voice
And that will light your way.

*Ka'Trina Andrews*

## Portrait

I open my picture book, and look at my adolescence
How easy the future—
Organized. My pictures taken.
It leans on the sidewalk, and falls on concrete.

The crime is not invisible
And it is here. Why else would I feel so innocent?
Why else would that same picture take place in my thoughts?
Looking ahead, dressed in its memorial thoughts?

I touch my head, but I don't touch it again.
I leave fingerprints. I find many scars.
It must have not been anything.
Something glamorous, something I didn't see.

*Jessica Calloway*

## Acquainted

Acquainted with various strangest doorkeepers
with many that are lost and in despair.
We are all the same when we kill and destroy each other.
Not just blacks, but whites, Muslims, and Middle East
and when we all act like this, we are acquainted.
Maybe not with peace and love
mostly hate. We never ask ourselves
are we acquainted with ourselves?
like when I'm just like the sun when I smiled.
Or at times when I'm lonely and confused
like the moon on an empty blue night.
I'm acquainted with God
because of all the love he shines.
Acquainted with myself
because I know how I am on the inside.

Shari Jackson

## Today

The streets are dead, like a phantom town,
wet grass, like it was pouring down
the day is gloomy and dull
the leaves are dead, yet beautiful
in the fall the buildings are red,
like the devil's face after losing the war of hatred
a blossom in the field of sins.

*Maurice Wade*

## Deep In Me

The dreadful sky
the trees have lost their lives
the darkness I see in broad daylight
the heavy noises outweighing my ears
in the silent night
the winter breeze brushes against
my summer-feeling body
the water which comes out of my head
runs down my face
it's the time of day when 8 o'clock
was too late ago
the night which makes me drowsy
keeps me up till the bright light
in the sky shows.
I watch myself in the mirror of life
To find out that I'm lonely inside
I challenge myself to be different from others.
I challenge myself to be me.

*Chantel Wanzer*

## Where Can We Turn, and To Whom Surrender?

Where can we turn, and to whom surrender?
Who can we go to, and whom can we trust?
When do we believe, when the belief can't be honest?
Why be fair, when we can't be treated fairly?
How do we seek justice, when justice is taken away?
What do we do when our road ends, and death takes its toll?
Where do we turn, when to whom we surrender is no more?
Life is precious, and death will soon come.
Life will come, and it will go.
Turn to someone who knows your life,
And sees it for what it is,
Precious.

*Teresa Bryant*

## Night's an Old Movie

Night's an old movie
Candle lights of vision
I cry, I cry because
My tombstone is untitled

But how did I die?
Was it me that had a stroke?
Or did I commit suicide?
Could I be the matricide?

A nightwoman tossing and turning
screaming out that tower-of-doom
a dog leaps into the startling night
and music soaks into the mid-age
like snowflakes melting across my grave.

*Tyanna Dowdy*

## Mystery Portrait

Women in trench coats
From Adam and Eve to Will and Jada Pinkett Smith
New people, old people
A mirror I painted on the Eiffel Tower
Every number joined, it leans
Painted by the Lord himself
All in chronological order
A.D., B.C., and the nervy 2001
Imagine when a newer decade comes
Will the tower fall?
Maybe not, because it's held up by my heritage
My United People Gravity.

*Theodora Walker*

*Krystal Johnson and Shari Jackson write about the Lodz ghetto*

## Nothing

If I was nature, I would be the birds chirping.
If I was a structure, I would be a broken-down house.
If I was a sound, I would be a waterfall without water.
If I was something that moved, I would be a bird,
Flying through the air.
If I was a color, I would be black, like a thousand nights.
I will be no taste.
I will be no month.
I will be no time.
If I was a feeling, I would be a child when
It's his first time touching wind.

*Kevin Nowlin*

## Fears

Fear is around every day.
Fear is around when the sun is up.

Fear is around when darkness comes
and the shadow of the moon is bright.

Fear is around when the stars are in the sky
and fear is always around
when you are alone, sad and crying.

But if one person
could stand by you and your fears,

a mother could stand by you
when your fears are scaring you,
frightening you,

a mother could cuddle or hold you beside them
when you cry or somebody hurts.

And love is all a child needs
to stop their fears.

*James Thomas*

## Speak To Me

Speak to me, I won't bite.
Speak to me in the name of the Lord.
Speak to me—birds don't sing every day.
Speak to me or I'll faint.
Speak to me, I'll be your friend.
Speak to me something again.
Speak to me, I burned my head.

*Gregory Finch*

## My Friend

My friend she was running away from home
She ran all day and all night
She ran like a cheetah trying to catch its prey
She never took a rest until her journey was through

She ran until people got tired of seeing her run
On her journey she passed birds, trees, swings, and leaves
She was running to her old house in Maryland
She was running because she missed all of her old friends

*Daveeta Ebb*

## It Is This Way With Marching

You have to stay in line
Never get behind
Always have to be on time

*Eric Woodward*

## Suffering In Silence

There is suffering in silence.
There, in silence, I'm suffering.
Silence is speaking to me.
There is the silence of prison blues.
Silence I don't understand you.
Silence I see you.
Silence you crave for blue.
Silence leave me alone.
Silence is calling America.

*Aaron Ferguson*

## Nobody's Child

I am nobody's child
because I have nobody to guide me
and I am strong to raise myself
because I am nobody's child
no one can love me and respect me
I have to stand for my rights
and if no one is there for me
I won't be there for them
because I am nobody's child
I do not have a mother or father
and that's not right to not have parents.

*Donald Thompson*

## I Had A Bad Dream

I went and told my friends
They said
You'll never sleep tonight
I dreamt monkeys tried to kill me
My friends said
You'll never sleep tonight

*Dominic Garvin*

## Rainbirds

Rainbirds rainbirds hide under that shady tree
or you will get wet just like me

Rainbird rainbird go in the sea
or you will be by that storm just like me

Rainbird rainbird please don't go in and out
or you will be eaten without a shadow of a doubt

Rainbird rainbird I love you so much
so don't go in and out
or you will be eaten by the shadow of doubt

*Andrew Staton*

## Ask Me How

Ask me how to change my ways
Ask me how to chant a song
Ask me how to give you a chance

Ask me how

Ask me how to wander about
Ask me how to twist and shout
Ask me how to eat a twix

Ask me how

Ask me how, when, what or where
Ask me how the blizzard tastes
Ask me how do twigs fall

Ask me how

Ask me how to bleed such blood
Ask me how to play in the mud
Ask me how I must know

Ask me how

Ask me how to do such things
Ask me how my muscles are in pain
Ask me how to be in sorrow

Ask me how

*Yolanda Butler*

*Amani Al-Fatah*

## Don't Come Home

Don't come home things are different
Come home you might see red fire apples
You might see blue apple trees walking down the street
Shady starlight loose in the wind
Engine overpowered but needing to be refused
Worldwide lights searching but not looking for anything
So Mom don't come home

*Carolyn Mozee*

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HARTWORKS

*Clockwise from top: Larry Robertson, Antonio Ashford, Dominic Garvin, James Thomas*