



The Institute Library

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AND

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New Haven Public Schools  
Department of Performing and Visual Arts

# THE WORD

A YOUTH POETRY JAM  
CHAPBOOK 2014

By the Students  
of Columbus Family Academy  
and Fair Haven School

EDITED BY  
Edited by Aaron Jafferis, William Baker,  
and Susan McCaslin

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The Institute Library  
New Haven, Connecticut 2014

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*This collection of original poems was composed by the students of Columbus Family Academy and Fair Haven School who participated in the 2014 poetry residency program, The Word. Co-sponsored by the Institute Library and the New Haven Public Schools Department of Performing and Visual Arts, The Word was developed by Artist-in-Residence Aaron Jafferis in 2013, drawing on a similar residency program he helped found in 2003. The purpose of The Word is to introduce middle school students to poetry, encourage them to write, and provide an opportunity to present their work to peers and the community through an annual citywide poetry “jam” performance and the present anthology.*

### **FROM AARON JAFFERIS, THE WORD FOUNDER AND LEAD ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE**

I started writing and performing because I was shy, and it was the only way I felt comfortable expressing publicly the intense things I felt inside. Last year, I had a student in The Word poetry program who seemed even shyer than I was at that age. The student struggled through anxiety, wrote some solid poems and performed at the city-wide poetry jam – which seemed like a triumph in itself.

This year, for the first time, I got to work with some Word veterans – students who returned to work with me again in the next grade. That shy student and her classmates are now writing daring poems and performing their poems with confident, world-challenging voices.

Yesterday, another student described his sister as “upgoing.” He made up this word, like Shakespeare, because there was no existing word to contain what he meant: his sister is outgoing and forward-looking and moving up in the world. Another student said she felt like a new person after presenting in front of her classmates, because they finally knew the real her – a sentiment I still feel when writing or performing.

I see new words and people being born on the page every day during The Word, and I’m meeting more and more upgoing students – for whom the practice of writing and performing poetry has become an important part of their growing identity.

This year – thanks to collaborations with The Future Project, various New Haven high schools, and the awesome students and teachers from Columbus Family Academy and Fair Haven School featured in this here anthology – The Word got a little more upgoing as well: it expanded into a first-ever citywide high school poetry jam and grew the middle school jam in its second year.

This anthology is a thank you to all the students, teachers, administrators, the Institute Library, the New Haven Public Schools Performing and Visual Arts Department, and everyone else hustling to help new words and new people emerge in our city.

## FROM NATALIE ELICKER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE LIBRARY

The second annual The Word citywide poetry jam was, by every measure, a glowing success. After months of coaching from creator and lead teaching artist Aaron Jafferis, middle school students from Columbus Family Academy and Fair Haven School took the stage at Cooperative Arts and Humanities High School on April 22, 2014. They shared their original poetry compositions with an enthusiastic crowd of supporters, including special guest Self Suffice the RapOet – who began his performance by telling one student, “you inspire me.”

I was among the audience and was dizzied by the depth and heights of the students’ poetry. At the time, I was interviewing to step into Will Baker’s position as Executive Director of the Institute Library. I couldn’t think of a greater privilege than adding my support to the voices I heard.

The Institute Library was founded as an educational membership organization in 1826 by eight young apprentices. These young men, soon joined by young women, borrowed from a shared collection of books, met regularly to read original compositions to one another, and hosted events that made the library for many years the democratic heart of intellectual life in New Haven.

After a long period of quiet, in 2011 the Institute Library recommitted itself to the educational and cultural life of New Haven through new on-site programs and community outreach. The Word is a new program featuring contemporary voices, but is also a resonant echo of the founding purpose of the Institute Library.

Generous funders CT Humanities, NewAlliance Foundation, and Seedlings Foundation made this year’s The Word possible, and we thank both them and the sponsors of the chapbook you are holding for helping memorialize and spread the students’ work. Three days after the middle schoolers’ performance, high school students gathered for their first-ever, city-wide poetry jam, made possible by support from The Future Project, to whom we are also very grateful, especially Wilbur Cross High School senior Alec Rice and Wilbur Cross Future Project Director Frank Brady. We send enormous thanks also to Director of the New Haven Public Schools Department of Performing and Visual Arts Ellen Maust, school principals Dr. Abie Benitez and Margaret-Mary Gethings, volunteer poetry teacher Max Stern, Institute Library coordinator Chelsea Stone, and middle school teachers Judith Leach, Kristin Bengston Mendoza, William Wagoner, and Mnikesa Whitaker – and, of course, to Aaron Jafferis and all of our students.

**KRISTIN BENGTON MENDOZA, 6TH GRADE  
TEACHER AT FAIR HAVEN SCHOOL**

There's a lot of talk about what young people in New Haven are going through. Most of the talkers are adults; many of them speak from a perspective that is far removed from the daily life of our city.

The Word is what happens when young people are afforded the space to speak for themselves. What a rare thing. It has been my great honor to carve out a little bit of space and time in the life of our busy school for Aaron Jafferis and these amazing writers – these wolf souls with the intelligence of police dogs – to pause and name what is real to them. Hunger, a degraded environment, the deportation of family members, and “the boom bang life” all hover just outside the vaulted doors of our school, a part of these students' daily existence. They deserve our respect and our total attention, both for meeting these fears head-on every afternoon when they step outside, and for having the guts to write about them too. I hope you will find, as I have, the seeds of real hope and change for our community in their words.

**WILLIAM WAGONER, 7TH GRADE TEACHER  
AT COLUMBUS FAMILY ACADEMY**

“Kids These Days”

The kids these days  
loud mouthed failures  
thinking they know everything  
little criminals in training  
worse then ever before.

Sit down  
Shut up  
Do exactly what we tell you

Were the words Pontius Pilate spoke  
to that upstart from Nazareth  
As we nail our sins in their bloody hands

What do you know about the Kids these days?  
Who are  
closer to God then the priests that lecture them  
kinder than most adults I know  
wiser than I'll ever be  
Who  
might just save the world we broke  
if they decide  
we're worth it?

Yadriel Colon

***Shoe Lookers***

---

the first thing people do  
when they meet you  
is stare at your shoes  
they don't notice how  
you are  
if you have  
a good heart  
they only judge  
your shoes to see if you  
have Nikes or Jordans  
They say, "Oh, they fake; Flea Market shoes!"  
Anger is eating me inside  
I curse at them  
Then ask myself, "Why?"  
Cause I know they're real

Rebecca Coronel

***My Happiness***

---

My happiness is a chair  
I make people comfortable  
Made of soft things like feathers with glitter  
When there is a sitter, they sit on me  
Then they see a little bumble bee  
So they run away  
I could just say, "Hey, come back. Don't leave me here  
Like an empty sack!"

Jaidy Gonzalez

***My Heart is a Butterfly***

---

My heart is a caterpillar  
I feel happy  
Popping with joy  
Jumping with excitement

Waiting for leaves  
There's a wonderful memory  
When I went to Lake Compounce for my birthday  
It's going to spark some joy

The weather is always sunny  
It needs leaves to stay happy  
Afraid of rain ruining its day  
Like when I fight with someone

It will stay in its cocoon  
It carries joyful wonderful memories  
All these years  
Always happy never sad

Then it will turn into a  
Butterfly

Dazaria Henderson  
***My Hand***

---

My hand is a  
Grumpy troll  
Hurt, bruised, and furious  
Saying oww I'm hurt!  
It feels  
Frustrated  
Its been dragged  
Over and over  
Livin a lonely life  
Growing stronger and longer  
It wants to be healed not to  
Be steel

Dazaria Henderson  
***What You Think of Me***

---

People think I'm shy  
People think I'm mean  
People think I'm lifeless  
Like a puppet with NO strings

But I'm a warrior  
Slicin and Dicin  
Helping out the needy  
Not being greedy

Donating clothes to Salvation Army  
Like mommy  
So imma be who I wanna be  
And say what I gotta say



Jhosselyn Jamarillo

**I AM**

---

My heart  
like a baby cheetah  
learning, blossoming  
turning into something  
bigger, better, stronger.  
Within me it grows.  
That heart matures  
surviving the mistakes  
the troubles of teen years.  
You might think it's just a survival tool  
but it's really much more than that.  
It's all of me.  
Now if you want to mess with it,  
Oooh you should know what you  
are getting yourself into.  
This once small baby  
will rise from within and use  
everything against you  
and then you'll notice what you  
said was a mistake.  
Yeah, yeah, I guess you're still  
what I used to be.  
It's fine, it's all right.  
Just remember I was once  
where you are  
and then you'll be  
me.

Jhosselyn Jamarillo

**Math Class**

---

Big board  
numbers  
problems  
paper  
pencils  
detention  
silent  
work  
sweaty  
boring  
white  
plain  
corny

hard  
all these numbers  
crunched up in my  
head confused not  
knowing what to do  
the walls pounding  
hard ba-boom  
ba-boom, this room  
making me tense  
the heartbeat gets  
faster while the  
people around are talking  
about who knows  
what but it  
soon gets higher, louder,  
stronger! then it stops everything  
gone silent  
like a desert  
pure silence not a breath is  
heard, the monster  
reveals itself, the stress  
monster making  
every one go quiet  
we all pack  
up and get ready to leave  
the bell rung  
I'm so glad  
"We out!"

Carlos Lebron  
***Bye So Called Cool***

---

You think you're at the top.

With your pants sagging  
and your attitude lagging.

Please, you're just a joke  
making people's minds choke.  
You're trying to strangle me like a thug.  
You insult me.

With your hat backwards  
and your posture downward.

Like a Chihuahua you act  
fierce

and you back down when  
it gets real.

You think you're so real.  
You're as real as a funny dream.  
You're a joke.

You think you can mess  
with people just like me.

Bro please.

I imagine you are a good guy.  
You treat yourself equal to  
whoever you walk by.  
You dress nice and your  
posture is fine.

You finally pay attention  
in class.  
You're part of a recreation of a  
good community

but I just hope you get the  
opportunity  
to really see

what you can be.

Yes I do imagine that.

**Carlos Lebron**  
***My Jacket of Jeans***

---

When people look at my jean jacket  
They don't say it's ratchet but

Some might say. They say it's  
bright faded and a little gray  
no it doesn't smell like decay but smells like the ocean bay

I button it on a winter  
Day. Some people may judge and

Be mean. But I like my jacket  
of jeans.

It's not black or green. No it's  
Gray

When I wear it I'm warm

If it could talk it says "thanks"  
Cuz I take care of it

I love it and it loves me

Yes I mean my jacket of jeans

**Carlos Lebron**

***Why, Why***

---

Ganglands and bangs  
Graffiti on the schools of Connecticut  
Stitches and scars  
No more lives and stars  
On top of the others, brothers and  
Sisters.

Press is coming wondering the comments  
Pistols and ak47s send kids  
To Heaven  
Started hard when you were seven  
In the projects

Is your reputation worth  
The slaughtered thousands  
Survival  
To kill  
Or be killed  
Why, why, why did you pull the trigger....  
Why is our community so ill...

**Adamaris López**

***Issues with Tissues***

---

I've got issues  
With my tissues  
It's rough and  
Tough it burns  
I start dripping blood  
My asthma,  
My allergies,

I sneeze  
Looks like tiny  
Puddles of red mud  
When I bleed  
I do not plead  
For tissues  
Cause I've got issues  
So I'ma tell you now.  
Buy the softest tissues  
In town.  
Just for you to memorize,  
Other people can also have issues  
With tissues.

**Brianna Morales**  
***Daddy's Old Home***

---

A place I hate.  
Daddy's old home.  
The smell of weed and cigarettes.  
The time I touched his dirty, old,  
rusty refrigerator.  
I remember him yelling,  
yelling at a stupid game.  
That ripped rug I sat on  
when I cried.  
The time I tasted his gross soup.  
I hate that place.  
Never do I want to go back.  
The place I kept secrets  
from my mom.  
I could have run downstairs.  
But I was too scared he'd hurt me.  
So, I didn't.  
The spirit of daddy's home haunts me.  
"You'll never be the same." it said.  
Daddy's home,  
leave me alone.  
I hate you.  
You destroyed my family.  
Stop haunting me.  
Leave me alone.

Brianna Morales

***Look at Me Look at You***

---

You call me a  
wanna be thug and dramatic.  
You say I'm snotty, mean  
and look at me like I were a  
drug addict  
I hear: She's two-faced, jealous and a  
disastrophy,  
even worse- I'm a  
catastrophy!

At least I'm not like you  
in the streets  
smoking weed  
While you left me  
when I needed you most,  
I learned who and what I  
Needed-  
not what I wanted.

Don't come to me with,  
"You're my boo!"  
cause I'm not.  
I'm a girl that's  
fighting,  
fighting for her dreams  
and there you are in the streets  
smoking weed.

Go ahead say what you wanna say,  
I'm getting stronger day by day.

Brianna Morales

***OUR PLACE***

---

Our place we are living,  
Is a bang!  
Filled with violence and gangs  
Video hoes and crack head mofo's  
Nothing will change  
Hopefully Jesus will help us  
Help us stop these girls fighting over boys  
Help us stop these boys stop shooting over Jordans  
This is crazy!

Our place is supposed to be comfortable  
And fun to go outside  
But with all the shootings and gangs  
We have to hide inside

Shout out to all the kids  
Who are trying to be safe- out  
And the parents keeping a look-out

Just be safe and be careful....

**Brian Ortega**  
***The Brain***

---

Howling at night if feasts for meat  
It works everyday  
Never takes a break  
Some say that it will be stopped  
but this wolf never gives up  
It keeps trying until he's king of the forest  
Just deal with it  
The brain is more complex than everything  
Even starts its own remix  
all of you are just Slacking  
just like you'll be left in the blistering cold  
While I made it with a 4.1 and  
Have a great cave and my brain is  
KING  
Of all wolves

**Joseph Rivera Perez**  
***My Right Hand***

---

My right hand works like  
An ant

It gets tired  
But doesn't want to get tired

It wants to rest  
Lays on my chest

It wants to be a mattress  
So it could rest

Then it dreams about playing  
And riding bikes

So it feels rested not  
Arrested to work

Joseph Rivera Perez  
**Robbers**

---

Robbers think they kool but  
They're really a fool

They're like a raccoon  
Stealing things from people  
Just like a goon

You rob money from a  
Bank or weapons from an  
Army tank

When they steal they  
Don't feel no pain or  
Get no shame

You don't get that  
If you're a robber  
No one will believe you  
And your friend could  
Become your enemies

If you really feel like being  
A robber and don't set things  
Right your life will be tight  
And might be robbed for your life

Dyesha Sanchez  
**Message In A Bottle**

---

Handsome  
Short black spiky hair  
You Wear cologne  
You Dress right  
You Wear your pants up  
not down  
Sometimes you  
Smell like cigarettes and beer  
"Yo, come over here!" "Let's go smoke!" "Yo, you crazy!"  
You go to the mall a lot  
You go to Forever 21



You Look  
You Judge  
My birthday's come and gone  
Just like YOU!

Dyesha Sanchez  
***The Magnifying Glass***

---

People think I'm shy  
"She's a nerd." Is what they say  
People think I'm phony  
Like my big brother J

But I really am bossy  
Not hanging with a posse  
Keeping my confidence up  
everyday

I want to let go  
telling you what to do  
I wanna keep helping people  
like you  
Sticking up for my friends  
It's what I do

Nayeli Tenezaca  
***My Timid Heart***

---

My heart is like a timid bunny,  
with sensitive feelings.  
He moves with fear and embarrassment  
Trying to scream but won't  
The only thing it would say is,  
"I'm scared."  
It's like a frozen lake that will never break.  
The weather will be rainy with thunder.  
My heart is afraid to get lost again  
The only memory that it will have  
My baby cousin that passed away  
When it sleeps it has flashbacks  
It will have the memory of my grandpa  
Who chose the wrong path with his decisions  
His white and grey hair  
His beautiful brown eyes  
He carries me in his hairy arms  
and puts me to sleep.  
He worked very hard

on his land growing food  
My heart wants to change  
Make good decisions that will lead me to  
a land full of dreams

**Bryant Thomas**  
***My Hair***

---

my hair is a lion  
bushy  
my hair really wants to get cut  
it makes its own law  
rawr  
ugh get off me  
it's stiff  
tornado  
cloudy  
it's afraid of getting too long  
now it's cut  
and now it's a Chihuahua  
scared of the cold

**Karen Veloz**  
***EYES***

---

People say, "You fake."  
They just made a mistake.  
People call me phony  
But then again,  
I see them lonely  
Cuz they have no homies

You harm me  
By calling me Barney  
People say I act perfect  
People say I ain't worth it  
People don't notice my  
Personality  
Or who I am  
They always talk about how  
I'm a wanna be  
I am a wanna be...  
I wanna be a hugger,  
I wanna be a girl who who feels free to be me

But I'm just a girl that no one can see  
Because they think I'm a wanna be

Well I am a mystery  
and someone else will see me  
While you people watch me make history.

## POETS OF COLUMBUS SEVENTH GRADE

### Steven Calle ***The Real Me***

---

My parents say that  
I'm not smart enough  
just because I can't do  
math in class  
but in the real life  
I'm Mr. Cool Guy.  
I'm that guy that tries a lot.  
I am smart at playing  
Battlefield 4.  
I am good at reading books  
about animals,  
while drinking Danimals.  
People don't know me  
who I really am.

### Jackie Campos ***My legs***

---

My legs I don't  
ever want to lose.  
My legs complete me.  
Without my legs I would  
not have the opportunity  
to explore the world.  
My legs remind me of a  
shark, how fast they move,  
and how smooth they move.  
My legs work as hard as my  
hands, that sometimes I need  
to sit down and take a break.  
My legs never stop working.

### Yanishka Colon-Rosario ***Mean Girls***

---

Mean girls full of negativities  
like:  
selfishness, not sharing with me,

irresponsible, copying her friend  
“Thanks.” “Damn.”  
“How dumb is her.”

Why y’all have to be harsh to  
people, even your friends?

You think you could rule the  
world. Well, you wrong.

You think you could be on  
spotlight. Think smarter.

You think you perfect,  
trying to walk slow-  
motion in the hallways.  
Well, you ain’t worth it.

Last thing to confess is  
to try to be nice is not that  
bad.

If you wondered what mean  
girls are, let me tell you.

Mean girls think they  
worth it  
cool  
famous  
perfect

But they are none of that.  
They are just girls with no  
heart  
in their life.

Yanishka Colon-Rosario  
**My Room**

---

My room is my sister.  
She have a beautiful white skin  
and a taste of humor. She have  
beautiful style in her closet  
and it’s messy in her bed. Love the  
loudness she creates when she

mad, love the way she comfortable  
in her bed sleeping with  
the moon lights.

**Michael Diaz**  
***you don't know me***

---

you call me a player  
you think I play girls in school  
be around girls in the class room  
acting like a fool  
but in the real life I'm Mr. Cool  
in afterschool I help them with math  
when I go home I take a quick bath  
and think about all the bad  
things they say about me  
but I don't care what they say  
I know I have a good heart  
so take me if you love me  
cuz I'm a real man  
I love arts

**Keisley Feliciano**  
***Ivelice***

---

This is for my mother.  
She's pretty and all,  
but witty if you're mean.  
She's got brown eyes full of lies.  
She could tie all her lies to fix the peaces.  
Lies about the past  
that last in her head,  
making her sad.  
Yeah she real stylish with them jewels  
but could be childish with them fools.  
Beaming at me and screaming at me.  
Not fun when I run away but  
I could watch her sit in a chair  
with her nice brown hair.  
She works in her car at the shop,  
wanting to go to the bar.  
Dying to have a break,  
take some time off.  
Her boss is a jerk,  
making her work.  
Asking for time off,  
"Boss I need time."

“Girl you lyin” he says.  
You working at the dealer  
this and that day.  
Bad and sad I felt,  
so mom, you’re the bomb,  
take some time off,  
rhyme with me,  
and waste some time with me.

**Keisley Feliciano**

**Love**

---

I look like I’m mad,  
but really I’m just sad.  
“Are you okay?” they ask.  
I say I’m fine but  
really I’m just lyin’  
as I watch the ocean in my mind shine,  
I see you grind,  
dancing like never before.  
Lately I’ve been dyin to say  
that I ride with you,  
or die with you.  
Got your back and never lack.  
I’ll dine with you and dance the  
wine with you.  
I’ll miss you and kiss you,  
just won’t diss you.  
And yeah I’m sad, mad,  
feeling bad.  
You ask why? Oh bye boy.  
You lurk me and hurt me.  
Broke my heart and had a stroke over you.  
To you this is just fine time.  
You’re just another turnt jerk,  
that put my name in the dirt.  
Yeah I tell my friends I’m fine,  
but you know I’m lyin.

**Ana Laura Gonzalez**

**Grandma**

---

I’m outside.  
My grandma  
is looking how I play.  
I run and jump,  
laughing so hard

I have a smile nobody could take.  
All of a sudden  
I see my grandma  
do a face.  
The lights in her face turn off.  
After I blink,  
my grandma is on the floor.  
I'm standing like a statue.  
My tears are falling like a waterfall.  
My lights turn on  
to go inside and tell my mom.  
After ten years,  
I still see you sitting down suffering from pain.  
I'm so sorry.  
I didn't do nothing,  
just stand like a statue.  
I really wish you were here.  
Grandma.

**Angel Henriquez**  
***who I really am***

---

My heart is like a turtle.  
It beats slowly and soft.  
It says to hold on, keep strong.  
The hard shell around it keeps all the  
dark terrible memory inside... All I see  
inside is a dark heavy storm. I  
feel the shadow creeping inside me.  
Shadows surround me.  
Feeling lost and alone.  
My shell cracks and shatters to pieces.  
Letting the storm spread.  
Growing bigger as I try escaping.  
Feeling lost as my heart turns to...  
stone.

**Jonathan Lapo**  
***fake friends...***

---

I would like to send a message  
to all the fake friends,  
they use you like a tool  
and throw you away  
like a piece of crumpled up paper  
without caring,  
picking on you,

embarrassing you,  
try to fight back  
but instead get hated,  
no one cares,  
if I act real I eventually get hated  
with disrespect,  
try to love and get hurt,  
try to care but get humiliated,  
no one knows how I feel,  
how you feel,  
just because I smile  
doesn't mean I'm happy,  
because one smile could hide  
a million tears...

**Maurice Marks**  
***The One I Can Trust***

---

my best friend Mikaila  
whose scarlet red hair  
covers half of her face  
always comforting me  
like an older sister  
when I am having  
a terrible day  
she can be nice  
but if you tick her off  
she will roar at you  
like a lion  
every morning  
she greets me  
“hi!”  
then I greet her  
“what’s up”  
when we have problems  
we fix them  
with laughs  
we trust each other  
look out for each other  
and we solve  
our problems together  
if I  
could go back  
in time and  
change our friendship  
I wouldn't change  
a thing.



Jordin Mendez

**Father**

---

I see you in the video.  
From a wedding  
all tired and happy.  
Old face  
like mine.  
That lady  
old and beautiful  
the second.

My mother  
was the first.  
Sad is  
what you gave her,  
made her collect  
vegetables and rocks from the farm and  
yet you gave her no food in return.

She left you  
but you didn't care.  
You got another.  
I will find you  
and expose what you  
truly are  
a good for nothing  
husband.  
May God  
wish you luck.

Dad.

Jordin Mendez

**Pain**

---

Pain is like a cobra  
it's fast and can hunt down  
its prey quick and painful  
its skin prickly and rough  
its sound a high pitched sound  
irritating and painful  
the stench was like smelling death

Pain isn't a thing you can escape  
Pain will be with you forever  
on the day you sleep and awake

Pain will be beside you  
when your mother dies  
Pain is right next to you  
Pain is a friend  
that you can't stop being with  
you

Destiny Ortiz

***rain coming down from mami's eyes***

---

I was in the living room.  
Shocking looking at the time then the stairs  
when I hear loud stomps and banging.  
My mom screams fear and guilt.  
I run up the stairs with that knot on my throat.  
I see the sharp weapon with skin and dried blood.  
My mother screaming at my sister,  
her eyes watering like a full rain cloud.  
I see my sister's fingers full of blood pouring down.  
"¿Tú 'tá loca?!" my mom says, staring at her arm.  
Two months already I stare at that arm  
and the flash back comes once again.  
I just see and feel all the guilt and the rain coming  
down from mami's eyes.

Leslie Perez

***Teachers***

---

Teachers are so tall  
Sometimes they're bald  
Wearing big glasses  
Screaming to all classes  
"Be quiet" they would say,  
or "Get out of my way."

When they scream at you  
They look into your eyes  
Like eagles looking at their prey  
Sometimes it makes you  
Want to cry  
I want to turn into a chameleon  
And disappear

Miguel Robles

***Tiger's Brain***

---

My brain is a tiger.  
In every direction the tiger moves,  
Sprints and returns to stealth.  
Join the dark side and hunt with  
Me.  
Fire is surrounding the tiger brain  
When looking for his pray.  
Freezing and cold hell also broken and dark.  
The tiger needs help to hunt  
And would enjoy for someone  
To join his side.  
Nothing scares the tiger  
The tiger is like a SAINT.  
The tiger always  
Stays awake never  
Sleep.

Graciela Sanchez

***My Past Life***

---

I remember as a little girl  
playing with my step dad  
moments full of joy  
smiles and laughs  
but by time moments fade away  
he used to come home drunk  
he got mad for anything  
I always had to do things the correct way  
but I was small  
no kid does everything right  
hit after hit after hit  
me crying and saying stop didn't help  
I never liked waking up  
it was like once I step out of bed  
a angry pitbull was there  
just looking at me  
telling me to hurry up!  
I look back and think  
of all the hurtful things  
he put me through  
and I say "it's better to forgive  
and forget than to live  
with that anger inside of me  
for the rest of my life."

Jose Santiago

**My Muscle**

---

My muscle is like a jaguar

Fast

Silent

It's made of muscle cells

The tissue

It wants to be relaxed

Afraid of pain

It wants to be solid as steel

But also stretchy as gum

Mikaila Santamauro

**Best Friend**

---

My best friends.

They mean a lot to me.

Through the struggle I lost all the fakes.

What I have now is real.

No more of the bull\*\*\*\*ers

lying saying they there for you,

got your back

when they actually stabbing it.

What I have now is the only thing I need.

I love them all.

All their flaws and imperfections.

I would lay my life down for them.

Bumps don't mean anything

in the end.

I will always be there.

Whether they want me, or not.

Sorry, you're stuck with me!

Ha Ha!

But even if they don't want me

when it comes down to it I'ma be there

whether we cool or not.

Because that's what friends do.

Forgive.

So if you one of the people I'm talking about,

know that you mean a lot to me.

Yes you, the giant.

Yes you, the person who looks Asian but isn't.

Yes you, the show off.

Yes you, the sneaky one.

Yes you, the sweet random one.

And finally...

yes you who has been there  
from the start.

Gisela M. Solano

***Barbie's lovely everyday routine***

---

Barbie's lovely everyday routine  
As the Barbie wakes up getting up from bed  
Getting ready for her day ahead  
Knowing that she has to force a fake smile  
Trying to look happy  
Not wanting to seek attention to the people around her  
Acting happy and childish the regular her  
But just look in to her dull eyes  
Do you really think she happy???  
There's a rainstorm happening  
Cold rain, dark clouds  
In that rain storm there's a cold heart beating  
With a tear stain face  
Feeling sad, broken and alone  
It's making the Barbie go crazy  
Thinking she alone no one cares about her  
Trying to stay strong just for another day  
Wanting to just go home just to stop from what she's feeling  
Faking a smile in front of her friends so they won't have to worry  
Is her lovely everyday routine...

Lizeth Tenezaca

***Invisible***

---

Never saw you on my birthday  
Even though I wished you were there  
Never hugged  
kissed  
given a present  
Never learned to ride a bicycle  
cause you weren't there to teach me  
missing your hand when I was sick  
Mom working so hard she couldn't come  
Alone in my room  
Thinking about you  
You never picked me up from school  
I dreamed with you But it never came true  
I couldn't see you  
You were transparent  
this happened to me  
like it happened to other kids

You were absent in my life  
no tough feelings  
nor denying I felt a hard pain  
without you  
stepping away  
to become Invisible again.

Jaeline Teoyotl  
**Shy**

---

My shyness is a box  
of crayons  
when you see a blank box  
of crayons you can't see anything  
once you start using the  
crayons you can see the  
true colors.

A familiar hand is  
all it takes to open this  
box of crayons. Once  
it's opened it unleashes  
everything.

All of my creativity  
is put on a piece  
of paper, a sunshine  
rising out of the bright  
blue sky, the pretty  
different bright flowers  
and finally the fresh  
green grass all around.

## POETS OF FAIRHAVEN SIXTH GRADE

Alanis Delect  
**The Lone Wolf**

---

My soul is like a wolf, it cries alone into the night sky  
It runs away to protect herself,  
scars cover her body from the day she defended the ones she loved,  
they showed their true colors,  
those damp lines cover her cheeks where the tears will always.  
It's a daily routine...  
Get up,

Brush your hair,  
Put on your fake smile, and go on with your day  
But all would listen,  
And all would care  
And everyone would remember  
When she rose from her ashes renewed like a phoenix  
With her spirit she made her mark  
And once again she cried alone into the night sky,  
With her beautiful melody, like the dawn of all time.

Evelyn Encalada Naranjo

***My friend***

---

*(Inspired by Ekiwah Adler-Belendez's "After E.A.B.")*

Oh! Janania eres el sol jugando  
con tus suaves manos.  
Quieres ser fuerte,  
para cuando te hagan la  
operación. Aun antes que  
te operaron te estabas  
quejando. Janania eres fuerte y  
tu decías "tengo que ser una  
niña positiva."  
Durmiendo, sin paciencia esperando  
por la operación.  
Llorando por las noches por  
medicina, hospital y siendo  
miedosa. Llorabas porque el cancer le dolía.  
Eres como una roca.  
A veces estás triste  
como una tortuga.  
Ella no espera a saber.  
Ella es bien fuerte, ella  
cuando estaba en su casa preguntaba  
"¿Cuándo me van a sanar?"  
Aun ella llora por las noches.  
Mientras yo, mi mama y mi familia  
le protegemos,  
de sufrir y morir.  
Ella es fuerte y con una buena sonrisa  
feliz, triste, y llorando.  
Decías "Que disfruten la vida  
porque la vida es corta."  
Sonido de llantos.  
Mi deseo es que se cure del cancer.

Noor Fadhil

***my mom's drawing***

---

My mom drawing  
She is really strong  
Drawing everything she sees  
Big hands  
Slow neat lines  
She doesn't smile  
Drawing mostly birds  
Mother bird  
Sometimes outside sometimes inside  
When she's 6 years  
First drawing  
A bear

Carlos Guzman Morales

***my arm***

---

my arm  
is a branch broken from its tree  
it says            put me down, right now  
in winter it sparks when it's frozen  
the water is frozen  
it wants to get out of the water  
I broke it 4 times  
when no one's awake it sneaks around  
it says that it wants to turn normal and real  
I can tell he says            put me down  
and there it goes, away, for ever

Gianna Hoffman

***My Room***

---

My room is slenderman,  
pitch-black, quiet and protective.  
It hurts any intruders by sucking their life force away.  
The ghosts protect my room.  
The ghosts listen to punk-rock.  
The ghosts want  
revenge for the people who didn't care  
for them.  
I try to tell these ghosts  
"Get over it!"  
but they don't listen.



Benjamin Kwakombe

**my nose**

---

My nose is like  
a lion and a wild  
cat. Because  
my nose likes  
to smell fresh  
meat. If my  
nose could speak,  
it could say Hi,  
dear possession.  
Because my nose likes me.  
My nose doesn't like water  
because if I swim I will  
not breathe in the  
water. My nose likes  
fresh weather not  
cold weather.  
If I breathe cold  
weather my nose  
will not survive.  
My nose is afraid of water.  
My nose likes to  
smell fresh food  
and fresh meat.  
It wants to change to a  
mouth because it  
is tired of being a nose.

Lizbeth Maldonado Martinez

**My Heart**

---

My heart is beating every  
second 1 2 3. It beats like  
a lion running for his life.  
My heart gets happiness and  
sadness. Sometimes it  
says I hate you with  
all my heart and sometimes  
it says I love you.  
It pumps out blood. The blood  
looks as dark as red chapstick.

Jaredth Martinez Lucero

***Forgive me piglet***

---

Spinning around,  
like best friends,  
her small pink  
stubs, holding my  
hands, while I hold  
her stubs!

I lay on you all night,  
you're suffocating under  
my big, fat caboose!

I lost you!  
I left you for brand new  
stubs. "I am sorry!"

"Help me! Save me!"  
The new one said.  
LOVE ME!

I imagine you  
with God.

I can see you don't  
need me, as long as you are  
happy! I forgive you.

Jaredth Martinez Lucero

***My Brain***

---

The brain, that grew up with me.  
A shark who loves and can take  
pain.  
Moves like a snake slithering in  
the smooth sand at the bottom of the  
ocean.  
"Give me more painnn!!!!" It says  
all day long.  
A fire growing like sparks  
of fireworks.  
Hotter than summer, with a lake  
of memories.  
Wanting more pain and mess-up  
things.  
Fears normal people and girly girls.

Memories of pain of belts, shoes, air vents,  
punches!  
Night time comes, my brain giving  
me nightmares of monsters, killers,  
and so much more.  
It wants to be the King of all  
WEIRDOS!

**Dalimar Matos Morales**  
***The Mall***

---

*(inspired by "Oda al Mar" by Pablo Neruda)*

Here is the mall  
and the mall is crazy  
but what is the mall?  
In the mall is a place  
where you have fun  
The mall said buy, buy  
and then said eat, eat  
and again said buy, buy  
and again eat, eat  
I can't buy I got no  
money in my pocket  
My pocket is like fries  
without salt  
The mall  
shout and then go  
silent and then shout  
and again go silent  
but then shout again  
The mall push you in  
and you can buy and buy and buy  
and buy lots of things  
until you can't buy any more  
Ohh mall don't kick me out  
I want to enter all your stores  
help me!!  
help me!!  
help me!!  
to enter  
I want to buy a lot  
of things  
Ohh mall we are  
made for each other  
When you empty  
I feel like that

when you feel  
full I am happy!!  
you a place  
where I have  
fun  
Please  
Don't go away!!

**Ursule Mirindi**  
***Kesa Whitaker***

---

You're like the earliest  
flower in spring...  
You bloom so fast it's  
amazing...  
My prayers are always going  
to be for you...  
Don't let go just yet...  
don't take the last breath...  
"Pass on the dance" you tell  
me, and so I will...  
twirl like a tornado in  
your yellow and blue tutu...  
don't let words pass you  
like a silver blade, let  
them pass like the softness  
of your sweet, soft coco  
skin...  
You're my inspiration, never  
will I forget you, you're my  
Bella ballarina,  
stay strong, God has a  
plan for you, just you  
remember bloom like  
the early spring flower  
you are.

Je' tem  
Kesa Whitaker.

Ursule Mirindi

**My heart**

---

My heart  
is like a chihuahua  
it pounds in and out my  
chest  
it barks like someone is  
hitting it, and jumps like a kangaroo  
it's a wild wind, a tornado,  
it yells "get me out, I  
want out," but why  
it will be an explosion if  
I don't get out, Not Fair  
Not Fair Not Fair, it repeats  
Pressure? Why me? I want  
out, a storm is coming.  
Dance, movement, GYM.  
"I need rest," it says.  
Get me out, once again  
it repeats.  
I want out, if not  
a storm is coming a  
Bad Bad one.

Ursule Mirindi

**The Journeys of Life**

---

*(Inspired by Ekiwah Adler-Belendez's "After E.A.B.")*

Oh Ursule, you wind – dancing  
with your pretty long legs,  
it's taken you four years  
to begin ignoring what people have to say about you.  
Even before you started Ballet Haven,  
you were spazzing strong and beautiful,  
impatient for the parents that never show up,  
for flowers,  
spaghetti, brownies and lemons.  
You were thrown out  
right at birth  
like leftovers from last night,  
fell over your own foot, trying to get up again  
like a dodo bird.  
You couldn't wait to know  
that soon everything will be OK  
and you insisted on going up, you feel down

even if lies were told about you.  
As Joelle protected you  
from stumbling and running  
and yelling,  
all you did was say  
“I’ll be OK, I believe in myself.  
No one will bring me down.  
Yes.  
I’m finally free.”

Anlly Ramirez Sandoval  
***La Esquina de La Tienda***

---

Aquí en la esquina de la tienda  
y cuanta tienda  
la gente entra a cada rato  
dice  
dame esto ahora  
dame este dinero que  
vale mucho. ¿Por qué  
las personas les gusta mucho el dinero?  
Porque puede comprar muchas  
cosas.  
Hay que comprar  
más, más y más, no  
puedo estar quieto cuando  
no tengo dinero.  
También y si logro convencer  
a las personas cuando  
me dan dinero  
quiero dinero  
dinero, dinero, no tengo nada  
para comprar comida comida  
dinero dinero. Dinero es para ver  
dinero es para gastar  
hasta que no puedo  
comprar nada porque el dinero es  
como una mariposa. Ohh tienda  
dame dinero. Mi bolsillo no me da  
dinero para comprar.

Valentina Rodriguez Aguado

**Mis Manos**

---

mis manos me gustan  
y se parecen mucho a las arañas  
porque pueden caminar en  
círculos no exactamente pero  
si ella pudiera decir algo  
diría que no  
la maltrate tanto y también que me  
ayuda hacer muchas cosas  
como las que hago siempre  
y también se parecería al  
viento porque algunas veces  
puede volar y se puede  
hacer transparente  
algunas veces son como serpientes  
pueden coger y comer y traer y  
muchas  
cosas mas

Jiaqi Wang

**Lazy Person**

---

*(Inspired by Ekiwah Adler-Belendez's "After E.A.B.")*

Oh, lazy boy  
you are a cloud – complaining with your small tired mouth  
it's taken you 1 hour  
to begin to work  
Even before you start writing the first nonfiction with Mrs. Mendoza  
you were whispering  
working hard  
and trying  
studying  
impatient for the future  
for bear  
cookie  
detective  
and machine  
You were working hard  
like a scientist  
But this caused you to be lazy  
like a pig  
You couldn't wait to know  
how to work and study really hard  
and you insisted on studying hard

even if tired and bored  
As Ms. Anderson protects you from bullying and attacking  
write, read, think  
and success  
You said  
“I look like a cloud  
smooth and untouchable”  
Do-do  
type...

## Jiaqi Wang ***Sorry, Earth***

---

Dear earth  
our home  
I want to ask you for forgiveness  
we have been wasting  
oils  
waters  
and foods on the earth  
since there were people in the world.  
Because of people wasting things on the earth  
the environment  
has been  
destroyed.  
I was wasting the things on the earth too.  
Once,  
I forgot to turn off the water latch  
when I went out with my mom.  
Much water flowed out,  
flowed out,  
and I did not  
even know.  
When I arrive at home,  
I saw that many water had been wasted.  
I really wanted to say “sorry earth”  
at that time.  
I wanted the earth  
to forgive me  
and other people  
in the world.  
NOW,  
the world is extremely dirty.  
I want you  
the earth



clean yourself  
and give us a good environment to survive.  
We will  
use water as little as possible  
And we'll  
keep oceans clean  
And our environmentalists are investigating  
new ways  
to keep the earth  
our home  
clean.  
Earth!  
Please forgive our sin.  
Thank you.

## POETS OF FAIRHAVEN EIGHTH GRADE

Kevin DeJesus

### ***Football Personality***

---

My good personality  
is a NFL football field,  
a big enormous full of people coliseum.  
It smells like a Puerto Rico mountain top grass field,  
with people cheering all over the place  
because I helped an injured person get  
back in the game,  
rain pouring down  
on Sundays the Giants win  
because I get in the game  
and tackle everybody in my way.  
I got a big personality  
like a football field.

Kevin DeJesus

### ***Goal Reacher***

---

(Inspired by Ekiwah Adler-Belendez's "After E.A.B.")  
I'm a cheetah – playing piano  
with my fast, long hands.  
It's taken me 3 months  
to begin my practice.  
Even before my audition,  
I was shouting Yes and #1,  
Learning, impatient for reading and writing,

the keys of the piano,  
the sound of it, the touching, the new store smell.  
I was moving to the U.S.A.  
I felt like I was lonely.  
I left all my friends in Puerto Rico.  
It felt like nobody liked me.  
I couldn't read and write until I came to the U.S.A.  
and I imagined myself on a stage, famous,  
even if I don't have time with my family.  
My mom protected me  
from death and loneliness.  
Making new friends,  
allowing people into my life, forgiving  
and patient,  
I said "It's important to sprint fast like a cheetah, but is  
also important to go long distances like a bird.  
Cooooo.  
Meet the destination."

### **Mahaghany Hunter** ***can you taste it?***

---

You're little  
Very little  
And you live on my tongue  
And when I eat you always get some  
Give me this and that!  
You so demanding  
Purring like a cat  
When it was so satisfying  
I remember when you wanted some  
Hot coffee  
Do you remember?  
How could you forget?  
You ask Please just take one sip  
After that, grey clouds form  
Thundering and lightning occurred  
Next time I ate it tasted like nothing  
My dear taste buds you're gone  
How am I going to taste any more  
Days went by  
And the clouds disappear  
And the thundering and lightning went away  
Taste buds you have learned your lesson  
And hopefully now you're here to stay

Mahaghany Hunter  
*Hungry Soul*

---

Now and then  
STOP!  
And hear  
The silent moans from  
Hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of miles  
North  
East  
South  
West  
I wondered how could they rest?  
Laying on bones and flesh  
At night hear them call  
Yell  
Plead  
“Please give me something to eat”  
But  
They don't know that they're gone  
Left out of their earth coat  
Leaving my heart into tears  
Because just last week, I threw away peas  
Because I don't like the taste of them  
But they  
They would kill for them  
So when I hear them moan  
I can feel them looking at me like a queen on the throne  
And so  
That reminds them  
That they're just one hungry soul  
Not able to even get a supper  
That I ungratefully left alone  
People like me hide behind the truth  
That starving ghost could have been you  
But that starving ghost would have love being  
You  
So those hungry souls  
Say goodbye  
Hoping, crossing their fingers  
That there's food on the other side  
Now  
Stop and hear  
There is now silence in the air

Thalya Lugo

**Cell Walls**

---

His brother was locked up  
He, himself was scared  
No one to run with  
No one to hide from the cops  
He felt it was unfair  
He felt used and betrayed  
So he wrote a letter saying  
Dear Brother,  
Your influencing my closest cousins  
Into the Boom Boom BANG life,  
Just like the devil  
You might hear it so many times,  
“Stop, please stop, I love you baby boy”  
From our mother shouting  
Over little siblings crying  
All you do is smile with a smile  
So disgraceful

Don't you care about the memories we had  
Not running from cops  
But I guess you don't care  
All you do is think that you'll be shining  
Flying, getting somewhere  
Bro you have to stop lying

But you write me a letter saying  
“I'm doing better”  
I then sit down, & cry...  
I knew you must've been dying  
Because all you do is “Gang Life” the  
Boom Boom, and Bangs,  
The drive by killing your brother on the street  
Because he's a different KIND?

Every night in New Haven you heard  
Boom Boom Bang  
Now every night in the hole you hear  
Boom Boom Bang  
Does it make a difference?  
But this goes out to you...  
Only if you can hear me through  
Them cell walls  
Might as well call it home...

Yeimy Morales

**My Brain**

---

My Brain

Like a Lion it roars

In slow motion changing its surroundings

We're all the same

So why do we confront each other?

Imagine our earth with rainbows and marshmallows

Warm and sweet, in those days...

When I was young

But now its fire red inside

Wanting to make a change

My thoughts want peace and justice

Afraid? Yes of injustice

I can become homeless from night to morning

Isn't it scary?

Been born in a different country

Is not a reason

To not be permitted

Into a different one

From what I seen

My family

They were forced

To more out of that one safe place

They had

Until others made it into the worst

Unfairness is all there's left

Over there

And my parents

They weren't with me

Why? Because them

Stupid papers.

Feeling unsafe knowing your loved ones

Have taken a risk

Leenecy T. Rivera

**Chains n' Flames**

---

Flamin' words

In the streets, in front of churches, and on TV

Comin' like an asteroid

People protestin', discriminatin'

Hatin' on lesbians and gays

This needa stop

It's how they feel

N' ya say it's a sin  
N' "God hates them for it"  
But God don't hate the sinners  
Just their sins  
He forgives n' forgets  
He loves us cuz we all his children  
N' what ya' doin' is wrong as well  
'Cuz what happened to don' have hatred in ya hearts  
This is what's tearin' this world apart  
First wit' the slaves lockin' them up in chains  
Then hatin' on immigrants jus' 'cuz they  
Don' wanna have their life endin' in flames  
Wanna work hard for a difference in their lives  
A change  
Now this?  
Everyone's to blame  
We sit here talkin' n' complainin' bout change  
But do you see anyone who actually tryin' to  
Make change?  
We all have sins  
But we needa separate the hatred  
Outa our hearts  
Like how an earthquake changes  
It moves the plates in the earth  
N' tears it apart  
So yeah we all got somethin'  
Wrong wit us  
But aint that why Jesus came down  
From heaven to help the haters n' peeps  
Wit' greed  
'n why he helped Adam 'n Eve  
Got didn't make us perfect  
So next time think about what your doin'  
'Cuz do you really wanna have hatred in ya hearts  
When ya stop breathin'?

Leenecy T. Rivera  
***Irresistible Aroma***

---

It was there  
Right on the swaying silky sheets of the hard wooden kitchen table  
I promised that I'll stop  
But the irresistible aroma of the chicken nuggets  
Sizzling with juicy brown mouth-watering BBQ  
I couldn't resist  
I flashed like a famined lioness

Chasing an antelope in the humid Savanna  
And Secretly devoured three of the Juicy flavors  
Dancing on my taste buds  
But all of a sudden I hear the spine tingling furious  
Voice of a starving and skinny 5-year old kid  
That is looking for revenge  
My little brother stormed in my room  
“Who ate my nuggets!!!” he said  
A rush of butterflies swarmed in my stomach  
And a sword stabbed at my lungs  
But I wasn’t gonna let him know it was me  
So I said  
“Chicken nuggets??? Oh you mean the ones on the table  
I saw the dog eat them.”  
He ran faster than light  
To find the victim who he believes ate them  
And he is eager to start a fight  
I know what I did wasn’t right  
But hey would you say you did it?

After a year a sister cannot sleep  
‘Cuz she is waitin’ for her brother  
to find the last piece of the puzzle  
I’m waitin’ for him, with the swarm of butterflies in my stomach  
And the sword stabbed at my lungs  
And probably so is my dad’s pit-bull  
And the helpless chicken nuggets  
And animals I promised I wouldn’t eat  
But ended up eating them anyways  
And if he finds out that I did eat it  
By the end of this poem  
Hopefully he would laugh his lungs out  
Instead of poisoning me  
Like a scorpion looking for revenge

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