

Word.  
SOUND.  
Power.

in the Classroom

2023 Anthology

# Word. Sound. Power. in the Classroom

is BAM's in-school poetry residency for high school students. Each year students explore the art of poetry and spoken word through a chosen theme inspired by history and current events. Over the course of 12 sessions, this year's young poets found inspiration and cultivated their own love for the written and spoken word. This anthology reflects that sense of discovery and serves as a culminating document celebrating their participation in the class.



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# Teaching Artists

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**Jennifer Cendana Armas** is a born-and-raised NYC performing artist, educator, and community worker committed to telling stories of diaspora. She is a commission 2023 artist for Restorative Justice Initiative, was a 2022 Harlem Stage WaterWorks Emerging Artist fellow, and recently served as directing observer and understudy for Elyria at Atlantic Theatre Company. She is also a teaching artist at BAM and social impact advisor and coach with Inspire Justice.

**Gideon Bautista** is a Filipino-American actor, playwright, poet, improviser, and teaching artist based in Brooklyn. Having earned his BA in Theatre Education at Emerson College, he's currently working on his Masters in Applied Theatre at CUNY's School of Professional Studies.

**Yasmar Cruz** was born in Puerto Rico and began her artistic training early in life. She is a published author and has written and directed plays at international theater festivals in New York, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic. Cruz is the director of Danzartes and received the 2021 Communitas Community

Impact Award for a wellness initiative that helped BIPOC women during the pandemic. She holds a master's degree in Dance Education from the City University of New York.

**Katie Chelena** (she/her) is a theater artist, poet, and educator originally from the mountains of North Carolina, now based in Brooklyn. She is a member of the experimental theater collective the New York Neo-Futurists and has performed in *The Infinite Wrench* (30 plays in an hour) since 2018. Her plays, performances, and poems have stomped around the Kraine Theater, House of YES, the Queens Museum, HERE Arts Center, and more. She primarily creates autobiographical plays, poems, and performance art, and her work is as queer, punk, leftist, femme, and hillbilly as she is. Her work invites you to rage, kiss, party, and riot. She is the theater instructor at NC Governor's School West, and this is her first year teaching with BAM. Katie holds an MA in Arts Politics at NYU.

# Teaching Artists

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**Jeesun Choi** is a transnational Korean playwright, librettist, and teaching artist. Her works move through diaspora, (im) migration, and transnationalism to reveal the joy and agony of the human condition. Selected plays: *BUST* (Soho Rep Writer/Director Lab, O'Neill NPC Finalist); *Lost Coast* (Playwrights Realm's Ink'd Festival, Nashville Rep's Ingram New Works); *Manuka* (EST/ Youngblood Podcast); *The Seekers* (Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Bushwick Starr Reading Series); and *Untitled/Diaspora* (JACK Radical Acts Festival). She is currently a Librettist Fellow.

**Okai Fluerimont** is a vocalist, percussionist, and producer who embodies all the music of the African diaspora. Born in Brooklyn, the Haitian-American Fleurimont has embarked on a musical path that encompasses the hard boom bap drum loops of hip-hop, roots music from the Caribbean, and many more styles. He is a skilled conga player and has concentrated on playing the West African djembe drum for more than 10 years.

**Najee Ritter** is an award-winning writer, performance artist, and organizer whose multi-disciplinary practice is rooted in cultivating spaces of healing and community building. Named a New York Times Visionary (2018), Najee's work invokes themes of home and love, specifically at the intersections of blackness and queerness. As the Founder, Executive Director of Spark House and Curator for The Neighborhood Project, Najee fosters connections between youth and seniors and supports them in creating public art activations that preserve cultural legacies. This, coupled with his work in other artistic mediums, has led to a defining career in poetry, film, and activism. Najee has been commissioned to perform at and create original programming for BAM (2019), The Public Theater (2019), Lincoln Center (2022), The Met (2023), and more. Forthcoming, Najee's work can be found in the anthology *That's a Pretty Thing to Call it: Prose and Poetry by Artists Working in Carceral Institutions* (2023).

# Teaching Artists

Word. Sound. Power. in the Classroom

**Marcus Smalls** (@MarcusSmalls) is a teaching artist and writer who uses his lifelong love of hip-hop to moderate creative environments around spirituality and identity. Marcus is a teaching artist at BAM and is currently querying literary agents for his debut novel, *The Divine Sinner Chronicles*. Marcus is also the Chief Creative Officer at Prayer Kloset Productions and is pitching *The Divine Sinner Chronicles* as a stage production.

**Jayson Smith** (they/them) is an artist, writer, educator, and curator from the Bronx. Their work has received support from New York Foundation for the Arts, The Poetry Project, Poetry Foundation, Callaloo, and The Conversation Literary Festival. Their writing appears in *html.review*, *Gulf Coast*, and *The Offing*, among others. J is founder & curator of [NOMAD Readings](#) in Brooklyn and elsewhere. [www.jaysonpsmith.com](http://www.jaysonpsmith.com)

# The New Storytellers

A decorative dotted line in a light blue color that starts horizontally from the right side of the title and then turns 90 degrees downward to end at the top right corner of the slide.

Emcees and spoken word poets have been referred to in modern times as griots, owing to their role in the community of speaking truth to power and holding the stories of their community through the art of spoken word and rapping.

The New Storytellers is a celebration of hip-hop's orators: the emcees and spoken word poets. We regard young writers in *Word. Sound. Power. in the Classroom* in the same tradition as the West African griot. They are keepers of history, knowledge, and truth. They are masters of our ceremonies, who have the physical voice to articulate, project, promote, and ignite the jam, the crowd, and the community to action.

Mikal Amin Lee

*Education Manager,*

*Word. Sound. Power. Programming*



Teachers:  
Tameka Thompson  
Matt Williams

Teaching Artist:  
Marcus Smalls

# Boerum Hill School For International Studies

# Gabriella Dominguez

*Mom.*

Walking home after dark  
my mother worked hard  
after a light jog  
she works on her art  
no time for herself  
only focused on wealth  
worked like a machine from the day through the night  
when she's finally done  
sleep is never enough  
still focused on work  
she never stops until she drops

# Tamya Jones

Familiar

Similar

but completely different

Glances

Stares

Small talk

I have yet to change

I have yet to adapt

I feel like me

The same me

They don't know me

I don't know them

I don't know this space

They know this space

Is that what makes me new?

# Asha Locke

Shivers travel up my spine when  
I lay my hands on your  
Empty white canvas not yet  
Ruined by humanity  
The smell of Christmas lingers  
In the frosty winter air  
The smell of cold comforts me  
Like a warm blanket  
I see sledding at prospect park  
I see Santa's jolly smile  
I see my dad's disappointed jewish soul  
As we admire the greatness of Christmas  
Jingle bell rock playing in the background  
As snow signals the beginning of the holiday season  
10 days off freedom  
I can hear the sound of joy  
Scorching hot chocolate races its  
Way down my throat as I  
Inhale the beauty of the marshmallow  
My reward for enjoying the snow

# Heaven Burt

I feel like i'm lost and broken inside and out  
I feel like i don't have nobody on my side or team  
I feel everybody is after me...even my own family  
I feel like i'm not important  
I feel like i don't exist  
I feel like i'm lost and going into a deep dark hole  
I feel when people ask me if i'm okay...i feel like they really dont care  
I feel like i'm broken into little pieces  
I feel like i lost my mind  
I feel like no bodies cares  
I feel like im gone  
I feel like i'm lost and someone needs to find me

# Maggie Gottlieb

## *Onward*

Sunday night

6 people

100 seats

Colors flashing

My dad's laughter spreads across the room

My sister sits beside me encompassed in the story,

Eyes wide, reaching her hand into the popcorn bag

The dark envelopes us,

Focused on the big screen

With our phones turned off,

Nothing outside can reach

The movie ends

Watching the credits

My sister and I run around the empty space

The entire world is only this room

We walk out

And down the hall

My mom turns on her phone

So does my dad

Out the door

Under the street lamps trying to illuminate the all surrounding night

Mom stops

Her eyes fixed on her phone

We look up at the man on the ladder

As he takes down all the movie names and writes

"Closed"

Only 30 feet from school

And then I'm home

In a prison

Stuck in a white space

Nothing around me

Just lost in the blank

# Melissa Ramirez

*Untitled*

I love love  
but love is like a foreign concept  
because behind every “i love you”  
is a comment  
on something i should do  
or something i should change  
to make you love me more  
because my honesty is never enough  
because my authenticity is never enough  
but my insecurities are always too much  
because they’re enough to make me want to change  
to please you  
to be exactly what you want me to be  
because it’s bad enough  
that i would do anything to make you happy  
because i crave your love so badly  
because your attention is like oxygen  
and without you i can’t breathe  
without you my heart is cold  
and i no longer wish to be  
without your love

# Daliangeliz Perez

## *Silence*

The silence you gave me  
Was the cruelest thing this world has ever given me  
Deep down i wish we have never drifted apart  
I couldn't bear the fact that i had lost you  
I couldn't stop looking for you  
Day and night hoping i would see you again  
But i finally realized you were actually gone  
And the hope i once had for us was no longer there  
The last glance we gave each other showed that we were done  
With sending these mixed signs



# Milan Anderson

## *Writing Poetry*

I walked into the English classroom  
and suddenly there was an instant gloom  
We had to make some poetry  
Writing this poem feels like  
petting a porcupine the wrong way  
Since writing this kinda sucks  
That's the first half done  
but the rest has yet to begun.  
Nine, ten, eleven, twelve  
I wish this unit could be shelved  
I'm going to stop rhyming  
Just kidding, I was lying

# Armen Muradian

I want to be seen  
How shall I complete it  
When you are feeling dark  
Just like all the stars  
You wanna be ripped apart  
Spread all of your life  
Upon all the empty dark  
You look back and think  
How will this be seen  
Are you just trapped dreaming  
Now that you are free  
We will all reincarnate, freely

# Camille Charlet

## *Knife in the rust leaf*

There's a tightly bound pleasure  
tucked behind an oak leaf

And a rusty carving knife that cuts through  
its woven fabric cocoon

Maybe that knife will drop, sink through the  
earth and grow; let it make roots that  
squeeze between it's rough edges

Maybe it will then stay hidden forever in its comfort on the soil

Maybe it will then be able to understand the  
heart of the cocoon

and the bandages its curled itself into

# ZHANE BLACK WELL (LAYNI)

*The Path is Right*

I WALK ON THE TRAIL  
TO CHOOSE MY PATH OF FAITH  
AS THE TREES SCREAM LEAVES  
SWING AS THE SOUL FLOWS  
WAVES OF SOUND THE LIFE BITES TELLING  
ME TO DO WHAT'S RIGHT. CHOOSE A PATH TO DETERMINE  
THE LIFE THAT'S RIGHT I FIGHT THE  
LIGHT THAT BLINDS ME SHINES  
FROM UP ABOVE LIGHTING THE  
DARK THAT TRAPS ME FROM SIGHT  
MUMBLE AND GRUMBLE TO CHOOSE A  
PATH OF MY FAITH ONE LEADS TO THE RIGHT  
SHOWING THE PAIN OF BEING ALONE AT NIGHT WITH  
NO LIGHT LIGHT REMINDING ME OF MY PAST  
THAT DOESN'T SHINE BRIGHT.  
THE OTHER TO THE LEFT SHOWS  
THE WORLD AROUND ME BEING REBORN  
WHISPERS OF THE WIND TELLING ME TO CHOOSE

THE ONE I LEAN UPON I THINK OF  
THE ONE THAT IS UPON ME IS THE LEFT  
WIND BLOWS LEAVES IN TREES LIKE A TOON  
THAT ENDS SOON BLOOMING  
FLOWERS SURROUND ME TAKING ME TO A LIFE THAT ENDS  
RIGHTS BEING REBORN INTO A WORLD THAT  
SHINES BRIGHT AT NIGHT TELLING ME  
THE PATH IS RIGHT  
WHAT A GOOD FLIGHT DREAM TO BELIEVE  
TO TURN IN FOR THE NIGHT  
AND DO WHAT'S RIGHT.

# Maggie Gottlieb

## *Unfamiliar Faces*

Family faces unfamiliar

People long dead

Girls with dolls

Boys dressed strange

A man in an army uniform

All flat on the wall

A painting of family colorful yet unfinished

Dusty

Old

Blending colors

Faces undefinable

People I have never known

Watch me

Real

Three dimensional

I am unfamiliar too

# Aaron Owens

I remember it like it was yesterday, trees as green as money,  
the air is fresh as my kicks, And then I woke up

Woke up to the alarming voice of my mother telling me to log on  
to zoom, the thought of no sports, no award shows, not even the  
thought of seeing my cousins

The vibe of outside being the complete opposite to my dream,  
my home covered is mask of stress and anticipation that I can't  
break through

Will there ever be a way out?  
Only time will tell.

# Ava Tartour

## *The shame of my passion*

I used to feel passion deep within my soul,  
For something I valued and would never let go.

I adored the thrill of something unknown,  
And the vision of a future that could be my own.

But as time died, my attachment grew cold,  
The fireworks in my heart began to fold.

My dreams and ambitions fade,  
And I will never feel the same shade.

This notion of what I used to love,  
Had become a foreign memory that I have shoved.

My passion was forgotten, living in a void of nothing less.  
Yet the feeling of guilt for moving from this passed happiness.

But with this emptiness,  
Came an opportunity for a new beginningless.  
A spark of hope,  
To heal, forget and cope.

The shadow of shame weighs me down  
Should I be ashamed to say I have moved on now?

The shame of my passion.  
Lack of devotion.

# Munzir

This girl is now part of my world  
Like a parasite stuck on a dog  
And when she is feeling real cold  
Then I give her my coat like a gentleman  
And I close my eyes like a grizzly in hibernation  
Cause of day and night  
Cause of day and night  
Cause of day and night  
I will open my eyes to see her smiling  
Her smile shines the room like the sun rising  
Her laugh contagious like the flu  
And her eyes are mesmerizing  
And her eyes are diamonds they shine like the moon  
Or like laying in the middle of a flower field

Her Visible relief:

Death stopped right at her front door,  
She knew her time was up.  
She pleaded to me and my family,  
Don't be upset when i leave  
Celebrate me instead.

During her funeral, the aura of sadness filled the room.  
Cries were heard, from left, to right. I had sat in the middle seat,  
7 rows down  
From the exit of the church. I could just barely see her open  
casket, her hands  
Were laid across her chest, but ever so slightly, she looked  
peaceful. She looked relieved.



# Nevaeh Brownlee

*wind-song*

when i cut my hair i feel ten times lighter  
the knots of weight are lifted off my shoulders  
and discarded into the dirt  
dirt under my fingernails washes away with unnatural soaps  
rinsing away with water.  
my mom always says when she sees sunlight on the sea  
she thinks of me  
my name  
a fairy, a princess, a lion  
when i think of that little girl  
i see her climbing up the trunks of tree's  
weeping willows blowing in the wind  
wind-songs  
that's what the birds sing  
the music of the sky and above  
Skye, s-k-y-e that's my name  
it all comes back to me  
the air, the sky, the sea  
they all lead back to me.

# Egypt Star Lewis

*Ariel Skye Smith-Golub*

He was her first love  
Her first love had broke up with her  
She was heartbroken  
For weeks she cried  
One day she decided to get up  
And write about her feelings  
And This person was her first love  
She wrote about this person  
And how nobody gets her but this person  
She doesn't want to let go of this person  
In the song she includes  
"How am i supposed to let you go only like  
myself when i'm with you"  
Nobody gets her like this person does  
She has nothing else to do but write about her feelings  
Her name was SZA.

# Kayla Hall

Writing reminds me of math  
Math is about following rules  
Writing also has certain rules  
But they're encouraged not forced

I've always been a follower  
Sticking to what i know  
When I write, the words jump  
When I calculate numbers leave

I follow the steps  
Then get the correct answer  
You write freely,  
but you're still right

Math and writing taught me  
You can follow the rules  
And still be right  
But can also march to the beat of your own drum  
And still be right

# Maebth Barth

A good feminist loves men  
That's what they say  
A good feminist loves men  
Like a bird loves the wind,  
For without it,  
It cannot fly  
Do you know how it feels to be tethered to you?  
Do you know the rules like I do?  
The rules engraved in my head so long ago  
Yet everytime I wear short shorts  
They're chiseled in again  
I can imagine you  
Laughing as I read this  
Don't be sensitive  
Calm down  
Chill  
What will it take for you to see me  
Through my mother's eyes,  
My grandmother's eyes,  
My sister's eyes  
To be born with a hole  
Between my legs is

A blessing  
A reminder of the woman I am,  
The woman I came from  
You too, were born from the core of a woman  
The core you've nicknamed  
Cunt  
Whore  
Slut  
Lazy bitch  
And you ask why we play  
Hard to get  
Always a game for you  
Always a hunt for us

# Teyanna Crump

i wanna cry

i do

but i can't

there's too much to do

i have to be strong

for you

i love you mom

and i miss you too

it's been a year

but i'm strong

living my life for you

# Tyler Williams

*The Worlds Visions*

We all have a set of ideas  
That we are a part of  
A prison now called a domain  
Our thoughts fly high if it were a plane  
Releasing our minds once bound by chains  
We all have a set of ideas  
That all of us might follow  
We all roam our own path  
With obstacles that can be complicated like math  
And if we fail we might cause wrath  
We all have a set of ideas  
WE WILL ALL BE UNIFIED AS ONE

# Luke Feln

*Loading File...100%*

*Personal Computation.txt*

Isn't it crazy how computation evolves  
it makes the cogs whirl and amplifies curiosity  
I need Intel I need answers, I need it all,  
size of a thumbnail surely my holy grail  
energy flows, my display glows.  
pixel to pixel, eye to brain, brain to hand,  
Just to load Chrome right at home.  
Late night gaming with the pals building a grand hall.  
All thanks to the power of computation

> |

# Ferdinand Connolly

## *The Chase*

On the road I look for myself  
Looking back I see nothing but despair  
But I push onward hoping for a better future  
It seemed like my soul was dead and gone  
I find nothing but empty fog  
Lost I don't see where to turn  
But it's alright  
I will continue the fight  
Feelin like a stranger to myself  
I find the road again  
Following blindly with trust  
I soon leave the fog  
On the road I look for myself



# Blaise Beky-Campbell

## *The Beautiful Game*

We laugh and cry upon the fields of green  
Players putting all of their emotions on display  
The victors or the victims will be seen  
The world sings one anthem for a day  
Winning with feet and the heart  
For the gold, everyone must pray  
A victory is only available through the art  
Everyone ready for the trophy to be claimed  
We will do anything for the beautiful game

# Abishai Scott

*S3lf Luv*

No such thing as a life that's better than yours  
No such thing as a life that's better than yours  
No such thing as a life that's better than yours  
No such thing, no such thing  
Even with that reminder, her self esteem is still low,  
she feels weak because she seems like she  
doesn't get much love, then says to herself  
"I asked for strength from the Lord up above"  
Time passes by and her self esteem goes up and is secure  
because you ain't never gon' be happy 'til you love yours

# Kieran Lesman

*Nul*

The apartment is trashed, got deserted like that  
Plaster is a baseball, skull hits it like a bat  
Prolong the crash, won't feel stat  
Black on black offers no contrast  
Down goes the very last  
Sky shatters, made of glass, half-mast  
Doorframe steadies fast  
Plummet quicker, down in red  
Blood thicker, down the red  
Crawl to bed  
Blown through a window crack, bathe in grey  
Glassy eyes, bathe in grey  
Trace around, passed a blade  
Searching for the light, and a fix: 100 proof, crucifix.

Teacher:  
Deirdre Deloatch

Teaching Artist:  
JENNIFER CENDAÑA ARMAS

# Cultural Academy of Art & Science

# Vinny Hernandez

## *I Am A King*

I am a king of chess and books  
I flip a new page and move my rook  
I wonder if reading in life is key  
Well, I've been taught this forever so it surely must be  
I hear the sound of flipping pages  
I visualize the things I read  
I see the words come into light  
It looks majestic, yes indeed  
I want my future bright as day  
I want an impact that makes a sting  
I treasure my brain and keep it guarded  
Like the goal of chess is to guard the king  
I am a king of chess and books

I pretend I'm Bobby Fischer  
I wish to be as good  
If I keep practicing for years  
I really think I could  
I feel that books and chess are great  
I admire them with a passion  
They're the things that keep me going

When I need a box of napkins  
I touch the wooden board  
I feel the wooden pieces  
I read a book with much delight  
And then I write my thesis  
I worry about my future  
I need to focus on the present so I can sail much smoother  
I cry when a character dies  
If they meant a lot to me  
Even in a book I like sometimes  
It's just a shock to me  
I am a king of chess and books

Vinny Hernandez

I understand that some feel reading isn't great  
But it's a darn good way to win in life and declare checkmate  
I say to give it a try  
Reading is really fun  
You might pick up a book one day  
And say, "This is the one."  
I dream of helping people  
I dream of getting better  
I try to constantly improve  
Through every type of weather  
I hope I hit the mark with this  
I hope you think this through  
My only mission throughout this poem  
Is for me to inspire you

I am a king of chess and books

# Nicholas McKenzie

## *ASTROLIA*

I am Astrolic, the greatest of its kind  
I wonder if people still believe in the Astrolic grind  
I hear stardust beam through the sky  
As I see the cosmic wind consume the eye  
I want what I want when I want it  
And, with that, I state that I'm Astrolic

I like to pretend that Garlarnic doesn't exist  
Even though I feel the same radiant mist hit my wrist  
Every time I skim the comics of the comical comet  
I worry over the fact that Astrolia will soon crumble and dissolve  
into nothing but ash  
I begin to break down and cry, truly embracing the soon-to-be  
demise of my planet  
Suddenly a voice echoes in my mind  
A voice that guarantees the safety of my planet in exchange for a soul  
I understand what I must do

I say out loud to whoever was speaking that I am ready to  
endure whatever is thrown at me  
I dream about the aftermath,  
still clinging to what little hope I have left  
As I try to gather up my remaining courage,  
courage that can lead to a new path  
I can only hope that whatever is waiting for me on the other side  
doesn't face my wrath  
Even though I know I won't make it out of here alive  
I can always state that  
I am... I...

# Ashanti Davison

*I Am*

I am dedicated and talented  
I wonder what people think of me  
I hear one bad thing after another about me  
I see who really rides for me  
I feel lost in the sauce and don't know what to do  
I want people to know that  
I am dedicated and talented

I pretend to be ok when I'm really not  
I feel broken but I keep trying to be ko  
I touch my heart to put it back in place  
I worry if I'll make it through the day  
I cry knowing I'm all alone  
I am dedicated and talented  
I understand you don't get me but I promise you  
I like being different  
I say, "I love you" sometimes just so I can hear it back  
I dream of expressing myself and being happy again  
I try to fight but it's just too much  
I hope you hear my truth  
I am who I am, dedicated and talented



# Odane Brown

## *Our Wish*

Held captive for many years  
Possessions of only hopes and tears  
Beaten and put to work  
As pale demons upon steeds lurk  
Freedom gained from war  
We thought we had gained but later lost more  
A new grotesque creature was born  
Two different colored worlds were its form  
One of lavish living  
Sustenance, upbringing  
The other of dirt and grime  
Where drinking from the wrong fountain was enough for you to  
do time  
Shaded knights banded to slay the white dragon of hate  
Our mightiest allies were met with bullets to seal their fate  
Nothing left but his wisdom and each other  
We combined as one mighty ship, no longer a white man's fodder

To this day we fight, we love, we learn  
But still our kind are lynched and burned  
We only wish to be loved in return

# Keira Sylvester

## *Millions Of Questions*

What do I do if I think about you?

When I'm in a small black car with tinted windows?

Or hear a voice like a tighter?

What if I made your favorite meal (savory, no dessert)?

And ate it in your favorite plush brown recliner?

What would happen then?

What if I wore your big sports shirt?

Especially the one ones with your pink calming scent?

Would you come back?

What if all I really wanted was to see you again?

Experience life with you again?

See your bushy eyebrows again?

Be hand in hand close together again?

Would you stay with me this time?

I don't wanna stop asking questions

# Oshawn Beckford

## *Unite*

We are one nation! we should unite!  
Put a stop to intoxicated segregation  
Then there would be no need to fight  
Conflict only builds pure frustration  
Is it so hard to love and not hate?  
This is just ignorance  
Don't you see the situation in each state?  
A state of imbalance  
The police brutality, the violence  
They deny proper education, the right to vote  
Whenever we speak, you want us to be silenced  
Please take note  
We only want peace  
We don't want to be killed just by walking down the street

# Sanaa Coles

2:53

what do you do when your bed becomes a prison?  
when it's meant to be a rest place but it isn't?  
i find it kinda comical  
hoping to find myself somewhere tropical  
looking for an escape from all the things messing with my  
psychological  
how does one escape from oneself?  
once upon a time, I thought I'd have it all  
today i can barely recall  
the last time i stood tall  
now i just spend my days staring at the wall  
it is the only way i can continue concealing  
the fact that i'm unreeling  
so they don't begin peeling  
at my layers and find truth that's so unappealing  
though now i'm left to wonder  
  
what is a human without feeling?

# Jarrel Olive

## *Colonization*

Through the lands that were  
Once ours we walked  
Looking over at the white men  
With their guns cocked  
Our path to freedom was blocked  
And every day the things we  
Felt passion for was mocked

Chaos takes over  
The world starts to burn  
The land we once knew  
Was only born to be scorned  
Our hearts were taken  
Broken and shaken  
I wish for a world where we can talk  
No matter where are, the white man stalks

# Elie Mondelus

## *Infinite Cycle*

If only we had time  
The pain would've been over  
I say that I'm fine  
But I honestly need closure

This infinite cycle where I feel stuck  
Is there even a thing called love  
Each part of my heart these demons pluck  
Bad thing my broken heart longs to be in a pair like turtle doves

They treat my heart like a rental  
I keep tripping over my lace  
Fix my teeth with some floss dental  
May that never again be the case

It's a cold world  
I might drown  
But I will climb to the top  
And receive my crown

# Elijah Gumbs

## *Caged Being*

I've been locked up my whole life  
Why must they keep me away  
Community filled with strife  
Why disagree when color doesn't matter anyway

Why must they judge my skin  
Nobody is perfect in this life of sin  
Color doesn't matter  
Actions define who I am within

Black and white need to come together  
We are stronger this way and can withstand any weather  
Stop ten fighting and relieve the pressure  
Blacks were victims and sometimes turn to aggressors

Like MLK we need to hold hands  
We are all equal on this sacred land  
Come together come together  
That is the plan

# Wemzley Narcisse

## *Breathe*

Breathing is life  
Letting it in  
Letting it go  
When it's your last  
You will never know  
Breathing is hard  
When you have a cough  
But when you are fine  
Breathing is soft

Breathing makes us  
A victim of theft  
Let too much out  
You have none left

Breath can be lost  
When caught up in fear  
So treasure each breath  
With those who are dear

Take a deep breath  
Listen to your heart  
It is again time  
For your perfect start



# Asharah McNeill

*From Baby To Designer*

I danced out the womb  
On a rainy day in September  
Like a chick flick  
Who wanted to dance in the rain

I grew into an adolescent  
Who learned how to take  
Responsibility from a long lost angel  
I decided I wanted to be an interior designer

Self-satisfaction and optimism  
I hold in my should  
They give me the power to fight  
Just like Muhammad Ali

I head into a new world  
And see it as a tricky society  
I will prosper like a preacher with a congregation  
This is my life story

Teacher:  
Jeff Nelson  
3rd period

Teaching Artist:  
Katie Kay Chelena

# Cultural Academy of Art & Science

# Carl Monestime

Age 14

## *Time*

I am grateful for lots of things  
Like my mom's cooking  
Like games and friends or even music.

But I'm most grateful for all the time I have.

Maybe it was a bad choice,  
A terminal disease or maybe  
They caught something later in life.

Maybe cancer or another illness.

Not everyone has a lot of time left.

But just like me they can spend the rest of their life  
Having fun with friends and family.

# Neveah O'Connor

Age 15

*i fear but i will*

I fear the world ending and not getting out there much  
I fear losing my family  
I fear losing my friends  
I fear dying alone  
I fear the world ending and not getting out there much  
I fear losing myself  
I fear not being successful, not getting my dream job:  
Physical therapy- that will be part of my future  
I fear the world ending and not getting out there much  
But let's switch gears, lets not focus on the bad  
I know I will succeed  
I will get up and get out-  
Get out of gun violence  
My brothers and sisters dying from being  
In the wrong place at the wrong time-  
Into a world with no shackles  
No racism  
No one hates anyone  
Not because of their beautiful melanated skin  
Or their beliefs

Or not wanting to do something  
A world where we are finally free  
I will experience that world and all its beauty  
From the land to the ocean to the hectic nights that will be my life  
Going out to a party and coming home to crackheads going  
"Hey lil mama."  
Or the old crazy women staring me down as I cross into adulthood  
I will do the daring and the unexpected  
Like travel all over the world and meet new people  
Even with my fear of flying.  
I know I will succeed.  
That will be my future!  
How about yours?

# Kayia Requena

Age 18

*My love for you*

My love for you is too strong.  
It takes away my power and leaves me unknown  
Like a math problem.  
Why does love cause so much pain?  
It feels like getting my first covid injection.  
I know it's unpredictable but somehow  
I wish I could predict it  
Like the weather man predicts the weather.  
Love is an illusion that gets in your head,  
Leaves you confused and makes you doubt yourself  
Like your coach doubted you.  
Love is too powerful.  
No human should have that much power.  
Love is a poison  
Ready to be activated in your heart.

# Adrian Rangel Sosa

Age 14

## *Leveling Up*

I come from parents who wanted more for me.  
They came to this nation with dreams and ambition.  
I was a hyperactive child, curious about the world.  
So hyperactive and full of energy, I made my aunt cry.  
So curious and quick-learning that my pre-K my actions were noticed.  
So care-free and worry-free that now I wonder what it feels like.  
I wish I was less anxious than I am now but I am glad for  
the experience.  
I am glad for all the people, places, and progress I've seen.  
Despite what I want from the past, I'm glad for the progress I've made.

# Sharilys Williams

Age 15

## *My family's hope and struggle*

I come from struggle and hope  
I come from a mother and father who wanted the best for me  
I come from the pain my mother overcame to have me  
When, because of my problems,  
the doctor had to cut me out of her  
I come from a family where others may not have had the same  
chance as me  
I come from the love my family made sure I had  
I come from the struggle of a family that wanted to make sure  
I had everything that I needed  
I come from a family where very few got to go to college  
And even fewer graduated  
I come from the hope my family had that- unlike them-  
I would do amazing things  
That I could have a job I love  
And I'm able to live happy  
Without the struggle my family had  
I come from a family that wanted me to be able to become  
A cook, a teacher, a writer, anything I wanted  
As long as it made me happy

I come from a family I am proud of  
Because they still tried the best for me  
Even in all the struggle  
My family still had hope

# Skydashia

Age 15

*My neighborhood*

While I share my thoughts  
As the sun goes down  
And the stars  
And moon  
Hit the sky,  
I talk to the moon  
And the little people in the sky  
Asking them  
Do you see how scary  
My neighborhood is?  
And the moon hits the sky  
The screams  
The shouts  
And the bright street light



# Jordan Promesse

Age 17

*Dear Future Self*

Don't be afraid of the unknown  
Right now, just focus on what's known  
Use your knowledge as a guide  
So that it can help you strive  
I wish I could see my future manifestation  
But what fun would that be? My future self is temptation  
Because I know what's my reality  
So don't be afraid of the unknown  
You're no longer on your own.

# Jordan Promesse

Age 17

## *Thank You Life*

I'm thankful for birth, family, friends

I'm thankful for this Earth,

I'm thankful for growth and the many things

I've seen and for still being a teen.

I'm thankful for food, emotions, and different moods

I'm thankful for my originality and all the people I've met

You have life so why be upset?

Make decisions you won't regret.

# Carleon Brown

Age 14

*In the future I hope*

I hope I can buy my mom a house

I hope I accomplish my goals

I hope the best for my family

I wish to be 6'1

I wish to change lives

I wish for the rich to end world hunger

I will become a chef with my own restaurant

I will not have kids

I won't die alone.

# Carleon Brown

Age 14

*I come from Canarsie*

I come from Arizona.

I come from basketball.

I come from sugary high fructose corn syrup drinks.

I come from watching good defenders hoop.

I come from math.

I come from Roblox & Minecraft.

I come from multiplication.

I come from Anime & South Park.

I come from my surroundings!

# Janelle Julius

Age 15

*Everything will take time*

Time is something that can go fast or slow

Time is something we all value, we need time

Time is something we have and can't stop

Time is important to everyone, everything

Time can be dark like the night or good like the light

No matter how good or bad, quick or slow,

Valuable or not valuable,

We can't stop time.

We can't change it

But you can enjoy it while it lasts

Because time won't last forever.

Time is life.

# Anu Kibauu

## *Unforgiven*

Unforgiven for these trials  
I come from a broken place  
A place where I was enforced to call home  
Seeing people's faces  
Many wouldn't leave me alone  
Too afraid of the past  
So I close my internal door  
And I leave it alone.  
Cause bygones are bygones  
But I know  
That if they get in my head  
I will be gone.

# Maria Nelly Arevalo Gooda

*The spirit in my room*

A future, something you can't see  
The story of your dreams  
I believe in a dream of yours is the key  
"A silly little thing," you say, but what I see is...  
Wish. A wish.  
Something that can be  
A better place for you and me.  
"Look up! The stars are out!"  
My child... the future is for you...  
For now, just dream, dream in tomorrow.  
Goodnight, little one... dream.

Our kingdom, our home, our memory  
By Maria Nelly Arevalo Gooda

"We'll be back," they said. "Just call."

Why? Why did you leave me...  
You said you'd come back but you didn't.

A family of six in a new land  
New things left and right.

Homeland down South, but someday  
Three will leave...  
One will move into a new world  
And two will be together until the youngest  
Leaves the nest

And then she will be all alone  
Until the day her four children  
Come back for a hug.

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# Jarrood Jones

Age 14

## *Dream World*

I want a world where dreams soar  
I want a world where people have chances  
I want a world where dreams fly high  
I want a world where everyone can be different  
I want a world without limits and obstacles  
I want a world with endless possibilities  
I want a world where everyone has bright futures  
I want a world where people can be creative  
I want this world to be where people can express themselves

# Jarrood Jones

Age 14

## *Hopes for my Future*

In the future, I hope to rise up  
I hope my dreams reach the sky  
That that these dreams soar high

In the future, I hope to not fall  
I hope to stand up tall

I hope my dreams don't go to waste  
I can't wait for what the future has to taste  
I know that whatever in the future I face,  
I know that I will be great

# Ki-mora Dawson

Age 15

*In the future, I hope/fear/will...*

The hope is to live the best way possible  
For the remaining years to come  
With a loved one and success  
Living off grid, and enjoying our lives  
Like kids at the park.

The future awaits me  
And I'm the only one that can make it  
It's only up to me  
In the matter of time  
And I have to make the best of it.

I will be successful  
I will be great  
I will be, at last, healthy and happy.

In the future, not only will I be at peace,  
I'll be living my best life.

# Ki-mora Dawson

Age 15

## *My Neighborhood*

Where you hear motoring in the muffled distance  
The cars beeping in the morning  
to get to their destination that we call work.  
This is my neighborhood.

Where the birds choir and the mothers come with the feed  
In the morning, and me sitting on my bed  
Preparing myself for the day  
And my loved sister and mom shuffling around  
To go out in the morning.

Already stopping by the store with the best chicken empanadas  
The best way to start my day.  
What a crowded bus! Like fish schools, all together in one space.

This is my neighborhood.

Teacher:  
Jeff Nelson  
5th period

Teaching Artist:  
Katie Kay Chelena

# Cultural Academy of Art & Science

# Skydashia

Age 15

*My neighborhood*

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Teacher:  
Callan McDermott  
4th period

Teaching Artist:  
Katie Kay Chelena

# Cultural Academy of Art & Science

# Andrew Mahfood

Age 17

*How I dream*

I dream I dream I dream

I dream of a language that truly conveys our feelings and thoughts

That it is heard worldwide and truly conveys the thoughts of the weak

I dream I dream I dream

I dream to be truly heard and understood

Like how you can lock eyes with a friend

With no words that need to be said

To not ever be misunderstood

Like a mother when they see

their child and first enter motherhood

Oh how I dream I dream I dream

# Alyssa Grant

Age 18

*Brooklyn, NY*

I come from...

If I had to be specific,

I would say Brooklyn, NY.

I come from a strong home

A home where vulnerability

Is seen as weakness.

A home where the door is always closed,

I come from a place where if it was said in the house,

It stays in the house (which only applies to the kids)

I come from a place where everybody knows your secrets

I come from a place...

I don't know.

But if I had to be specific,

I come from Brooklyn, NY.

# Dre Louison

Age 17

*I'm Here*

I'm here to live, I'm here to stay  
I'm here to express what's wrong or right.

I come from a ghetto neighborhood  
Where there is a lot of gun influence,  
Gang violence. I'm here  
To get out of this ghetto community.

I'm here to love, I'm here to hate  
I'm here to put food on my dinner plate.  
I said "I'm here to stay" but everyone says  
They're going to leave someday.

# Emmanuel Brummell

Age 18

*I lived here*

The place where none goes  
but many gets lost,  
we come from the same place.  
Why should we speak  
when the trees and birds all around  
say it for us.

# Ethan Rambarran

Age 17

*I come from*

Where I come from, the sun shines bright  
And the land is lush and green.  
It's a place of beauty and delight,  
A paradise you've never seen.  
It's a land of rivers, mountains, and sea  
Where nature reigns supreme.  
The air is filled with sweet melody  
And the people are warm and serene.



# Ryan Solomon

Age 17

*I come from*

I come from a small country in South America  
I come from the land of many waters and green trees  
I come from the country, where I experience all of life  
I come from a small village where everyone knows each other  
like they're related  
Even though my family wasn't all that wealthy,  
I learned one thing:  
That growing up in the countryside is  
one thing anyone can rely on  
Adventure and nature are the things to do  
when you wanna have fun.

# Keyon F

Age 17

## *Fully Focused*

In the future, I aspire to be something great.  
My greatness will revolve around music.  
If not an engineer, an artist.

I love music. Music has always  
been around me my whole entire life.

I listen every day. I listen  
no matter my mood.

If I'm sad, music uplifts me.  
I want to be there for music  
As much as its been there for me.

My end goal is to sell out  
and headline arenas of thousands.

I'll leave a positive impact  
for the generation behind me.

# Jordan Promesse

Age 17

*In the Future*

In the future, I will still be myself  
Only with a sustainable amount of wealth,  
Thriving to attain more trophies on the shelf  
While also maintaining my health.

In the future, I hope I become idolized  
Not like the presidents,  
But like from the bible  
Who makes good things evident.

In the future, I fear being the same,  
Even with the fame,  
But to be another person takes time.

# Jordan Promesse

Age 17

*Of all the things*

I'm thankful for family

And the friends that stay true.

I'm thankful for the sanity

That sticks us together like glue.

I'm grateful for being free

And able to make great decisions.

I'm grateful for the vision to see

The outcomes of my precision.

I'm thankful for the lord

For he is my only religion.

# Wood-by Paulemont

Age 16

*My future*

In my future, I hope to be strong

I hope my fear of failure won't hold me down.

I fear that I won't be ready for what's to come.

I hope to stay true to myself.

I fear I'll be like the rest,

Watching my life pass by

And watching other people succeed

Like I can't do the same.

I wish to win.

# Wood-by Paulemont

Age 16

*Proud*

I'm proud to be alive

I'm happy that I survived

My family is my drive

They help sustain my life

They keep me sane

They keep me right

I'm proud of what I came from

I'm proud of what I am

# Makayla Moise

Age 17

*I come from*

I come from coco tea, bake, and saltfish.

I come from talented and loving family members.

I come from late night walks and long morning talks.

I come from church services that start early and end late.

I come from friends that feel like family.

I come from warm hugs and tears.

I come from a line of immigrants that work hard to make a living.

I am home.

# Alexander Austin

Age 18

## *Peaceful World*

I hope the world gets better.

I hope people stop killing children.

They have lives too.

I think children should live to the fullest.

They shouldn't have to worry about dying early.

They should go outside and be able to play  
without their parents worrying.

I hope gun violence stops

because people kill each other for stupid reasons.

We need to make the world better. Peaceful.



# Annisabelle Jerome

Age 17

*I come from*

I come from a beautiful island  
“Pearl of the island” was its name  
In the soul of its’ descendents, it is still a beautiful pearl.

Silk and ribbons clouding the sky  
Coastline and beaches,  
Black, walking, skipping, good honest people  
Giving a hand.

Beauty of my country dancing with  
Rainbows  
Colors  
Pastel  
Different shades  
To please the heavens.

Midnight blue sky  
Shimmering lights  
Stars shining  
Brightly upon the moon

Happiness, sadness,  
And sorrow  
Hoping to see their loved ones soon  
I can’t wait to breathe your air once again.

Teacher:  
Mrs. Anderson

Teaching Artists:  
Gideon Bautista

# High School for Innovations in Advertising and Media

# Elon Morrop

## *Monopoly*

They stole my money in the game  
monopoly. Niggas stole my shit and  
raided my ass like they were digging  
for gold. The niggas stole that shit and  
ate it in front of my face like some  
fucking hooligans. Don't worry as I'll make sure  
to chop off and burn  
their manhood with my jaws of justice

# Jenyah James

Age 17

*Speak My Mind*

“Speak up

Stand up

Stand up for your rights”

Say what comes to mind

Because no one has all the time

Don't regret not saying

What just make you shine.

# Jenyah James

Age 17

*Think Straight | Memories*

Mind clear

Eyes stare

I am awake

Cause I can think straight

Memories flow

# Nick Jordan

## *Memories*

Snowboarding  
with my friends every winter. Playing  
video games after coming  
inside from the cold. Drinking  
hot chocolate by the fire. Spending  
time with family on christmas eve.

# Sebastian Damas

Age 17

*Speak My Mind*

Sleep, Darkness, rest, impress, lies & truth, centuries.

Power

Strength

Belief

Grateful

Never give up

Wake up to reality

Time

Lessons

Grow

Learn from it

Fake it 'til u make it!

Manhood

Empty head

Sun

Clouds

Plane

Moon

Start

Howl

Beauty

|Skin

Smile

Lips

Feeling

Emotionless

Heartbeat

Connection

Illusion

Stress

Change

Nothing

Failures

Progress

Success

Better

Stronger

Tough

# Sebastian Damas

Age 17

*Why is it important to improve?*

Most of the time people take their responsibilities after having failures or after something really bad happened. The anger, the frustration, the disappointment or the sadness caused by previous bad events, will bring the motivation for some.

Working out,  
better at a sport,  
better at writing essays,  
better at work, better at school,  
better at being a parent, being better  
at anything & everything, these thoughts  
are mostly caused  
by motivation.



# Jawaun Zwiefach

*Something*

I have to write something?

# Emmanuel James

Age 17

*i speak my mind*

i speak my mind on how playboi  
carti is the goat because he is  
soooo inspirational if he has  
100 fans im one of them if  
he has 1 fan i am  
one of them if he has 0  
fan then that means that im  
dead if the world is against  
carti im against the world

# Mohamed Ghaleb

*Speak your mind*

Speak your mind. You have the  
right. Freedom is yours take it  
by force. live your life. life is yours.  
freedom must be free your mind is  
your happy times but also bad times  
speak your mind its yours for life.  
dont stop till your mind is free.  
life is a test life might not let  
you rest move on for the truth  
is in front of you stay on your  
path success is your goa.  
your people are who you are  
you are your people I AM  
arab from south yemen  
learn lots from my people  
I know who I AM dont  
forget who you are I  
started from northern I made  
it something travel the world  
see the peace for thats the truth.

# Mohamed Ghaleb

*yemen/gold*

gold the most precious to me  
it is who i am gold  
has the potential to be the  
greatest thing in this world  
but the corruption has  
made it worthless gold is  
beautiful it is the truth

but the truth has 2 sides  
gold has a side of unity  
and love while one side  
have hatred and evil gold  
to me is a memory of love  
and connection with the world  
but gold now is changing for  
the worse I hope that change  
for change is necessary for growth.

I fight for whats  
right I hate the evil  
that fights will not stop till  
gold reach a place of true

# Clyde Steloi

*Money and family*

Money and family, well

Your family financial status

Plays a big part in

Determining your mindset and lifestyle

If you grew up rich, you lend.

# Clyde Steloi

*The Best Season*

is easily  
spring because of the greenery  
and it's not super hot like summer  
and not cold like autumn  
and freezing cold like the  
winter, in spring it rains a lot

# Julius Jeffers

Age 17

*I remember a time*

when Jenyah was  
annoying me, The most annoying  
person in the world doing what  
she does best

# Damitrius Stokes

Age 17

*Sleeping*

Sleeping

It isn't my thing  
but that warmth,  
sweet sweet warmth



# Damitrius Stokes

Age 17

## *Monopoly*

So  
I get aggressive and racist  
when I play  
monopoly with my friends,  
especially  
when they start taking  
my stuff. I just can't take it,  
it's very annoying.

It also comes out  
playing  
call of duty,  
especially  
with people doing bad,  
Just being annoying,  
using  
shotguns and stuff  
like that.  
Yeah.

The lobbies are TERRIBLE sometimes  
It just gets very violent and  
I've almost been BANNED

On multiple streaming platforms because of how  
my aggression takes over sometimes  
And it's the funniest thing ever  
But like it shouldn't happen  
But it does

I definitely don't want this to get out  
Because if it does I will definitely  
Get fired or something like that  
I'll be seen as a bad person  
Especially for how I talk in Call of Duty.

Not, Not very much of a good person when it comes to video  
games

A terrible person when it comes to gun games.

# Kareem Coley

## *Ups and Downs*

I love my money,  
Money is the reason  
I go everyday,  
Money has been there for me all my life  
Through the ups and downs  
And when I have a big frown.  
Money, my best friend,  
till the very end.

# Rahmel Solter

Age 18

*Speak your mind*

Speak your mind.  
In 2023 I will push  
All distractions aside  
To achieve success  
in anything I do. I will  
Know nothing but success,  
I will succeed,  
I will succeed,  
I will succeed.

# Rahmel Solter

Age 18

*Doesn't Matter How Dark*

Doesn't matter how dark it gets,  
The sun will always come out again  
And let the sun be a reminder to you  
That all negative feelings and emotions  
Shall pass.

# Dylan

*Speak My Mind*

I'm really bored in school  
And I hate waking up early  
To come here.

# Precious Ekeh

*One Day at a Time*

One day at a time  
On the hustle and grind  
Time is shy

The world is mine  
People see the glory  
But don't know the story

But they will in the end  
Of time.

# Ethan

Age 17

## *Collection*

It's been there with me my entire life. And I will never stop loving it.

The cause of my love for my collection is the great memories it gave me, or the Friends that I know from having a liking with it.

Teacher:  
Mrs. Anderson

Teaching Artist:  
Jayson P. Smith

# High School for Innovations in Advertising and Media



# Anissa Fennell

Eat or be eaten

We are a living food chain

Producers come first

# Aamir Stuart

There's seven seasons  
Each a reason to welcome  
Change and sympathy

Times are changing soon  
August July and June  
Bring sun and fun

# Malaak Saleh

It's very sunny  
The breeze makes me feel lovely  
When I feel runny

I adore music  
Taylor Swift is my favorite  
When I listen I smile

Life is your story  
Live it with lots of glory  
Or you'll be sorry

# Jade Hendricks

Mother Tree

Trees are our existence  
We are killing them, save us  
We must save the earth

Oxygen

Death to our breathing  
Selfish humans not caring  
living is a cast

Windy Childhood

Water breeze with me  
Nostalgia in me  
I, finally free

Teacher:  
Nilaab Daftani

Teaching Artist:  
Jeesun Choi

# High School for Innovations in Advertising and Media

# Asiyah Thompson

9th Grade

## *My Griot*

My grandmother is my griot.  
She is tall, about 5 '11  
and loves to wear plaid sweaters  
with jeans and her favorite boots.  
She wears glasses and has curly short hair  
salt and pepper color.  
She has two dogs Zane and Bella and  
she is always reading post on Facebook so she  
usually has a focused face.  
She has her glasses below her eyes with  
her chin down  
and biting her lip. Unfortunately this habit which has been  
passed down from her to my  
all the way to me.  
She is always sitting in the living room  
in her armchair  
facing the TV playing  
Bruce Almighty but no one is really watching it.  
It's just for white noise.

When I walk in the room in her focus range  
she turns her full focus to me.  
When I walk over  
I see Morgan Freeman playing God.  
I remember it's so weird that  
I am watching someone who has played such a great role who  
has actually talked to my grandmother.  
I am curious so  
I ask her about the time  
She went to the movies with Morgan Freeman's daughter.  
Of course I prepare myself for yet another one of her  
great stories she  
describes the day as as if it happened yesterday.  
She describes it with  
excitement she felt.  
She nods as confirmation to the awe  
on my face and continues on about where he lived  
which was surprisingly right near her.

# Nakayla Charles

9th Grade

## *The Running Girl*

My griot is a black african american  
She is young and funny  
15-year-old girl who wears glasses  
loves running around my head  
telling a story over and over.  
She's kind  
respectful  
and funny.  
She's had bad eyesight since 4th grade.  
She makes me dizzy by running up and down in my mind with  
her story.  
She says this story over and over with joy  
because she's proud of it.

Everybody knows that am a creative person  
But I don't like to draw very much.  
I went through a lot but  
not so much.  
I have things I'm afraid of  
and things I can overpower.  
I am quiet and loud person at the same time.  
I like sleeping  
Movies  
Anime  
And talking to people close to me in my head.

Nothing makes me normal  
Everyone is different  
In their own ways.  
Like the way I look  
the way I talk  
the way I present myself.  
I am special because of it.  
Nobody is the same.

**CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE**

## Nakayla Charles

My power comes from my soul.  
My soul is unique.  
Different from others  
And that makes me have a lot of powers to do things  
Like talk to people, communicate with others  
in different ways than just talking  
My power help me  
with hardship  
'cause I know don't have to be like everyone else  
My power help me  
with the way I help people.  
I know my soul is pure.  
I will still help someone even though they did me dirty.  
But it depends on how dirty!  
My soul is pure and clean  
that's my power.

My room helps me relax.  
I go there to recharge.  
I sleep there  
watch my movies and anime there.  
My room is a safe place  
for me to think  
about me  
what makes me happy

what's good for my health.  
My room is white  
and sometimes messy  
just like my mind.  
So it helps me feel like am in my mind  
My room is everything

I see myself in the future as a successful women  
Why?  
'Cause I'm accomplishing everything I want right now  
keeping my mind straight.  
I want to be a coder.  
I want to major in computer science  
I have big dreams for myself  
but it's hard to accomplish.  
I'll try my best.  
'Cause I want a lot of things for me in the future



# Miguel Dume

9th Grade

## *My Mother*

My Mother

Is a light skinned Dominican woman

Who is 5'0 and usually wears a bun

She lies down on her bed watch her show

She stops the show and tell me a story

Tells me of when i was a little boy

We were at the park

She had bought me lots of toys

But this guy was selling bubble guns

I always wanted one

I begged her for it

But she wanted to go home

She said no

Since she already bought me lots of toys

But I didn't understand

So I decided to throw a fit

Threw myself to the ground crying and screaming

We went back home

That's the only time my Mother has hit me

If I was her I would too.

# Melvin Louissaint

9th Grade

*Demetrius Bartholomew James The Second*

Demetrius Bartholomew James the Second  
came from the trenches of New York  
and grew up trying to make it out the hood.  
Growing up, Bartholomew made music which was so bad  
that made him more involved in the hood.  
It was so bad that they had to kick him out.  
Later in his life,  
he meets me where he learns to become a comedian.  
He thought he made money being a comedian  
but it was because everyone thought he was homeless.  
I then told him that he was my son  
He quit being a comedian and found a new job.

# Isaac Germain (aka G-Man)

9th Grade

## *Demetrius Football Compass Game*

Demetrius Bartholomew James the Third Junior looks like a Tall Black African American Male with a beard and no wrinkles on his face. He looks very excited to tell me the story about his past. He took me to a football field and suddenly Demetrius Bartholomew James the Third started sweating. Demetrius Bartholomew James the Third started to speak about how he was on the same football field in high school and how he was destroying the opponents in the finals. A large section of students was cheering and the other half was booing at him. Demetrius Bartholomew James the Third won the game in the end and

Demetrius Bartholomew James the Third went to a restaurant with his team to celebrate his victory against the Atomic Bombs. I say to Demetrius Bartholomew James the Third Junior congratulations. What did it feel like to win the game and be the MVP?

# Carl Sudney

9th Grade

*Save by the Christ*

She told me the story  
About the earthquake  
Earthquake that destroy the neighborhood  
Shocking  
My mom said I was almost killed  
But I survived  
My neighborhood was completely destroyed  
And so was the country  
My mom was shocked  
I can tell because she looked surprised  
I asked more about the story  
I found out how I was almost killed  
I was shocked to figure out  
That I was stuck in the bathroom  
My mom got me out just in time  
Before the building collapse  
I asked her  
How does she feel now after surviving the earthquake?  
Grateful.

# Bryce Franklin

9th Grade

## *My Idol*

My Griot is a person of color

African American

Short gray hair, an intelligent person, has a mild face inside the house, in the kitchen cooking She tell me about the time I fell down the stairs when I was a few months old

She always laughs when she tells this story

I used to practice going up and down the stairs

My parents always always walked up and down the stairs with me

# Arihanna Francis

9th Grade

## *Only Laughs*

she only seek for others to smile, laugh, and be well  
she does this so often you couldn't tell if she's not okay  
even if you try  
some would call her unreadable  
unsuspected of her emotions  
even when you don't want to have the thought  
maybe she's not okay  
maybe it's uncomfortable getting ask the question  
she's my other half, she fills my heart and soul  
it's maybe because of her beautiful soul,  
that she could make me feel like  
when I'm with her  
everything is always alright  
as time goes  
I always realize something new  
it could be her new blue hair, black glasses,  
or new sense of style  
no matter how much she changes  
all I see is her beautiful soul, just as before  
she's my best friend

I could never ask for anything more  
when she sees me it's like a bundle of joy was saved  
and it feels the exact same for me  
if no one else understands this poems,  
I know she would  
that's why her beautiful soul fulfill my heart and  
soul the way it does  
that's why she's my best friend  
only she would truly know

Teacher:  
Jasmin Fearon-Weekes

Teaching Artist:  
Najee Omar Ritter

# Teacher's Preparatory High School

# Kierra Lundy

Age 15

## *Artist Statement*

I am Kierra Lundy. I'm from Brooklyn, New York. I believe that in life, we sometimes fail, but if you keep trying there will always be an amazing outcome and more to look forward to. My power comes from who I am today and how strong I am. I am inspired by my Mom because she is the strongest person I know, she never folds. One day, I will have everything I want and will continue to grow as a better woman, giving great advice to those who seek it.



# Kierra Lundy

Age 15

## *My Journal As Mom*

No matter how hard life gets, my journal always keeps me going.  
My journal speaks her mind. She works nonstop.  
My journal stands her ground, no matter what, for her kids.  
My journal manages everything by herself.  
My journal performs trendy tik tok dances.  
My journal empowers me, encourages me to speak out.  
My journal loves spending time with me.  
My journal awards me and gives me money.  
My journal smiles when things are going right and as planned.  
My journal's biggest fear is losing somebody close to her.  
My journal pushes me to keep going, no matter how hard life gets.

# Keishon Bobb

Age 15

## *Artist Statement*

I am Keishon Bobb. I am from Brooklyn, NY. When no one is looking, I get to express myself freely. I don't feel judged when I'm alone. I feel free. I believe that anyone can be a nice person if they do the right things. My power comes from my family members and relatives who believe in me. I am inspired by many artists and musicians such as Toby Fox, Crush 40, Yuji Uewaka, and Yoichi Kotabe. I create to relieve my stress, let all my worries go away. Creating comforts me and helps me improve. One day, I will be a well-known artist, and I will do whatever it takes to reach my goals.

# Keishon Bobb

Age 15

*Dear Future Self*

Do you remember that time when you were 7 years old, and you went to that art museum that mom took you to? The art looked so amazing. It really inspired you and planted the seed for the idea of who you wanted to be in the future: you wanted to be an artist.

Day to Day, you've had to overcome challenges to get you where you are today. Such as, improve your artistic skills, learn some tricks and techniques to get better at your craft, ultimately becoming more creative with your work...

I'm here to remind you to never stop dreaming, you're doing great. Dreams can make a better future and give you new stories to tell!

Signed,  
Your Past Self

# Keishon Bobb

Age 15

## *The Sun As My Mother*

The sun rises just to spend time with me,  
and we have good bonding experiences.

The sun checks on us to make sure  
we are all doing well.

The sun takes me  
all around the world.

The sun tells jokes  
just to make me laugh.

The sun tells me life lessons  
that help me to become a better person.

Under the sun,  
I have learned that sometimes people can be better  
than what you expected them to be.  
Being a good person and looking out for others  
is the right thing to do, and can bring light  
to someone's day.

# Naleciea Charles

*Dear Future Self*

Thank you  
for never giving up on your dream.  
You were dedicated to your work.  
And it paid off.  
You graduated from high school  
And got your degree in education.  
You got your permit.  
Then your license.  
You workout everyday.  
You eat healthy foods.  
You are a DJ at night,  
Coder in the day.  
You own three homes.  
One in Cali,  
One in New York,  
And another in Atlanta.  
You are mentally and financially stable.  
You go to therapy every Sunday.

You love yourself.  
You put yourself first  
to make sure you are always good.  
You never let anyone put you down  
because you know who you are.

# Zelise Claire

Age 18

## *Artist Statement*

I am Zelise Claire. I'm from Brooklyn, New York. I'm of Cuban descent. When no one is looking, I am a happy, funny, and positive person. I believe that people should be treated as equals, regardless of their race, gender, or sexuality. I believe everyone deserves to be heard.

My power comes from my mother, who taught me to speak my mind and not allow anyone to disrespect me. My father taught me to always fight back and be comfortable in my own skin.

I am inspired by grunge bands from the 90s. Bands like Nirvana, Alice in Chains, Pearl Jam and more, lyrically. I enjoy the music, but the lyrics are what resonate with me. I create to inspire others. I sing and write lyrics to relieve my stress and unwanted thoughts or feelings. I listen to other people's music to hear what they have to say, and I give feedback as well as support to help them on their journey.

One day, I will make a difference in the lives of others and encourage them to keep striving instead of giving up when things

get hard. Because I know how it feels to want to quit. I want others to know that they are not alone in this world, they're not the only ones hurting. I want to inspire so they can aspire. I want them to grow and succeed in order to achieve their goals and dreams.

# Zelise Claire

Age 18

## *A Letter From The Future*

Dear Zelise,

I'm going to refresh your memory in case you don't remember where your dream came from. It all started when you realized you had nothing left to lose. You wanted to go to college for computer science and become a game designer. You always thought creating a game yourself would be so cool. You wanted to change how you were living. You wanted to become successful and live larger.

Your dream looks like you're living in a fantasy because you didn't think achieving it would be possible. You're making video games and a great amount of money now. You're even making a few songs in your spare time. You're working at a wonderful company. You're enjoying yourself and celebrating with new friends you've made over the years. You're even still in touch with your old friends from middle and high school.

You overcame learning how to speak in front of people and large crowds, teaching and explaining to others exactly what it is that you're doing. You talk to people who are fans of the games you helped create. You inspire people who want to do what you do

and help guide them to achieve their goals and dreams. As scary as it can be, it's quite exhilarating being the person who others come to and living the life you once yearned to have. You've always wanted to make a difference and you know you'll make it to where I am, if not further. I know you can do it, I believe in you, always and forever.

Sincerely,  
Your Future Self,  
Zelise

# Zelise Claire

Age 18

*Dedicated To My Sister Kelise*

Kelise walks to school everyday

Kelise presents in front of classes

Kelise talks back to anyone

Kelise hums when she's happy

Kelise and I play video games

Kelise tells me jokes

Kelise shares with those in need

Kelise is afraid of spiders

Kelise thinks about her parents constantly



# Anthony Douglas

## *Artist Statement*

I am one of the smartest people in my class. I am from Brooklyn. I believe in my ability to make quick decisions. My power comes from my free will. I am inspired by my own imagination. I create to become a person I'm not able to be in real life. And one day I will or hope to become one of the best twitch streamers/ youtubers because of those who have inspired me to do so.

# Anthony Douglas

## *Letter To Future Self*

Dear Future Self,

If you're reading this, that means that you managed to almost, or completely, reach your dream of becoming a First-Class Gamer.

If you are almost complete, that means there must have been a few acceptable and unacceptable pit stops and that's ok. This letter is coming from a you that believes in multiple realities and worlds. Meaning that there can be a reality where you can make your dream come true. Remember that one part of Teacher's Preparatory School morning announcement saying "never give up and try, try again." This saying has kept us going for as long as we were in high school, and hopefully will last through college. So as long as you keep your head held up high, no matter who keeps you down, you will make your dream a reality. It could take 10 to 15 years but I know that our dream will come true. Remember where your dream came from. Ever since we were just a little kid, we have been and always will be inspired by those who made us laugh, cry, smile. Eventually, we wanted to become just like them and give people a reason to feel what we still feel. Keep up with your dream, and have a few side goals. Good luck, Older Me.

From,

Your Younger self

# Anthony Douglas

## *In Dedication To My Pillow*

My pillow holds my weight every night

My pillow rests in my room every day

My pillow puts me to sleep in seconds

My pillow and me sleep together

My pillow sometimes ends up on the floor

My pillow puts a smile on my face by making me comfortable

My pillow surprises everyone because it is the first place I

hide my money

My pillow's worst fear is being away from me

My pillow gives me hope just by being there every time I come  
back home

# Adanna Alicona

Age 15

## *Artist Statement*

I am Adanna. I'm from Honduras and Guatemala. When nobody is looking, I am very loveable and have a lot of energy. I believe that I am very nice and innocent. My power comes from inside of me. I am inspired by my mother and other young black entrepreneurs. I create to make money and make people happy. I make treats for special and personal orders. One day I will be the biggest young entrepreneur.

# Adanna Alicona

Age 15

*Dear People's Favourite Young Entrepreneur*

Heyyyy Adanna,

I hope you're doing well. But let's talk. Let's talk about your big dream of becoming the first young Garifuna entrepreneur. This all started because you put your mind to something and you had the support from your parents.

Remember, you were only 14 when this all started. We have grown soooo much. We now have become tik tok famous on our business account and gained over 1,000 followers on instagram. But don't let this fool you.

Yes, it is fun, but it can also be stressful. When we first started, we were only getting small orders here and there. But after our first pop-up shop, we started to get larger orders from customers. Now we're bringing in 4 to 5 big orders almost every 2 weeks. But it's okay because we are constantly doing what we love. And don't worry, mom is still helping. And dad is still there to be your taste tester.

It is now 2025. And we are 18 and grown (somewhat because you know mom doesn't play that shit). We are in college. And no we didn't get a dorm because you know how home sick we would get. But we are still growing and have a lot of growing to do. Just remember you got this. If you don't do it, who will?

# Adanna Licon

Age 15

*The Sun As Jennifer Saravia*

The sun speaks up for herself  
The sun cleans the house everyday  
The sun tells the truth  
The sun is a very caring  
The sun randomly sings and dances  
The sun and I have our daily talks  
and give each other positive quotes  
The sun shows she cares for me and my sister  
The sun is a leader  
The sun's biggest fear is failure  
and letting my sister and I down  
The sun gives me hope  
She is bright  
She is beautiful  
She is the light to my world

# Marae Newton

Age 15

## *Artist Statement*

I am Marae Newton. I'm from Long Island, New York. When nobody is watching, I'm different from other people. Annoying to one, talented to another, quite too few, unknown to a lot. I believe in moments, memories with fun adventures. I believe in books, art and people. I believe in sunrises and sunsets. I believe in not sharing emotions with others. My power comes from my worth and being enough for myself, putting my health first, the rest of the world can wait. I believe beauty comes from within. People say their biggest inspiration is their mom and dad, mine is SZA and Rod Wave. My biggest motivation in life comes from soulful music, not being able to find the right words to describe what's exactly happening inside. My biggest inspiration comes from my favorite artist who doesn't notice but gives me comfort. I create positive, warmful feelings. I create to lift people's spirits and give them hope, when they think they would've never found it. One day, I'll be the person I see in my dreams. One day, I'll find inner peace and not let anyone define my emotions.

# Marae Newton

Age 15

## *About A Star*

A star wears aesthetically pleasing clothing.

A star balances her time throughout her day.

A star speaks up for others.

A star cares for my feelings.

A star tells funny jokes and stories.

A star dyes her hair every month.

A star boosts my confidence and self esteem.

A star worries about not being enough.

A star prays to give herself hope and peace.



# Marae Newton

Age 15

*Dear Beautiful*

Now that we graduated from cosmetology school  
and built the dream of our 8-figure company,  
don't spend another year doing the same thing!

I know getting here wasn't easy,  
but we managed it.

Don't stop  
until you're proud.

I hope you found a way to spend your days  
that brings you joy,  
makes you proud, and  
brings you financial success.

I hope there's balance in your life,  
and you're living in your penthouse,  
taking care of yourself,  
living to the best of your ability.

I hope you're still becoming the light for others  
and inspiring them to be joyous,  
present, and to fully exist.

Always remember,  
the world is yours  
and people are just living in it.

# Adesha O'brien

Age 16

## *Artist Statement*

I am Adesha O'brien, I'm from Trinidad and Tobago. I'm passionate about my future. I believe I don't need anyone to make it far in life. My power comes from my inner-being. I am inspired by my powerful mother. I create to remind myself about my dark times and to inspire others. One day, I will become a child behavioral therapist and write a book.

# Adesha O'brien

Age 16

## *Letter From Future Self*

Dear Adesha,

This letter is to remind you of the reason you've gone through so many hardships, sleepless nights and heartaches. To become a positive role model for children that have felt the way you've felt. Becoming a child behavioral therapist has been your dream since you were 12. Your dream came from your willingness to help others regulate their moods in a positive way, and learn to deal with their problems in a healthy manner.

As of 2028, age 22, you're living lavishly, giving your mom everything she's ever desired, doing things we would've never dreamed of, not having to worry about your next meal and stressing about supporting your siblings. You're clinking glasses with your pinky up, champagne popped.

But this wasn't given to you easily. You've had to overcome your self doubt, your uncertainty around achieving your goal of being a child behavioral therapist. Your fear of pursuing this career because it was unfamiliar to you and you didn't have many

people that were successful in their educational careers to lead you on a steady path toward success.

But you did it.

You wrote a book that talks about your difficulties in life, "Life Is What You Make It," and it sold out locally and internationally. Many reviews from teenage girls say this has helped them with their daily life, depressive episodes, and body dysmorphia.

Be proud of yourself because it wasn't easy. And from me to you, I'm proud of you.

# Adesha O'brien

Age 16

## *Brick As Mom*

Brick isn't afraid to hit rock bottom

Brick cares for her kids

Brick sticks up for me

Brick forgives people that hurt her terribly

Brick finds the weirdest names to call me

Brick and I call each other everyday

Brick gives me motivational speeches

Brick is hopeful when I do well academically

Brick has a giving personality

Brick's biggest fear is losing her kids

# Daniel Straker

Age 16

## *Artist Statement*

I am Daniel Straker. I am from Trinidad and Tobago. I am a well behaved student. I believe in going after your dream, no matter what it is, even if others may disagree. My power comes from my family's love for me. I am inspired by my love of sports like football and basketball. One day, I will be a sportswriter, writing about football and basketball, because sports gives me a feeling of liberation. The love of the game, when it's a close game, and someone does something you never see coming. I will create to be free of my problems.

# Daniel Straker

Age 16

*The Stars As Someone Close To Me*

The stars remember my first words

The stars care about me

The stars are not ready for me to grow up

The stars worry about me

The stars love to shine

The stars left their life for our family

The stars light up the room

The stars love to sing

The stars love God

The stars are beautiful

# Daniel Straker

Age 16

## *Letter From Future Self*

Dear Daniel,

This is you from the future. Do you remember where your dream came from? It was your love of sports and wanting to provide for your family. I want to tell you you did it, you reached your dreams! You became a successful sportswriter ten years from now and took care of your family. You always say that God, family and sports are the things you love most in this world, but it is hard work. People will always try to stop you, but never let them get to you. Because you did it. You have written about the Lakers, the New York Knicks, the 76ers and the Brooklyn Nets. Football teams like Barcelona, Manchester City and Manchester United. You did it. You should have seen the look on mom's face when you became a sportswriter, priceless in my mind.

# Kevin Carasco-Vasquez

Age 17

## *Artist Statement*

I am Kevin, an extroverted Venezuelan and somewhat smiling compared to how I am in front of other people. I believe that most people do not know how to give true value to things or people, since everything is valued socially or monetarily. My power comes from my father, since I have a certain awe in spite of the ups and downs. I am inspired by my goals, since they get me up every day and inspire me to come to class. I believe in order to create a good future for myself and those around me, one day I will achieve nutritional balance and graduate with a degree in architecture.



# Kevin Carasco-Vasquez

Age 17

*For You, From The Future*

Do you remember  
when you played that game known as minecraft  
which instilled in you the passion  
for building new things  
and carrying out the products of your imagination?

Well, right now  
you get up from your bed to do your personal grooming.  
After your breakfast, you enter your work room.  
You sit down  
and turn on the computer.  
You begin to give life  
working out the architectural ideas  
Which live in you today.

Since you have achieved it,  
despite the ups and downs along the process,  
despite the lack of money  
and time,  
despite the lack of support,  
in the end  
you managed to fulfill your dream.

You are a great architect.  
You are celebrating with your family.  
And from the sweat of your brow,  
you are creating different  
and varied designs  
according to your tastes  
and your vision.

# Kevin Carasco-Vasquez

Age 17

## *My Treasure*

My treasure speaks  
without considering consequences.

My treasure speaks  
without getting nervous in front of anyone.

My treasure plays video games.

My treasure makes an effort to learn English.  
My treasure copies any sentence with ease.

My treasure fears the police  
and hides from them for no reason.

My treasure plays and eats.  
My treasure never meets me, it says how stupid I can be.  
My treasure loves to be praised.

My treasure must be very well protected.  
So that it is not stolen  
or lost.

It is the most precious thing I have,  
and within it, is the greatest value.

# Gendri Candelario

## *Artist Statement*

I am Gendri. I am from the Dominican Republic. When no one is looking I retract into my shell, which is my place of peace that brings me serenity. I believe in God, and there are people who do not. My power comes from myself. I'm inspired by the kitchen. I believe in myself and in my future. One day, I will own a multi-family house.

# Gendri Candelarario

*Statue of Liberty As My Sister*

The Statue of Liberty goes to work every day.

The Statue of Liberty expresses herself freely.

The Statue of Liberty gets mad when I take something from her.

The Statue of Liberty cooks very well.

The Statue of Liberty goes on a trip every year.

The Statue of Liberty does almost everything with me.

The Statue of Liberty is freedom and represents strength

just like my sister.

# Kiana Donaldson

Age 15

## *Artist Statement*

I am Kiana. I am from Panama, and I am a dancer. I believed in God. My power comes from my family. My little brother inspires me to have my own business. One day I will become a lawyer.

# Kiana Donaldson

Age 15

## *Letter From The Future*

When you were little, you always dreamed of being a lawyer. This came from a movie about some girls who were lawyers which inspired you to study and pursue this career. You dream every day to improve yourself and achieve your goals. You're doing your best to achieve it. You celebrate with your loved ones. You had to overcome many roads with holes like critical rejections of self-esteem. When you got through these things, you were able to reach your goals, thank God. Keep giving your best effort and everything you can imagine will come true.

# Kiana Donaldson

Age 15

*Star As Someone Special To Me*

My star likes to glow.

Seeing my star every day makes me smile.

My star is very strict.

My star gets mad when she hears that I don't behave well.

My star always has the solution for something.

My star gets angry about everything.

My star and I support each other in everything.

My star works 3 jobs in a day.

My star's biggest fear would be  
if something happens to her children.

My star gives hope to her children  
and encourages them to fulfill their goals and dreams.

My star is bright.

My star is small.

And every time I see her,

I make a wish.

# Nency Velasquez

Age 16

## *Artist Statement*

I am Nency. I am from Honduras. When no one is looking, I am a quiet person. I believe in God. My power comes from my mother and myself. I am inspired by cooking. I believe in my future and my family. One day I will own my very own restaurant.



# Nency Velasquez

Age 16

## *Dreams*

Your dreams came from watching your aunt work hard in a beauty salon. You're a boss. You own a big home with a big kitchen and long blue sofas. You are working hard and giving orders. Helping people in interviews and celebrating them when they join your team. You overcame family losses and betrayals by friends. And in spite of it all, today, you are celebrating these things with your mom, dad, brothers and sisters.

# Nency Velasquez

Age 16

## *Orchid As My Mother*

My orchid needs sunlight and attention.  
She gets mad when I don't pay attention to her.

My orchid tells the truth.  
She says it is better to express how you feel  
than to keep it saved.

My orchid prays every day.  
She advises me.  
She cleans the house and is afraid of rats.

My orchid,  
she is delicate.  
She needs a specific amount of water.  
And she blooms,  
before me,  
every morning.

# Jeremian Fletcher

*Letter From The Future*

Dear Future Self,

You want to sell houses or become a lawyer. Remember that your dream came from a tiktoker. Seeing him made you want to be just like him. In the future, you complete this goal. And become the best there is. You're around 27 years old. So start working on your dream now because it is never too late to chase it. Get it out the way. What I mean by that is complete this goal, so you can chase another one and start a new journey. You are never too old or too young to chase your dreams. When you stop dreaming, you stop living. Keep knocking down every obstacle in your way. Not just for you, but for your family members too.

From,

Past Self

# Anelsy Cruz Lopez

Age 15

## *Artist Statement*

I am Anelsy Cruz. I am from the Dominican Republic. When no one is looking, I am a very serious person, because I keep stuff to myself sometimes. I believe there's a lot of gun violence in New York City.

# Anelsy Cruz Lopez

Age 15

## *Letter From The Future*

Your dream comes from hardships. In your dream you see light, hope. What brings you hope and peace is living in a big mansion, with big closets, long stairs, and a pool. Having a family, and lots of money. You will have to overcome your emotional baggage by raising your awareness. In your dream you are living with a family that has cars in every different color. You work so your family will be proud of you. You are celebrating with your family and people that appreciate you whenever you need them or whenever they need you

# Jewell Horton

*Letter From The Future*

Dear Present Jewell,

The dream of becoming an artist finally came true. After working so hard, it came true. The dream to become an artist came from seeing so much beautiful work on the internet and you thought you could probably do something like that yourself. You were right. You moved out of New York and to LA to pursue your dreams. You spend most of your day drawing. In art class, even when you trace, you still try to give it a twist to tell the difference. You practiced and studied to help make your life a reality. Knowing that you might fail, you still kept yourself motivated.

# Makayla Newton

Age 15

## *Letter From The Future*

Dear Kayla,

Look at us. We're doing amazing. Everyone who doubted us back in highschool, and while we was young, they can't say nothing about about us not succeeding no more, lol. We're living life now. With our 3-story, 8 bedroom, 2 bathroom house. With 2 pomeranian puppies. We have 2 children and a husband.

A Mercedes Benz and a BMW. We're really loving life. We got so much going for ourselves. And we're living great.

# Arwen Delgado

*Letter From The Future*

Dear Past Self,

Remember

when you were younger,

All the games you would play?

And your dream of joining

the WNBA?

You have great potential.

It takes a lot of wits,

but you have to be mindful

of the challenges that will come your way.

Some people will doubt you,

but you have to stay strong.

You have to do what's right

and prove that they are wrong.

The reason I write

is to let you know

That you made it.

Don't give up.

You got a great future waiting.

Stay strong.



# Jadon Livingston

## *Artist Statement*

I am Jadon. I'm from Brooklyn. I am someone looking into the story of himself. I believe that we are in the World of Babylon. My power comes from my father, and I am inspired by entertainers like Lil' Baby. One day, I will write my very own book about my life at its highest points, so people who grew up like me can feel motivated.

# Jadon Livingston

*Letter From The Future*

Dear Jadon,

You've made it  
to where you've wanted to be.

You're living  
a happy and healthy  
lifestyle.

At the age of 28,  
you're an entrepreneur,  
trading by day,  
in the stock market.

You are celebrating  
with your family  
and a few friends,  
making 7 figures.

It is the most surreal  
feeling.

Knowing  
that you had to teach  
and believe in yourself  
to get here.

# Catherine Braimah

*A Letter To My Present Self*

Dear Catherine,

Remember when you dreamed of becoming a doctor and traveling the world? We did it.

Your dream came from watching De'Arra's youtube and seeing how successful she was, which made you keep going in life, and encouraged you to never give up. Day after day, thinking you wouldn't make it, or even finish high school, because of your absences. You were astonished the day you graduated, with the help of your guidance counselor who pushed you to keep going.

You went on to the College of Staten Island. College was hard because of the company you kept. They made you skip school and party all day, so you decided to leave and start a new life at the University of Houston. You finally left Brooklyn to focus on graduation. There, you made friends who supported you and helped you reach where you are today.

I am proud to say you are a college graduate and a traveling nurse.

You cried so much at graduation because you thought you would never make it, or be anything in life. This is your story. This is my reminder to you. Never give up.

Keep going.

# Quinn Clinton

## *In Dedication To Orion*

Orion challenges herself in volleyball.

Orion speaks her mind.

Orion balances her time.

Orion asks questions during class.

Orion and I often empower each other.

Orion often shows her emotions.

Orion opens up her arms to people who need it.

Original boosts up her confidence.

Orion comforts me.

Orion opens her heart to everyone.

Orion ignites her smile.

Orion rewrites her feelings to hide them.

Orion stretches her abilities to do theater.

# Quinn Clinton

*Letter From The Future*

Hey Quinn,

Remember that dream  
you had been chasing  
since you were 3,  
becoming an engineer?

Well,  
it finally happened

after many years of trying.  
We had some ups and downs.  
We overthought it.  
10 years later, finally an adult,  
you try and try, and you never  
gave up, Quinn.

You and your mother's relationship  
is better. Yes, you guys have  
disagreements, here  
and there. You still live in New York.

You still have Orion, Tiffany,  
and many more by your side  
congratulating you. You made it

through high school, now  
your dream college. You are  
amazing. You finally made it  
to this point in life.

Since 3 years old,  
making flowers out of  
everyday objects. You are  
very talented.

Teachers:  
Mr. Crawford  
Ms. Jeffers

Teaching Artist:  
Yasmar Cruz

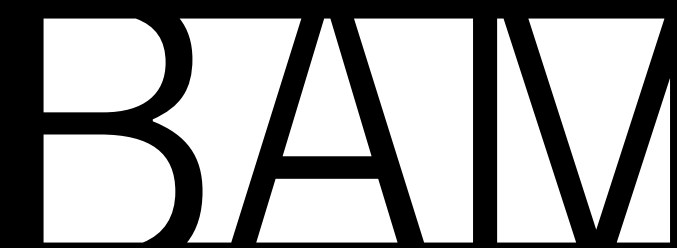
# West Brooklyn Community High School

# Audrey

*Audrey's Story*



Word.  
SOUND.  
Power.  
in the Classroom



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