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.
Contents

Teaching Artists ................................................................. 5

Boerum Hill School For International Studies .......................... 9
Teachers: Tameka Thompson, Matt Williams
Teaching Artist: Marcus Smalls

Cultural Academy of Art & Science ........................................ 36
Teachers: Deirdre Deloatch
Teaching Artist: JENNIFER CENDAÑA ARMAS

Teachers: Callan McDermott, 4th period .............................. 50
Teaching Artist: Katie Kay Chelena

Teachers: Jeff Nelson, 5th period .......................................... 69
Teaching Artist: Katie Kay Chelena
High School for Innovations in Advertising and Media
Teachers: Mrs. Anderson
Teaching Artist: Gideon Bautista

Teachers: Mrs. Anderson
Teaching Artist: Jayson P. Smith

Teachers: Nilaab Daftani
Teaching Artist: Jeesun Choi

Teacher's Preparatory High School
Teachers: Jasmin Fearon-Weekes
Teaching Artist: Najee Omar Ritter

West Brooklyn Community High School
Teachers: Mr. Crawford, Ms. Jeffers
Teaching Artist: Yasmar Cruz
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.

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Teaching Artists
Word. Sound. Power. in the Classroom

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 Fleurimont 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).

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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
The New Storytellers

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,
Boerum Hill School
For International Studies

Teachers:
Tameka Thompson
Matt Williams

Teaching Artist:
Marcus Smalls
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
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 don’t 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
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
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.
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
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
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.
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

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE
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
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 ok
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
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
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
Cultural Academy of Art & Science

Teacher: Jeff Nelson
3rd period

Teaching Artist: Katie Kay Chelena
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?
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
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.
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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Jarrod 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
Jarrod Jones
Age 14

Hopes for my Future

In the future, I hope to rise up
I hope my dreams reach the sky
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

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The best way to start my day.
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This is my neighborhood.
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.
High School for Innovations in Advertising and Media

Teacher: Mrs. Anderson
Teaching Artists: Gideon Bautista
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 i am one of them if he has 1 fan i am one of them if he has 0 fan then that means that i'm dead if the world is against carti i'm 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 goal.
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 what's
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.
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.
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.
High School for Innovations in Advertising and Media

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Teaching Artist: Jayson P. Smith
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
High School for Innovations in Advertising and Media

Teacher: Nilaab Daftani
Teaching Artist: Jeesun Choi
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.
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
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.
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?
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
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.
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.
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 okay. 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 Licona
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.
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.
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.
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.
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 Candelario

*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.
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.
Dear Future Self,

You want to sell houses or become a lawyer. Remember that your dream came from a tiktok. 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.
Look at us. We're doing amazing. Everyone who doubted us back in high school, and while we was young, they can't say nothing 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.
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.
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.
West Brooklyn Community High School
Audrey

Audrey's Story

[Image of people using virtual reality headsets]