

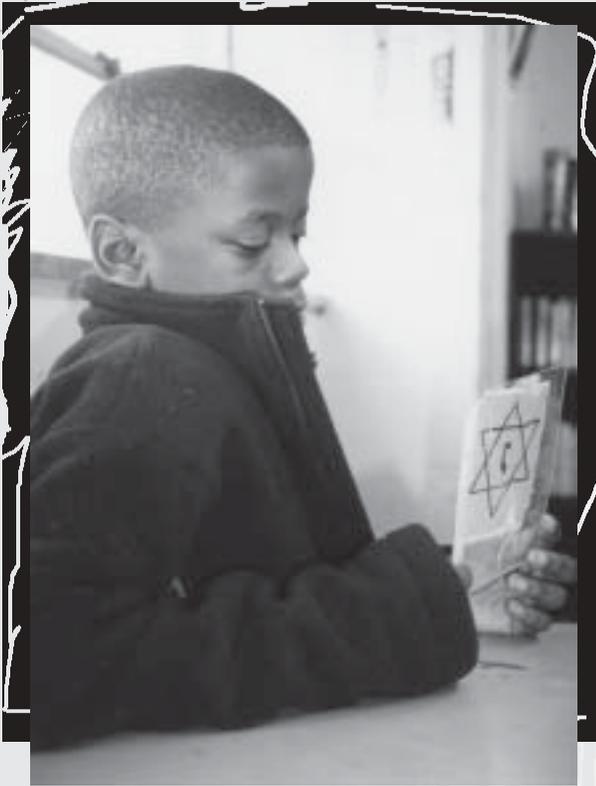


HARTWORKS

Spring 2003 • \$1

SPECIAL ISSUE: REFLECTIONS ON THE HOLOCAUST

The Charles Hart Middle School Literary Magazine



Reginald Stewart

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 and 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 2003, 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 the 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

INTRODUCTION

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, and independent non-profit working to create a literary renaissance in Southeast Washington. Now in its third 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 2003 edition of *Poet’s Market* recognizes *hArtworks* as “an outstanding example of what a literary journal can be (for anyone of any age).”

This issue is the culmination of eight weeks of Holocaust studies as part of our “Teaching Tolerance Through Literature” curriculum. Our students have read, discussed and responded to a series of works, from the poetry of Primo Levi and Nellie Sachs to the writings of children from the concentration camp Terezin. In partnership with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, we have made two museum visits, and we have held discussions at the school with Holocaust survivors. By confronting the issues raised by the Holocaust—tolerance, justice, authority, personal values, and community—young people can make important discoveries about themselves and help to chart a moral course into their own futures.

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 Arcana Foundation, the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, the Commonweal Foundation, the D.C. Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation, the Junior League of Washington, the National Endowment for the Arts, Michael Joy and TSC/Joy Monterrey, LLC, Borders Books and Music, Free Hand Press, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Arena Stage, the Shakespeare Theatre, Kathleen Huston and McGuire Associates, Joyce Page and Ms. Printing, the Washington Council of Agencies, our friends at Popeye’s on Malcolm X Avenue, Ann Brogioli, Denis Collins, Ruth Dickey, Fritz Edler, Barb Gomperts, Tom and Carolyn Grey, Betsy Holt, David Klevan, Paul Mandelbaum, Bill Miller, Raina Rose Tagle, Chris Thaiss, and Vera M. White.

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 Dr. Patricia Watkins, Principal Lee. E. Epps; Assistant Principals Willie Bennett, Gregory Better, and Yvonne Davis; Ms. Tameka Brown, Ms. Gloria Fergusson, Ms. Shirley Grooms, Ms. Carolyn Jackson, Ms. Mary Johnson, Ms. Irma Morgan, and Ms. Jaimee Neel; Ms. Eleanor Elie, Ms. Pamela McKinney, and Ms. Maevern Williams.

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Esther Rosenfeld Starobin

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Broken Body—Broken Soul?

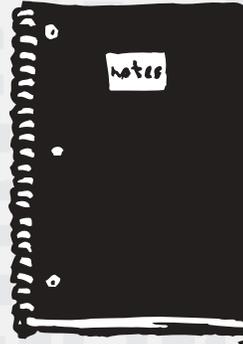
Hate and difference have caused destruction
and lives are put to a pause.

I've heard too many cries and seen cancelled lives,
closed down homes, hear their cry.
Death is a word that they hear often.

But the wounds begin to mend,
as they pretend they aren't hurt,
searching for some type of hope.
Realize you are not alone.

The body is broken, but not your soul.
We remember the forgotten lives,
the ones who lived their lives despised.

Gabrielle Martin



So little time, but enough for war

A heart of gold, but a face of stone.
I really don't like war,
it left my grandmother alone.

I can't understand the concept of war,
It reminds me of medieval knights with their swords.
Do we have to go to war?
Can't you remember the peace before?

Tattered letters and torn souls
At least we live our lives bold
Because I refuse to stand down,
Instead of war, let's have peace,
Think of those out on the streets.
Walls close in on me,
War, I don't want to see.

Gabrielle Martin

The Sun's Dream

The sun dreams of being a square
and having a lot of friends
The only friends he has are the planets and the wind
He dreams about being cold and having the flu
He dreams about taking a break in the summer,
because that's when he works the hardest
The sun dreams, the sun dreams
Oh boy, how the sun dreams

Lamont Gaines

Tribute to Survivors

Memories of the changes remain,
For the survivors, life will never be the same
Because of the Nazi's reign.
Such hatred of what's different,
Because they're not like you.
Families separated, civilians killed,
When I heard, I said "Is this real?"
Freedom taken away and
Hateful symbols displayed,
It's over now, and times have changed.

Gabrielle Martin



Beyonca Jones

justice

Why

I don't know why my life is the way it is
I think it is that way because
my Dad has not always been in my life
Sometimes I would like to sit in my room and cry
But I can't, because I am a soldier
Why, why does my life have to be this way?
Sometimes I feel like breaking glass
and a camp far away

Michael Stuckey

Never Again

Never again will I sit and watch
people crying and not ask why.
People picking up guns, shooting people.

Why?

A bullet grazed my arm.

I got up and said, no more.

Never again.

For that brief moment I felt
like I was somebody,
but fear and death ran through my mind.
First comes courage, then comes honor.

Joseph Heath

Different

Racist, no, much worse—
picture people walking down the street,
being put on a train,
told they were going to a better place,
and all of a sudden, boom, you're dead.
I can't see how someone could kill
another human being—Could you?
One man killed many people
Why? Because he wanted people to be
just like him.
I think people are supposed to be different.

Joseph Heath

In a way

In a way, life opens and closes.
People open to new things and
then they close them off
for the next best thing.

In a way, I do the opposite,
because I figure
everyone is their own person.
I don't close off one thing for another—
I never forget.

Joseph Heath



Bless These Memories

Bless these memories, where flowers bloomed
and opened up, but now they wither
to the ground.

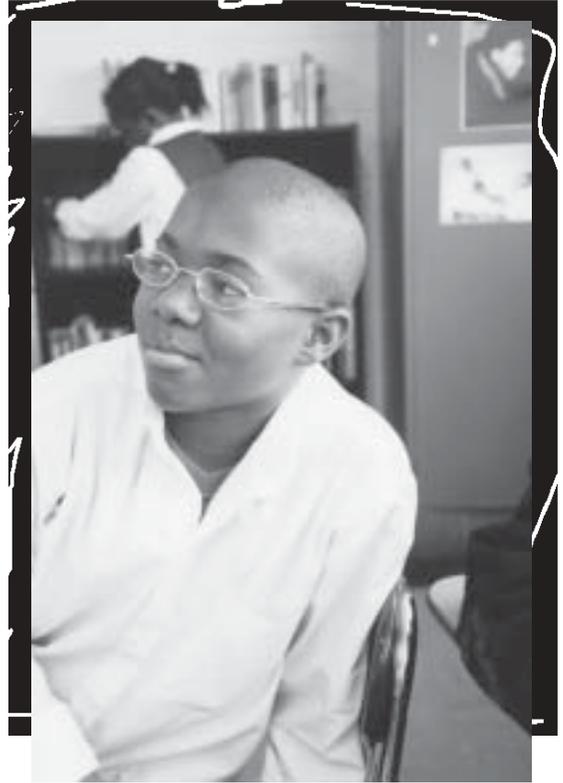
Boarded up houses, broken glass scattered,
windows busted, forgotten like
the destruction of buildings, closed up
never to be opened again.

Death, who pays a visit to people, crying
shouting, no hope anywhere, shame
covers the world.

Difference, hate, fear in the air, to
never be exposed to happy people,
poor, running for life, running
from problems.

Bless some memories,
because bad memories
should never be blessed.

Kiara Johnson



Jawara Johnson

identity

I Feel

Yellow stars and small train cars,
I feel discriminated.
The starvation and separation,
I feel sorry.
All of the labor with zero wages,
I feel void.
One meal a day and nowhere to play,
I feel bad.
Sickness, dying and babies crying,
I feel sad.
No kind of classes and poison gasses,

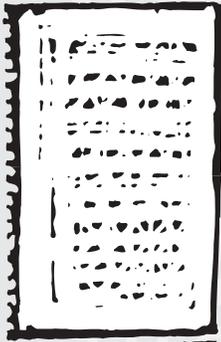
I feel ungrateful.

Dayna Hudson

Tell My Story

Every night it's a gold star. It looks like broken glass.
My window is made of hope. Yesterday I had fear.
Today makes a difference.
I hate clouds. I think they are gas camps.
I don't like destruction, trains.
When I say Why, I change the season to spring.
The waves are death. Their blooms opened up
to change the weather.
Tonight, I can predict I'll be crying green kids.
I remember the suitcases, closed down into running soldiers.
I will tell no more until summer.

Gregory Finch



Never Again

Never again should this happen,
no one knows
how to drink water they had
to go outside and pick up snow.
It's just memories.

Daniel was a true survivor.
He had to give up everything,
his diary and golden medal from his Dad.
He missed his sister and his mother.
He was filled with fear, but he survived.
Millions of adults died, and millions of children.
I never knew such a large number of children
could be killed like that...
Please save the children.

Sherrell Jones



Diamond Williams

tolerance

Never Again

The boy who got shot because of something stupid
never again.
The girl who got pregnant for money
never again.
The dad who got killed thinking he was a high roller
never again.
The baby who grew up to be a drug addict
never again.
About the crying angels who are crying
because of the why people live never again.
Puzzled about everyday life
Never again.

DeAngelo Spann

Memory

As I walk through the valley of death,
an eel electrocuting my life,
destroying family and friends,
ones who care about me,
people I love.
It's like we're in a desert, each one of us,
picked off one by one.
There's nothing but violence,
down every alley, every building.
Drugs a remora, sucking off your brain,
destroying your memories.
Me, I remember everything.
I'm like a mountain collapsing,
yet I refuse to fall.

Jawara Johnson

January 14, 2003

I went to a museum—
not an ordinary museum,
it was the Holocaust Museum.

I saw a boy who hated fear,
loved hope
and never loved death,
a boy who survived
with one of his parents
and never used guns,
a boy named Daniel.

Terrance Jackson



Why I love being a twin

My mom always says:
“Boy, if you wasn’t a twin,
your punishment would be double.”

Terrance Jackson

What Do You Think?

If you lived when I do, Germans, what would you do?
Hope? Live, die, all you see is red,
the blood that millions of people shed,
the blood of hope, the blood of life,
the blood of agony and pain.
Do you think that is the right place for a five year old child?
Do you think that you should be taken from your child
to die for the idea of another person?
Do you think it’s right for kids to die from gas, starvation, guns?
Do you think it is right that people do not know when
or what to stand for?

Delonte Williams

I Remember

I remember fear and hate
I remember trying to escape
Kids crying, parents shouting
Broken glass
People trying to survive
Soldiers, trains, camps, death
Never forgotten
Today is tomorrow's yesterday

Dayna Hudson

Tell My Story

Tell my story about yesterday,
about the parents' death,
closed down stores, houses boarded up,
kids on moldy mattresses,
nighttime comes with little food to eat,
kids are crying, shouting, running away
from camps they have to go to, or guns being fired.
How is one kid going to survive?

Deon Smith



l-r Delonte Williams, Marcus Jackson

justice

Broken Body, Broken Soul

Broken glass, broken hearts,
everywhere I go, broken love,
broken families, broken stars,
broken waves, broken snow,
broken feelings—
This is a broken world that we live in.

TyVaughn Montgomery

I don't know why

There is a gold star
I don't know why.
The frost, the snow, it makes it so cold
I don't know why.
I remember the Holocaust
I don't know why.
Maybe because of the way the kids were crying
Don't ask me why, cause it touches their heart.

Brian Johnson



Broken body, broken soul?

I saw broken glass
people shouting, crying out for help.
The fear, the tormenting,
how hateful was Lodz Ghetto to the Jews.
Stores boarded up, running them from their homes,
crying from kids, women and men.
No hope, no prayer.
Death is on its way to eternity.
Why would some do something like this?
People never forget what you've done,
so never forget the world, how it ended.

Monica Harris

I don't know why

I don't know why stars only come at night.
Guns shoot off in wrong directions.
Parents tell their kids fighting won't solve their differences.
I don't know why people escape their homes.
Why don't clouds turn colors.
I just don't know why.

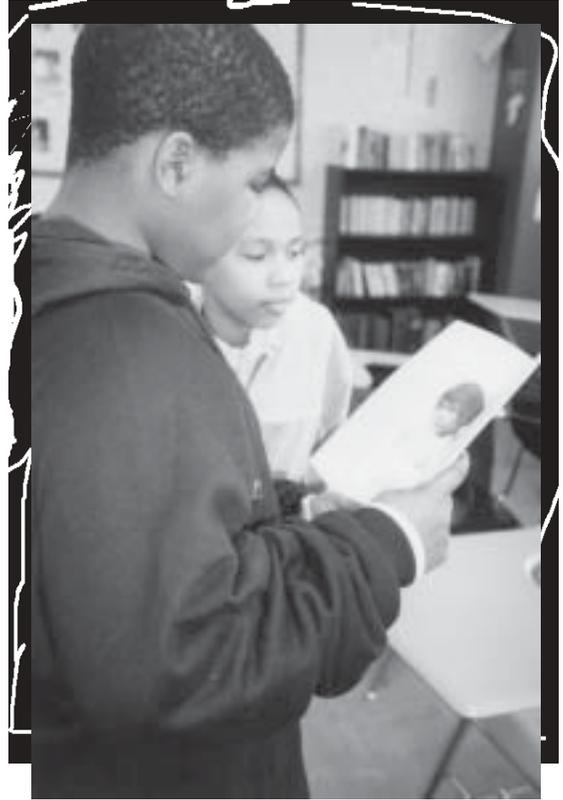
Eugerttha Harris

Yellow Star Conversion

Isolated like the runt of the litter,
Dehumanized because of your religion,
Because of a star on your shirt.
Perfect is his standard, one he doesn't meet.
The hollow dreams of his imagination—
mayhem, death and pain,
yet he's living in so-called luxury.
Real happiness can't come from living
off of the labor of others.

Into all this devastation comes
the oasis of hope for the Jews.
Day brings happiness, but night comes
and night brings misery.
Out of the moonless dark appears the sun
and the oasis returns.

Reginald Williams



l-r Reginald Williams, Monica Harris

identity

Never Again

The streets are closed down and forgotten
Hoping that the gold star will spare my life
Crying soldiers are lost,
Looking for a new hope as the frost
falls off their faces.
Destruction starts, broken glass falls
into my eyes, blood overflows
the hope of yesterday,
death waves flow as sons and daughters
get taken away from home
and are gone forever.

Delonte Williams

Never Again

Never again will there be slavery
Never again there would be dark clouds in my world
Never again, no more closed doors
Never again weapons being used
Never again flowers blooming for the bad
Never again death in my world
Never again nighttime for the evil
Never again forgotten people
Never again racists judge people by their cover.

Monica Harris

Why?

Why does talking turn to shouting?
Why does anger turn to pouting?
Why do babies turn to children?
Why do people get hurt, and
Why is hurt a feeling?
Why does sleepiness turn to rest?
Why does life turn to death?

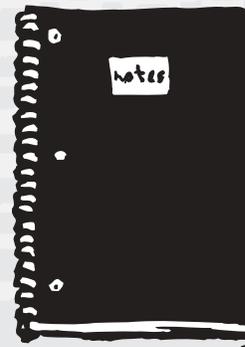
Tayonne Casey

I will live

There will always be power in me.
There will always be those three words in me, "I will live."
Every time I say those words it tells me to never give up.
I have a feeling that puts clarity in my life.
But I also feel like this is the day that I will perish.

There will always be self-esteem in me.
Soon I will shine like emery.
Sometimes I feel hard, as hard as granite.
I say those three words, "I will live"
And then I am smooth as ice.

Chanice Little



Do not erase

The mouth of the child opens
The fear and hate collapse
The shouting escapes
The yellow star has turned blue
The clouds are white again
What was forgotten is remembered
The tan grass has turned green
The why is still a question.

Joseph Hudson



clockwise from top left Tony Bush, Monica Harris, Delonte Williams, DeAngelo Thomas, Marcus Jackson

tolerance

I don't know why

Every night there is a gold star in the sky.
I don't know why.
And a window that was fresh, now it's boarded up.
I don't know why.
Yesterday hope, tomorrow fear.
I don't know why.
They chased running chickens into death and plucked their feathers.
I don't know why.
I am trying to survive this world.
And I don't know why.

Stephen Staton

Inside the walls of sleep

Inside the walls of the sleeper
lie the illusions of sleep.
The disasters of slumber
poison my dreams,
draining and draining away my courage
until I spring like a jack-in-the-box
to escape from this black hole.
But walls are not always the same.
There are the marvelous fantasies
of immortality and unreality
until tomorrow's day comes,
and the door opens to reality and new possibilities.

Reginald Williams



Those Winter Sundays

A desperate mother calls my name.
All I know is my head and my pillow.
My head weighs 2000 pounds.
As I open my eyes, the bright light blinds me.
My dirty, stinky dog on my chest.
Today, I want to stay in bed
as a day with no school should be lived.
The icy air rushes over me as I whip the covers off.
Mind says no
Body says stay
which one should I listen to?
I know I must go,
But I don't want to.
What is the point?
I wish I went.

Andrew Horn

The Battle

The misty woods of misfortune
wander the vast pastures of my mind
wanting to escape, wanting to burn the pasture
with embers and a wheel of fire.
But the cascade of water doesn't always come
and the woods escape to haunt me,
stalking my conscience.
The trees are hollow and will die.
But they will return.
Until that day I will fight.

Reginald Williams

justice



James Saunders

Dirty World

When you see people on the street
and someone drops a gum wrapper on the ground
maybe they don't care about the world.

Why do people litter?
They just don't care.

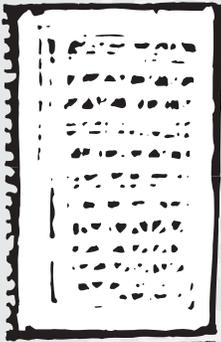
Like my father always said,
"It's a dirty world but it's still spinning.
You can't do nothing about it."
But just try to live in it.

Van Jackson

Never Again

Here in the ghetto, never again.
To see what I had, or could have been.
Truly, the last sight of my family and home.
Them packing me up, shipping me off to a concentration camp.
In my world, I daydream of candy and ice cream.
In my bed at home watching TV.
Then I go back to reality
Me seeing what was there
Me being scared
Me saying I haven't seen my family
Being pushed and shoved.
Not being loved.
I wonder why.

Sarai Morris



Never Again

Before he came, all was well
Me and my kids had so much fun
The sun rises, doves sing
I go to the kitchen, a cookie is on the table
My face starts to shine
Knowing I'm loved makes it good
I go through the day laughing and playing
Sunset comes
We go to sleep to see what tomorrow brings.

Then tragedy strikes.
Hitler leaves a wake of destruction in his path
He comes and takes my hopes and dreams
Kills my kids
Takes me to the ghetto
My memories of my kids
Never again can I see their face
Never again can I see cookies on the table
Never again can I hear doves singing
It's gone now
Never again.

Shaquiel Jenkins

Broken Body, Broken Soul

Jews were slaughtered
Hitler laughed
50 people put in one room
he gave them a blood bath.

Houses burned, forced into ghettos
Through winter snow and frost
Parents separated from kids
Kids crying, parents sighing.

They know death is coming along
But in a room there's a boy who says
The beat me, hurt me, shoot me, and stab me
But they won't break my soul.

Shaquiel Jenkins



Terrance Jackson

identity

Tell my story

Fear of the day the world would end
The hate that I had for my father
The ghetto where guns go off
Crying because my grandmother is gone
The death of me is what I fear
Opened up so I could come out
Camps where I remember my first fight
Hope is what I had for my grandmother to live
Remembering me running from my fears
Forgotten the great things I've done
My mother shouting for joy and hope
Soldiers fighting for us
Why is this world coming to an end?

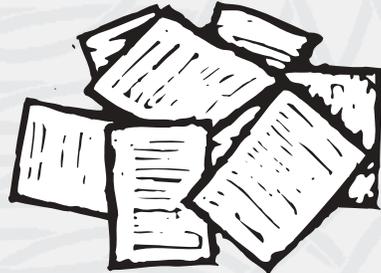
Lovette Dickerson

Bless these memories

Broken glass against the snow
Remember the soldiers of green and gold
Forgotten the death from crying parents
Give hope and stars against the waves.

Uprooted bowls make different clouds
From guns to fear because
They never escape from yesterday
While the spring blooms and the kids survive
By shouting “why” all the time.

Dakia Koon



Never Again

Closed down out in the open
Kids running, playing together
Love hidden somewhere
Hate has taken over.

Fear in everyone
Windows and broken glass
Death is increasing, guns shooting
Everyone’s trying to get away.

Being forgotten, having no one to care for you
Four seasons go by, the snow is still there
Remembering the escapes, the destruction
And the soldiers today.

Looking at that gold star.

Kelly Perkins

My Mind

My mind is like a field
with a building blocking my memory.
It is like an eel
striking me in my brain.
It is like a lion
roaring in my ear.
It is like a caterpillar
sliding through my thoughts.
It is like a kangaroo
jumping through my head.
It is like a waterfall
washing away my dreams.

Timothy Rawls



tolerance

l-r Chantz Clagette, Tyjeanna Hight

Four Corners

In this maze I got lost
I saw four different corners,
four different things.
Wiping my eyes, thinking this couldn't be.

In the first corner I see my grandmother looking at me.
I say, "I wish you lived a lifetime"
to be able to put your face against mine.
In the second corner I see my grandmother and me
looking out the window, staring at tomorrows.
In the third corner I see the color black looking at me
I begin to cry, thinking why the color had to be black
like a sparrow reminding me of all the sorrow.
In the fourth corner I see me feeling
and thinking of all that could be but never was
Because my grandmother died before I could look in her eyes.

Sarai Morris

Remnants

The chasm of lost dreams
yearns to be filled
with the molten lava of misplaced memories
which will eventually generate into jagged rocks
that my mind will use to cut through the exaggeration.
I dread, yet I desire that crack in my long term.
I think I'm going crazy over these rounded half-truths,
but where's the other half?
The dove flew across the endless pearl ivory sky.
He flitted to and fro with an uninterrupted pace.
Into a clear white
Up into the sky, high up.

James Saunders

Doors

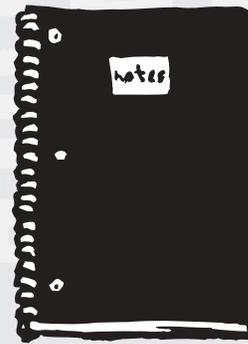
Doors opening and closing to love and happiness.
Doors closing and opening to hate and defeat.
The opening and closing is in the hands of the beholder.
The opening and closing will determine your future.
A door is a way into the mind.
A door affects your past.
Life is a closed door in a locked house.

Joseph Hudson

People

Why do people kill other people?
All we are doing is making less people.
I don't understand some people.
They think guns and violence will solve their problems,
And that's not right.
Broken glass, all that hate, needs to stop.
Stop the violence, bring in the love.
People, before you do something bad,
Change your mind.

DeAngelo Thomas



Home Lost

Paper, pencils and pens
Tears from a child
Crying, escaping fear
Hate unforgotten,
Hate and death.

Broken glass
stabbing into the clouds of dreams
Soldiers drop to the ground
Guns plunk down too.

No, not war.
We can't take the pain.

Patrice Harrison



Tony Bush

Searching

I crawled through the cultural ways of life.
I came to the end of the line and became the history of the world.
I designed a home built for a mother who is a queen
Without a king, that is divine for a perfect dream.

I am logical.
I once became the sunlight of a kingdom.
Making people come before me.
I searched for a theme of
Children making jobs fit for themselves.

I crossed a cloud when the air flowed through the valleys of water.
I turned myself into a shadow of intoned grace.
I looked back and turned forth and saw me.

Sharkiyla Marshall

justice

The Structured Pieces

Before time, I came and conquered the world.
Right before the Romans were on top of the world.
Crete was just a song.
I saw tragedy strike before me.

I chopped through the secrets of the war.
Suggesting I seek the world.
I crawled over the states trying to conquer the world alone.
Succeeding before dawn, I was caught beside myself
Through the war, beyond victory.

Sharkiyla Marshall



POEMS

Poems are like sweet, gentle words
that make you feel much better.
On the other hand, they give you pain to write.
Just make me want to tear up things and fight.

You can write about dogs and frogs, running on logs.
Fishes and hens getting blown back by wind.
Or you can just throw the paper with nothing on it,
walk out of the room, and hit something with a broom.

So just sit back, relax,
and try to write about doves flying with wings,
because poems are imaginary things!

Nathaniel Nails

Born to Fly

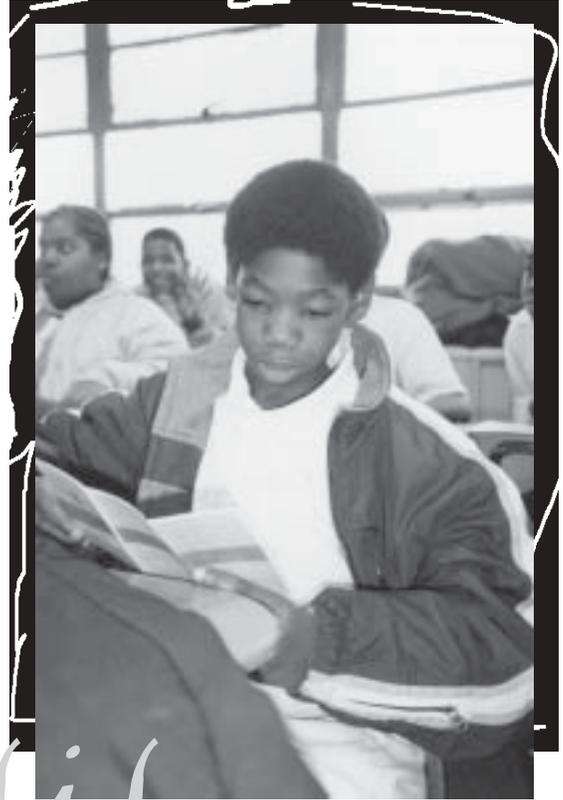
Young, steely breeze,
cold to me.
Liquid questions
ease by rhythmic streams.
Why drink
from my brilliant pictures?
Delicious skies
awake a desire born to fly.

Tony Bush

Run

Frost, snow, a pond
My feet jumping,
like when the spring stars bloom.
This will never be forgotten.
Running and shouting,
kids crying, just for fun.
Then here comes destruction.
I have my suitcases all packed.
Shouting and crying, six guns in the air.
Hate, fear, all my hope left yesterday
Gold star stands on my heart.
Can I survive?
I'll try to raise my head and stand like a soldier.

Pamula Twyman



DeAngelo Thomas

identity

Fast life

When I see a cheetah run, it reminds me how fast life can go.
Once you're a kid, playing with other kids.
Next you're a teen, hanging with your friends,
having fun, going out to movies, and shopping at the mall.
Then you look up and you are an adult, looking for a job,
trying to pay bills and take care of your kids.
That is why I will slow down and try to take my time,
because I know that I'm still a child.

Marcus Jackson

Timeless cries for help

A candle in the dark room is a cry for help.
A shoelace that's untied is a cry for help.
A door that's closed is a cry for help.
Snow that is untouched is a cry for help.
A window that is closed is a cry for help.
A seed that is not planted is a cry for help.

Joseph Hudson

featured writer **ESTHER ROSENFELD STAROBIN**



Esther Rosenfeld Starobin left her home and family in 1939, at the age of two. After the Nazis came to power in Germany, the situation for Jews in that country had become so desperate that her parents sent their four daughters to live with foster families in England.

Thousands of other parents also sent their children away to safety through an operation known as

Kindertransport. Ms. Starobin's parents were murdered by the Nazis in 1944, but she and her sisters were reunited after World War II. They came to the United States in 1947, when Ms. Starobin was ten years old.

She attended Kramer Junior High School and Anacostia High, and grew up to become a middle school teacher.

On February 25, 2003, she shared her story with members of the Hart Middle School Writing Club.

Top: l-r Esther Rosenfeld Starobin, Gabrielle Martin

Center: l-r Esther Rosenfeld Starobin, James Saunders, Devin Hudson, Joseph Hudson, Reginald Williams, Monica Harris, Gabrielle Martin

Bottom: l-r Esther Rosenfeld Starobin, Joseph Hudson, Reginald Williams

the gift

I suppose our home in Adelsheim, Germany was typical of the homes found in that small town. My parents used part of the house and the remainder was rented to two ladies. Though I have no memory of it, I have heard my sisters talk of the small parlor that was off-limits to them. My oldest sister, Bertl, mentioned the very fancy doll that was kept there for show. It was not a toy to be played with by the girls. On the very detailed list of articles found in our home that the Germans compiled after our parents were deported in October 1940 there is listed "a doll". Could this be the doll my sister remembers as being so fancy that she was not allowed to play with it?

Our family was permanently separated in 1939 when my three sisters were sent to England on the kindertransport. They had been living in Aachen with two aunts after Jewish children were forbidden to go to the regular schools. In March 1939 they left for England without the opportunity to say goodbye to their mother and father. Our Aunt Hannah, my mother's sister, who lived in England had found separate homes for them to go to upon their arrival in England. Later that year, in June, I too was sent on a kindertransport to England. I went to live with the Harrisons in Thorpe. This placement had been arranged through the Quakers who had worked with the Jewish community to bring the children out of Germany, Vienna, and Czechoslovakia. The Harrisons were a devout Christian family who had hoped for a little boy to be a playmate for their only son, Alan. However, when that didn't work out they agreed to take me.

Soon after I arrived in Thorpe I came down with scarlet fever and had to be kept in quarantine as was the custom at that time. Alan was not allowed in the room where I was but played with me through the window. Once I had recuperated I became a devoted follower of Alan who was nine at the time. I have been told he quickly accepted me into his life and allowed me to go places with him. While I immediately accepted Alan it took me longer to get used to Uncle Harry (Mr. Harrison). I was somewhat uneasy around him. It wasn't clear what previous experiences I had had that led to this behavior.

While Alan was in school, Auntie Dot and I would often go into Norwich to shop and visit. In order to get to the bus stop we had to walk across an empty field. One day we met a woman while we were walking across this field to catch the bus to Norwich. In her hands she held a beautiful china doll. Auntie Dot spoke to her telling her that I had been sent by my parents to England to be safe from the Nazis. Without hesitation this woman handed me the doll.

What a wonderful gift! The doll's eyes opened and closed as I moved her up and down; the painted features made her look so real. The doll, that I immediately named Betsy, had fingers and toes. I found it hard to believe someone just gave this wonderful toy to me. When we arrived home Auntie Dot gave me some left-over baby clothes and I began knitting items to supplement them. Betsy became the joy of my life! Unlike the doll in Germany, this doll was played with.

In 1947 when I hastily left Norwich to meet my sister for the journey to America, Betsy was left behind. I suppose she really would not have fitted into life in America. Also at ten, I was getting a little too old for dolls. Actually once we were settled into my uncle's house on North Capitol Street in Washington D.C. someone did buy me a doll. The only thing I remember about that doll was her name, Monica.

Once settled into Washington, my sisters and I lived with an aunt and uncle for a couple of years. After my sister Edith joined us in the U.S.A., we moved to an apartment of our own. Bertl and Edith worked and made enough money to support us. Ruth was in college and worked to obtain room and board. By this time I was finishing junior high and entering high school. I had made one very good friend, Grace, in the first junior high I attended. We were more interested in clothes, boys, grades, etc. than in discussing our families. I don't think I ever really explained to Grace why I lived with my sisters and she never asked. It was just the way it was! After high school, I was fortunate enough to be able to attend college and become a teacher. I married and had two daughters in the following years.

Of course, Auntie Dot, my foster mother, kept the doll as she did so many mementos of our time together. When Alan, my foster brother, came over sixteen years later as a Fulbright exchange teacher he brought Betsy with him. I was delighted to have her again but kept her well hidden from the curious fingers of our young daughters.

Years passed and I occasionally unwrapped Betsy to admire her beauty and remember the kindness of that English woman so many years ago. Eventually, the girls were gone from the house, and I had money to use for frivolous items. My friend Harriet and I went to visit the doll hospital in Ellicott City, Maryland. By now Betsy's eyes had fallen back into her head and some of her fingers and toes were less than perfect. The doll hospital owner with ridiculous solicitation asked if she might undress Betsy. She did so and began to tell me about her origins. Like me Betsy came from Germany and was somewhat destroyed. However, the owner said she could be mended. So I left Betsy to be fixed and redressed. When I picked her up, the doll looked new. She was splendid in her fresh outfit. Only when you looked carefully could you see the scars from the previous years.

Esther Rosenfeld Starobin
October 14, 2002



The Cemetery

Tombstones in a row
Circles connect the family
I wish I knew them

The strangeness of it
Centuries of family
All are forgotten

Beautiful, peaceful
Untouched by dreadful events
Torn apart from me

The chain broken
A generation murdered
Stories left untold

Start the chain again
Search our memories
To tell each other.

Esther Rosenfeld Starobin
October 18, 2001

I don't know why

I don't know why there is killing,
no hope, no survival,
screaming and shouting.
I don't know why there is no more spring,
no more flowers blooming.
I don't know why the clouds are gray,
stores closing down.
I just don't know why all this commotion
is going on in this town.
I don't know why there is no more sunshine,
then we die, the world comes to an end.

Monica Harris

Sunflower

Here I am
Got kicked out of my house
I'm in the ghetto scrubbing floors
Washing the sidewalk, so many stains
Wishing I had wings to fly away
But every morning, no wings.
I see no ice cream truck
No pennies on the ground
I smell sewer
Not fresh air
I'm told to fight for what I have to believe
But do I come?

Raekala Middleton



Delonte Williams

tolerance

Bless these memories

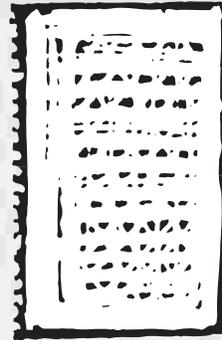
At nighttime, I see people running,
kids crying, parents shouting,
or people being forgotten
because the years go by and I wonder sometimes
why people have to die because of gunshots.
I remember the day of my best friend's death.
I was heartbroken, I felt weak,
and my heart opened up and I asked God
Why couldn't she be a soldier and survive?

Shantel Williams

Broken Body, Broken Soul?

What?
Why me?
It feels like I need hope
Or am I forgotten?
Where are my friends?
Will I survive?
I hear guns, babies crying, older ones shouting.
I see parents taken away by soldiers
and others running and running,
shouting "open up, open up."
I don't want to be here.
Can I escape, or should I remember?

Kiera Price



The fusion of shooting stars

One day I was walking from aftercare.
It was six o'clock and pitch dark outside.
That put something on my mind.
As I continued wandering, I tripped over a pebble.
When I got up, I looked in the sky.
Looks like the stars finally showed happiness for once.

Delonte Morrow

I don't know

Why are kids crying? (I don't know.)
Why are kids lying? (I don't know.)
Why are kids playing with guns? (I don't know.)
Why are kids watching the stars and saying that's not the one? (I don't know.)
Why are people holding their suitcases ready to move? (I don't know.)
We know how you feel. They did the same thing.

Kevin Wood

Uprising

Uprising
the golden star
plucked the wrong thing
now the hope of frost on cars
Uprising
the wrong one
don't bang with sticks on the drum.
Uprising
the waves, why
look down or up
where's the sky?

Kevin Wood



LaVon Johnson

justice

I don't know why

I don't know why kids hate.
I don't know why soldiers don't escape.
I don't know why flowers bloom in spring.
I don't know why stars appear at nighttime.
I don't know why parents like shouting.
I don't know why people fear trains.
I don't know why hope went away yesterday.
I don't know why broken glass falls from windows.
I don't know why people say why.
I don't know why people die.
All I know is I will survive.

Deanna Dickson

Hope

Blue is my skin
Blue is the color of the air
Blue is the color of the sky
Blue is the color of a heart
Blue is the color of wormwood
Blue is the color of the animals
Blue is the color of my soul
Blue is the color of my bright bloom
Blue is the color of my body
Blue is the color of a hand
Blue is the color of the world
Blue is the color of the earth
Blue is the color of my home
Blue is the color of my name
Blue is the color of my life
Blue is the color of my light
Blue is the light in me
Blue is my world.

Javaon Skinner

Black

Black is the night sky
The pitch street
The color of my hair
The shade of the shadows on the wall
The color of dark
The color the blind man sees

Steven Jackson

Strength

Strength is believing in yourself
Strength is being strong
Strength is never giving up
Strength is about character
Strength is showing how strong you are
Strength is being united
Strength is staying in and not going out
Strength is about standing up
Strength is about being yourself
And I would be Patricia.

Patricia Smith

I Once Had a Friend

I once had a friend who would laugh at my jokes
I once had a friend who met a few jerks
I once had a friend who was very slippery
I once had a friend who acted like Badilla
I once had a friend that hung around the wrong crew
I once had a friend that was very blue
I once had a friend.
P.S. He's in jail.

Andre Harper

identity

Imagine This

Can you describe the feeling
Of being cold and hungry every day,
Not being able to talk, being trapped,
Working all day for no food or money,
Trying to get to freedom, but you can't,
Hoping every day that you won't die?

Imagine someone taking your shoes
And never giving them back,
Walking around in the dirt
With glass cutting your feet,
Sleeping behind barbed wire and
Never being able to leave.
Imagine wearing a star and a number,
No name, just the number 2468.
Imagine this, you wouldn't like it.

Ronell White

Blue

Blue is the way of loneliness
Sometimes the sky
Blue is a something you want
But can't get
Blue is a broken heart, a heart that is lonely
Blue is something you want to eat, but you can't
Blue is an ocean that splashes at night
Blue is a thoughtful mind.

DeAngelo Covington

Camps

How would you feel if you were nearly beaten to death by cold,
Closed in by barbed wire seeing things that you've never seen before,
Being assaulted, working for nothing, being hungry,
Every night praying that God brings you peace,
Wishing for silence,
Listening to someone being assassinated every minute,
Wishing for freedom,
And having no shoes to wear.

Roosevelt Jones, Jr.

Witness

*I stand as a witness to the common lot
With no hope in my eyes
The cold trains just run by
No escaping the barbed wire
No freedom from Auschwitz*

Tae Manager

Can You Describe This

A yellow star and barbed wires
People with hope that have been taken to camps
Their clothes are damp
They are hungry
They have no shoes
There's no sun
They are gone
They are fighting
And trying to escape to freedom.
Do you know what this is?
It is the Holocaust.

Stephen Staton



Strength

Strength is the power to be the leader and not a follower.
Strength never lets anyone tear it apart
Because strength is a brave heart.
Strength is strong like the wind
And strength can never bend.
There is never a best for strength.
When people ask, "Why go on a ridiculous quest?"
It answers, "Life beyond death,"
Strength is the endless breath.

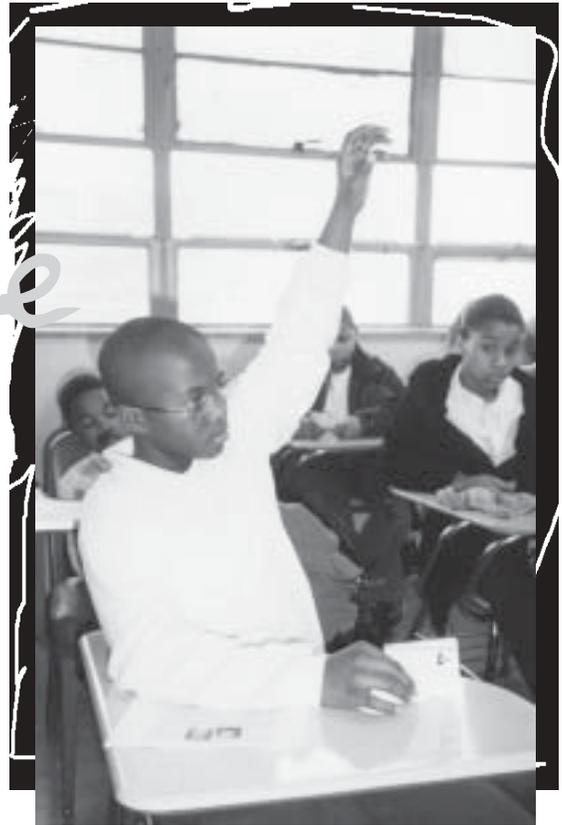
Angelina Gomez

tolerance

To The Enemies

To the enemies of the State,
How much of this madness can we take?
Living in a world we didn't make,
Paying for a lot of adult mistakes.
Children grow up to become our young adults
Until we teach them how to hate.
Living in a world they didn't make.
Living in a world that is filled with hate.

Angelina Gomez



Jawara Johnson

Trapped

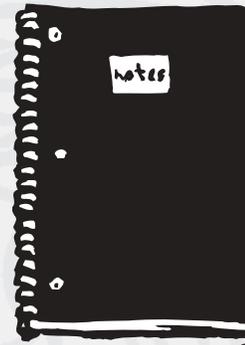
Can you describe this?
The cold nights when you can't see anything
Within your sight. Trapped somewhere you
Don't want to be. Somewhere where silence is war.

Jamal Walden

Visiting the Holocaust Museum

We saw all the trains and
How it was back then.
I am glad it is not like that now.
They took stands
And raised their hands.
Then they had to wear a yellow star
And they couldn't go very far.
They needed freedom, but
People would kill them.
There was always barbed wire
Because they would never tire.
They heard the sound of people calling
And felt their lives falling.
This is what I saw at the Holocaust museum

Keisha McDonald



Taken

They took people's lives for nothing.
They separated families for nothing.
Just picture if this was us.
We would only have one pair of clothes
And would have to follow their rules.
If you didn't you would be punished.
Good people were scared for their lives.
This is where people lost husbands, children, and wives.

Tiffany Mace

Brave Man

A brave man is strong
and so is his heart.
This man is powerful
and his might is too.

A brave man's song
can never be wrong.
The waves in the water
will keep him alive.

This man's light is so
clear that it looks
like glass and water
with yellow waves.

This man's hair is long
and so is his spirit.
He loves the waves.
They control his whole spirit.

Christopher Harvin



l-r Marcus Jackson, Monica Harris, Tony Bush, Reginald Williams

justice

My Lost Father

He's standing in front of me,
not knowing it's me.
Should I say hi or
wave goodbye?
He stood by the tree
and I just looked.
My friends are there
not knowing why.
So I looked at them
and shook my head, about
to say goodbye in front of
everyone.

Johniece Simms

You Will Struggle

You will struggle till the day you must die
You will struggle till that day you can survive
You will struggle till you can stand up for yourself
You will struggle till Heaven's gate opens up to be your jail
You will struggle all by yourself
You will struggle in front of everyone else.

Teairra Braxton

Shame

Shame is something that eats away
if you don't do the right thing.
Shame drives a pink car
that he is very sad about
because his favorite color is red.
Shame also eats pizza which makes him lonely.
Shame lives in a small house that makes him mad
because he wants a big house.
If shame walked down the street
and walked into somebody
he would cry because he felt sorry
about walking into them.

Clarence Crump



Fear of Death

Death waits for you at the dinner table.
Death scares you when you get out of the tub.
Death is as smooth as a razor blade,
and like a hot knife through butter.
Death is like a cobra, striking fast.
Never let your guard down—
death can strike at any given time.

Marcellus Johnson

My Lost Father

My father was lost
and he couldn't be found.
When I called for him
I heard no sound.
The love between us was forbidden
and it's all because
of where my lost father hid—
in the darkness where no one could see.
He didn't see how sad we could be.
Days and months went by
and I thought to myself, Why, God, why?
We weren't close
when I thought we were.
My memory of him became a blur.
When you were lost
I had a lot of things to say.
I wondered if we ever were
going to meet again one day.
As time went by
I denied you more and more.
At that time you weren't even more important
than a trip to the store.
You weren't there when I became a teen.
When I saw other kids with their dads
I felt dirty and unclean.
Now we're together and it feels good.
Just never go back to hiding in those woods.

Raynese Jefferson

identity



Devin Hudson

What I Saw

I looked out the window
and saw the sun flickering on the ground.
I saw pine straws and not leaves,
a clown in a car without gas.
It was cold so I invited him in
to sit in front of the fire,
and it started to snow.
But I got scared and put him out.
It snowed so hard
I think I saw the moon.
I feel a simple pain from my cat.
I think of dogs underwater
with shoes on, walking on the sun.
A pumpkin with dignity.
And a lot of sunlight in his heart
and then I saw his face.

Shannon Matthews

All Alone

She had a very small family
It was just her and her mother
They lived in a tree house
In an apple tree above the graveyard

They were very poor
They didn't have much
They wore the same clothes since '99
They had to walk barefoot half the time

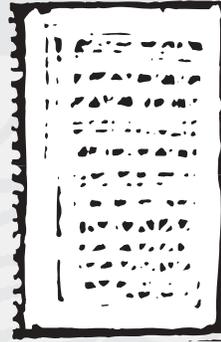
They used to live in a big white house
Before times got so
They had to leave
They left everything but sadness and pain

One day her mother left to find a job
She'd been gone about a month
When she passed away
And went to a better place

Her daughter cried mostly every day
Then she passed away
Over sadness and weakness
But she didn't go to a better place

Because it wasn't her time to go
She made herself go that way
It wasn't the right way or the wrong way
She went her way, the down way

Latrice Williams



Bullet

Dear Bullet,

You are fearful. I
hate you like you hate me.
Bullets bullets bullets and
more everyday. I wonder
when I will get hit
by one.

But I'm not
because I'm faithful and I'm

Terrance Jackson.

Terrance Jackson

I Am Leaping into a New Year

I'm leaving the old year
with my head down and crying
because my family is dying
like leaves coming off a tree
or like snow and rain coming from the sky
but I'm getting better
when my family says "I love you"
so before they leave
my new year is going to be
a world of happiness
and not sadness

Timothy Rawls



l-r Reginald Williams, Dayna Hudson

tolerance

I Warned You

"I warned you too many times about going into that abandoned house" said Tommy's mother.

"But mom—"

"No buts young man, now go up to your room and get ready for supper."

The next morning when Tommy got up for school he went downstairs, and as he reached for the refrigerator door he saw a note which was written by his mother. It said, "Some of the adults from the neighborhood and I are going to the abandoned house to help clean and fix it up. Be back before suppertime."

When Tommy got home from school, he saw police cars and an ambulance in front of his house. He ran towards the ambulance and saw that the person they were lifting on was indeed his mother. Tommy rode with the police to the hospital and he waited in the waiting room to see if his mother was going to be all right, but two hours later the doctor told him his mother was dead.

He never got to tell his mother goodbye, but he visited her grave everyday, and two months later, Tommy was dead.

Nicola Johnson

Fear

I fear monsters in my closet
at night when I'm asleep
I want someone to run them out
Oh help me please
I hear them every night
there in my closet and under my bed
Can someone get them out of there?

Sharvelle Osborne



Identity

I am the color of the sky
I am shaped like my mind
I can glide 15,000 miles before I fall
I sound like the thunder that does not stop
I am the number 21
I am food that tastes good together
like cake and hamburgers
I am a musical instrument
that will put you to sleep
and I am dying to say goodbye

Lewis Franklin

The Missing Person

There is a new kid in school and he is quieter than the smallest ant on the earth. He has an unknown name because he doesn't say a word. The other kids try to talk to him, but there is no answer.

Some days, he is not at school even though his mother sends him there. People start to put up posters of the kid and I wonder, "Could he be missing, or someplace he's not supposed to be?"

I got some of my friends to help look for him every day after school. We went up to the woods and found his shirt, shoes, socks, pants, and books. We looked for him that whole day.

When we turned our backs we heard a wolf howl. Then we saw the wolf and it looked just like the kid. We ran out of the woods. As we ran we heard a voice saying "Help," but we never found the kid.

Aaron Smith

She Is Not Alone

She is not alone
say the moon and
the stars

She is not alone
the whimpers and
cries of a wolf

She is not alone
her mother says
and her father says

I am not alone
says the little
girl

Terrance Jackson



The Literary Magazine Club meets with Holocaust survivor Flora Singer

justice

Embarrassment

Embarrassment goes
anywhere it makes you cry.
It drives a jeep and eats old moldy bread
for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.
It wears old dirty clothes and holey shoes.
Its pet is a rat
because it is dirty and fat.
The last thing it does is
embarrass you in front of a boy.
It can even make you hide
from somebody you really like,
and makes you cry every single night.

Lonnisha Young

Dream

I am like an eagle soaring
in the sky. I am the tear-
drop from your eyes.

There's a loud roar like the
wind, and this is my poem,
all within.

I am like a volcano bursting
into flames. Now the tears have stopped
falling from my eyes.

And what makes me feel
better is writing a poem.

Van Jackson

Doors

A door is in front
of me. Should I open
this door? It might be my
future or an outrage.

One door has to
be my future but I
can't pick the wrong
door or my life will be
ruined.

So I open the second
door and fall through
a blank life.

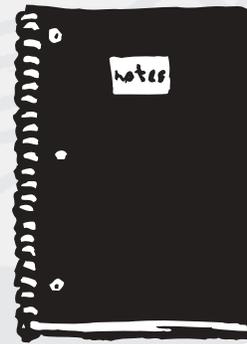
Van Jackson

This Is What I Want the Most of All

What I want the
most of all is my family
and poem. Why do I want
my poem? Because it's
my dream and my life.

It's what I do.

Van Jackson



Dislike

I dislike my house
because I got to lay in dirt
and for dinner I eat gross, dead rats.
I drive a bean to work
and to the store to buy more food.
I dislike my mother
because she beats me all up.
I dislike the way I dress
and the way I drink mop water.
I dislike the way I brush my teeth
with old bones,
and when I go to sleep,
I wake up on the highway.

Nico Griffin

I Still Wonder

I still wonder if life is life
because the way violence is hurting us.

I still wonder if I have love in my heart
for him/her, because it doesn't seem so.

I still wonder if work is available
to us/them. I really don't think people know.

I still wonder why love was here for me,
and I still wonder if life is life.

Regina Taylor

identity

Me

I am a boom of thunder
sweeping through the night.
I am a tornado throwing around
cars and trees.
I am snow over your house like
a canopy over the bed.
I am strong like a hurricane wind
flying through the nation.
I am swift like lightning as I
keep you up at night.
I am wise, just like my ancestors.
I am clever, just like the fox
would be if it was being chased.
I am as worthy as a diamond,
but I am still just me.

Jawara Johnson

Do Not Die

Dying is something
I do not want to happen to my family at all
because it is too sad when someone
in your family dies—
you see their death
and won't forget it at all.
It is sad when people die
because you will not want to forget them.
Do not die.

Candace Craig



My Grandmother as a Star

My grandmother is a star
shining bright at night.
My grandmother is a star
because I want to see the sky
but it is so far. My grandmother
is a star because I love to see her
at night when I am home in my bed.
One of my grandparents is gone
but they still shine in my heart.

Candace Craig

Do Not Die

There was this boy, and people were looking at him because he did something to a family member. He was coming from the store that was just up the street from his house, and they found him and shot him up. The mother ran out of the house as fast as she could. She saw her son, and all she saw was red blood. She thought it was just a cut, so she took him in the house and put him on the sofa because she thought he was asleep. The mother called the police and the ambulance. They opened his stomach, but he was dead. They found bullets in him and it was so sad that day.

Chantal Campbell

I Have Enough Treasures from the Past

I have enough treasures from the past.
I could make a fortune
out of the bracelets, pictures, clothes, houses,
and much, much more.
The treasures that I have and will always keep
will follow me until I'm 18 and older.
I will sit down one day
and show my treasures to my kids
and they will show them to theirs
and they will show them to theirs.
So I have enough treasures from the past.

Deanna Vaughan

tolerance

My Hands Are a City

My hands are a city
and in these times
the sun shines anyway,
even though the clouds are dark.

The lines are streets that are jammed,
nobody has any electricity
and the ones with identity are helpless

as the twist of a wrist,
and an open hand.

A war, sadness, and
a hurtful world,

an open hand
in front of everyone.

Tony Bush

Winter Flower

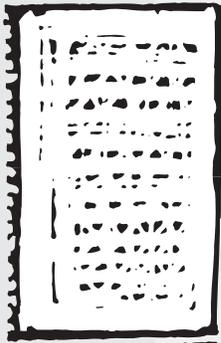
This is rare.
I can't believe it.
It just can't be.
It's like the sun is out
on a stormy night,
or the barking of a dog
with a bone in its mouth.
Our minds can't comprehend
the complexity of this.
It's so thick you can't breathe it,
so lit with energy
it's glowing and no one can
keep it to themselves.
Even in the winter
this spring flower is growing.

Tony Bush

Who Is Lost?

When she comes and goes
it's like the wind coming and going.
Sometimes I wonder
"Am I lost, or is she lost?"
When I think of her,
it warms up my body
like baked bread in the oven.
It brings back the old memories
of when we used to be a family,
and again I wonder who is lost.

Ricardo Jackson



Block

She hates him,
and someone else doesn't like her.
Are you in the building?
The street moves all around the world.
That house grows every 20 minutes,
but the door is locked.

Shariah Gross

Pain Is Good Company

Pain is good company.
My grandmother's passing was
no good news
but the pain
was good company
because I
know she's in a
good place.
I guess it was
time for her ice to melt,
but now the birds
have been set free
and now I know
she loves me.

Ceira Hawkins



l-r DeAngelo Thomas, Delonte Williams

The Birds Arrive

Birds, birds, where are all of you?
Can someone help me find them?
I've been searching for years
to find my poor little birdies.
It's been so long now I'm in my thirties.
My mother caught them for me
when I was only three.
I wish they would come back to me
so I can go back to being happy.
No more sadness for me
because at least I know they are free.
I will try to be full of joy at every cost,
but in the back of my mind
I'll always know I'm lost.

Rashanda Jackson

justice

From Darkness to Darkness

From darkness to darkness
you have lost your way.
You cannot say where to go
or where to be
because you can't see.
You're hearing noises
and getting scared,
and there is no one
to tuck you into bed,
so stay in the light.

Danielle Harrison

I Thought

I thought that when my grandmother died
my life was just gone,
but now I just have to face the fact
that she's gone. She was like my father, mother,
grandparents, aunt, uncle, big brother and sister
all put together. She always made sure I was ok,
and took me to fantastic places
to do fantastic things.
I was only 6 or 7 years old when Grandma died.
She was 43 when she passed,
and I was so blown away.
I felt like I'd rather die with her
than live without her,
but years went past and I got older,
and realized she went to a better place.
I was still mad that she was dead,
but I have to face she's gone.

DeAndre Hobbs



Face, Facing Face, Facing

My cute brown face fades in the clouds,
hiding from all the bad things
happening in this world.
“No tears,” I say. It will all be ok,
all this killing, raping, murdering
will someday go away, and then
my pretty face will come up out of the clouds.

Brittney Braxton

New Year

I got kicked into the new year
so hard I started crying tears
weeping in the new year

When you look at me
I know all you see is fear

The storm is coming
when it's nice and clear
I've seen a tornado
and it's already here

Tron Pannel



l-r Nathaniel Wilkes, Reginald Stewart

My Mother

My mother is like a flower that blossoms,
like a star that sparkles. My mother's like
the moon that's full at night,
like a book you read that's exciting,
like music that makes you dance,
she's like a cloud that sheds its tears.
My mother is like the sunset
that makes everybody smile,
like a car that drives everywhere,
she's like the water that's in the ocean.
My mother is like a friend that everybody
can talk to about their problems,
she's like candy that's sweeter than gold,
she's like pearls, so beautiful,
like a feather that floats on the wind.

Tamethia Greene

identity

Above

From above, God has to come down
From above, souls are flying around
From above, I know God is straight chillin'
From above, God sees drug dealing
From above, God has to create stuff
From above, God made us.

Tron Pannel

A New Man Walking

I am a new man walking from jail
after 25 years in the joint.
The black hole is scary.
I hear voices in my head.
It's so dark
I can't see anything but the blue light
that is under the door.

Takim Kenner

My Mother's Clock

My mother's clock
ticks like her heart.
It wakes her up anytime
until it's time to go for good.
It keeps going and going
like the Energizer bunny,
but I'll be sad when it starts
to slow down its tick.
It works pretty good at times
but the tick stopped
a little while ago.

Richard Lynch

My Lost Chain

I had a chain that sparkled
like a star in the air.
I loved that chain
and I cried every day.
That chain meant so much to me,
but I don't worry about it
because at last the day will come
when I'll find it.

Anita White

Self-Portrait

A blackboard racing in time,
she slowly walks and falls
into a deep dark puddle of nothing
but tar,
and she can't seem to escape,
but she isn't giving up hope,
not just yet.

Verona Clifton

Five Flights Up

As I walked up the monument steps, I kept thinking about my past. I couldn't help it because strange things happened that I didn't understand. I couldn't believe it when my mother died. She was in her best condition, and went to the hospital every month.

"I can't understand it" kept coming into my mind.

They had an autopsy on my mother's body and found out she was poisoned. As I kept walking, I was at the 50th flight of stairs, and thought maybe my mom's best friend killed her.

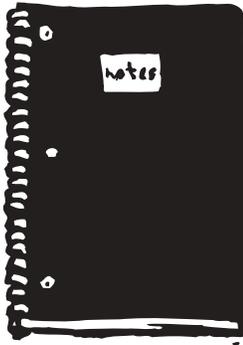
Then another memory came up about my sister. She was the best at saying things to calm me down. She was also my friend, and I loved her. She encouraged me not to drop out when I was about to. She had good friends, so I couldn't believe she was missing.

I kept walking up flight after flight of stairs, and as I got to the 95th, I lost the desire to keep walking. Then I felt a funny feeling that when I got to the top my sister would be there. By now I was at the 100th flight of stairs, five flights up, and thinking I might be reunited with my sister and mother.

I walked until I got to the top, and there they were. If I didn't go up those last 5 flights, we might not have been reunited.

Richard Lynch

tolerance



Chain

As I try to break these chains,
many faces hold me back.
As the bind gets stronger,
I'm struggling to get free.
As it holds me through the stormy night,
raining as hard as it can,
I keep getting flashbacks of my past.
I can't help but keep holding on.
The wind keeps blowing through my hair,
and I can't help but think
this might be the last thing I do,
the thought of dying.
I get scared and don't know what God
will think about me, so I pray
into the stormy, windy, bright night
until I feel a burst of strength.
I use all my might,
but the chains still don't break.
After crying, thinking about my family,
I say to myself, I will not give up,
so I try again until I break free of the chains,
and I say to myself, "Thank you, God."

Richard Lynch

The Living End

An apocalypse walks down Broadway
destroying everything in its path.
But destroying people is out of the question
for it turns us into its minions.

Once the town is destroyed,
it sucks the life force from our bodies
and when all the towns have been destroyed,
it shall suck the life force from the Earth.

I write this poem out of sorrow and pain
for my life is over,
vein to vein.

Jawara Johnson



Thieves of Light

They steal the light of day,
causing an endless night.
You know why they steal light?
They are shadow beasts,
and they despise light.
If they sense it in you,
they will hunt you down
and steal your light
turning you old and gray,
for your light is your soul,
your happiness
and the rest of your emotions.
They must be stopped, but how?

Jawara Johnson

When the City Moon Looks Out on the Streets

When the moon looks out on the streets
it lets out a cry of hope and sadness.

It cries out of sadness because it is not free
like the humans.

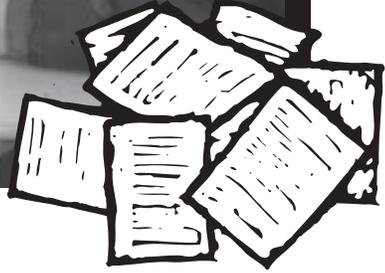
It cries out of hope because it knows one day
it will be set free to roam the skies as it pleases.

But the city moon goes to sleep, hoping to be freed,
hoping to be where it pleases.

Jawara Johnson



l-r Elmer Toogood, Joseph Heath



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Jawara Johnson

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