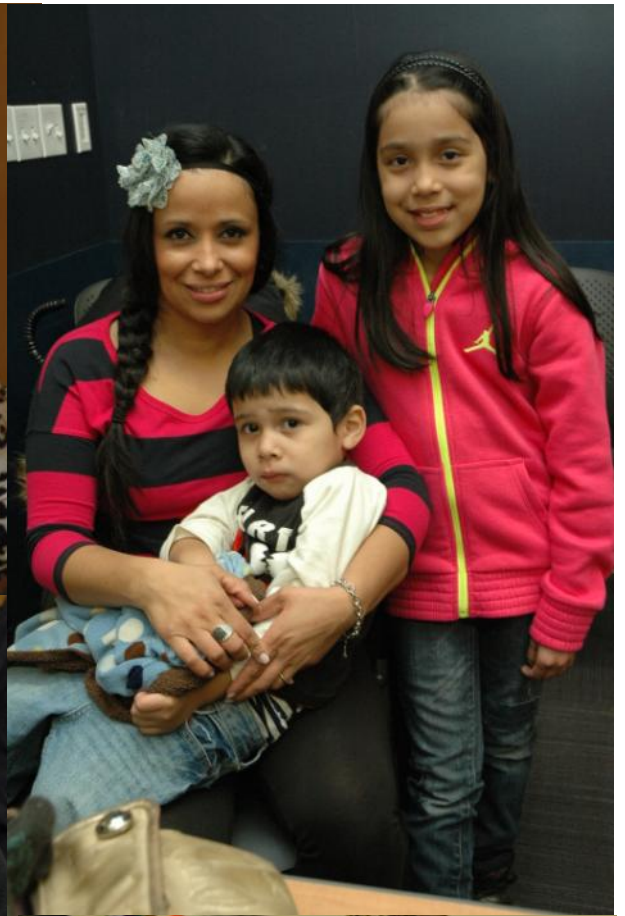


ODYSSEY ORACLE



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CELEBRATING POETRY

Spring

By Jamie Lovely

It's finally spring
I found myself
back in the garden
dirt under my fingernails
sweat on my brow
excitement in my soul
of feeling alive
happiness in my heart
of having the hope
to continue to grow



The Sun

By LaPrice Black

I looked for the Sun to shine on me,
Wanting it to hit my heart with its great shine.
I said, "Sun, what you have for me?"
The Sun replied, "I need your rays on me."
I didn't have the colors of the rainbows,
I scrambled around, wondering where I should go.
I stopped and smiled at the Sun, and he said,
"Well done."



What If

By Derick McCray

What if I was broke
Would you give me a loan
What if I was homeless
Would you give me a place to lay my head
What if I was lost
Would you help me find my way
What if I was hurt
Would you mend my wound
What if I needed a friend
Would you turn your back
What if you didn't see me again
Would you wonder what happened
What if I didn't exist
Would you remember
What if
What if you were in my shoes
Would you want me to turn a blind eye
Now ask yourself
What if.



Spring

By Milli Lau

Cold-winds over, warm-winds come,
Flowers coming into bloom;
Snow stops, rain starts,
Grass growing long and green;
Grey-sky disappears, blue-sky restores,
Birds flying back to the sky.



Dancer

By Vanessa Lopes Maia

I am a dancer
I feel the passion of love
through the beats of my heart.
My feet move to the rhythm of my soul
I only hear the drums
The rest of the world becomes silent
My heart screams
Only then everyone can hear
the passion I feel for dancing.

Class Metaphor**By Lucia Chikowero**

We are a chain, strong and beautiful,
 Hooked piece by piece, loop by loop,
 Made of different textures and strengths,
 Bonded in a unique, artistic manner.
 If one loop fails, the whole chain falls apart.
 If one hurts, the whole chain feels the impact.
 We are a unique chain looped together by Odyssey.

**Song of Vanessa****By Vanessa Lopes Maia**

I'm an overcomer.
 Life brings tears but I wash them away with a smile.
 There are days of darkness, but my sunshine appears.
 In the days of solitude I do not fear
 For there is my God always near.
 My heart aches at times, but love comforts my soul.
 The obstacles on the path make me stumble, but if I fall
 I will be sure to get up and brush away the dust
 Perseverance is a must in my vocabulary list.
 Nothing gets in the way of a determined woman.
 Nothing gets in the way of an overcomer.

Song of LaTrease**By LaTrease Hibbler**

Goddess of Earth, wind, fire, and water
 She talks and I sing
 She sighs universally and I follow,
 Just as the revolutionary butterfly
 I've established.

Our energy impacts everything—
 Simply today, tomorrow, and the day to be.
 I allow the best of both worlds
 As dual senses emerge.
 We do not need to protect ourselves
 From anyone but ourselves.
 So instead of waiting for a good day
 To come around,
 Spirits of Earth, wind, and water
 Represent life. Good God morning or
 Good morning God? . . .



Inflammable

By Michael Martin

It incinerates all mind, body, spirit,
and destroys everything in it.
There's no hope in sight,
only the engulfing suffering of my plight.

This fire trap of torched turmoil
has fused dreams into despair
and joyfulness into loneliness.

Unable to avoid the incendiary,
I've succumbed to the device
of a tortured quandary.
Mind burning with misery,
heart aching in agony.
Between the two, I cannot fathom
their synergy.

The inferno of sorrow gives a brutal infuriating blow.
As the temperature exceeds Kelvin, I question
am I really among the living?

Drenched in the combustible firestorm while
becoming the flamed fury foredoomed,
With no one to blame for these charred remains,
I start to lift the slain from the ashes of pain.



The Second of April, Bittersweet

By Simone Lawrence

It's sad to say with just five days
we all will leave this room,
I have to say I'll miss this place
with every thought that blooms.
I can't believe my class will leave
with memories glowing like the moon.
It seems as if this Odyssey trip
has helped me change my tune.
I'll cry for the year, it is that clear
My love I cannot hide.
To miss this place leaves this bitter taste
through everything inside.
For I have learned myself through books
and talks of life's affairs.
Yet will leave the biggest part of me
for all of you to share
So as we leave this room let's cry without a care.
But what is true is this new family of ours
Blossoms with love we all will share.

The Mist**By Kunga Chokten**

A seed in the water, they thought I would never grow
 And in the mist, I was lost.
 Betrayed by the mind, I left my heart to sorrow,
 And in turn, it seems I was crossed.
 Oh, how I've fallen, with no one in sight.
 The mist has risen, days turned to night.
 Blistered feet leave me lying on my back,
 And to the gods I stare.
 With a heavy heart, I cannot stand,
 And to try would be more than I dare.
 As my eyes weaken and my view fades shorter,
 A tear falls past my ear,
 And as fast as I've lost, and as quiet as I dream,
 I open my eyes to see the mist has cleared.

Odyssey Banyan Tree**By Milli Lau**

Odyssey class is a banyan tree.
 It opens like an umbrella during bad weather to cover us;
 It shares soil and water with us when we need;
 When we get sick, it gives us support;
 When we feel sad, it gives us comfort;
 When we have a goal, it helps us achieve it;
 Before we get lost, it gives us direction;
 Before we fall down, it gives us a hand;
 Before we feel despair, it gives us hope.

Odyssey Net**By Nyagoa Hoth**

Our class is like a net,
 Woven together,
 Each part selected very carefully,
 Based on strength and potential.
 Connected, we are strong,
 But if one of us happens to fall,
 We will catch them.

Charlienne Takes Flight**By Charlienne Cotto**

I am a butterfly in progress
 I am metamorphosing
 I am a larva growing to a caterpillar
 After some incubation
 I will rise as a glorious butterfly
 I will fly high above all adversity
 And all poverty
 Finally reaching my beautiful graceland.

Ferris Wheel**By Christopher Bester**

My life is a Ferris wheel.
 I have ups and I have downs.
 Sometimes I stop,
 But I'll still come around.



Graduation Poem**By Janet Shelton**

You have seen me cry
 But turned a blind eye
 You heard me scream
 But it fell on deaf ears
 You have seen me torn
 But failed to help mend me
 You have seen me lost
 But failed to help me find my way
 You have been told of my darkness
 But failed to provide any light
 You have seen me at my weakest hour
 But failed to offer strength



Now,
 I have seen you cry
 And not once turned a blind eye
 I have heard you scream
 And asked you what's wrong
 I have seen you torn
 And I mended you back together
 I have seen you lost
 And I helped you find your way
 I have been told of your darkness
 And light I provided
 I have seen you at your weakest hour
 And I provided you strength
 Yet funny how it goes

That I have always been there to see you
 But never have you been able to see me
 But it's OK, it's fine with me
 Because on September 4th, 2013 an Odyssey I have begun
 From Thoreau to Socrates to Whitman and Hughes
 Along with unmentioned names
 You wouldn't even know
 My life sailed
 My tears are happy now
 My screams are of joy
 And my direction is no longer lost
 Because the darkness I was in
 I finally turned on the light
 Today is my day
 Today is my time
 Through all of life's struggles
 Some before and some encountered along the way
 I am only docked for a short moment
 With friends, professors and family
 To receive my UW Odyssey Certificate
 I worked so hard to achieve
 Once I'm done and all laughter and tears subside
 I will set sail again
 On my next journey
 Because what I have learned is
 That I and only I,
 Again, I and only I, control the HELM
 Of my Odyssey

Candle**By Starr Miles**

Sweet scents of life,
 I have given you to smell all my loves,
 my children, my mother, brothers, sister, and father,
 all that I hold dear.
 I am a large round candle made from many churns,
 but I am mounted, solid, and strong.
 Come nearer and feast on my muted colors
 that you see on my surface and deep within me.
 Come warm your soul in my flickering flames
 of blue, green, and gold shaking and weakening,
 and then standing bold.
 Can you see my tears dripping down
 from the heat and the pains
 of life, choices, and indecision?
 Yes, see my full robust tears frozen in time
 down the side of me where you all can see
 that someone or something has truly hurt me
 over and over, can you not see?
 But tell me, have you EVER seen a candle like me,
 so round and bold? Now please come nearer
 and press your fingers here into the wick of my soul,
 and my heart deep inside beneath my warm sticky wax;
 now you share this part of me. Look, watch the wax
 as it quickly dries on your fingertips.
 Now take this part of me with you, smell my sweet scents,
 gaze upon my muted colors and beautiful flames.
 Please, now gently blow out my flames,
 and I will give you a puff of white smoke.
 Look as it turns my flickering lights into gentle black cinders
 silently floating up towards my strength, my guidance,
 my beautiful black ancestors—my mother, grandmothers,
 aunts, great-aunts, and great-grandmothers,
 the matriarchs of my family, all who made me
 who I am and who keep me strong.

**Destiny****By Mallory Carter**

I used to be a one-way street,
 that always put others before myself.
 I always had many life issues that got
 in the way of my goals and future.
 But today I am a navigation system
 that has a destination to get to!
 Yes, I am still a loving and caring person,
 but I have to put my future first
 because if I don't put myself first, who will?
 As I travel to my destination
 there are many potholes, road blocks,
 U-turns, and Do Not Enter signs.
 Instead of stopping, I just reroute
 and go around all those signs,
 and deal with them as they come.
 Lack of sleep
 Lack of faith
 Lack of support
 Overworked,
 many motherly duties,
 No me time.
 One thing I know is that
 my navigation system will
 lead me to my destiny!

Who Am I?**By Lucia Chikowero**

I look at my husband's face and ask him who I am.
 He looks back at me and straight into my eyes
 with love and admiration and says,
 "Sweetie, you are who you are."
 From a distance my two cute kids
 run around and giggle, calling "Mum!"
 Confusion and terror written all over my face,
 I dash to the mirror.
 "Mirror, mirror, who am I?" I ask.
 Looking back at me,
 I see a set of warm, beautiful brown eyes,
 curly black hair, fairly big white teeth,
 curly full lips, and a light chocolate brown skin,
 accompanied by a lovely fading smile.
 Wait a minute, is that who I am?
 I look deeper in those brown eyes,
 searching high and low for who I am.



Through those brown eyes, oh yes,
 I find who I am.
 I am that volcano waiting to erupt,
 A tigress waiting to pounce on this unjust world,
 I am that smart, intelligent, and confident girl the world is waiting for.
 I am that brave and courageous woman that man, woman, and child are waiting upon,
 waiting for me to come and rescue them from the wrath and jaws of this unfair world.
 I am the great one who has waited for decades upon decades to discover herself,
 only to be discovered by Odyssey.

**This Is Me!****By Jackieta Fairley**

I've been walking this catwalk for 31 years.
 I'm aggressive in mothering my cubs.
 I'm a shaman in this world of pain and sickness.
 I'm a perfect wing on the back of a Victoria Secret model.
 I'm the knowledgeable one just waiting behind bars to be set free.
 I'm dark and mysterious as I stalk my education to a better living.
 I'm This and This is Me!

Pearl**By Vanessa Lopes Maia**

I am a precious pearl
 who lives in a dark shell in a deep ocean
 yet to be found, yet to be rescued.
 I may seem so fragile inside this shell
 in the pity of my loneliness.
 I need the chance to be brought
 from the depths of the ocean
 to the sunrays of light.
 Only then will I be able to shine.
 Only then will my treasure be known.

Blue Eyes**By Christopher Bester**

Your crystal blue eyes remind me of the ocean.
 They are like a secret potion.
 It's a beautiful thing when you've awoken.
 I know if eyes could speak yours would have spoken.
 Your diamond blue eyes should forever be open.

Song of Milli**By Milli Lau**

Appearances are colorful, but are puzzling, are deceptive,
 Silence is dreary, but is comfortable, is peaceful,
 Speech is amusing, but is disturbing, is harming,
 Work is arduous, but is interesting, is meaningful;

I can't see in the darkness, but I can feel,
 I can't hear in the valley, but I can know,
 I can't speak through my tongue, but I can express,
 I can't do without my heart.

On Fire**By Jaquan Fleming**

I am fire
 Slow to start
 But sometimes a spark
 Will ignite to a blazing inferno.

Never Forget the Fallen**By Shiquille Ward**

I wake up every morning
 Thank God for another day
 Got some guys that didn't make it
 So we celebrate
 Enjoy life
 Spread love
 And just embrace
 If it's a dream you been sitting on
 Grab a pen
 Grab some paper
 And just sing along
 Be happy
 Be grateful
 Be thankful
 Because remember
 Trayvon would be happy
 To trade places.

Rhapsody in Bloom**By Jamie Hanson**

My soul croons a
 Rhapsody in bloom, my
 Bleeding heart
 I wear on my sleeve.



Song of Kelli**By Kelli Green**

I must get better
How will I ever be able to do anything
I can't accomplish nothing
It's very frustrating
How come everyone else has it
How do I get it
I must get better I say
I must get more confident in myself

The Odyssey Experience**By Mallory Carter**

At first there were 30 different reasons
But today there's only one reason
30 different attitudes
30 different likes, dislikes
30 different people
30 different stories
Over the time we have all come together
No one would have thought that possible
Feeling the love and support of others
Knowing that you are not alone
Sometimes just seeing another's face
Or hearing another's voice
Brings life into our lives
We start out as strangers
but now are all a family
striving for the same purpose out of life.
It's amazing how 30 people
Have become 1.
I call that the experience of Odyssey.

Life's Odyssey**By Derick McCray**

Life's Odyssey
A journey of the unknown
Life hands you many different missions
Which path do you choose
Comes full circle into your own.
Within each decision you make
There are consequences and repercussions
What defines you for who you are
To learn not only from your achievements
Also the many mistakes
Now take these words
Hold them near
Analyze the pros and cons in life
Before you make your decision
Always always think twice
For life's Odyssey
Is a journey of the unknown
Embrace your fears.

Bleeding Heart**By Isis Bernard**

I am a bleeding heart
that is only planted once
and blooms every spring,
no matter how many times
you may try and rip out the roots.





Procrastination

By Kunga Chokten

Procrastination is like a disease.

If you don't do something about it right away,
it will only get worse.

I always put the hardest thing off for last
and in turn never get around to it.

I can avoid the word "procrastination" completely
if I just allow myself to not fall behind.

One of the best feelings
is actually getting caught up with everything.
It's a huge weight off your shoulders.

Procrastination is the lack of determination.

Sometimes you just need some gasoline
thrown on your motivation to get things done.

Song of Michael

By Michael Martin

I hear the melody of myself.

It soothes and is an enriching tool.

As I'm tuned in and listening
to everything around me,

I relish the love of every moment.

I am grateful for everything
and I will not regret anything.

The enjoyment I receive daily
is a beautiful blissful satisfaction.

Musically imported from Detroit, Motown, my town,
my mental motor runs on high octane knowledge,
which drives my mind to happiness.

I've never heard this rhythm before;
however, I'd love to hear lots more.



When I'm Ready

By Kelli Green

I thought I needed to know

I thought I needed to do it now

Better sooner than later, they say

But I learned something today

I don't need to know

I don't need to do it now

I do have time to make it there

And get to where I want to go

I'll do it when I'm ready and
comfortable.



Song of Mallory

By Mallory Carter

As May starts to come,

I have realized I have achieved

one of my goals called Odyssey.

Odyssey has changed me for

the better. Through the

long nights, busy weeks,

three kids, and working,

I feel blessed through it all.

I put my mind on something

and have accomplished it.

It wasn't easy, but I was

determined to succeed.

Without Odyssey, I would just be

another stressing mother,

working many long hours

without a clue of my future.

Thanks to Odyssey, I am

a proud, happy mother of three

working my way to getting

my nursing degree

starting this fall.

Broken**By Jeannine Shoemaker**

Sometimes I feel broken,
 a shattered part of myself,
 other times I feel strong as an ox,
 and no one can break me.
 That is when I'm a mom
 fighting for my children
 and I won't let nothing stop me.
 But when I'm down
 and feel as if I can't go on,
 that is the broken, shattered part
 of me.
 That's when I can't fix my mom
 or give part of myself to do so.
 I can't take her pain away
 or help her as she struggles to breathe . . .
 I wonder which one will be the last.
 I'm broken because there's nothing I can do.
 I offered one of my lungs, but the doctor said
 I could not be a candidate,
 plus it's too late for that.
 I feel broken when I feel the sharp pain
 going through my back
 and I feel like giving up.
 But wait—
 I know that I have more to give.
 That is who I am, I'm a helper, a giver,
 and I can't give up. I'm a strong woman inside,
 and someone out there needs me.
 Where is the glue to put me back together?
 I can do this, I can go on

**Questions****By Robert James**

Questions are my friends
 A fine place to begin
 I know not where they end
 They teach me again and again
 Questions have a friend
 Some assume it is the end
 I say to that there is reply
 Received we wonder why
 Together
 To find a place
 Better
 Than yours or mine

**Nigger****By Robert James**

Nigger! Nigger! Nigger!
 Does it offend?
 Well, I hope so
 cause it don't hurt Black people no mo'.
 So what's the real reason
 people hate the word so?
 perhaps they know
 guilt
 unaddressed won't go.

Change**By LaPrice Black**

Change is not a circle
 Change is a distinctive way
 Change can be for better or worse
 Which one will you choose?



The Truth**By Toshiana Northington**

My heart has been broken
 I know what it feels like
 My heart has been broken
 That's why I hold it tight

I have had men cheat on me
 I have had people lie to me
 I will not let anyone else bring me down
 I'm gonna do me

My heart has been broken
 I know what it feels like
 My heart has been broken
 That's why I hold it tight

Family say they will be on your side
 But talk about you behind your back
 Friends say they will be your friends forever
 But as time goes by, we will see about that
 Now let's be real, only you can be true to you
 That's why I'm gonna make it, do what it do

My heart has been broken
 I know what it feels like
 My heart has been broken
 That's why I hold it tight

Lord has been on my side through thick and thin
 Lord, you know I am truly sorry for my sins
 I have made a change for the better
 I have made a change for my kids
 I have made a change for my future
 Cornealius, I have changed,
 I know you are pleased

I say I have made a change for the better
 I have made change for my kids
 I have made a change for my future
 Cornealius, my brother, you know what it is

My heart has been broken
 I know what it feels like
 My heart has been broken
 That's why I hold it tight

Song of Zeynab**By Zeynab Ahmed**

I am thoughtful and repulsed.
 i wonder if this world will ever find peace.
 I hear the cries of orphaned children.
 I look for light in a time of darkness.
 I am thoughtful and repulsed.

I pretend I am OK with the world.
 I feel angry that nobody worries about those children.
 I worry they won't be rescued.
 I cry thinking of their pain.

I am thoughtful and repulsed.



Not a Machine**By Michael Martin**

I am not a **Machine**, built to build
 I am not a **Machine**, programmed to perform certain tasks
 I am not a **Machine**, calculating and solving
 I am not a **Machine**, analyzing and estimating
 I am not a **Machine**, completely dependent
 I am not a **Machine**, awaiting commands

**Song of Amber****By Amber McCarley**

I am a mother, a sister, a daughter, a cousin, and
 so much more.
 I am a hard worker.
 I am a Nurse Assistant and I do catering.
 I am from Buffalo, New York.
 I lived in Charlotte, North Carolina for four years.
 I moved to Madison, Wisconsin,
 and have lived here for four years now.
 I am quiet but can get loud.
 I am very independent and strong.
 I love who I am and will not do too much changing.

Rainbow of Life**By Alisha Taylor**

Racism is a raging red fire that kills dreams.
 Optimists believing an orange will heal all.
 Yuppies flagging down yellow cabs in order
 to make the best teams.
 Girls competing with eyes of green only to
 be crowned prom queen.
 Boys trying hard to fit in so that the blues of
 adolescence offers them a plea.
 Individuals insisting on stopping to watch
 the indigo bunting's scene.
 Victory has arrived when we live to see
 another violet sunset.

**Odyssey****By Shiquille Ward**

My odyssey can never end.
 Every day a brand new odyssey begins.
 An odyssey is a journey,
 A journey of self.
 Self-preservation is the main goal,
 But on this odyssey "all that glitters" ain't gold.
 I've looked the devil square between the eyes
 And continued to sip my coffee, didn't blink an eye.
 I've flown with the butterflies high in the sky
 As I continue on this journey
 I hope to only gain not lose,
 For an odyssey is a game,
 A game I can't lose.

Song of Alisha**By Alisha Taylor**

My song is often one with little to no words
 One of remembrance of a simpler time in my life
 One of my younger years of waking up to the smell of morning dew
 and the way it sounds as it whistles through the curtains of my cracked window
 I enjoy the sounds of autumn leaves clapping from the highest tree tops
 to the beautiful sight of leaves dancing on the ground
 To just lie outside and try to find the brightest star
 or the nights my family watched the earth's magical light show
 The taste of catching raindrops on my tongue
 was like quenching my thirst with nature's tears

**I Am****By Robert James**

I am the child of Why
 bred never to cry.
 I am the "Stroll"
 all the vices and hustles to behold
 Heavy hearts, dirty minds, clean souls.
 I am a different kind
 Our struggle instilled in me.
 I am an expression of possibility
 Deferred!
 I am Blaxpoitation, cultural
 misrepresentation
 I am genocide only the strong survive
 I am the reason for eugenics
 And Planned Parenthood clinics
 I am always forgotten and never heard
 When I cry out it's deemed absurd
 Still I try
 Without knowing why
 Because
 I am the child
 Who could NOT cry.



My song is an instrumental because words
 would only drown out the vast sounds
 that Mother Earth offers my senses

Song of Lucia**By Lucia Chikowero**

In a time like this I celebrate life.
 With one parent gone while you are little
 When you still need her to help you bathe
 When you can't even tie your own shoes
 When you still need her to take you to school
 and even teach you to write your own name
 When you need her to gently guide you
 around the gorges of life
 In a time like this I celebrate life.

Life has a way of turning things around.
 Left young, beaten down, dead ends ahead
 has been part of my journey.
 I have fallen down several times
 but I have never stayed there
 I am now a mother as well,
 gently shepherding my own flock,
 giving them what I never had.
 Priceless to see beautiful smiles light up their faces.
 When I look in the mirror I see my mother
 giving me the assurance that I am doing great.
 In a time like this I celebrate life.

Lion**by Christopher Bester**

I am a lion, king of the pride.
 I call the shots like Simba.
 I'm always sharp like my teeth.
 I am an oversized wildcat with a fierce roar.
 I am all mighty to the cubs
 and a safeguard.
 I stand tall towering over my enemies.
 I expose weaknesses
 and attack at will.
 I am a lion.

Song of Latrice**By Latrice White**

When I look at myself
 I think of midnight,
 such a dark complexion.
 When I look up high
 and see the stars shine so bright,
 I feel that's my life so bright.
 So many changes come and take your faith,
 but I still have faith.
 Once the stars fade over the night
 to shift to the morning,
 I can't wait until the night falls again
 to shine so bright.

I Am a Mother**By Jackieta Fairley**

. . . At the first year I thought that none of this was for me.
 Oh, my God, had the stork laid the baby on the wrong door step.
 As time passed, I began to feel this feeling of importance.
 It became more apparent that M-O-T-H-E-R was Jackieta
 And Jackieta was M-O-T-H-E-R.
 This being a mother ain't no easy street,
 But it's my street.
 It has twists and turns, curves, hills, plateaus,
 stop signs, flashing yellow lights, green lights,
 roses, daisies, tears, laughter,
 headaches, heartaches, and pain.
 But through it all, a M-O-T-H-E-R I remain.

Zip It Up**By Starr Miles**

Sweet 'n Sassy Missy Starr,
 Tell me who you really are?
 Can you learn a little more?
 Open up a few closed doors?
 What or who's waiting on the other side?
 Leave your worries in the back,
 Matter-of-fact zip them up inside your backpack.
 Once you step inside this class,
 your odyssey begins.
 Actor, professor, poet,
 historian, author, singer,
 soak in all their gifts of knowledge . . .
 Look through that looking glass
 that reflects who you really are inside.
 Learn what gifts your classmates can provide
 of knowledge, pain, hardship,
 perseverance and strength . . . family.
 Missy Starr, zip it all up inside
 that backpack you carry on
 Odyssey graduation day
 with joy, happiness, and pride.



EXPLORING EMILY DICKINSON

#1292

*Yesterday is History,
'Tis so far away—
Yesterday is Poetry—
'Tis Philosophy—*

*Yesterday is mystery—
Where it is Today
While we shrewdly speculate
Flutter both away*



She is saying that yesterday is gone and you cannot get it back. She is also saying that if we worry about the days going/ coming, we will lose the joy of being here.

I chose this poem because it is a reminder to live life and not to worry about what I did or what I should be doing. Live for today and enjoy your time on earth. (**Simone Lawrence**)

#1287

*In this short Life
That only lasts an hour
How much—how little—is
Within our power*



This poem means life is short, and it is here not for long. It describes how we have enough power to do a lot within this little bit of time. There is a lot that can be done and accomplished in this little bit of time. I think this is saying you have little time but so much to fulfill.

(**Toshiana Northington**)

#361

*What I can do—I will—
Though it be little as a Daffodil—
That I cannot—must be
Unknown to possibility—*



This poem means that a person will help if they are able. Even though that person may not have much, they will help with what they have. Possibility imagines how much help that person would love to give if they had the world.

(**Toshiana Northington**)

#599

*There is a pain—so utter—
It swallows substance up—
Then covers the Abyss with a trance—
So memory can step
Around—above—upon it—
As one within a swoon—
Goes safely—
Where an open—
Would drop him—
Bone by Bone*



Pain, interrupting ordinary life, can be so overwhelming that it takes over—controls the mind and every aspect of one's existence. Nonetheless, underneath it exists a sacred life "so memory can step around—across—upon it." In many cases,

pain becomes detrimental and is nearly impossible to avoid once the mind is overtaken. Pain has great effects on body and soul, both physically and psychologically.

Slipping into a trance like state, in an unrealistic state, pain separates the soul from the body. Relying on a way to get past the agony, we head for relief, no matter what the means is. Pain blinds us and robs us of our dignity once "it swallows substance up." (**LaTrease Hibbler**)

#135

*Water, is taught by thirst.
Land—by the Oceans passed.
Transport—by throe—
Peace—by its battles told—
Love, by Memorial Mold—
Birds, by the Snow.*

Dickinson is talking about how you see the value of things when you do not have them. She says you see the value of water when you have been thirsty. You value being on land when you had been traveling on water; transport when you have really struggled. You value peace when you have been through battles. You can discover you love someone after you have lost him/her and you are now erecting memorials for them. You really miss the sound of birds when you have had a very long, snowy winter when everything is gloomy and no sign of life.

To me, the issue of valuing something after a period of being without is a very big part of my life. I grew up an orphan. Whenever I see people fighting with their parents and not communicating with them, my heart hurts. I always wish I had had ONE more day/week/month/year with them. People do not see the value of what they have until they have lost it. . . . (**Lucia Chikowero**)



#435

*Much Madness is divinest Sense
To a discerning Eye
Much sense—
The starkest Madness
'Tis the Majority
In this, as All, prevail
Assent—and you are sane—
Demur—you're straightway dangerous—
And handled with a Chain*

Popular ideas are usually viewed as making more sense because they have the majority of people on their side. When you go with the flow, you are considered as good; the moment you deviate from the mainstream idea, you are labeled as crazy no matter how insane the majority view is. Usually things that are viewed as craziness make more sense to people who think critically. What is viewed by the majority as making sense could be the craziest things; unfortunately in a democracy, the majority rules. Whatever the majority says binds everyone. The unpopular minority are usually viewed as dangerous since they do not want to toe the line with the crazy majority who may not be thinking critically at all.

I resonate with the issue of being viewed as insane because you are not toeing the line with everyone. Most African people are very

conservative when it comes to issues of sexual orientation. In my circles I am known for defending the right to choose and letting others be. I always ask people as to why the hate if they are not homosexual themselves; how are they affected by gays? On this, people view me as crazy. In any case the majority rules. For example, Uganda recently enacted anti-gay laws. (**Lucia Chikowero**)

1129

*Tell all the truth but tell it slant,
Success in circuit lies,
Too bright for our infirm delight
The truth's superb surprise;*

*As lightning to the children eased
With explanation kind,
The truth must dazzle gradually
Or every man be blind.*

According to Emily Dickinson, the fact and reality of our words are important. However, the truth may be hard for the audience to understand because it could be very complicated. Moreover, the truth may overwhelm the listener because it could be very painful. Therefore, people should tell the truth indirectly, kindly, and gently in order to lead others to find out the entire truth gradually. Otherwise, the truth may cause harm and endanger those who are innocent or ignorant.

It is true that many people cannot handle the truth because of its complexity and harmfulness. Saying the truth periphrastically would be a better way to deal with these problems. However, Emily Dickinson neglects that the "truth" is a subjective concept. Everyone thinks that they know the truth. What constructs the truth? Who decides the truth? We all have bias. When we talk with other people based on what we believe is true, we can mislead them from knowing the truth. This is the reason I think that we should guide others to experience the truth instead of telling it. Nevertheless, it is hard to do so. **(Milli Lau)**



303

*The Soul selects her own Society—
Then—shuts the Door—
To her divine Majority—
Present no more—*

*Unmoved—she notes the Chariots—pausing—
At her low Gate—
Unmoved—an Emperor be kneeling
Upon her Mat—*

*I've known her—from an ample nation—
Choose One—
Then—close the Valves of her attention—
Like Stone—*

Emily Dickinson believes that she can choose her own destiny based on her thoughts or mind. She can refuse the pressure to conform to the prevailing group by closing her doors and staying alone. She maintains her path to resist the oppression of the outside world. She insists on her choice by not accepting any lure. She would only choose the life that she wants consistently – making her own decision and giving her life meaning without outside interference. Therefore, she is like a statue staying in her own kingdom.

In reality, nobody can isolate themselves from society to live in their ideal world. Since human beings are gregarious animals, we cannot avoid being influenced by other people such as our families and friends, as well as authorities. Our thoughts and actions are being controlled or restricted unconsciously by this physical world. We must conform to the norms which are imposed on us. When we are aware that we want to make our decisions or try to do something for ourselves, we may not have too much choice. Our souls are not completely free and independent. **(Milli Lau)**

#164

*Mama never forgets her birds,
Though in another tree—
She looks down just as often
And just as tenderly
As when her little mortal nest
With cunning care she wove—
If either of her “sparrows fall,”
She “notices,” above.*



This means to me Mama is always going to protect you, even if that is risking her life. She will always have your back, even when you least expect it. She also will take care of you until you are able to do so yourself. **(Christopher Bester)**

#41

*I robbed the Woods—
The trusting Woods.
The unsuspecting Trees
Brought out their Burs and mosses
My fantasy to please.
I scanned their trinkets curious—
I grasped—I bore away—
What will the solemn Hemlock—
What will the Oak tree say?*



I think Ms. Dickinson may be referring to picking certain plants from Nature and using them for her own purpose. When she says “My fantasy to please,” I believe she is stating personal intent to use the burs and mosses. Hemlock, of course, is the plant used to make the poison that killed Socrates. Is that the reason it is solemn? Solemn can mean marking a religious ceremony, so could Ms. Dickinson have used plants as part of a religious observance?

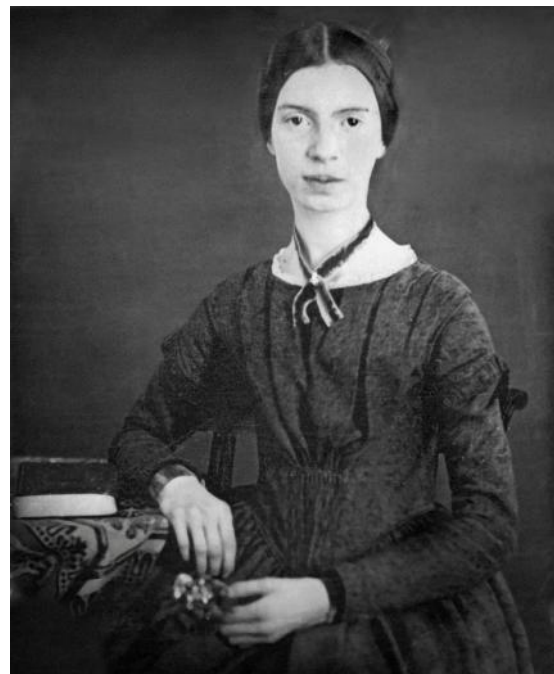
I also see the whole poem as being an apology to Nature for taking without ever really asking permission. It can also be a song of appreciation for Nature’s passivity and benevolence. **(Robert James)**

#919

*If I can stop one Heart from breaking
I shall not live in vain
If I can ease one Life the Aching
Or help one fainting Robin
Unto his Nest again
I shall not live in Vain.*



This poem is so me. I have always been the fixer in my family, one to ease every one’s pain. My daughters would even bring me small animals to take care of and nurture back to health. That’s one reason why I became a medical assistant and wanted to go on to become a nurse. It makes me feel so good to know that I have eased the pain of others and that I have tried my best. **(Jeannine Shoemaker)**



LOVING LANGSTON HUGHES

*Helen Keller
She,
In the dark,
Found light
Brighter than many ever see.
She,
Within herself,
Found loveliness,
Through the soul's own mastery.
And now the world receives
From her dower:
The message of the strength
Of inner power.*



Helen Keller was the first deaf and blind person to get a Bachelor of Arts degree. This poem depicts how despite enormous challenges, she blossomed into a lovely woman through inner strength.

I read this poem and immediately felt it was written for me. I have emerged from the darkness of domestic abuse to the light and loveliness of self-love. I recently changed my name to Jamie Lovely. I do believe I am lovely.
(Jamie Lovely)

*In Time of Silver Rain
In time of silver rain
The earth puts forth new life again,
Green grasses grow
And flowers lift their heads,
And over all the plain
The wonder spreads
Of Life,
Of Life,
Of life!*

*In time of silver rain
The butterflies
Lift silken wings
To catch a rainbow cry,
And trees put forth
New leaves to sing
In joy beneath the sky
As down the roadway
Passing boys and girls
Go singing, too,
In time of silver rain
When spring
And life
Are new.*

The poem "In Time of Silver Rain" is about a renaissance, a time when life is new. The vision of spring is illuminated in the words "green grasses grow and flowers lift their head," and "the butterflies lift silken wings." Hughes beautifully introduces the human connection to the Earth with "in joy beneath the sky, as down the roadway, passing boys and girls go singing too."

My favorite time to be alive is in spring. Everything is new and full of hope and possibility. The silver rain sounds cleansing of the decomposing past. I love the line "To catch a rainbow cry." **(Jamie Lovely)**

*To a Dead Friend
The moon still sends its mellow light
Through the purple blackness of the night;
The morning star is palely bright
Before the dawn.*

*The sun still shines just as before;
The rose still grows beside my door,
But you have gone.*

*The sky is blue and the robin sings;
The butterflies dance on rainbow wings
Though I am sad.*

*In all the earth no joy can be;
Happiness comes no more to me,
For you are dead.*



Mr. Hughes starts this poem at night because night reflects his mood as opposed to day symbolizing happiness. Giving the darkness a color brings some beauty to it, and the moon's light is mellow, creating a sense of ambience. I

think the suspenseful and melancholic mood of night is captured rather stunningly. Then Mr. Hughes starts to describe life: the dawn, the sun, and the "still growing rose." All resonate with vivacity before he first mentions someone has "gone." Mr. Hughes continues with scenes of beauty which serve as irony to his sense of profound sadness. He ends by saying he has completely lost his ability to be happy at anything because his friend has died.

(Robert James)

*Ultimatum: Kid to Kid
Go home, stupid,
And wash your dirty face.
Go home, stupid,
This is not your place.*

*Go home, stupid,
You don't belong here.
If you don't go,
I will pull your ear.*

*I ask you if you'd like to play.
"Huh?" is all you know to say,
Standing 'round here
In the way.*

*So go home, stupid!
I'll spit in your eye!
Stupid, go home--
Before I cry.*

The first stanza's metaphor for blackness is a "dirty face," and segregation is clearly addressed. The second stanza shows that violence is used to enforce and uphold segregation when he says, "If you don't go, I will pull your ear." The third stanza speaks to the feeling of fear and inadequacy produced by segregation. The last stanza shows that segregation causes one person to belittle another. In so doing, the violent segregationist embarrasses and degrades himself.

(Robert James)

*Dancers
Stealing from the night
A few
Desperate hours
Of pleasure*

*Stealing from death
A few
Desperate days
Of life*



In "Dancers" Hughes describes how dancers express themselves. Through movements, dancers show their happiness, excitement, as well as their sadness.

Dancers also use dance as a form of escape. They can be anyone they want to be, and they can be any place they want to be. Dancing is a source of pleasure where the body allows the mind to travel through moves of the soul. Here Hughes resumes in a few words how dancers find

their pleasure through dance in the moments of pain.

I relate to this because I am a dancer. Ever since I was a child, I have always found a connection with my body and soul through dance. When I dance I find myself in a different dimension, perhaps in another world. I could not express with words what I feel and project to others when I am dancing. Dance has also been a great stress relief for me in my most difficult days. When I dance to the beat and the rhythm of Brazilian music, I live memories. I also have heard from others that when I dance I pass on a great positive energy that motivates them. I love to dance . . . I am a dancer. (**Vanessa Lopes Maia**)

*Grief
Eyes
That are frozen
From not crying*

*Heart
That knows
No way of dying.*



In "Grief" Hughes expresses the feeling of someone who suffers and feels heartache over a loved one who passed away. Perhaps Hughes himself suffers deeply a loss of someone special. Here he mentions that there are no tears,

but there is a heart that is in pain because the heart does not conceive the meaning of death.

Both of my paternal grandparents died in Brazil while I have been living here. Although I did not cry as much as I thought I would have, my heart aches and suffers. It is very painful to let go of someone we love so dearly. It was also very hard because I could not see them or say good bye or even be there with my family. My grandparents will always be in my heart. (**Vanessa Lopes Maia**)

*Vari-Colored Song
If I had a heart of gold,
As have some folks I know,
I'd up and sell my heart of gold
And head North with the dough.*

*But I don't have a heart of gold.
My heart's not even lead.
It's made of plain old Georgia clay.
That's why my heart is red.*

*I wonder why red clay's so red
And Georgia skies so blue.
I wonder why it's yes to me,
But yes sir, sir, to you.*

*I wonder why the sky's so blue
And why the clay's so red.
Why down South is always down
And never up instead.*



In "Vari-Colored Song" he is talking about getting away from the segregation of the South. Some black people never left their home. He is speaking of the inequality between blacks and whites. Why was it always so sad and down in the South? He wrote this poem to

speak about people staying in the south and being treated badly. He is writing as a black man who knows he needs to leave home. (**Simone Lawrence**)

*Still Here
I've been scared and battered.
My hopes the wind done scattered.
Snow has friz me, sun has baked me
Looks like between 'em
They done tried to make me
Stop laughin', stop lovin, stop livin'—
But I don't care!
I'm still here!*

In "Still Here" he is talking about what life does

to you. I believe he is saying that no matter what life brings or does, he is still strong.

I liked this poem because it is expressing how you have to stay strong no matter what life can throw at you. (**Simone Lawrence**)

*Blue Monday
No use in my going
Downtown to work today,
It's eight,
I'm late -
And it's marked down that-a-way.*

*Saturday and Sunday's
Fun to sport around.
But no use denying -
Monday'll get you down.*

*That old blue Monday
Will surely get you down.*



"Blue Monday" says to me that you should try even if you think you know what's going to happen no matter what. Try. You don't know until you try.

Always try no matter what you are doing. I like this poem because it's something I know I need to work on. This is my case every Wednesday night because this semester I have to show up to class late due to work. It makes me not want to come because it's going to count against me in some way not to mention all the information I'm missing. (**Kelli Green**)

*Porter
I must say
Yes, sir,
To you all the time.
Yes, sir!*

*Yes, sir!
All my days
Climbing up a great big mountain
Of yes, sirs!*

*Rich old white man
Owns the world.
Gimme yo' shoes
To Shine.*

Yes, sir!



The poem "Porter" means basically you have to respect your slave master or the white man for the rest of your life by saying "yes sir" even if you're doing them a favor. Your life is ordered. (**Christopher Bester**)

*Hey!
Sun's a settin',
This is what I'm gonna sing.
Sun's a settin',
This is what I'm gonna sing:
I feels de blues a comin',
Wonder what de blues'll bring?*

*Hey! Hey!
Sun's a risin',
This is gonna be ma song.
I could be blue but
I been blue all night long.*

The poems "Hey" and "Hey Hey" say he was coming to the blues and was low starting off his night. He didn't know what it would bring, but he gets through the night. He is tired of being down, so he will change up his song. He don't wanna be blue no more. (**Christopher Bester**)

Theme for English B

The instructor said,

Go home and write

a page tonight.

And let that page come out of you---

Then, it will be true.

I wonder if it's that simple?

I am twenty-two, colored, born in Winston-Salem.

*I went to school there, then Durham, then here
to this college on the hill above Harlem.*

I am the only colored student in my class.

The steps from the hill lead down into Harlem

through a park, then I cross St. Nicholas,

Eighth Avenue, Seventh, and I come to the Y,

the Harlem Branch Y, where I take the elevator

up to my room, sit down, and write this page:

It's not easy to know what is true for you or me

at twenty-two, my age. But I guess I'm what

I feel and see and hear, Harlem, I hear you:

hear you, hear me---we two---you, me, talk on this page.

(I hear New York too.) Me---who?

Well, I like to eat, sleep, drink, and be in love.

I like to work, read, learn, and understand life.

I like a pipe for a Christmas present,

or records---Bessie, bop, or Bach.

I guess being colored doesn't make me NOT like

the same things other folks like who are other races.

So will my page be colored that I write?

Being me, it will not be white.

But it will be

a part of you, instructor.

You are white---

yet a part of me, as I am a part of you.

That's American.

Sometimes perhaps you don't want to be a part of me.

Nor do I often want to be a part of you.

But we are, that's true!

As I learn from you,

I guess you learn from me---

although you're older---and white---

and somewhat more free.

This is my page for English B.



In “Theme for English B,” an English instructor gives an assignment to his students to write a page about themselves. He also tells his students to let the words come from their “selves” in order to make it “true.” The only black student wonders if his white instructor oversimplifies what is the “truth.” Then he talks about his background – a 22-year-old colored student, born in Winston-Salem, going to school and college in different places, and not living in luxury – to tell the audience that he is a minority in a diverse country. When he starts to write, he realizes that it is hard for him to understand the “truth” because he is young and the “truth” is different in the eyes of black and white people. Afterward, he says the “truth” for him is what he has observed and experienced. He lists the common things he likes to do to prove that his different race or skin color does not mean he is unlike other young white people. He believes the “truth” is that he and his white instructor are linked even though their perspectives vary, and no matter if they want it or not. Since both of them are Americans, they can learn from each other through sharing their cultures and views although he differs from his instructor in race, age, and status.

I think the narrator is right; the “truth” is different to various people. After I read this poem, some past experiences appear in my mind. . . . In an economics class one year ago, I remember that my Asian instructor was very happy that I often could answer his questions, which the other white students could not answer. However, I heard my white classmates whisper and saw their strange facial expressions, regardless of whether I could or could not answer the questions. For my instructor, answering his questions implied that I put effort to prepare his class and was eager to learn. For my classmates, the fact that I could answer the questions was signaling I wanted to show off, while not answering the questions meant I was stupid. . . .

Now, in Odyssey class, I do not feel any of my classmates want to show off their ability even though many of them compete to answer questions. Moreover, I do not think any of us believe that there

is anyone who wants to show off. What is the “truth”? While some Americans comment that Chinese students are not willing to answer teachers’ questions because they are afraid of making mistakes, they would not consider that we are also facing the pressure of being seen as showing off in a way that may make many Americans feel uncomfortable. **(Milli Lau)**

*Vagabonds
We are the desperate
Who do not care,
The hungry
Who have nowhere
To eat,
No place to sleep,
The tearless
Who cannot
Weep*



In this poem, the narrator describes his life as a vagabond – no resources, no shelter, and no feeling. Although he is a member of society, he is nobody. He has “nowhere” to stay and no one to “care” about him. He has nothing – he has no food to eat so he feels “hungry”; he has no home so he has “no place to sleep”; he has no hope and no feelings so he has no “tear” and cannot “weep.” As a traveler, he cannot live in a normal life. He is isolated from the society and cannot find his place in it.

For me, this poem is a metaphor for the historical experience of African-Americans. They are part of this country, but they have been isolated and ignored for a long time. Before I came to the United States, I thought “American” was used to describe all people who were born in America and grew up here regardless of their skin color. However, I find that I am oversimplifying the meaning of this word. In the United States, “American” is only used to describe white people. All the others are called African-American, Native-American, Filipino-American, etc. Just from the language, it implies a sense of “social exclusion” that can make discrimination continue unconsciously forever. **(Milli Lau)**

SONG OF THE CLASS OF 2014



Inspired by Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself"



We celebrate ourselves and sing ourselves.

We have worked as a janitor, peer tutor, garbage man, newspaper factory worker, balloon seller, roofer, security guard, truck driver, grocery bagger, McDonald's cashier, sandwich expert, afterschool counselor, waitress, telemarketer, secretary, vent filter maker, nurse's aide, gas pumper, cook, grocery store stocker, home health aide, housecleaner, letter carrier, hair stylist, gallery monitor, apple picker, and Boys and Girls Club group leader.



We come from Madison, WI; Dearborn Homes in Chicago, Illinois; Ivanhoe Projects in Gary, Indiana; Detroit, Michigan; Buffalo, New York; Norfolk, Virginia; Dayton, Ohio; Detroit, Michigan; Memphis, Tennessee; New Orleans, Louisiana; San Antonio, Texas; Muranguape, Brazil; Nyameni Marondera, Zimbabwe; Malakal, Sudan; Nairobi, Kenya; Hong Kong; and Puerto Rico.



Our relatives were born in Durant, Mississippi; Hennings, Tennessee; Hayti, Missouri; Forest City, Arkansas; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Chimanimani, Zimbabwe; Khartoum, Sudan; Mogadishu, Somalia; China, Japan, Cuba, and Tibet.



They speak Portuguese, Spanish, Shona, Ndebele, Zulu, Xhosa, Ndaou, Kiswahili, Venda, French, German, Arabic, Nuer, Somali, Mandarin, Cantonese, Taishanese, English, and American Sign Language



And call themselves sanctified Christian, Jehovah's Witness, Baptist, Catholic, Black Muslim, Pentecostal, Seventh Day Adventist, Muslim, Buddhist, and Atheist.

We are complex, funny, frugal, introspective, secretive, provocative, curious, competitive, friendly, hardened, stereotyped, blessed, knowledgeable, inquisitive, loved, persistent, motivated, stressed, short, tall, friendly, honest, sincere, humble, mushy, caring, strong, tired, broke, busy, happy, loving, supportive, honest, creative, vivacious, crazy, spiritual, smart, ambitious, charismatic, responsible, dedicated, outspoken, athletic, brave, calm, old school, boring, autistic, sleepy, enthusiastic, bashful, delicate, joyous, nonchalant, optimistic, pessimistic, quirky, soulful, gracious, peaceful, witty, goofy, serious, mean, forgetful, intuitive, sensitive, big-hearted, nurturing, lovely, and smooth.

We are the Odyssey Class of 2014.





