

ODYSSEY ORACLE

CELEBRATING ODYSSEY



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We're all here in this room like a box full of pieces, some oddly shaped, some hard around the edges, some cut out, and some misplaced. We can't force the pieces to fit, but as the year passes we each have a story piece to contribute to the whole picture. We learn and grow with one another and complement the piece next to us. We're not stuck together with staples or glue; our relationship binds us and holds us together like a puzzle." —Ashley Wills

"When we took photos, we joked, jumped around, and problem-solved together to make sure all of us fit into the puzzle to form one giant picture." —Nicki Cooper



Congratulations
to the
Class of 2016!



We are the Odyssey class of 2016.

ODES TO ODYSSEY

In Odyssey we all are like a rainbow.
We are different colors, ideas,
different backgrounds,
but all together
for the same purpose and dreams. (**Karina Gómez**)

We're all here in this room like a box full of pieces,
some oddly shaped, some hard around the edges,
some cut out, and some misplaced.
We can't force the pieces to fit,
but as the year passes we each have a story piece
to contribute to the whole picture.
We learn and grow with one another
and complement the piece next to us.
We're not stuck together with staples or glue.
Our relationships bind us and hold us
together like a puzzle. (**Ashley Wills**)

Odyssey, Odyssey, what do you mean to me?
Odyssey, Odyssey, how can I say this and not feel glee?
What I can I say about what you have done for me?
Odyssey, Odyssey, you have freed me
Odyssey, Odyssey, you are like a dolphin in the sea
You make my mind run free
Odyssey, Odyssey, this is what you have done for me.
(**Rosalyn Richmond**)

Odyssey is like the friend that I always dream of,
The perfect model of a true friend,
So humble, so knowledgeable, so complete,
Beautiful Odyssey, you are my dream,
The blessing every human deserves. . . .
(**Guadalupe Tinajero**)

Shall I compare Odyssey with other classes?
In Odyssey we get a start,
Start to write, to read, to understand,
With Odyssey we discover life.
Odyssey is like light that attracts all of us.
Other classes last a few months and they are done.
Odyssey is never gone. (**Shaimaa Ahmed**)

Yes,
I studied in the Odyssey Program, yes,
I read books, yes,
I had great food, yes,
I met great people.

I will miss teachers,
I will miss me as an Odyssey student,
I will miss everyone there.
They will miss me too, I know.
I know.
I know.
(**Mustafa Mohammed Saed**)

I love my Odyssey, ups and downs,
I know we will go on, my Odyssey.
Distracted, loud, dramatic, and full of divas and kings,
We will rise from ignorance and poverty.
Oh Odyssey, Odissia, how can we let you go
When you have been bound to our souls?
(**Luna Santos**)

Odyssey is like a boat sailing through open waters,
With all the resources on board to prepare for any matter,
Sailing away to a wide open sea in front,
Left to explore at your very own touch,
When movement from the waters rocks your boat,
Just remember tough times require you to stay afloat,
Where you want to stay depends on your quest at bay,
Odyssey will ask you the ultimate question, and that is
Which way? (**Marisela Tellez**)

There is a silent laughter our class displays each night
Like a group of nuns at prayer
The high notes and the low ones vary in pitch
Like the stinging glare of a mama bear
One thing is for certain and I cannot tell a lie
I would not replace the chance of being part of the Lucky Year 13
For all the world's apple pie (**Kelly Dixon**)

If you stand really close to a mosaic,
it will seem a random collection of fragmented parts.
Some pieces look like discarded, broken, and blemished glass
that is beyond repair and of very little value.

By taking a step back, suddenly there seems to be something more.
Each jagged edge tells a story that the next one completes.
Even the material binding them together tells a story that
blends different colors, shapes, sizes of many origins and odysseys
into one singular piece, one sentiment, one representation. (**Tamara Thompson Moore**)

Odyssey is a camera.
There are buttons and shutters,
lenses and apertures.
We all worked together
and captured a beautiful moment
in life. (**Karina Herrejon**)



Odyssey, probably a lifelong prodigy.
Years from now, what I've learned here
will still be a part of me.

All the different aspects of lives
we got to see. The amazing pieces
of literature we got to read. From
fearful to brave, we came to be.

When I found out about Odyssey, I saw
a new path to knowledge open up.
Yet this knowledge wasn't new. It was
just covered up.

Every day in class I learned something new,
even within the same subjects I was
taught in school. The things you learn
when you pay attention and listen.
Don't shy away from the doors or
opportunities that show face once
you complete your Odyssey mission.
(Joe Young)

I love Odyssey because it's like my dessert. I'm ready to dig in and learn new things every
Wednesday night.

I love all my teachers and volunteers.

I love Odyssey because I have some amazing classmates that will uplift me.

I love Odyssey because I know if I had a rough day at work I can come to Odyssey to get some
good laughs and take things off my mind

I love Odyssey because I love walking in the door, seeing a smile on everyone's faces, and being
greeted as I walk in the classroom

I love my Wednesday nights because I know I'm going to Odyssey after work and ready to see
what we are doing next in class

I love Odyssey because I have showed so much progress from when I first started till now

I love Odyssey because this is my second family

I love Odyssey because I'm going to miss my Wednesday nights after May 4th

I love Odyssey because it has been an amazing journey with everyone that I have gotten to know
along this journey

My odyssey

My family

My journey

I will never forget about my Odyssey because I will tell the world about my journey and about this
amazing program

(Jalisa Galvin)

Oh, Odyssey, let me see,
I loved it when you accepted me.
Daring to be different is my Odyssey.
Pink, green, red, black, and blue like the sea
Are the colors I use to highlight me.

Oh, Odyssey , let me see
The uniqueness of being free . . .
I wouldn't have made it without Mrs. Emily
Thank you, thank you, thank you,
You've been a wonderful friend to me.
I'm glad I applied for this Odyssey.
(Bettye Emmanuel)

Odyssey, Odyssey, oh how I love thee.
Odyssey, Odyssey, oh how you feed me.
Odyssey, Odyssey, oh how you always amaze me.
Odyssey, Odyssey, oh how we need thee.
(Nickitia Cooper)

I wake up and think about what day it is.
 It's the day class is held. I get ready and head to work.
 The time drags it seems, but it's all in my head.
 So I focus on work and not the time,
 And put my mind on tasks so I'll be feeling fine.
 The time has come for me to head to class.
 The door opens, and I'm greeted with smiles and pleasantries.
 Before long food not aromas will be filling me.
 What guests will we have? Will we act or read, look at art,
 Or be relieved of what they try to put in history books to deceive?
 I could never imagine nor believe
 What enjoyment I have had from this class.
 If I told you, your mind couldn't retrieve
 The tales I'd tell to make you believe. **(Steve Jones)**

Emily is the star
 At the center of the solar system
 She is seen in the sky,
 And gives light to the earth.

She helps the tree to grow
 And makes it have fruits.
 She names each fruit
 An Odyssey student.

Due to the sun,
 The fruits are getting
 Tasty and shiny.
(Umaima Mohammed Saed)

My Odyssey
 Is my family, my stress reliever, my comfort zone.
 My Odyssey
 Has taught me to never give up when I feel things are at my very worst.
 My Odyssey
 Showed me how to speak up, not to be shy, express myself, give my all.
 My Odyssey
 Raised me in just a year, proved to me that I am STRONG enough to be able to get through
 something I didn't think I was able to get through.
 My Odyssey
 Gave me friends I hadn't met before, gave me different races, gave me different cultures.
 WE ARE THE BEST ODYSSEY PROJECT CLASS!!!
 2016 **(Katia Robinson)**

Like a temple, it'll cleanse
 Like a child, it'll believe
 Like a mother, it'll nurture
 Like the stars, it'll guide
 Like the legs to a table, it'll
 support

(Mai Neng Thao)

Odyssey
 Bouncing on a trampoline going up and down and up and down as high as I can go
 Suddenly a string detaches from the trampoline and I collapse from up high
 Falling on my face and lying there speculating on what to do next
 Defeated from the challenges and obstructed by the obstacles
 Crumbling away in self destruction
 Turning my body over to watch the clouds surface through the sky
 Gradually I stand up tall on both feet
 I reach for the string and begin to bind the knot
 Connecting it twice, holding it in place
 Forcefully eager, jumping higher and higher, passing clouds
 Arms held high while I'm reaching for the stars. **(Jayvonna Flemming)**

LETTERS TO THE CLASS OF 2017

Dear Class of 2017,



I am a student from the class of 2016. I am writing to let you know that with being accepted to the class, make sure you are motivated to get the work done. If you are ever in a situation where you really need

someone to talk to, open up to Emily or Kevin because they understand, they listen, and they keep you going, even when you are feeling down. Whenever you come to a point where you want to give up, NEVER do it because it's not worth it. Have pride, confidence, self-motivation, and also come to the class with a family-oriented personality. Best believe you will make it where you want to if you just put your mind to it.

(Katia Robinson)



Believe it or don't believe it, the Odyssey Program will change your whole life. Odyssey will help you discover your talent. Odyssey will show you that nothing is impossible. If you can't write poems,

Odyssey will help you to write more than one. If your English is not good, Odyssey will help you to improve it. If you want to know about American history, Odyssey will teach you about it. If you want to have a higher education, Odyssey will help you get closer to your dreams. All your dreams will come true if you really work hard to get them. You can start that by coming to the class every day and doing all of the homework. To be honest, I felt scared that I could not do it, but when I went

to Kevin, he helped and showed me how to do the homework. Kevin makes me believe that I can do the homework. That's what makes me never give up. **(Umaima Mohammed Saed)**



I am writing to inform you that the best thing you can do for yourself during this project is utilize any and all services offered. Try to do your best and never give up on you. Once you give up on yourself, you give

the world the "go" to give up on you. Even when your assignments are incomplete or undone, still do your best to maintain perfect attendance. Please spread the word to others about Odyssey. Know that in this class you are your brothers' and sisters' keeper. Always remember you must be in the game to win the game. **(Nickitia Cooper)**



Don't give up! "College is for the privileged, the wealthy, the intelligent." That's what society makes us believe. Odyssey gave me a second chance, and not only a second chance at education but also a second

chance at success within myself. Don't sell yourself short. These people believe in you. You just have to believe in yourself and never give up. **(Ashley Wills)**



Welcome to a grand exploration that is Odyssey. For the next eight months, prepare yourself to challenge and be challenged. Take a step outside of your comfort zone. At this

time you may not know that there is something inside of you that your classmates don't have. Please share it because your experiences matter. Make the most of this opportunity and make your Odyssey class the best ever. (**Tory Latham**)



Welcome aboard the ship, which will take you on an adventure. Prepare yourselves to meet your destination. Emily and the staff are about to take you on a trip of a lifetime. You will learn many things along the

way, including finding yourself. Dedicate yourselves to class and don't hold back. Explore the resources at hand and make the best use of them. The whole staff is here to help and see you succeed. Attending the Odyssey program is a blessing for those who were picked. Let your minds wander, your ears listen, and eyes focus with your heart open. (**Marisela Tellez**)



No matter what obstacle you face throughout this journey, hold on and push through. You have been given an amazing opportunity to grow within yourself. Your views on life, politics, and the community

around you will be different. You will be enlightened by a lot of topics and opinions of your classmates. One thing in our class is that we uplift each other and encourage each other. We use each other when feeling down and reach out to the teachers. They are always there, even when they seem like they are not. Start your journey with an open mind for everyone comes from a different background. Remind yourself that no one is perfect. There is a reason why you were chosen. Good luck and prosper through! (**Jayvonna Flemming**)



I am a very proud student of this current Odyssey class. I was not as committed as I would have liked to be due to life situations. A lot of the time I wanted to say forget it. Twice I did. December 2015 I lost my

job. On the flip side, my husband took me to Myrtle Beach. I was so happy in 80 degree weather with sand running through my feet and watching and listening to the silent sound of the water's waves in my hotel room on the eighth floor. I wanted to pack up and move. Mrs. Emily called me, texted me, Facebooked me and sent me a letter to my home. I kept refusing her calls. Once I received a letter to my home I crawled from under my pink and white blanket and I had seen the light. I called Mrs. Emily. She seemed so happy, which made me happy. I regained my strength, showered and prepared for class. The moral of the story is this: never quit. Here it is, April 6, 2016. After being behind like eight assignments, I am only missing three. I am very proud of me. I look forward to May 4, 2016. I will then be an alumna. Bettye Emmanuel, that's me.

(**Bettye Emmanuel**)



The Odyssey program: I was lucky to be in that program. It is a journey that you might want to end the first four classes, but believe me: you will not want to be done later on. Enjoy every moment in the class because

you are going to miss it. People here love you and they are ready to help, so get yourself helped. You will feel different by the end of the class. I felt smart. If you don't like reading or writing, then you are in the right class. Wednesday will be a win day for those who show up. (**Mustafa Mohammed Saed**)



First of all, I would tell you, "You are a lucky person." You are lucky because you got accepted into the Odyssey class. Odyssey will make you find your way. Odyssey will open many doors for you.

Odyssey will show you how to be a successful person. My advice to you is to keep coming to class and do not miss any days. Also, try to always do your assignments on time. If you miss something, that means you miss a lot. Odyssey will help you see life from a different edge you have maybe never seen before. You will grow with Odyssey and Odyssey will grow with you. As I said before, "I hope everyone can have a chance to attend the Odyssey class because I think then our community would be perfect." (**Shaimaa Ahmed**)



When I started this class, I was scared because I didn't know what to expect coming into the Odyssey program. A month into the Odyssey program, my car was totaled and I didn't want to go to class. I wanted to give up but I didn't; I kept on pushing. I was in class on Wednesday nights and tutoring on Monday and Tuesday nights. I did not let that stop me from coming to class. The Odyssey is an amazing program to be in. You have great people to support you through the Odyssey program. My biggest thing is that if you need help on homework, please go to tutoring because you will get all the help that you need. If you do not understand the reading, Kevin will make sure you get the help that you need. The Odyssey program has opened my eyes so much because they helped me grow from when I first started. I have had nights at home where I wanted to cry because of all the help that I have gotten from my teachers and

volunteers. They have helped me out with my daughter and with my homework. My class has helped me when I have stumbled over words I didn't know, so don't be scared to stumble across words you don't know. I love the Odyssey. (**Jalisa Galvin**)



Odyssey gave me life! I entered Odyssey in limbo, like I was dangling carelessly in mid-air, trying to keep my balance 1,000 feet high while walking on a tightrope. With a mere shift of a slight breeze, I could fall over.

Now, balancing walking on a tightrope is not my cup of tea, so falling over was inevitable. On one side were all my struggles, hurt, pain and hardship, and on the other it was the sheer determination that I'm going to make it. I have to make it, not only for me but for my family. We all depended on me. When they say things are thrown in your path at the right time for all the right reasons, that would be my Odyssey. Odyssey gave me hope, inspiration and goals to reach. Odyssey was my light guiding me through the dark where I couldn't see. Odyssey motivated and excited me and gave me back my passion that had been slowly slipping out of me. Odyssey gave me life. It never gave up on me, for I will never give up on my Odyssey. So, I invite you, Class of 2017, to follow in my footsteps as you, too, get to experience the gifts of your Odyssey. (**Arkeshia Sallay**)



This journey isn't easy. I spent many nights with confusion and writer's block. I would read a passage in a book and fear my thoughts about it. Some of it I flat out didn't understand. I continued to scratch my head and had many questions. At times I felt lost. I

didn't want to go to class. A year may seem like an eternity but it goes fast. You will find bliss when you find out your own meaning of the author's messages. You discover a side of you that you never knew existed. You feel a sigh of relief when that essay you spent all week revising is finally done. Each class and each assignment you learn a little more about yourself. You begin to grow into this overall intelligent human being. The world seems like a better place because you have wonderful teachers beside you who give you their soul from September to May. The help is always there, and I mean it's there. The discussions in this class are life-changing and your fellow classmates know so much. In the end, you will feel this endless boost of confidence that you will always remember and take with you as you journey through life. This was my experience with Odyssey. I will never forget it. **(Kala Taylor)**



You are probably scared and excited right now, but your fear overwhelms any other emotion, and that's okay. You are here sitting in the red chairs that will take you on a journey that will empower you like never before.

Odyssey will not only be something that you look forward to every week, it will become the source of your education. That is all that matters now. Your writing will grow tremendously. You will be proud of it. Kevin will help you with that. Coach will teach you crazy words that will make you think you are crazy and amazing when you use them. Emily will teach you how to read poetry and if you don't already know, poetry doesn't need grammar; all it needs is power. You'll be grateful for that. You will be amazed by what Craig and Jean teach you. The fear will dissipate and when it does, you'll be free to enjoy your Odyssey. Enjoy Wednesday! **(Karina Herrejon)**



Life brings you so many obstacles and challenges to overcome. It's definitely not a bouquet of beautiful red roses. Whenever you come to the point where you feel like giving up, just remember the thought that came across your mind when you decided to apply for the program. When you discover so many reasons to quit, find just one to keep on going. Don't quit!

There were numerous amounts of times when I seriously considered walking away, but I could never bring myself to do so. I have two boys watching my every move! I felt I had to work twice as hard, being a single young mother, raising two African American boys. This world is already designed to tear them down because of the pigment of their skin. They have to succeed! It is a must. I will not allow them to settle for less than they deserve. They were my purpose.

What or who is your purpose? What or who motivates you?

If you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything!

Stand up! This is your chance to be heard and seen. **(Jelissa Williams)**





I am not a prophet, but I'm going to tell you about the things you're going to experience while you're a UW Odyssey Student.

Life...

You will wonder what ever happened to your bright-eyed enthusiasm when your stress levels interfere with your ability to put pen to paper. You will be concerned with maintaining your workload while balancing family responsibilities, household chores, and your financial obligations. You will think of Socrates and the thought-provoking ideas while making love. You will hear a joke, but instead of laugh, you will make a clear and concise retort to its maker about why the joke is insensitive; you will have a voice to speak up, to speak out, and speak within. You will begin and you will finish. You will develop a new sense of confidence and a close-knit group of peers to share ideas with. I am not a prophet, but wait and see how much you will astonish yourself. Open the books, open your mind, and open the door of possibility and opportunity and then you will have made yourself a prophet of your own destiny, your own life. P.S. See, I told you that you'd finish! **(Tamara Thompson Moore)**



Welcome and congratulations! I congratulate you on your decision to continue with your education. This program will be a new and exciting opportunity to learn and explore new books, ideas, and express yourself. Take

the time to enjoy every moment of this class and don't be afraid to ask questions when you don't know the answer. Welcome to one of the greatest adventures in your life; at the end of this journey you will not be the same.

(Karina Gómez)



Please give yourself the chance to embrace and let your class raise you up. Also, expose yourself and leave something in Odyssey's history. Be yourself and put 1,010% into class. I have experienced missing classes and

coming in late and you will regret this. The Class of 2016 is about to graduate and I will miss my teachers, classmates and staff from the Odyssey. Be happy that you made it into the Odyssey. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to be part of something. Take advantage of the benefits that Odyssey is giving you and remember that now you are a UW Madison college student. Take advantage of using the UHS services. Explore the life of a college student. Take one day out of your chaotic life and go to Union South, Memorial Union and, my favorite place, College Library and let your muse run wild when you write from the heart.

(Luna Santos)



I would like to give you a warm welcome and congratulate all of you that were accepted into a new journey. Odyssey is an amazing class, and it is a blessing to all. This class is unique. For me, it is my second home. Here I feel

welcome. Every Wednesday when I knock on the door, there is always Emily or someone with a smile opening the door. The students are family; we all share feelings and thoughts. The class takes two and a half hours, but with the interesting lectures, the time goes really fast. Congratulations once again for becoming part of our family. I recommend you to attend all of the classes, complete the assignments on time, and be thankful to have this new opportunity. Work hard and keep following your dreams.

(Guadalupe Tinajero)



Your mind is going to be set on fire with knowledge if you are ready to receive it. The journey may at times seem long, yet it is worth every moment. I came into Odyssey with the knowledge of very little, yet I am proud today

that I have greater knowledge of people from my past that groomed my present. Stay strong no matter how hard it may seem. There is light at the end of the tunnel. I enjoyed every moment of meeting and greeting new people from different lands and learning the truth about how they live and breathe. Enjoy the journey and soar to the highest heights you can go. **(Rosalyn Richmond)**



I would like to give you all a warm welcome to Odyssey. I admire your bravery and willingness to apply for the class. I know picking up your pen to fill out the application and writing your testimony was not an easy task, but I can assure you that

it'll all be worth it in the end. If it is support and guidance toward your education that you are looking for, then look no further. Odyssey will expedite your thirst for knowledge and provide you with the nutrients to execute the building of your educational capacity. If you need insight and motivation to complete the assignments, do not hesitate to ask for help. The effort and energy you invest in Odyssey is what you will get out of it. Appreciate and take this opportunity seriously. The team of extraordinary teachers here will give you many blessings and help guide you in the direction that you desire most, if you let them. Whether you are ready or not, Odyssey will transform you in ways you never knew possible. Be prepared because you'll be going on a journey. Enjoy. **(Mai Thao)**

I suspect that if you are sitting here reading this, your journey up until this point has been challenging, at the very least, and arduous and treacherous at the very worst. You are probably tired and maybe even still nursing some wounds



you received along the way. Please – breathe...do it often...breathe. You are going to be able to lift your head and begin to look at the faces who are welcoming you. Take the cool water and other nourishments that they are going to offer. The

intense gazes from them may scare you at first, but soon you will begin to know they are sincere in their concern and commitment. It is safe here! As you come to class each week, allow the spirit of hope and hospitality and healing to wash over you each time you come in. Life may not get easier, but you will get better. I promise this: the opportunity before you is rich and simply dripping with gifts that your dreams are made of...Lastly, you may become afraid and overwhelmed from time to time. That happens from time to time as one grows and sheds the old skin so the new can come in. Don't stop. Keep breathing and keep coming back and never, ever stop learning how to tell your story! It matters; that is why you are here now. Welcome. **(Lisa Partee)**



I would like to tell you that whatever ideas you have about Odyssey are wrong. There are no words to describe this journey or experience. The impact it will have on you is so deep; no other class I've been in can touch it. The road

will be long and hard. You'll get the February blues but hang in there; the journey is well worth it. If you can, you should make each class. The discussions and improvisations of each class cannot be duplicated, described, or demonstrated. The support you will receive from your teachers, students, and alumni will push you along the way. If I can work two jobs and finish, I know you can. I know some of you will say, "I work and I have kids." I won't say you are wrong that it will be hard, but think how your kids will look up to you if you don't quit. I hope you will take this as seriously as I have. You can do it! **(Steven Jones)**



I came into the Odyssey and felt that I knew it all and that I was smart. Then I knew I was not. I figured it would be the English literature

that I took in college, not. I thought I couldn't write because I had lost that mojo. I knew my reading was like chopped stew so I didn't want to read. This was my safe place to keep me from reality. I have tapped into a woman I knew but did not know was this great and smart. I tell

you your doubts will be your ambitions and your flaws will be your strengths. Believe, even when you see no hope. Ask when you are afraid; con Kevin into the answers (lol). Be open with your mind, eagle eyes, and bat ears.

Be great, be proud, and use your haters to be your motivators. **(Brandice Hatcher)**



Everyone in the Odyssey program/faculty makes it their mission that Odyssey provides you with a replenishing meal and book loads of information, all to help further your yet to be filled minds. Whether it is using information you never knew or

information you may have known, the Odyssey faculty wants to be sure you leave class knowing something new completely or an addition to what you may have some knowledge on. I say to you, make it your mission to get to class every week and stay up on what is due. You never know what will happen in this Odyssey class. The three days I missed were the most fun and interactive classes, but that doesn't take away from everything I have learned. As with you, don't let anything keep you from learning. Use Odyssey as a crutch if you have to. Regardless, everyone benefits from being an Odyssey member. **(Joe Young)**



First and foremost, welcome to the Odyssey Class of 2017! Wow, where to start? This is an amazing opportunity. This journey with the Odyssey Project has not only changed my life, but it has changed my children's lives as well. They

attended Odyssey Junior, and they loved it and looked forward to it--every week, every day! They enjoyed reading already, but this is a family to them --meeting and playing with the kids everyWednesday. During my journey with Odyssey I faced hardships, but who doesn't? There have been times I wanted to give up, but I knew this would be a life changer. I have missed days, but I have not given up. I refuse to! If I have any advice for you, it would be to be in class everyWednesday! Be appreciative and take advantage of being with teachers/professors who actually care, and be a part of the family. (If you don't have family, or even if you do, you will have one here with Emily, Kevin, and the entire Odyssey family!) Participate in class, and get out of your comfort zone. If I had the chance to have this opportunity all over again, I wouldn't change anything except: 1. Make sure I'm here every week, and 2. Participate/get out of my comfort zone. . . . I'll be in touch with my class, and I'll stop by to say hello to you all! Again, congratulations! Come in open-minded and ready to learn! **(Tasha Thompson)**

FINDING A VOICE: EDITORIALS



Make Education Affordable **Kala Taylor**

I am proud of the fact that I didn't go to college after high school. I had no idea about my future. While I was in the work field, I learned about the true crippling reality of college.

In today's society, the cost of college has gone up four hundred percent. Thirty years ago the cost of a bachelor's degree was under nine thousand dollars. The price is now over eighty thousand dollars. My boyfriend decided on a different major in college and regrets it to this day. The cost has damn nearly bankrupted him, and it breaks my heart. I have heard many explanations for this dramatic increase, such as population, no funding for education, and colleges not being held accountable for their cost. The real reason is supply and demand. Americans owe more than \$875 billion dollars in student loan debt.

My friend and my sister went to technical schools. Technical schools like Globe and ITT tech charge double what community colleges charge and offer few grants and scholarships. Graduating with this amount of debt has forced over sixty percent of graduates since 2008 to live with their parents again. This has caused over thirty percent of graduate students to work at jobs completely unrelated to their degrees. In the US alone, over three hundred thousand waiters and waitresses are college graduates. Filing for bankruptcy doesn't cover student loan debt. The student loan debt in the US increases over three thousand dollars every second.

All of this information scares me. How many intelligent individuals have we denied college to? I propose we increase the educational tax. Education is just as important as medical and entertainment taxes. Education should be a top priority again because it benefits us all.



Welcome Refugees **Umaima Mohammed Saed**

Can you imagine how hard it is to leave everything behind, only to realize then that someone does not want you to be in America because of your religion? You never know what others feel until you are in their situation. The Arab people are dying every day and screaming from the pain, but no one can hear them or care about them.

Every second kids die without any reason.

Can you tell me what you would do if you were in their situation? Imagine yourself living in the camp in cold weather without food or drink. You look at your children with crying eyes due to their hunger. Many Arabs left their countries to save their children, but sadly some people do not want them to be in a safe place because they are Muslim. Do you think all Muslims are terrorists? Do you think all Germans are like Hitler? We need to treat everyone equally. We are all human, and we are all going

to die one day. We should open our hearts to accept others living with us. When you help others to be happy, you will live happily too.

We do not know what is going to happen tomorrow. Maybe one day the roles will get reversed. Americans might need to move to Arab countries to be in a safe place one day. We have to help others now to be in a safe place so we can get help back one day.



You Can't Represent Us If We Can't Represent Ourselves **Jayvonna Flemming**

My brother went to prison for five years on his first crime as an adult. I'm not justifying what he did, but he has a job; he's working and paying taxes. He's paying for the politicians but not represented by them. It's okay for felons to pay their taxes but not okay for them to have a say—so in who represents them. Every vote counts, and the vast majority of black and Latino males are not represented. In the U.S, more than one in eight black men will be ineligible to vote because they are felons. A large number of people are not being heard because of a mistake they made possibly one time. There exists a process for people with misdemeanors to get their right to vote, but no similar process for felons. There are people in Congress sitting at the table with multiple misdemeanors (including DUI's). Why are they allowed but not felons? I propose a similar process for felons to go through to be eligible to vote. Nine states have a process in which felons can regain their voting right. Vermont and Maine allow and encourage felons to vote. There should be a happy medium where other states should be open to let felons go through this process and prove they have what it takes to vote. We as citizens should encourage felons to go through the process, so their voices can be heard. It's not a true democracy if we all are not represented.



Have "The Talk" **Jalisa Galvin**

Andrea is a product of a teen mom and became a mother at the age of 16, after having no conversations with anyone about sex. "No one talked to me about sex. It was taboo in our household and that's the way it was," Andrea said. Andrea now serves as a guide for teens in the local community, sharing her story in hopes of making a difference in the lives of many, before it's too late.

Why not now? Talk to your teens about sex. According to Planned Parenthood, "Teens often name their parents as their biggest influence in their decisions about sex. And teens who report having good conversations with their parents about sex are more likely to delay sexual activity...and use contraceptives when they do have sex." There are two thousand teens that get pregnant in the US every day, and 7 out of 10 teens have sex.

I think it is important to talk to your teens about sex because there is so much out there in this world that they may not know about, like all the STDs that are out there. The schools only talk about so much. You should want your children to come to you and be able to ask you questions about sex. You should be ready and willing to answer their questions. This is not something that will go away. It will always be there, and when you talk to your children, it might just ease your mind knowing that they know about sex. They will know they can come to you if they need to and they won't feel scared to talk to you about sex.



Education Can Fight Poverty **Mustafa Mohammed Saed**

Poverty is found in all countries. Poor people think that they live poor and must die poor. Some poor people look for food to eat, some people work, but the money they make is not enough for the family, and some are poor in knowledge so they live like they are not alive. They hear people talking, but they do not understand. However, all people have access to education; it is free and everywhere. The greatest people are known for their knowledge.

Kids are the seeds, and education can help them grow up. But poverty can make it hard for the kids to study, or in some cases the family does not support learning. School is the key, as is giving kids extra time to finish their homework, providing study help for all ages, and showing them the careers that they could choose for the future. School could also help kids to come up with a plan on how to achieve their goals. All humans deserve the lives they want.



Reform Our Justice System **Karina Herrejon**

People making laws and policies as serious as our crime laws should be guided by psychologists and sociologists, not politicians. Psychologists have an understanding of the human brain, and sociologists have an understanding of human behavior and trends. Because of this, they are better equipped to help design the laws to provide justice for people. They also have an extensive understanding of why some people are prone to committing crimes.

Some politicians make laws for political advancement instead of for the health and betterment of society. Politicians are in a position of great power, and it is hard for some to resist not getting that power by whatever means necessary. It sounds very appealing to some people when politicians say that they'll be "tough on crime," and so they'll say that only to get votes. Unfortunately, getting "tough on crime" is not a healthy way to provide justice for the community.

You might ask why we shouldn't be tough on criminals, or why we shouldn't seek revenge—especially the victims—, but it's important to remember that it's human nature to have those feelings. It's instinctual. However, acting on instinct and our initial feelings isn't smart when it comes to criminal justice. When our instincts start to impact other people's lives instead of just protecting our own, society risks breaking down completely. We must remember that punishment and revenge are not justice.

Oftentimes a person has to be in a very bad state economically and mentally to commit a crime or murder. Although this is not in any way justifying these horrible acts of crime, this information should make us more empathetic regarding the circumstances that lead to

criminal acts. It should also lead us to work on the things that lead to crime before the crime happens, such as the health and mental health of people. If we want a more merciful society, one must be willing to understand and put oneself in the shoes of the criminals. Vengeance maintains the current criminal justice system.

When dealing with criminals we must not lose our humanity. While maintaining a safe society, we also have to treat criminals. It is all of our responsibility because they're products of our society. It is also our responsibility to be aware of mental conditions that cause violent crime. We must reform our criminal justice system. Psychologists and sociologists should be the ones guiding the laws for our criminal justice system.



Follow Your Heart to Fairness
Shaimaa Ahmed

It's hard watching people walking without transportation, without direction, without wearing anything. Those people run away from death, but they find that the death follows them. The kids wonder who took from them their smiles, their toys, their schools, and their homes. However, I am wondering how I can help, or can I help?

Should I only watch, or just cry? I am wondering if life is unfair, or have we made it unfair? I want to know, where is the truth?

A lot of people are talking about their ideas and they try to persuade us that they're saying the truth. But I am really confused! Who should we trust? Each one contradicts each other. Actually I don't trust anyone because I can't feel them. I will let my heart lead me. Our hearts have a real sense of honesty. We need to listen to our hearts carefully and closely to find the way. Let's cooperate to find the right direction because we can't clap with one hand.



How Much Should a Future Cost?
Marisela Tellez

Everybody tells you that education is the key to the future, but what do you do when the system keeps moving the key out of reach? We teach and encourage our children to dream about what they want to be when they grow up, yet little do they know how much of a nightmare student loans and tuition can be. College tuition in

Wisconsin is increasing instead of becoming more affordable to students. This type of economic barrier makes it even more difficult for those who are looking to overcome poverty and build a future of their own.

There is a thirst among the many potential students who want to attend college yet lack resources. By making education affordable to all, individuals would have the opportunity to have a higher quality of life and health. They would be able to pursue a career that will provide them with many opportunities and relieve them from depending on public assistance. As a state and community, we must find a way to make education available to all and pass over the financial barriers in place.



Be True to Yourself
Lisa Seward-Partee

I can only speak for myself when I say that I am tired of explaining why “black lives matter,” and I am not going to do it anymore.

Friends, please learn the necessity of “dissonance” or the art of “Sitting through the Awkward Silence.” We must stop wasting precious energy allowing ourselves to be engaged in the endless loops of always EXPLAINING who we are and why it is so necessary that we experience the “essential-ness” of discovering and celebrating the very things that make us different and unique. There should never have been a need for an entire “movement” to wear our kinks and curls. Stop! You see, it’s in those uncomfortable moments that we should graciously remain silent but continue to just LIVE our Truth. These moments are precious and pregnant with possibility, and true enlightenment and ensuing change can happen, if we just get out of the way of Truth, for surely it can and will find its own expression. I IMPLORER YOU, BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF THE ‘DARKER HUE,’ STOP EXPLAINING...and just get really, really busy LIVING OUR TRUTHS. That “silence” is the message that is thunderous and eloquent and speaks to those dark places where the roots of racism are flourishing.

I promise you this: White folks will not die just because they are not coddled and made completely comfortable as we spoon feed them the watered down gruel of our significance. Okay? Just go be as BLACK as you can be and have fun doing it! “The Uppity Negress”



Additional Education for the Police Force
Guadalupe Tinajero

Many African-Americans and Latinos are targeted, accused, or arrested because of their skin color. Many people assume that African-Americans and Latinos are dangerous criminals. Social media, for instance, with daily news, tends to influence people’s perceptions of how to view minorities. On television and on the Internet, we can see how they created a frightened panic over crime by over-emphasizing crimes committed by African-Americans and Latinos.

I have witnessed the difference in my neighborhood in the treatment of African Americans by the police, as compared to the treatment of Caucasians. When they frisk African Americans, their attitude is rude and objectionable, but when their targets are Caucasian, their treatment is completely different. They appear gentle and even friendly.

Unquestionably minorities experience injustice and inequality. I always wondered, does skin color make us more apt to be criminals? Bitterness is the result of injustice, and this goes on and on, like an infection that makes our lives miserable from generation to generation. We should take action to end police abuse. I believe we should approach the police officers, asking why there is a difference in treatment. Or better yet, we should demand training and education for police. If we put an end to this mistreatment, then our future generation will enjoy a better life.



Diversifying our Education System **Tory Latham**

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” Although those words were spoken over 50 years ago, we are still living with many of the same injustices today. The racial disparities between children of color and white students in the Madison Metropolitan School District are screaming for attention. This is an injustice that can’t continue to be placed on the back burner. One day very soon these same children will become the backbone of this supposedly great country. Making a quality education for all children, regardless of where they live or how they look, should not be optional.

I do, however, have options to offer. MMSD needs to hire more qualified teachers of color. Research shows that children respond better and have higher test scores when their teachers look like them. Also, teachers should have higher expectations of children of color. If that happens, children are more likely to remain in the classroom for minor incidents. If these things aren’t addressed soon, there is a possibility that our country will continue to fall behind the rest of the world. Please address this injustice because our country can’t continue to be great in the presence of such injustice.



Acceptance is Key **Steven Jones**

“They know that parents have to teach, that children can’t achieve unless we raise their expectations and turn off the television sets and eradicate the slander that says a black youth with a book is acting white. They know those things.” That’s a deep and very insightful quote from Barack Obama, our president, in 2004. I know how it feels to be told I’m “acting white on the inside” or “acting white.” One day in my youth, I was home listening to music and relaxing. Then enters a family member: “Why are you listening to that white folks’ music?” That was the question that still sends chills down my spine. Overwhelmed by emotions, embarrassment, and enlightenment, I was filled with many things, but I wondered, “Why does it have to be white music?” I quickly turned it off, not liking the feeling I had inside.

As I grew older, wiser and more mature, I didn’t care if people judged me for the music I listened to, the way I dressed, or the company I kept. I also realized that many don’t have the resolve to get past friends and family judging them for being different, and they keep their true selves hidden. Why do we attack one another in our community when we should be uplifting, understanding, and unfazed by people different than ourselves? We are already behind from the many horrible, hateful and horrendous years of slavery and segregation.

We can’t grow as people or a community if we mock ourselves and remain closed minded. I’m not saying to forget where you come from or be something you’re not, but if someone comes along, don’t tear them down or make them feel less than a person. In our community you’re either too

black, not black enough, or acting white. Who decides these things? We should just stand by one another regardless. There are many forms of abuse, and some never recover from any attack on their character, heart, or integrity. We have come a long way as people, but we'll never get where we can and should be, if we don't make the changes that make corporate America target us, or tear us down! We can't help how they view us, but we can change how we treat one another! We must unite! If you don't listen to me, go back and read the quote from a pillar in our black history!



Self Defense **Ashley Wills**

Guns and crime: these two seem to go hand in hand. But is everyone with a gun a criminal? Approximately 10,700 United States citizens died last year from gun-related incidents. Do stricter gun laws ensure safety against gun related crimes? The second amendment of the US Constitution reads: "A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed."

The government feels there's a need to protect us from ourselves by limiting our access and being able to have or obtain weapons for self-protection. Taking away guns from citizens in order to ensure their safety is the primary way to make sure they don't reach the hands of a criminal. Where there's a will, there's a way. A criminal will always find a way to acquire a weapon despite laws preventing it. If we all had the right to carry weapons openly, I feel that in an attempt to deter criminals in a rage, a perpetrator might think twice before committing these heinous crimes if they knew that potentially several people had the means to protect themselves. With all the crime and uncertainty in the world, I would feel better knowing that I could protect myself or someone else in the event we were being attacked.



Accept Transsexuality **Luna Santos**

Transsexuality has been a taboo for many people in the world, and the reason is the majority of people doesn't know, or refuses to know, about the topic. A transsexual person is born with the appearance of a given biological sex but is aware of being a gender opposite to their biological sex.

The following will show that, in fact, transsexualism has been around throughout our history. In ancient Rome the Phrygian worshipers of the goddess Cybele have the male choose the gender. During the 1200's, Pelegius originally lived as man, but after his death his sex was discovered to be female.

Many transsexuals are homeless because their families don't accept them as who they were meant to be. In fact, there are about 50 percent of transsexuals who die by the age of 30, usually by their own hand, because of the degradation that society and the media place on transsexual people. Polis was beaten at McDonald's in Maryland on April 18, 2010. This case was not taken to the Supreme

Court, and he did not get justice for it. On November 18, Christopher Brown Lee found his 15 year-old sister Samara hanging from their garage, with a thick black rope that she used to walk her dogs with. She was born the opposite sex and was bullied to the extent that she took her beautiful life.

Some people might continue to keep their eyes closed or refuse to open their hearts to the world. Others like Vicky Tom step up for the right thing no matter who it is. As it has been said before, the one who is free from sin must throw the first rock. Hopefully, this small intro about transsexuals helps you realize that by judging and catastrophizing people without knowing their backgrounds, there will be a significant effect on the person's life and their family forever.

Love and respect each other.



Use Odyssey as a Tool
Joe Young

The reason why it's hard for young black men to maintain a full time job and succeed/progress in life is because unexpected events happen everywhere, every day. People have to live their lives based off the choices they make after these "unexpected" events come into effect. I, myself, have had to live a life revolving around traumatic losses in my family. One was very unexpected, and the other left me with a sense of misdirection into the rest of my life.

Unlike average teenagers, I tended to my family matters. At the end of the day, that's who I knew would always support me, and vice versa. When my mom took on the lifetime task of raising my nephew, I took on that very same task. I would stay home instead of partying or just hanging out. I changed diapers instead of thinking about when I would have to eventually grow up and support myself. From the age of 13-17, that's what my life was. I almost forgot that I still needed to decide about college, not to mention having the right amount of credits to actually be accepted. Let's not forget about the ACT, too! I was going on 18 and had yet to prepare for any of this. Even some of the guys I was cool with were already deciding on what college they were attending or if they were even going. That brought up the thought of working every day, which was something else I had yet to experience. The same guys I was hanging out with all had jobs for at least two years by the time we were all 18.

Today I find myself a few steps past the previous situation I described above. Ever since I joined Odyssey, I've been more hopeful that I will find meaning in my life. I want to find a role to play that fits me and my future. I will continue to use the resources gained through being an Odyssey student. I even look forward to seeing what more Odyssey can do for me as far as finding a career and finally being able to take bigger steps towards success. One day I will be caught up with the ones who left me behind in my struggles. Hopefully Odyssey can be one of the perfect tools to use for fixing my problems.

POETRY MATTERS

All lives matter
 The children who didn't get enough to eat
 All lives matter
 The women and mothers who feel defeat
 All lives matter
 The brothers in jail whose doors slam at the sound of the bell
 All lives matter
 I'm living on Earth but feels like hell
 All lives matter
 Our father who died on the cross for our sins
 All lives matter
 The charge of injustice from beginning to end
 Today might not be the day but eventually we'll win
 All lives matter. (**Jayvonna Flemming**)

It is sad to see that our world is still viewed in black and white,
 As if we were all color blind.
 If we have succeeded in bringing pictures to life,
 Why can't we do the same with our minds?
 We hold a diversity like no other,
 Yet we lack the ability to welcome each other. (**Marisela Tellez**)

Wages are always unfair.
 Some people get high wages,
 but they are really doing nothing,
 while other people work hard
 but they get little money.
 I don't know how the owners
 figure out the wage. (**Shaimaa Ahmed**)

Cheating
 Give me the truth
 To savor my youth
 And even if it hurts
 At least my heart won't be perverted.
 (**Mai Neng Thao**)

Elections are bought.
 The people distraught.
 Bribing the candidate
 For the gain of the rich.
 How can the poor stand?
 (**Karina Herrejon**)

Survival,
 Making sacrifices
 Survival,
 Being strong
 even when you know you don't want to
 Survival,
 Getting through the struggle
 Survival.
 (**Katia Robinson**)

What's left for a black man
 With no fam? Mess around
 And have a baby?
 Well, damn...
 She keeps asking if I'm ready
 I keep saying, "No, ma'am"...
 But will I be ready when things
 Get heavy though?
 When the doors slam,
 Where am I heading?
 Got to get steady.
 Life isn't peanut butter and jelly
 When you can barely keep
 Your bread together.
 And everyone is trying to tell you that you're failing.
 But until they walk
 In your shoes, what can they
 Tell you?
 (**Joe Young**)

I work, but I still struggle
 I work, I still have nothing
 I ask my Uncle Sam for help
 He tells me to work
 I work, I work
 But I'm still in the red
 I need help to work, so I need childcare
 I ask
 I get a bill that I can't afford
 I work and still can't work
 I ask for a little help with food
 I get told I make too much
 I work, I make too much
 I work, I still have less
 I ask to go to the doctor
 They say go to work
 I work, I work
 I'm still sick
 Uncle Sam, how much more can I work to be poor?
(Brandice Hatcher)

Run away, run away, run away.
 Home is not a safe place to stay.
 Run away, run away, run away.
 Hide in the night, hide in the day.
 Run away, run away, run away.
 Give your all, your last to pay.
 Run away, run away, run away.
 Sleep, but there's no rest where you lay.
 Run away, run away, run away.
 Walk past the schoolyard where friends play.
 Run away, run away, run away.
 "You're a misfit" society will say.
 Run away, run away, run away.
 Abuse is not abuse, they make it okay.
 So, run away, run away, run away.
(Tamara Thompson Moore)

I am not surprised
 By mass incarceration, racism, or poverty.
 They are all deeply rooted in American Pride.
 A pride that allowed violence against freedom rides.
 A pride that attacked the communities of poverty with petty crimes.
(Tory Latham)

Poverty
 When you eat, remember there is someone who doesn't have food to eat.
 When you sleep, remember there is someone who doesn't have a place to sleep.
 Thank God for what you have,
 So you don't live like those who don't have.
(Mustafa Mohammed Saed)

You say it's not real because it can't be seen,
 But I feel it every day.
 You say I'm a free-loader,
 Yet you don't know how far I've walked in crumbling shoes.
 You say my pain means nothing as long as I'm standing on my own.
 Pain.
 It's not in my head but is consumed by one; me!
 Invisible to you is very real to me. **(Kelly Dixon)**



Sorry, Earth, for making you bleed every day.
 Sorry, Earth, for making you hungry.
 Sorry, Earth, for cutting you in two halves.
 I don't know what to do to make you happy,
 but I am working on it.
 I have the same sadness you have.
(Umaima Mohammed Saed)

Poverty is like an illness
 It affects millions of people
 Poverty takes away happiness
 It stresses and depresses people
 Poverty should end soon
 Poverty must end soon
 Poverty is the most difficult thing
 Poverty should die soon
(Guadalupe Tinajero)

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 Run away, run away, run away.
 Abuse is not abuse, they make it okay.
 So, run away, run away, run away.
(Tamara Thompson Moore)

Trump
 When you take your viper out a walkin;
 And laugh with glee as he does all your talkin;
 Dismayed you need not ever be,
 When he turns to sink his fangs in thee.
(Lisa Partee)

Society, why do you trouble me?
 Society, why do you shun me?
 Society, why do you judge me?
 Society, why do you deceive me?
 Society, why don't you accept me for me?
 Society, why don't you question authority?
 But if I do, you condemn me.
 Society, you have no power over me
 because, Society, my mind is free.
(Steven Jones)

Hey Black...
 Do you know who you are?
 King
 Queen
 Rich
 Powerful
 Beautiful
 Warrior
 Creator
 Survivor
 Who you really are
 African
 Black
 Toned
 Deep
 Inheritance
 Blessed
 Do you know you can be President?
 Go
 Doctor
 Lawyers
 Educator
 Inventor
 Social image
 If you try to be the damn best you can
 Dreamer
 Conqueror
 Visionary
 What you can be
 Black and proud
 Hey black...
(Brandice Hatcher)

Damned if you do, damned if you don't
 Living to work, working to live
 Killin' yoself to provide for your family, something's got to give.
 What resources? What assistance? Just makes no sense.
 Rent, car notes, childcare, food, clothing
 That's money well spent.
 Those who sit at home, twiddling their thumbs,
 The ones who do not do a thing,
 Seem to be getting by.
 While the others work their behinds off,
 Barely making those ends meet,
 Receive no help.
 My question: why?
(Jelissa Williams)

Life is like a race,
 Long and difficult,
 But only we can choose how to finish.
 Your mind is like a parachute...
 It works only when open.
(Karina Gómez)

The day I left
 You cried and said call when you get home.
 I said I love you and talk to you soon.
 All I see is you standing in the hall
 Crying.
 I ask myself, why did I leave you all alone?
 All I want is to go back and ride it out with you.
 I couldn't see you in so much pain.
 You are my grandmother and best friend.
 I miss you with all my heart. **(Jalisa Galvin)**

God's Not Dead
 Taking God out of school
 Taking God out of government
 Taking God out of news
 Taking God out of conversations
 And when the world is failing,
 We wonder why we ever let God die.
(Ashley Wills)

Do I believe
 That eye for an eye
 Is justice for me?
 Do I believe that a person
 That beat, raped, and molested a child
 Should get the death penalty?
 Do I believe? Why yes indeed.
 Do unto thee as has been done unto me. **(Arkeshia Sallay)**

I'm just this little girl that wants you to love me.
 I'm just this little girl that is craving your attention.
 I'm just this little girl that wants you to know me.
 I'm just this little girl that wants you to play dolls with me.
 Daddy, all I want is you to hug me, love me, and spend time with me.
 Daddy, I hear your voice but I can't see you.
 Daddy, I love you to the moon and back.
 Daddy, when am I going to see you again? **(Jalisa Galvin)**



To be a fly on the wall for the times I am not present.
 Would the things I hear fill me with resentment?
 Or make me be proud to not be around when I'm spoken about aloud?
 Would the crowd come from far and wide and stand side by side?
 Or be filled with sorrow in an emotionless pride divide?
 Would they be filled with pride and hold hands with one another
 as they remember my name at my funeral? **(Steven Jones)**

Single Mother

For all the mothers that do it alone,
 I respect you.
 Never let your child's father, or his failures, affect you.
 Honey, you're special.
 I know you don't hear it enough,
 And some nights while the kids are asleep,
 Your daily struggles start to make you tear up.
 It pays off when they say, "I love you, Mommy."
 I know that cheers you up...
 The joke's on him for missing out on a blessing.
 Contemplate how many females don't get the opportunity to create life
 When your creation has you stressing.
 Nobody ever said it would be easy.
 But children make it all worth it.
 Their love is what helps you make it through
 Because Lord knows,
 Life is far from perfect. **(Jelissa Williams)**

A wide open highway
 Technology
 An encouraged child
 Space
 A love that is true
 Imagination
 There are no limits
(Tory Latham)

Love Has No Label

Love has no race
 Love has no religion
 Love has no gender
 Love has no disability
 Love has no age limit
 Love has no size
 Love has no shape
 Love has no shame
 Love has no pride
 Love has no timeline
 Love has no expiration date
 Love has no condition
 Love has no fear
 Love is love, no matter what form it comes in...
 Love has no LABEL **(Jelissa Williams)**

Beautiful love, brilliant love,
 What would we do without you?
 You make lives happy.
 You bring hope and happiness.
 Beautiful love, brilliant love.
(Guadalupe Tinajero)

It's been so long, I don't need it anymore.
 The heart has been tampered with, beaten to its core.
 When the monsters played a mean game,
 My father, you never came.
(Mai Neng Thao)

Aging

Do what you want to do
 Do not wait
 You might forget
 Age will not wait
 Get up and do what you want to do
(Mustafa Mohammed Saed)

You laughed
 And you cried.
 No more of that.
 You swung and walked some scorching paths.
 No more of that.
 You cleaned in between little baby toes to find lint.
 No more of that.
 Away with you.
 No more of that.
(Karina Herrejon)

I dream of a time when my
 Mind will be free of stress and mess.
 In this dream, my mind is on no time frame
 or with any blame.
 My dreams begin with hope,
 Yet seem to be trapped in ropes.
 Oh dream of mine, I have now awoke
 and still am feeling as if I might choke.
(Rosalyn Richmond)

Lost Soul

I'm lost in my mind only time controls it.
 It's like I walked into a lion's den by mistake,
 Because the cage was open.
 Don't know what to expect until things start unfolding.
 Meaning, what I see with my eyes don't leave much room for hoping.
 These thoughts in my head keep my mind open,
 Staying up late at night to increase my creativity focus.
 Am I using the wrong keys to make the right door open?
 If you can see my vision, then maybe I need the keys you're holding.
 If you were in my position, I would say have faith.
 Keep your mind open.
 Stay humble and hungry.
 Patience is only a hold up.
 This place we call home takes hearts from home,
 And puts them in places they never belonged.
(Joe Young)

Papa's hands--
 Papa's hands have seen wars lost and won
 Papa's hands are rough and gritty,
 Filled with strength and tenderness.
 I often take his hand in mine
 and feel the pains of his labor to keep his family alive.
 Papa's hands have kept me safe
 and have frozen time of this curious mind.
(Kelly Dixon)



When I die...
 When I die, just play my song.
 When I die, don't come along.
 When I die, go ahead and blow my mind,
 And come on down the soul train line.
 When I die, forgive yourself,
 I've forgiven mine.
 When I die,
 look around to help your fellow kind stay above ground.
(Nikitia Cooper)

Survival
 No matter if you are honest or strong,
 The stronger does not shake from the wind.
 The honesty is humanity.
 Don't let anything change you.
 Keep your character forever.
(Shaimaa Ahmed)

White Sky
 When I look up, I see the white sky
 I think how will it be if I die?
 There is no one in this life that loves me
 Only sadness and darkness
 I wonder if my life is going to be like this forever?
 I'm depressed and thinking of a fast way to die.
 During my depression a sonic light shines in my direction
 The bright white light is warm
 I can't see you but it's like an angel
 The angel comes to me and asks me, "Are you okay?"
 I'm amazed by the melody of your voice
 Your face shows you care about me
 I can't make any sound
 But finally say, "No, I'm not okay."
 One big drop turns into a river
 Running down my face
 You hug me and you whisper to me
 "I'm here, don't worry."
 I try to break from the darkness...
 I can feel my face warm
 You shine on top of me and you give me hope to keep living
 I look up and I see the white sky
 I see you, my cozy bright sun. **(Luna Santos)**

She had her kids at a young age
 She struggles to make ends meet
 While living in a room that's as big as a cage.

A single mother alone and cold
 With these two, she finally feels complete . . .
(Tasha Thompson)



DELVING INTO EMILY DICKINSON

*A word is dead
When it is said
Some say.*

*I say it just
Begins to live
That day.*

Emily Dickinson was saying that no matter what you say or if you pass away, your words are still here with people. They will remember your words. I chose this poem because my grandmother's words never die at all. Her

words are still with me, like she would say, "Don't throw a stone for a stone." **(Jalisa Galvin)**

*If I can stop one heart from breaking
I shall not live in vain
If I can ease one Life the Aching
Or cool one Pain*

*Or help one fainting Robin
Unto his Nest again,
I shall not live in Vain.*

This poem is very moving. Emily Dickinson talks enthusiastically about helping people to minimize their pain.

I love this poem because, just like Emily Dickinson, right now I am in a situation where I wish I could help a relative who is struggling with his life. If I could do something to lessen his pain or make him go back to his previous, happier life, I would do it without question.

Reading this poem makes me think that many people, if not all people, feel the need to help others overcome pain and reach goals. For instance, the Odyssey Project is one example of people who work hard to help others reach

their goals; many times, they put people back on track with their previous lives. This can make people see a light at the end of the tunnel.

When I see homeless people sleeping outside, especially in the cold winters, my heart breaks apart. I hope I can do something to help them dream again.

In a few words, this poem tells what and how I feel. I don't have the words to express my feelings, but when I read something like this, I feel relief knowing that words cured the soul.

(Guadalupe Tinajero)

*We lose—because we win—
Gamblers—recollection which
Toss their dice again*

My understanding of the line "we lose because we win" is simply that if we had never won, we would have quit. The occasional win keeps up trying. The last lines confirm this, as the gambler recollects which tosses won and how to relive that toss. Emily Dickinson has captured a gambler's mind and spirit. You have to lose in order to win. That's what keeps us playing.



I hold onto that win and keep playing. It's an addiction. This also reflects how in life sometimes it takes you failure in order to straighten things up. You might fall and fall, but eventually you make it. You have to keep trying. Even if you apply for that job and are told no, go to the next. You might have better luck. It's all in the mind. **(Jayvonna Flemming)**

*Some keep the Sabbath going to church
I keep it staying at Home—
With a Bobolink for a Chorister—
And an Orchard, for a Dome-- . . .*

*God preaches, a noted Clergyman—
And the sermon is never long.
So instead of getting to Heaven, at last—
I'm going, all along.*

Emily Dickinson expressed how she had to leave the confines of the "Dome" and the incessant "tolling the Bell" so that she could go and look for Him in the places that He can actually be found: in the intricate craftsmanship and eloquent design of the world He created; the wild and unkempt parts of nature.

My experience of being held hostage by the "noted Clergyman" until I learned to just "stay put" on my own out of fear of the gaping, cavernous mouth of Hell is multilayered and complex. I am so grateful to have gotten away from those times and people so that I would have a chance to even HEAR his voice in the "Bobolink" . . . and then properly reintroduce ourselves. I think He knew that I would be one of His "special needs" children. He lovingly and tenderly put together my "divine lesson plans" so that I would be able to continue to hear Him as I slowly learn to shut out the clammering of voices past. I continue our "Heaven" right in my here, my now, and my forever. **(Lisa Partee)**

LOVING LANGSTON HUGHES

Dreams

*Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams lie
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.*

*Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.*

In this poem Langston Hughes is saying that dreams are vital to the life of every person. Without dreams, there is nothing to plan or look forward to; therefore, no reason to live.

I believe that no matter how old we are, we must hold fast our dreams. We can fail, but also this is part of success, and at the end everything is worth it. One of my dreams was to go back to school and the starting of that dream was Odyssey. I was afraid of failure, but I have also learned not to be afraid of my dreams. **(Karina Gómez)**

In darkness there is light, and she found hope even when she could not see. With help, she took the inner light of her soul so she could be the best.

Odyssey is my light. Odyssey has brought out the person I buried so far down in me that I lost it, never to be reborn. Odyssey said, "Come out." Odyssey tugged and pulled, and gave me the inner light to shine. Odyssey has given me back me, who I am and am supposed to be. **(Brandice Hatcher)**

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.*

Negro Mother

*Children, I come back today
To tell you a story of the long dark way
That I had to climb, that I had to know
In order that the race might live and grow.*

*Look at my face—dark as night—
Yet shining like the sun with love's true light.
I am the child they stole from the sand
Three hundred years ago in Africa's land.*

...

*Oh, my dark children, may my dreams and my prayers
Impel you forever up the great stairs—
For I will be with you till no white brother
Dares keep down the children of the Negro mother.*

This poem is about an African-American mother who tells her story and gives a voice for black mothers throughout the ages. She describes how she was taken away in her homeland of Africa as a child, forced to live down south and dedicated her life to endless days of slavery. She suffered from abuse, neglect, and seeing her family sold and taken away. One of the most important lines mentioned in the poem is, "I was the seed of the coming Free." This line is powerful and shines light on all the years she lived in darkness. She refers to herself as the seed which was planted for the younger generations to live lives of freedom. The poem delivers a message to the children to not let their ancestors' sacrifices remain in vain, to build a future of their own, and to make her proud.

Langston Hughes's words impacted me as a Latina because we, as minorities, know what it is like to be treated unfairly and denied the same rights as others. I think this poem is very powerful and moving for anyone who reads it. It gives a closer perspective on those who involuntarily fell as victims to the cruel crimes of slavery. The sacrifices made throughout the older generations are not always recognized and often go about without appreciation. I think it is important for all of us to learn about our ancestors, how we came to be where we are now, and to teach our children about our own history. **(Marisela Tellez)**

Mean Old Yesterday

*That mean old yesterday
Keeps on following me.
The things I've said and done
Haunt me like a misery.*

*What I did last year—
How come it matters still today?
The snow that fell last winter's
Melted away.*

*I thought you'd done forgotten
What happened way last week,
But when I saw you this morning,
You turned your head and would not speak.*

*Memory like an elephant,
Never forget a thing!
Well, if you feel like that, baby,
Gimme back my diamond ring.*

"Mean Old Yesterday" questions how things from the past can live into the present. The poem expresses being disturbed and haunted by actions that were done. Toward the end of the poem, the narrator conveys a nonchalant attitude about wanting his diamond ring back if his spouse is not willing to forget and keeps letting problems from the past surface in the present. Langston Hughes uses images such as snow melting to prove that things can disappear and be forgotten, but when you have a memory like an elephant, certain things can keep coming back to plague you.

The very first few lines of this poem instantly caught my attention. There have been countless times when I've done or said something that I was not very proud of, and they continue to hurt me in ways that I didn't know were possible. Sometimes, it could also be things that others have done to me, and it would be on my mind all day. Regardless of all the happy little moments I've had, this dark thought of mind would overthrow all positivity. **(Mai Neng Thao)**
I felt Langston Hughes was saying that although Chicago is a fast-paced city, both night and day, you

don't have to get caught up and captivated in its lifestyle. You have to stay grounded and humble. Chicago and all its hustle and bustle has the ability to run you high, but the end result can leave you so far down below. That same, good-feeling ground which you never quite slowed down enough to appreciate could be the same ground in which your cold, soulless body lay.

I feel like I can apply this to my life by understanding and

acknowledging that no matter what is going on in my life, and if it feels it's all too much and too fast that I can't keep up, I can always take a step back and slow myself down. Even start over, if need be. I can stand strong and grounded no matter my environment.

(Arkeshia Sallay)

The woman speaks of her fear of dying in the winter time. She speaks of tulips in the springtime. She speaks of her wish to die in the springtime.

Red Roses

*I'm waitin' for de springtime
When de tulips grow—
Sweet, sweet springtime
When de tulips grow;
Cause if I'd die in de winter
They'd bury me under snow. . . .*

Heaven? Hell? I have dreamed of my funeral. I dreamed of it being springtime. I dreamed of my coffin being covered with flowers and broken sunflowers drifting in the wind. I would want my loved ones to celebrate my life and to find peace with my passing. Yes, I did find this poem to be short, but it painted a picture of me. It was also straightforward for me. **(Kala Taylor)**

It was only by pure chance that I opened our book to this poem. When I read it, it spoke volumes to how I

Chicago Blues

*Chicago is a town
That sure do run on wheels.
Runs so fast you don't know
How good the ground feels*

*I got in town Monday
Tuesday rolling drunk
Wednesday morning
I pawned my trunk. . . .*

*Chicago is a town
That sure do run on wheels.
Runs so fast you don't know
How good the ground feels.*

am currently feeling. Bottom line, a bad situation can be turned around for the better. The poem is about escaping your surroundings and some various ways that it can be done.

The first stanza is light-hearted and quite visual. I can see my kindergarten self now trying to imitate a sea lion swimming to a far off land, and my adult self telling the world of my one-way ticket intentions. The second stanza gives me the picture of someone reckless and impulsive. To be rich and to buy

anything you want (in this case, a car), and to just go and never return, can either say that the sky's the limit for exploration or that it is just time to vanish

into the air. Either way, this part is too impulsive for my own tastes, but something that I am sure many a lost soul has done before. The first line in the last stanza, *Hard-hearted and unloving*, speaks of many a situation: abuse, depression and just feeling unwanted. The imagery of seeing a bird fly away makes a bad situation feel positive.

*Fly away from you,
Yes, way Away From
You. (Kelly Dixon)*

Declaration

*If I was a sea-lion
Swimming in the sea,
I would swim to China
And you never would see me.
No!
You never would
See me.*

*If I was a rich boy
I'd buy myself a car,
Fill it up with gas
And drive so far, so far.
Yes!
I would drive
So far.*

*Hard-hearted and unloving!
Hard-hearted and untrue!
If I was a bird I'd
Fly away from you.
Yes, way
Away
From
You.*

GROWING POWER: CELEBRATING FOOD JUSTICE

Having Will Allen visit and sign my book was like having the “hood” version of Superman come to rescue us from bad food! Slow Food cooks are the new version of granny’s cooking, taking the time to prep and cook meals. Me getting a crock pot is my first house warming gift for my home. It will allow me to have home prepared meals. —Brandice Hatcher



The Growing Power of Will Allen as he demonstrated how to use crock pots was chicken-veggielicious. —Char Braxton '06



My chicken and crockpot this morning. Thank you again for the food. ~Karina Gómez



Chicken and dumplings made by Bettye Emmanuel



Having Will Allen visit our class was very inspiring. There is so much attention being paid to unemployment and under-employment that we forget about such things as eating right. I am extremely grateful for the meals that are prepared by Slow Foods UW students using the crock pots. They allow working parents to provide a satisfactory meal. —Tory Latham



Karina's family enjoying a meal from the new crockpot

I liked the book by Will Allen and to learn about all the work he does to ensure that people eat healthier, grow their own vegetables, and take advantage of the resources. Also I liked having UW Slow Food interns weekly cooking healthy meals for us and taking the time to write down the recipes for us. It helped me feel more confident to learn to cook in a way that I did not know. It helps me save time using a crock pot. Thank you for the crock pot. It was a big help for my family. —Karina Gómez



We are so blessed!!
We had the amazing
opportunity to meet
this “pioneering
urban farmer” who
has committed his
life to building new
food systems that
can feed and heal
broken urban
communities. This



morning, we took our gifts of all organic veggies and an organic
chicken and had a wonderful time appreciating the gifts of the earth—and Olivia
learned to put together her first crock pot dinner!! —Lisa Seward-Partee



“Made this for dinner tonight.” ~Kala Taylor





I appreciated Will Allen coming into class and telling us a little about himself. I admired the determination and drive in him to produce organic fruits and vegetables and to make it affordable for those who don't have the means to buy that produce. —Jelissa Williams



Will Allen's appearance in our class was very inspiring. Also he instilled more confidence and a boost in my healthy eating journey. I love the fact that he gave us all crock pots, that was so great and help to jumpstart our new healthy way of life. I felt honored to have him and even more so that he was able to autograph my book. —Arkeshia Sallay



Shaimaa Ahmed cooking with son Abdul



Crockpot dinner made by Steve Jones

