

Year 13, Issue 9

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# ODYSSEY ORACLE

## CREATING AT THE CHAZEN



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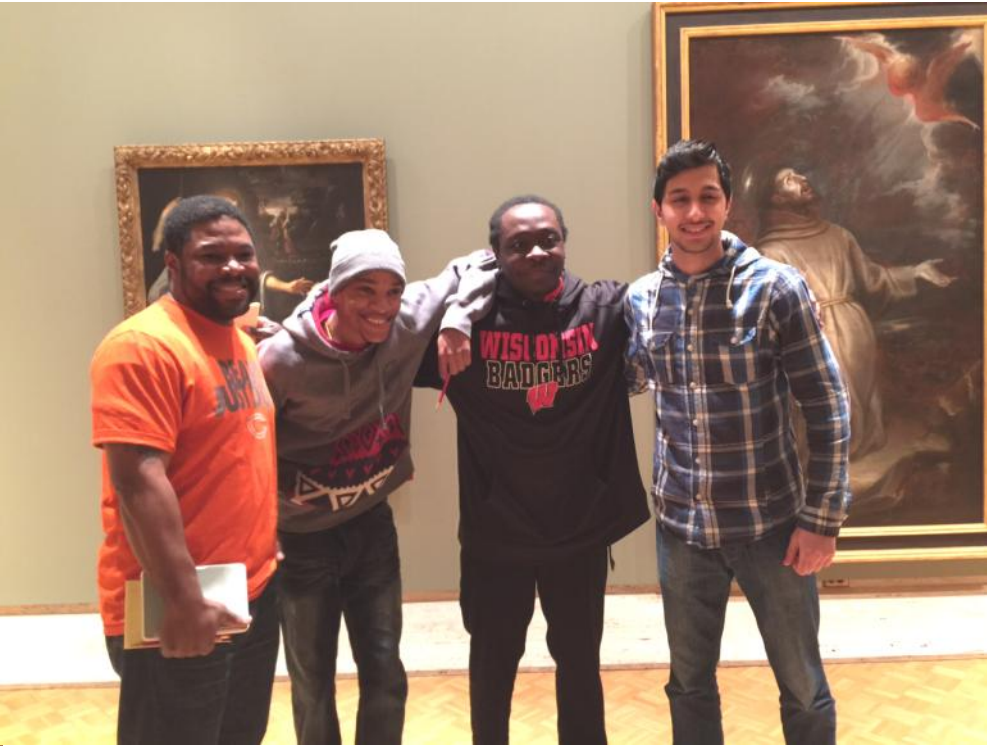
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# I AM...



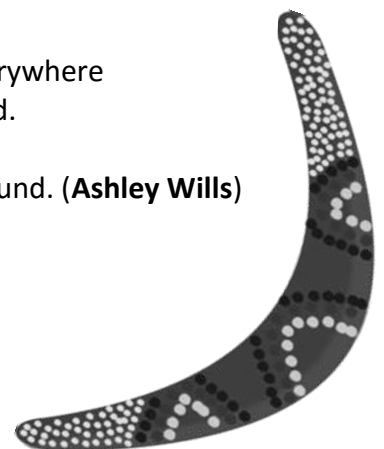
I am gorilla glass.  
 I get constantly mishandled.  
 I always end up on the floor.  
 I get tossed and viciously slammed.  
 I've been constantly abandoned by people  
 and left alone to fend for myself.  
 I may have cracks and scratches,  
 but my image is still beautiful.  
 You can still see me.  
 I am still holding together.  
 I am gorilla glass. **(Kala Taylor)**

I am a tent that holds her kids.  
 I protect them from cold.  
 Protect them from the risks of life.  
 I stand to harsh conditions.  
 I travel to wherever they take me.  
 I am delighted to be a guard to my kids.  
**(Shaimaa Ahmed)**



I am a date palm tree, so tall you might not see.  
 Stable as you see, nothing can move me.  
**(Mustafa Mohammed Saed)**

I am a boomerang.  
 I'm here and there and everywhere  
 with the change of the wind.  
 I'm up then I'm down,  
 but I always come back around. **(Ashley Wills)**



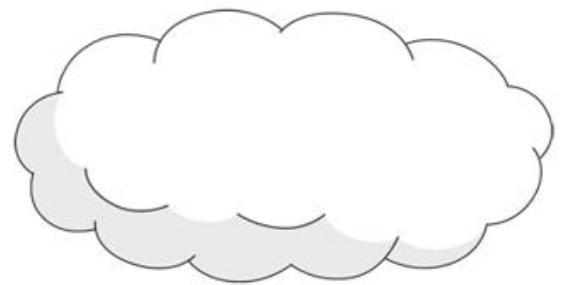
I am a cane.  
 Always there for anyone who needs to lean on me.  
 I will hold you up and stay by your side  
 For as long as you choose to depend on me.  
 And even when you cast me away,  
 I will always be within reach  
 to help you stand firm and upright.  
**(Jelissa Williams)**



I am the wind  
 Blowing in the direction I desire  
 Floating in thin air  
 Whirling in destruction  
 Left to right surrounded by my lonesome  
 Whose unseen presence mists in the sky above  
 Draft of roaring pain against my face  
 Forces of hope near  
 Some days I feel like running but yet I stand still  
 The old me. **(Jayvonna Flemming)**

I am a whisper,  
 hidden in plain sight and at times inaudible,  
 Always ready to ruffle a few fallen leaves, when stirred,  
 Forever strong-willed and keenly observant,  
 Never synchronous or in the same place,  
 but you know when I am with you.  
 Like the wind blowing through the trees,  
 I gently nudge those that silently speak the loudest.  
 As day morphs into night, I find my sweet spot  
 and relax until morning comes,  
 awaiting your next arrival again, from a distance.  
**(Kelly Dixon)**

I am a cloud.  
 I am the purest cloud in the beautiful sky,  
 like a pile of cotton in the sky.  
 I am the kindest and most honest.  
 I am the most beloved by any kind.  
 I cry when I see people hurt.  
 I hurt others when they see my tears.  
 However, my tears help to quench the thirst of flowers.  
 I help to wash people's sorrows away and bring new life.  
 I am a cloud and I am proud. **(Umaima Mohammed Saed)**



I am a...lasting impression  
 Like the smell of the perfect amount of cologne  
 I am the perfect touch  
 Without the use of my hands  
 I am in your ear  
 When I am not present  
 I am tasty  
 That which you cannot get enough of  
 I am...more than what you see. **(Tory Latham)**

I am a mama bear  
 Who only wants to protect her cub  
 No matter the opponent in front  
 After all I am all he has left  
 Raised by a single mother trying to do her best  
 I will forever hunt for whatever he needs  
 Rest assured his hunger will be at ease  
 He is the greatest cuddle bear anybody could have  
 We could hibernate and nap forever without being asked

When I give you one of my bear hugs do not complain  
 I just want to hug you tightly so you can feel my embrace  
 I promise I will not cause you any pain  
 Take it as a simple reminder of how much you mean to me  
 You will forever be my baby  
 We are like two wild animals when we play  
 We jump, play, and roll around all day  
 Whether it's snow, dirt, or water  
 We will shake it off without a bother  
 We hold a bond like no other  
 You are the back to my bone  
 I will carry you until I am old  
 I cherish all the moments full of hugs and laughs  
 Before I know it you will be a man. **(Marisela Tellez)**



I am a star; I shine in the dark.  
 I lead you to your path.  
 I lead my children to life.  
 I lead my own life.  
 Sometimes I shine, sometimes I do not.  
 Shining takes time, and time is hard to find. **(Guadalupe Tinajero)**

I am a Queen, crowned with the knowledge that is giving me the power to reign free.  
 I am a Queen walking on the past that used to hold "Me"..  
 Anger, depression, abuse, and loneliness are my peasants who used to be.  
 I am a Queen that used to be misused and misunderstood;  
 Now I am a Queen who has the throne  
 and the power, worth, and gain minus the pain.  
 Oh, my dear people, don't feel sorry for this Queen.  
 I am a Queen that is winning and shining,  
 sitting on her throne with a future with great treasure.  
**(Rosalyn Richmond)**







I am a crimson fall leaf.  
 I am a beautiful transition.  
 Look at me.  
 Look at all of us.  
 Look at our colors and listen to the crunch of the leaves.  
 Look at us; listen to our voices.  
 We do make noise!  
 We are calling for you to look at us.  
**(Karina Herrejon)**

I am a child of God, hated by “Christians.”  
 I am a leader who looks to follow.  
 I am a provider who receives handouts.  
 I am warm-blooded, yet cold hearted.  
 I am a friendly mother, and a motherly friend.  
 I am a good half who fights to remain whole.  
**(Nickitia Cooper)**



I am a part of something that became extinguished and is now a dysmorphia.  
 I am a descendant of the ancient Greek goddess Aphrodite.  
 I am bonded with a tribe that called me a beautiful double spirit.  
 I am not just a transgender woman...I am a part of history. **(Luna Santos)**

I am a turtle, hiding in my shell for fear I will  
 be hurt again. I am quiet and stay to myself.  
 I don't talk so much, to anyone. I move

slow and at my own pace. I come off as hard and emotionless on the  
 outside. On the inside, I am soft and have feelings. I often hide due to  
 being overwhelmed and being nervous. **(Tasha Thompson)**



I am not strong every day. I get so tired and afraid. And most often, I look nothing like a Warrior. And I  
 accept that I am powerless over so much...but I am still grateful and rejoice in the fact that I know where my  
 source of strength lies...

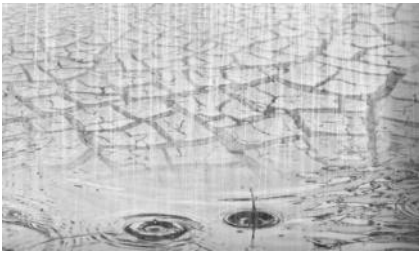
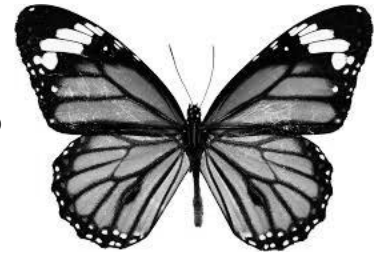


**~I am Joan of Arc~**

Regardless of what lies right outside my front door—threatening daily to  
 undermine any good and righteous thing I fight to protect—I am Free. I am  
 being Reconciled and Restored so that I may go forth and reclaim my birthright  
 that was pilfered so long ago. That's the Glory to the Story! So when the days  
 come that I see the powers of this world threatening to pillage or plunder any of  
 the gifts that I have been entrusted with, I will swiftly upraise my standard that simply says, “**#superchick**”  
 and move forward crying, “In Odyssey's name I must fight them...even if they hang from the clouds!”

I stand cool and composed before a million universes and proclaim that I am going to take my babies and  
 leave these streets that are lined with filth and violence. We are going forward—never to return to this  
 squalid existence—and on to our home of birth. **(Lisa Partee)**

I used to be a caterpillar, wandering through life aimlessly searching for my purpose. But now I am a butterfly with wings spread, beautiful by God's design. My reflection in the mirror gives me a reason to appreciate me. My purpose is to serve God wholeheartedly while submitting to His word. (**Jelissa Williams**)



I am a desert rain of dry tears. I cry at the opposite end of things, situations that normally do not end in tears. I don't cry for things like funerals or childbirths or illnesses; I have accustomed myself to this, trying to hide my pain from my aunt's death. I remove myself from the moment of present time. I find myself crying when I get extremely upset or when I feel like I am being done

wrong, when I am not. My biggest dry tears come from when someone calls me "spoiled." This will get me angry and tears will fill my eyelids. (**Brandice Hatcher**)

I am a tree, with deep roots and strong, sturdy branches. My exterior is weathered and rough, but inside are layers that tell stories of generations, connecting ancestors to the fruit I bear. My leaves harvest rays of sunshine to feed my soul; I drink heavenly dew and stretch my arms to reach the sky in her star-lit show. All of my friends take a comfort in my cool shade; I give them refuge from weary travels and drop sweet treats to nourish them another day, until they meet the loving soil, and I welcome them home. (**Tamara Thompson Moore**)



I am a walking time bomb ready to explode because I have a lot going through my mind and a lot on my plate. I'm this walking time bomb because I'm a mother, student, and employee, and I am trying to be in a relationship. I'm in school Wednesday nights, spend two nights tutoring, trying to get lesson plans done in a short amount of time and home to make sure my daughter is fed, bathed, her teeth brushed, story read and to bed on time. I'm a walking time bomb ready to erupt – everyone needs me to do something so when do I have this down time to say I need this or I need help? I DON'T! When I'm at home, I'm ticking. If anyone says the wrong thing to me, I explode. I just go on and on with the conversation and do

not let go. I'm a walking time bomb; I have not let anything out that has been bothering me and it has all built up inside, so I can explode at any time. I am human; I cry and I hurt and I am far from perfect. Anyone can judge this walking time bomb. I am not afraid. (**Jalisa Galvin**)

I'm a drum. When you play a drum, people listen. I'm not as quiet as I used to be, but when I speak people listen because my voice is low like a bass drum. Just because I don't talk a lot doesn't make me quiet. I'm that drum in the concert band that isn't heard often but crowds listen when it is played. I'm that timpani that makes you focus on the show. You can't wait for the next blow from the stick or mallet. I'm a drum. (**Steve Jones**)



I am a pterodactyl dinosaur because I like to view things from every angle. Their wings show the strength of my compassion. They like to rise away from negative things. I enjoy being alone, but with my skills I am allowed to accompany anybody. Dinosaurs are from old times, and I often get told that I have an old soul. (**Bettye Emmanuel**)

# FEELING PROUD



I am proud of not giving up on life itself. I have been in rough/hard situations, from being homeless, sleeping outside, and bouncing from home to home, to not being able to get around or not being able to take care of Harmony (my daughter) financially, mentally, physically and emotionally. Throughout that time I never gave up on anyone or life itself, but I gave up on myself. I am proud of not giving up on life itself. **(Katia Robinson)**



In just 186 days...I am really pleased, overall, about the work I've done. I learned that my feelings are fleeting and fickle and never should be used to measure success. And while every day isn't perfect, I've managed to stay employed, do fairly well in school, and maintain a household all in a new city. I think I am most proud of my writing. I love watching it flow and evolve...in the past six months. I have watched as my dreams are beginning to come true. I'm proud of me because I have been true to myself, even when it felt like I had no support. **(Lisa Partee)**



I'm proud to say I've decided to live a healthier life, both mentally and physically. I wanted to live life more fulfilled and extended. I began this mental and healthy lifestyle by first ridding my life of all negative and poisonous relationships. I began taking more time for myself and doing things that made me happy and humble. I began healthy eating, being more aware of the things I put into my body, more fruit and vegetables and baked meals. I incorporated a workout ritual and have lost over 30 pounds. I feel great, happy, healthy, and humble. I look

forward to a very rewarding and energetic future due to these changes. **(Arkeshia Sallay)**



In the last six months, I have to say that I'm very proud of myself because I have been doing very well in class. I'm receiving so much support from my family, friends and teachers and this lets me know that I can go back to school. At times, I just cry because I'm happy that I took my first step in getting in this class and going back to school. My daughter has been a good trooper for me as we have three long days out of the week. She makes me so happy; I'm doing all this for the both of us. **(Jalisa Galvin)**



Over the last couple of years I have become a better person internally; my mind, body and soul are stronger. I take negatives and use them as fuel and don't let things out of my control linger and stay with me. If it is out of my control, I let it go. It's hard when people are rude to you, but they win if you get into an altercation with them. There are times when you should speak up, though, and show backbone. **(Steven Jones)**



I am proud of how I have been able to manage and organize my time. I have learned to balance time with my toddler, a full-time job, and school. I have taken on an online psychology class through MATC this semester and have kept on top of all my due dates and assignments. I am proud of myself for returning to school and finding what career I want to pursue. I am giving my schooling 100%, like never before. **(Marisela Tellez)**





I am proud of being in America. America has opened the door for me to be an educated person. Now I am studying at Madison College, and I am planning on transferring to UW. I am proud of being in Odyssey. Odyssey gave me hope and support to feel that I am not alone here. I want to thank everyone in the Odyssey who supports me. I promise that one day in the future I will come and help the Odyssey program to support others. I am proud that I love my family. There are a lot of things that I am proud of, and it's hard to say them all in a few sentences. **(Umaima Mohammed Saed)**



I am proud of the man that I am. I am a man who continues to grow and offer more to my community and family. I am a man that sees no ceiling to my future. **(Tory Latham)**



I am proud of the new woman I have become. I have patience for myself, and my anxiety stress levels are down. I no longer worry about the things I cannot control. I no longer get worked up about money, food, or whatever I do not have. I no longer wonder if God speaks to me.

I am proud of how I am confident in myself, in school, and in my growth with God and how I am very stern about my actions with males and my choices of them. I am boasting about being a great mother. **(Brandice Hatcher)**



I was shy of 25 years and never had a full time job. Part of it was because I've been a student most of my life and never knew of any other way, until three years ago when I had finally made a difficult decision to leave school. **(Mai Thao)**

Yesterday I was pulling my linen cart and a ball passed my path. I stopped my cart and saw this cute little kid with a onesie run toward it. I grabbed the ball and



threw it at him. He smiled, and we tossed the ball back and forth. It's moments like that that make me smile through the day. These children are sick and some are near death, but still they smile. These kids bring happiness into my life. Honestly, I'm boasting about the children I work with; children who have incurable diseases and want to laugh and play with you, children who have darts and nerf guns and want to play tag. The children are the reason why I go to work everyday. I learn something new everyday. Even though the endings are not always happy, I cherish every moment with every child I meet. **(Kala Taylor)**



I am proud of the fact that I have perfect attendance in Odyssey. **(Rosalyn Richmond)**



I wrote a Facebook status to make people aware of the racist immigration bills that are being proposed in Wisconsin. I wrote a bit about the contributions my family has made in the U.S. and my pursuits of higher education, in hopes that some friends, who are not up to date with the propositions, will now have a say. Although Facebook isn't the platform, I know that people are always reading their newsfeed. **(Karina Herrejon)**



I am proud of myself because I achieved a 4.0 GPA at MATC last semester. Also, my son, Alan, has good grades and I am really proud of him and myself because I am helping him with everything I can to make him succeed in school. **(Guadalupe Tinajero)**

Believe it or not, I have so many wrongs and struggles, but yet so many positive things to be happy about. I think about the struggles in the last six months, dealing with my father. However, I wake up every day to my family and to my kids. I am proud that I have



taught my four year old everything she knows from spelling three letter words (mom, dad, cat, and dog) to writing her name to tying her shoes; I am now working on that with my son. I am proud that I am a great mom. I get up and go to work. I am proud I get to be here, working on myself and on my future. I am proud! **(Tasha Thompson)**



I'm so proud that I passed my property and casualty state insurance exams. I told myself over and over that I wouldn't pass it. I took it once before and failed miserably, so I knew I was setting myself up for failure. A very large corporation acquired the company I work for. I was told if I didn't pass the exams by January 31<sup>st</sup> I no longer had a position with the company. The long break we had in class opened a large window of opportunity for me to study, study, study. Long nights, stress and anxiety plagued me.

The day came. Each exam was allotted three hours, and I used every last second. I prayed hard that God would bring me through it. To my absolute shock and amazement, I passed both exams. That experience really gave me the confidence I can make it through anything I set my mind to, but only with God by my side. "If the lord brought you to it, he will bring you through it." I truly believe that, under every circumstance. To say the least, I am an insurance agent. **(Ashley Wills)**



2015 marked an acceleration in my reaching personal goals that had been like trophies in a case; I would mention them, admire them, and appreciate them, yet was missing action. I had worked with mothers for many years, but had for too long wanted to help in a more expanded role, beyond lactation counseling. I became trained and certified to provide childbirth education, labor support,

postpartum care, first aid / CPR, and neonatal resuscitation. I didn't know I had the capacity to learn so much, but when I did, I was on a roll. I acted as a Doula for three women within six months. Each woman had a different family makeup, education level, and ethnicity as well as differing personalities. I am proud of putting what I knew into practice.

**(Tamara Thompson Moore)**



I am so proud to have joined Odyssey and to have met such wonderful, accepting, and beautiful people, who have turned out to be my teachers and classmates – LOL. I am proud to be a part of a group of people that is so diverse but that has the same force and who will all succeed in life. I am mostly proud to be one of the first unique women who have made it into this life-changing program. I am so, so proud that, thanks to this program, I have started my hormone therapy! **(Luna Santos)**



I feel very proud of various things that have happened in my life, but especially two that make me very happy. One is the opportunity Emily has given to me to be part of the Odyssey Project. It has been an experience from which I have learned a lot and am continuing to learn more and more. The second is that more than a year ago I made the decision to change my eating habits and exercise more. I did this not only because I wanted to lose weight but also because I wanted to improve my health. For years I was struggling and was frustrated by the way I felt. As much as I was doing, my body was not reacting, so I decided to talk to my doctor. She did some medical tests and told me I had anemia and an irregular thyroid gland. I learned what kind of foods could help me rather than depending on medicines. It's not easy, but I'm very proud to maintain healthier eating habits that help me feel better and have more energy. Sometimes I feel down, but then I remember how good it feels after I exercise, and that encourages me to keep going. **(Karina Gómez)**



Within the last six months, I have chosen to attend college and go back to school. The beginning was hard for me; I felt that I was too old to be a student. I got an F in the first assignment in biology class, so I told myself college was not for me but

for the young students. After awhile, I decided to give it another chance and try to improve my knowledge. On the second quiz I got an A, and I kept going until the end of the semester; I had an "A" GPA. I did it! Now I am happy to be in classes with my son, and we challenge each other. Now I am taking the first step towards my goal to becoming a nurse. All my classmates are the same age, but I am the oldest one, so this gives me an opportunity to prove to them that age does not matter; the important thing is to learn more.

**(Shaimaa Ahmed)**



I didn't like studying, and I used to tell myself that all the time. My friends were supporting me to not study. At the same time I used to feel jealous when I saw others studying and that they were happy about studying. Now I'm in college

and, without the supporting friends, I started to love what I studied. With love I can understand more and remember more. I'm not feeling that jealous like before, but I am feeling smarter. When I forget to study, I hear the books calling me to study, and my pens stand up and come to my hand. That's because they know I love them. **(Mustafa Mohammed Saed)**



I'm hanging in there by myself, pushing myself by being a full time single mom, full time hospice CNA, and Odyssey student. I feel like I'm alone sometimes because I don't have a lot of support from family and friends, but I'm proud that I

haven't given up. No matter what assignment is given, I grow as a person, writer, and student. I

now feel within myself I am capable of succeeding. **(Jayvonna Flemming)**



In the last six months I have to say that I'm very proud of myself because I have been doing very well in class and making sure I'm going to tutoring. I have come a long ways I have so much support from my family, friends, and teachers. They

all believe in me and tell me, "You can do it. It will be a long journey, but it will be worth it at the end, Jalisa." My daughter has been a good trooper for me as we have three long days a week of coming home late, but she sticks it out with her mother. I'm proud because I have some amazing people to help me out with Aa'laisa for this three-day week. I'm very thankful for everyone that has been a part of Aa'laisa's and my life these last six months. I'm proud of myself because I have made a lot of progress in these last six months. I have scheduled a Compass test so I can get in some classes at MATC, and I am applying for the SEA program. I'm proud because it is going to be a long journey, but I have so much faith in myself that I can make a better future for myself and my daughter. I'm standing up tall to say that I'm very proud of myself for working hard and putting in time on my classwork. I try to keep the faith and believe in myself. All I can say is, "Jalisa, you are going to have a better future soon. Just keep going, and you will make it." I AM PROUD OF MYSELF. **(Jalisa Galvin)**



# FOOD MEMORIES

I have many food memories, but the one I will share was on Super Bowl Sunday every year in Louisiana when I was a kid. My mom or my brother would make a big pot of gumbo!

They would start early in the day preparing this huge pot of delicious, delectable, and divine ingredients – fresh crab legs, Cajun sausage, okra, rice, and even shrimp. Imagine all your favorite soups as a kid and how it smelled and how you couldn't wait until it was done. It would seem like days when I was a kid. I would see them putting all the ingredients into this huge pot; it was so much food that other family members and even neighbors would come to get a bowl of this delicious, delightful, dreamy dish. I can smell those aromas that put me in a trance. **(Steven Jones)**



salivate. After the graduation ceremony, we gathered together into our dining room, where my mom used to serve us a plate with our favorite turkey piece, rice, and mole on the side. Everything was delicious. I can't really keep writing my memories without getting hungry! **(Guadalupe Tinajero)**

Mole sauce is a typical dish in Mexico and is one of the most popular dishes for events such as quinceañeras, weddings, and graduations. Mole is the dish that I remember most. My mom used to prepare mole with turkey and rice every year for my birthday, as well as for the end of every school year. I remember the smell of the turkey and seeing my mother preparing all of the ingredients for the feast. Many times she would slaughter a turkey in the early morning. I remember the two stoneware bowls that contained the mole and turkey and a food steamer with the home-raised turkey. The smell of the mole was like sweet

chocolate with many types of dried peppers and spices. I remember the sound of the mole while it was boiling; I can easily



The aroma of Amber rice [*ambe mohar* rice] as I remember it in Iraq was quite distinct. Whenever this type of rice was cooked, a relaxing and appetizing aroma spread outside the house. When walking on my way home from school with friends, we could smell the rice aroma. We were really hungry, but this smell made us full...This type of rice is cultivated only in Iraq. The *ambe* word means scent in Arabic. Not only is the smell of Amber rice special, but the taste is also different from other types of rice. When anyone eats that rice, their mouth will feel brisk and their body will gain extra energy. **(Shaimaa Ahmed)**



I remember when my parents came to visit one summer week. My cousin Sean stopped by my house with two green tomatoes. My dad noticed them and asked where he got them. My cousin said he had gotten them from the community garden up the street. My dad told him to go and get us some. They were a nice light green color. My dad washed them well and put them to the side. The next thing I knew, my dad was in the kitchen taking meat out of the freezer. There were pots boiling on the stove. Onions and other veggies were being chopped. It had now become a backyard BBQ, requiring a trip to the store. The turn up was real: got to love family with fried green tomatoes. **(Nickitia Cooper)**







My favorite food memory is when I would go to my great grandma's house and she would cook me pig's feet. Yes, pig's feet! My grandma's house

was the first place that I had ever had the dish, and I was sprung from the first taste. I loved the smell of them cooking with the fresh vegetables from her backyard garden and other simple ingredients, such as salt, pepper and vinegar. I would ask over and over if they were done yet, but they took hours to simmer. When they were done, my plate was fixed with cabbage as the vegetable and hot sauce for seasoning. That was good eating. Today, because of health reasons, I don't eat them that often, yet I will put on a pot at the beginning of the year for luck. **(Rosalyn Richmond)**

Born into the loop of poverty, some of my earliest food memories lie deep within the flavors of a packet of Thai Mama noodles (Thai ramen noodles). Since the "food" was cheap, and that was mainly all we could afford, we often ate instant noodles. Mom would take a thin, worn out pot and boil some water. After tearing open the package, she would drop the dry block of noodles into the steaming pot and empty the tiny packet of seasoning, the sole magic to the noodle soup. Suddenly, all sorts of aromas would start to encompass our tiny two-bedroom apartment. The smell of garlic mingling with artificial crystals of chicken seasoning perfumed my taste buds.

Shortly after the noodles met the boiling water, the noodle soup was done. Mom poured it piping hot into a plastic blue bowl and set it on a small square coffee table. The legs to the table were so short I could sit on the floor. I would just look at the hot bowl of noodle soup patiently for a while and didn't touch it. Only when Mom handed

me a spoon did I slowly scoot the bowl near my chest, careful not to spill it. Dipping the spoon into the broth, I slowly ladled some into the curve of the spoon. I would bring the spoon close to my lips and blow at it to cool down the heat. Mom taught me how to do that. When the soup was calm enough to let me taste it, I brought it to my lips and sipped. The warmth of the soup rivered down and embraced my tummy. Then the slurping began. **(Mai Neng Thao)**



I went to the Williamson Street Fair and tried jambalaya for the first time. I decided that I needed to make my own. After I came home from the fair, I looked up a recipe online that looked good to me. I bought all the ingredients and I started to make the recipe.

I used dark green jalapeño peppers, small but powerful. The blade was against the dark green skin, and the dark green skin was against my skin. Red, yellow, orange, and green bell peppers were in groups. I chopped the tomatoes, the chicken, the bell peppers, onions, and okra. When I started to chop the jalapeños, my fingertips started burning. I had a very painful sensation. It lasted for many hours, and I had to sleep with my fingers in a bowl of water.

My mother and sister came home, and they started helping me add the ingredients into the pot. They were laughing because it took me four hours to put everything together.

When everything was done, we sat around the table and enjoyed eating the jambalaya. It was a bit too spicy, but the shrimp tasted like the ocean and made the spices tolerable. **(Karina Herrejon)**





Ever since I was a small child, I despised mushrooms. My dad would dice them up almost microscopically, and I would still pick them out of anything. I

never let a slimy, brown fungus past my lips. As I grew older, I learned I LOVED mushrooms. I crave them, put them on and in everything I can – pizza, salad, omelets. I love them sautéed on burgers, pureed in soups, and minced in casseroles. I love morel hunting on the cusp of spring. I can't get enough. I've taught my skeptical children to love mushrooms as well. To this day, my dad finds it comical that he could never sneak a hidden mushroom past me in anything. **(Ashley Wills)**

I love some German chocolate cake! Well, not just any German chocolate cake: my grandmother made the best that was ever made. One bite was like having a volcanic eruption of freshly



crumpled pecans and coconut integrated with perfect creamy chocolate. Each and every time she would be preparing to bake one, the bunch of us paced with delight and very little patience. She would wait until later in the evening before cooking so we would fall asleep before she was done. Boy, oh boy, when we woke the next morning, we couldn't wait to eat; we could finally enjoy a piece. Since my grandmother's death, my aunt has become the cake master, but nothing can compare to my grandmother's German chocolate cake. **(Tory Latham)**

Back in my house in Iraq, I had a palm tree and my grandpa was the one who planted it. I remember waking up early in the morning and the weather was so fresh that it woke you up if you were sleepy; the sun was starting



to rise to burn us. I would go under the tree looking for dates to pick. The dates were yellowish and so soft that you could hold them tight and they would change to honey. I can't forget the taste; it was so sweet but they never hurt my teeth. They gave me energy, and after I was done eating, I would go and play soccer by myself. I made others wake up to make me breakfast and a cup of tea with mint.

**(Mustafa Mohammed Saed)**

One of the nicest memories in my life was when I spent the day with my grandmother. Without my grandmother, I would not know how to do housework, especially baking. My grandmother was the reason that my family's house danced and was full of food in Iraq.



At night, my grandmother used to tell me a lot of stories about my grandfather until I slept between her arms. Then,

early in the morning, my grandmother would wake up and slowly move my head from her arms so she could get to the kitchen. She would bring a very big container to put flour, water, cardamon, and salt in it. Then she would start mixing them with her soft hands. Her hands were much like an octopus when swimming through the ocean.

When I opened my eyes, I didn't see my grandmother sleeping next to me, so I ran to the kitchen. I gave her a very big hug until I could feel her heart beating. I loved to eat the first bread that came from the oven. When I put the bread near my mouth, the smell was all about her love. The taste was heavenly, delightful, fresh, and delicious. After my grandmother was done baking, I asked her to go to sleep; she said, "Leave everything. When I wake up, I will clean everything." I answered her, "Sure, Grandmother, don't worry. Just relax." Once she went to bed, I would run to the kitchen and clean everything. When my grandmother woke up, she was surprised and would give me extra bread – don't tell anyone. **(Umaima Mohammed Saed)**

My most vivid food memory is going to the doctor when we were little. Our day started by waking up at 4 a.m. to catch the bus. We had to be early to the clinic in order to put our insurance cards in a pile, and then the nurse would call our names. It was first come, first serve, so it was important to be there early. The bus ride was scary because the driver was driving very fast, and he did not respect the traffic signs. I ended up feeling scared, dizzy, and hungry.

After spending all morning at the clinic waiting to be seen, the most exciting part of the day came when we left there and my mom took us downtown. We were very hungry, and we knew that my mom would buy freshly made corn tortillas. I still remember the smell of fresh corn and how soft the tortillas were. It was so easy to roll them and make a taco. If my mom had a little extra money, she would



buy pork rinds for our tacos; but if not, it did not matter. She just put a little bit of salt in our tortillas. Those were the best tacos in the world.

**(Karina Gómez)**

When I lived at home with my adopted family (my aunt and uncle), there was one food that I enjoyed: my aunt's spaghetti and garlic bread. It was never made with ground beef, always with Italian sausage. When you walked in the house, she would be grinding and frying the sausage. She would make the sauce and let it simmer for a few hours, and then add the noodles. Just having a hot meal with the smell of garlic bread

and fried sausage used to make my mouth water. However, one day I saw her add cream cheese, and I never ate her spaghetti again after that. **(Tasha Thompson)**



It was a perfect Sunday afternoon on a warm summer day to take a trip to the farm. The air smelled of fresh trees as well as fresh dirt, since it had rained the day before. There were rows and rows full of plants as tall as five feet. Each plant was perfectly aligned within its row with only a small amount of dirt as a pathway. The plants were full of such vivid green colors, which made the raspberries pop out even more. The bright colored berries hung so delicately from each thin stem as they patiently waited to grow. There was a splash of color among the tall plants; there were berries with a color mixture of yellow and orange as well as the original bright red berries we are used to seeing. Some were as big as a quarter and others as small as a dime.

I carefully picked each berry one by one, looking for the ripest ones without squishing the life out of them. After making my selection, I eagerly looked for the faucet to wash them off. Without any time or taste

buds to waste, I began to enjoy the sweet victory of hard work. The

berries were so soft that as soon as they touched my tongue, they melted and let their flavor explode.

**(Marisela Tellez-Giron)**



As a child, finding ways to stay warm during rough Wisconsin winters was always a challenge, and there were too many occasions of not being able to find a suitable after-school snack before dinner. I was about four years old when my mother taught me how to make cinnamon toast. This



was a really big deal for me because coming home from school or trying to be quiet on a Saturday morning, raiding the kitchen for something simple to eat at that age, was a chore within itself. It took me a while to get things just the way I liked it; however, with some additional skill, I could easily master and morph my toast into my own creation.

To this day I still like my toast with a gentle crunch—firm enough for a dousing of real Wisconsin butter to cover the hot bread from corner to corner and melt with ease between the craters that form after popping out of the toaster. Eventually as I mastered the proper ratio of cinnamon to sugar, I watched my topping bubble and pop on my buttered toast like mounds of lava. For the sole fact that this concoction was mixed with sugar, the first few bites were always a melt in your mouth nirvana. I was left with the crumb free satisfaction of creating a good snack on my own.  
**(Kelly Dixon)**

Whenever someone asks me which food reminds me of my childhood, I always answer that I love real Mexican-made cheese quesadillas, which I was addicted to when I was a young child. But one of the most memorable foods that I have ever tasted was a tuna avocado. When I was seven years old, my family and I used



to love to go to this homemade food restaurant. A gay chef owned and cooked the food, and it was just deliciousness. Well, one day we asked for the special, and we got three huge neon avocados with a hot creamy dressing with small red chopped peppers. When I looked at the avocados, I was confused since there were just avocados. Then I dove my fork

into the avocado and bit it. Dripping out of my mouth was juicy tuna with a nice rich creamy sauce inside of that huge avocado! I pictured freshness in the fields from how well prepared this meal was for me. I loved every bite of it until I finished my three gorgeous platonic loves. I asked my mom for more, but with a worried face she said no since we did not have enough money for more. So with that being said, we enjoyed our unique meal of the day. I have never since that time gotten those huge avocados filled with tuna. But for this March 14, 2016, I will create that meal for my birthday!  
**(Luna Santos)**

Since I no longer have my mom to throw down in the kitchen every night or Sunday evening, I would have to say that any time I helped my mom out in the kitchen is a strong memory I have about food. My mom lived in her kitchen. There wasn't a day in our lives that our fridge was empty or running low on food. We always had too much, never not enough. I would tell her she should start selling plates of food because she cooked so much. I'm the youngest and smallest out of all my siblings, and I

was the only one around the house with my mom for a long time. But she still cooked like there was a house full of hungry bodies. I miss the smells and the different dishes she would try to surprise us with from watching cooking shows. I really believe her cooking skills were passed down to me. It's just up to me to tap into that talent and cook more!  
**(Joe Young)**



Cooking had always been my thing. That's probably why it was my favorite course to take. I'll never forget the end of the semester assignment we had to do. We were in groups of three or four. Each

group had to choose a country and cook two or three items for other groups to try. My group had Mexico as our country and chose enchiladas and a Tres Leches Cake as our dishes.

The other two members in my group had mysteriously been absent the whole week the assignment was to be prepared. The finished product had to be presented that Friday. Needless to say, I made it happen. I put my foot in those enchiladas. Shredded chicken, gooey cheese, beans, sauces, chili peppers: Yummm! For the Tres Leches Cake, which in English was "Three Milk Cake," I did my thing, with cake batter made from scratch, whipped cream made from scratch, and fresh strawberries to decorate the cake. Yesssss! I had every group's mouths watering on presentation day.



faculty. I definitely was the topic of discussion for two weeks straight. I have many talents, but I'm so quiet and to myself that you'd NEVER know. All I can say is DONT SLEEP ON ME! ☺

**(Jelissa Williams)**

I look forward to my birthday in June every year. It's not because of the weather or even the fact that I get off that week. Personally, it's because there is a heartwarming dish that my friend's dad Michael makes: Italian Salad. It's a forever tasty and colorful greeting to my endless summer of fun, with crisp green peppers and onion, juicy ripe grape red tomatoes, endless amounts of cheese—mini cubes of mozzarella cheese and shredded mozzarella—, and perfectly prepared penne pasta with a colorful decoration of Italian spices. He always puts it in a gallon container for me. This is a dish that I can eat for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. When I open that container and that blast of garlic and red vinegar hits my face, I know that it's going to be the beginning of a beautiful, colorful, and tasty summer for me. **(Kala Taylor)**



My teacher gave me a perfect grade, 100%, being that I had done the assignment on my own and stuck my foot in both dishes. My teacher asked me to save a few servings to pass out to other



# LESSONS FROM WILL ALLEN

## Admiring Will Allen

I admire Will's motivation and hard work to create a new revolution for communities and the food industry. He is an inspiration to our own health and lifestyles. His teaching among the communities has taught others to break free and learn to grow healthier foods on their own. I admire Will for the change in norms he has created among those in poverty and the future they will hold.

**(Marisela Tellez)**

I admire Will Allen because he is a man with initiative. Although he faced many difficulties to undertake a business in agriculture, he did not give up and achieved his goals. I also admire him because he did not only think of his profits, but also the healthcare of a community by teaching young people the importance of farming. Will accomplished not only helping a community enjoy healthy produce, but also helping the youngsters to spend their time in productive activities. **(Guadalupe Tinajero)**

There are a few "hints" of *Raisin in the Sun* in this story, such as Mr. Allen's family escaping a form of servitude, sharecropping, and migrating to the city for a better life. They left behind centuries of hardship and pain, twisted mindsets and rural customs for a better way to live. As a former executive, he cashed in his retirement with the dream of making his community stable. This just reeks of admiration, and I applaud him. **(Kelly Dixon)**

I admire that Will Allen will visit us in our class. He is a successful man who proved that dreams can be achieved if the person seeks achievement. Today, Growing Power is involved in more than 70 projects and in outreach programs in Milwaukee and across the United States, as well as throughout the world. Really, he did a great job...**(Shaimaa Ahmed)**



I admire that Will is not only educating his community on eating healthy, but that he is also providing jobs. Will has brought some much needed attention to the systematic attack on the communities of poor and especially those of color. I personally struggle with eating better, almost like I am addicted to unhealthy foods.

This brings a couple things to mind that I have been having conversations about recently, one being an article written by a 16-year-old Madison resident. The article touches on the city of Madison's setup of food restaurants, under-performing schools, and cash loans stores being established in the Latino and African American communities, which, on a map of Madison, looks like a crescent.

The other topic is one that I have been discussing with family and friends of mine. For years, African Americans from southern states have been considered dumb or slow learners. I have argued that many folks from down south have a different set of skills that us "city folk" don't have or use. Those skills are hunting, fishing for food, and farming. I think about if there was ever a time that our technology failed us, could we care for ourselves? **(Tory Latham)**

I admire that he's trying to make a difference in poor communities by trying to change the outlook of the poor by showing them they can eat better and healthier. **(Steven Jones)**

- Will likes his community.
- He cares about others.
- He loves his family.
- He is patient. **(Mustafa Mohammed Saed)**

I admire what Will Allen has been through without giving up. Also, I admire that Allen was the first African American to play basketball for the University of Miami. **(Umaima Mohammed Saed)**

Will Allen is admirable because he is trying to educate people about healthy ways to eat. In the short term, he will provide food for those who don't have any; but in the long term, he will provide and teach skills so those people can grow their own food. **(Karina Herrejon)**

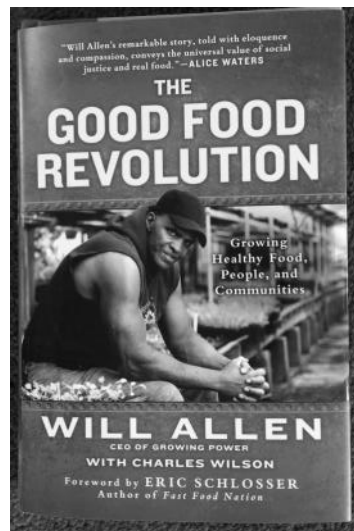
What I admire in Will's story is that he "has transformed a dilapidated set of greenhouses in downtown Milwaukee into the headquarters of an urban farming network that now operates in seven states." I just think that it is good that he has opened up this greenhouse and is growing fruits and vegetables. It is just amazing to see this. **(Jalisa Galvin)**

He has done so much. It's amazing. He is teaching us to cook and grow healthy food. He came from being poor and dealing with situations in his life others may run from. Will Allen has dealt with it and is making differences. **(Tasha Thompson)**

### LESSONS FROM WILL ALLEN'S *The Good Food Revolution*

Get Started:

The page titled "Get Started" is about how we always tell ourselves we will begin or do something but sometimes end up putting it off. Will is encouraging us to start now and not wait; otherwise, it might never happen. He reminds us that gardening requires baby steps, patience, time, and experience. Mistakes are part of learning and mastering. I could apply this message to all aspects of my life, whether it is schooling, personal, my health, etc. I think it is important to find and follow motivation like Will's and push ourselves to get started on something we are capable of being successful in. **(Marisela Tellez)**



In *Get Started*, Will Allen discusses how many times people have ideas on how to start a project, but they put those ideas aside until they find the perfect time to start it. He gave the example of the garden, arguing that gardening is not easy; it requires time to learn and get good at growing. He said that gardening is a process where one should begin small and slowly move towards their goals. He states that when he opened roadside, some of his produce wasn't organic, but his plan was to ensure that in the future, he would try to have mostly organic produce. Then, he said that big things are created by an accumulation of small things and that people are afraid of making imperfect decisions and would rather do nothing.

I apply this reflection to my life because I agree that many times I wait for the perfect time and I end up missing opportunities, just because I am afraid of not succeeding. Also, I know that we can achieve our goals with perseverance and by taking things step-by-step, especially when getting started. **(Guadalupe Tinajero)**

He says that before starting any project, we need to have a good plan to start. We also should not spend too much time just planning. We should also learn from other experiences. Do not be a person who just talks about doing things. "Be a person of action." **(Shaimaa Ahmed)**

In the article "Getting Started," Will Allen wants to give advice to help the people to start accomplishing their goals. Allen says we shouldn't be afraid of what we want to do. Allen says to achieve our goals we have to work to get them, instead of just talking about them.

When I came to America, I was worried about going to college; but once I started going to college, the doors started to open for me. Odyssey is the first door that is helping me get closer to my dream by making me think about my goals of helping people in the future. **(Umaima Mohammed Saed)**

Start now. Slow and steady. Idealism can sometimes turn into inaction. I didn't want to start school until I felt "ready," but eventually I realized that I would never be ready and that time was going by too fast. (**Karina Herrejon**)

In "Getting Started" he talked about how some people will talk about how they want to do something and then they don't get started because they are talking and not taking action. When you start a garden, it won't be the way you want it to be and you are going to miss steps and make mistakes, but you will learn as you go and it will get better as time goes on.

I don't have a house to grow my own garden but I could go to the farmer's market and get fresh fruit and vegetables and eat more vegetables than I do now. I need to stop talking about how I am going to eat healthy and then not take any action to eat healthy. I am going to start getting more vegetables when I go grocery shopping. (**Jalisa Galvin**)

### Patience

Patience is one of the keys to success. Farming taught Will patience, and patience made Will a great basketball player. Everything in my life needs patience; for example, waiting for an exam, reading an article that is not interesting, choosing a major, choosing food, and waiting for a soccer match. (**Mustafa Mohammed Saed**)

I chose "Patience" because I get in my own way sometimes, being that I am a "blue" personality. I sometimes get caught up in "I deserve" situations because I have put so much positive energy into others and have done right by others, so when my time comes, it should be perfect. I get impatient because I don't know when that time is. What I got from it was that work has to be put in, and it won't happen overnight. (**Tory Latham**)

Wow! I reread this message about three times, not because I didn't understand it, but because it made so much sense. I saw my old social worker today in Villager Mall going into the DCDHS building. Long story short, she was pretty much saying the same thing as Will Allen. It may not seem like you're getting anything done or making any progress right away, but it takes time and patience. I can use this in my life because I expect to see differences right away. If I just breathe, take my time, and be patient, I can do so much more! (**Tasha Thompson**)

### Grit

I liked all the messages, but I chose "Grit." We all will go through hard times, but we have to dig deep to find the grit and determination. When we stumble, we must stay positive and push forward. (**Steven Jones**)

### The Virtue of Making Do

The take-away for me in this piece was how can I fix or deal with my present issues with the resources that are currently available to me? Mr. Allen's grandmother was able to keep a garden strong and growing by being innovative with just the resources she had, which meant being able to keep some kind of food continuously on the table. Nowadays, that is a challenge within itself for many people I know.

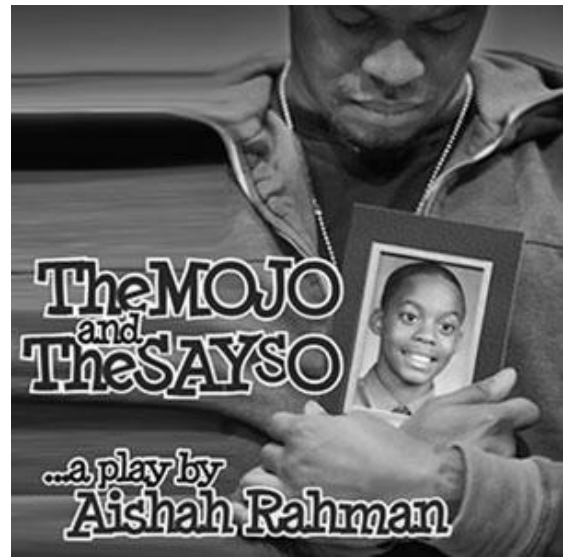
This piece also tells me that whenever giving up comes to mind, I should stop and think outside the box. The answer to the dilemma or a new idea could be right in front of me (Ex: George Washington Carver – How to grow peanuts for human consumption. I never knew this fact). (**Kelly Dixon**)





# THE MOJO AND THE SAYSO

*Thanks to the Bronzeville Arts Ensemble and Madison Theatre Lila for providing complimentary tickets for Odyssey students and alumni to attend "The Mojo and the Sayso," Aisha Rahman's powerful and relevant 1973 drama based on a true story about an African American family coping with the tragic death of their 10-year-old son at the hands of a white police officer.*



"The Mojo and the Sayso" was a very engrossing, entertaining, and enthralling play. It was about a family being torn apart by the wrongful death of a brother/son who had a promising future. It did a great job of illustrating how different individuals handle grief or tragedy. I took away from it that when something tragic happens, you should stick together to ones close to you instead of drifting apart. Also be careful who you trust in the dark times because there are those (like the pastor) who will take advantage of your time of worry, weakness, and woe. **(Steve Jones)**



Thank you for another new experience in life! The play allowed me to experience the pain, shattered dreams, and hope for a new beginning as a family struggled with a wrongful killing/death of a loved one. **(Char Braxton '06)**



# GOODBYE TO THE FEBRUARY BLUES



This Wisconsin winter seems  
to only disappear in my dreams.  
Bundled tightly wherever I roam,  
only warm when I'm in my home.  
The snow and ice makes me want April showers  
to come quickly and bring May flowers.  
My dreary eyes need those lively, vibrant hues  
to help me shake these February Blues. (**Tamara Thompson Moore**)



I've got the February Blues  
Every day I hear about  
Donald Trump in the news. (**Joe Young**)



I've got the February Blues  
and the sky isn't giving any clues  
to when Spring will let its warm weather sing,  
as the cold continues to sting.  
To our jackets we cling,  
the snow boots we bring,  
until we can walk barefoot in the Spring.  
The blues won't keep me down  
or with a frown.  
I will play my music loud  
when I'm feeling down . . . (**Steven Jones**)



I've got the February blues  
Across the border my lover flew  
He left me over the long sad weekend  
Emotions are strange and hard to mend  
A fate like this was inevitable  
Yet nothing shall be regrettable  
A love so rare across two countries  
Leaves my heart happy and so empty. (**Mai Neng Thao**)



I've got the February Blues. Exams are following me every week.  
The weather stops me from playing soccer.  
Assignments follow exams.  
Time is not moving; it must not be February's friend.  
The weather is tricky, nice in the morning and cold in the afternoon.  
People are getting sick, and I think I'm next. (**Mustafa Mohammed Saed**)



I've got the February Blues or something like that.  
Because of this second month flu has mucus all in my back.  
I've got the February Blues or something like that.  
Can't wait any longer for income taxes to get my life on track. (**Tory Latham**)



The snow isn't white and sparkling.  
 I see cars flying by going to an unknown destination.  
 Mad faces.  
 Faces full of tears, holding tight on the steering wheel.  
 If you let go of the wheel you might lose control.  
 You might want to lose control for just one moment and smile.  
 I need one moment to smile. (**Karina Herrejon**)



February Blues come from all kinds of news.  
 Good news, bad news, it all stems from the blues.  
 My nerves in my arm are giving me the February Blues.  
 Short hours on the job are bringing the blues.  
 Housing issues are stirring up feelings of February Blues.  
 My man left me a Valentine's Day Blues. (**Rosalyn Richmond**)



February Blues leave me weary and cold.  
 I remind myself Spring is just around the dirty, snow-covered corner.  
 With every day getting longer and the sunlight peeking through the dreary gray clouds,  
 there's hope in my heart that there won't be another snowfall,  
 and before I know it the tree buds will be sprouting  
 and my February Blues will turn into March Madness. (**Ashley Wills**)

Well it's February and I've been pushed around and bogged down  
 by those trusty ole February blues.



No sun's a shining, very little smiles a'finding,  
 I fear for my being, for my harmony is unbinding.

It's so cold, my heart is nearly ice  
 Inside and out, no warmth to be found,  
 even if it is as plain as my rice is white.



I can't breathe, choke hold, tied up,  
 spun and stuck in these ole trusty February blues. (**Arkeshia Sallay**)

I've got the February Blues;  
 no one can tell I have a lot of stress,  
 sometimes wishing and wanting time to stop.  
 I can't wait to see the sun rising at the dawn. (**Karina Gómez**)



I've got the February Blues.  
 Winter in Wisconsin is the weatherman's Spring tease.  
 Just when you think shorts and t-shirt weather is tomorrow's reality,  
 Mother Nature steps in with a hearty laugh and a big, "I don't think so!"  
 I've got the February Blues. (**Kelly Dixon**)



I've got the February Blues by starting the month with freezing weather and a lot of homework to do. This semester I am taking five classes and they are very expensive. I am taking college Chemistry 1, College Algebra, English 1,

Psychology, and Odyssey. I love being challenged, so I am doing my best to work hard. Last week I spent the whole weekend locking myself in the room to study because I had three exams on Monday. I don't have any friends, and I do not do anything fun. All I think about is education. I am also planning to take classes during the summer, but the problem is that financial aid won't pay for me; so I need to work on saving some money to use during the summer. I have applied for a lot of scholarships, but I have not heard any news.

**(Umaima Mohammed Saed)**



I've got the February Blues. I failed the TEAS test last week. I was studying for almost two months and I hoped to pass this test to be able to apply for the nursing program. I was upset last weekend. Also, I worked last weekend both

days, Saturday and Sunday, so I didn't get any days off. I feel that I need a break from all the stress. Once I failed, I gave up and I told myself I don't want to continue my studies. But my young daughter told me, "Come on, Mom, you can do it." In this moment I realized that failing one time isn't the end of the world. I can retake the test as many times as I like. I will ask for help to improve my knowledge next time. Hopefully next month I will retake the test and, whether I pass or not, at least I will try. I will work hard and keep going until I reach my goals.

**(Shaimaa Ahmed)**



The end of a long day or the beginning of a new one...I don't know which I prefer. Neither seems to bring relief. I've got the blues... My blues are so deep and so wide and so tall. I don't know which I prefer – nighttime or morning

time...neither seems to bring relief. I'm sorry that I am so sad, for my life is good. I have to fight, but I am so tired. My blues make my all over everything hurt. . . . I am so tired. Please forgive me. I've got the blues. . . . **(Lisa Partee)**



I've got the February Blues. I love the fact that it is Black History Month, but that's it.

February 11, 2010 was the day I came home from working a third shift at Oak Park Place to discover

that one of my kids was not breathing. This was the hardest thing I have EVER endured in my life. I buried my son, Kasar Marquell Emmanuel, on February 20, 2010.

I, for three weeks after, thought I was dying – bad stomach pain, vomiting, no sleep, body aches. I found that I was in a mood of depression and also two months pregnant with Rasak Walé Emmanuel, due September 20, 2010. I sat in the bed for weeks; I got up only to use the restroom.

## MAMA'S BLUES

*From James P. Johnson's piano roll (1917)*

Music by  
JAMES P. JOHNSON



February 21, 2013 I had another baby. During this pregnancy my due date was February 27, 2013. I've always had a C-section, so I was scheduled on that day. But as you know, babies come when they are ready. From February 18, 2013 until February 21, 2013 I was in labor. The shooting pain of labor was unbearable, but I didn't want to have Kas'mur Marquell Emmanuel on the burial day of Kasar. Finally, on February 21, 2013 my husband forced me to go to the hospital. My baby was healthy and fine.

Every February, all 28 and sometimes 29 days, I feel that labor pain. On February 21<sup>st</sup>, for the past three years, I have shown happiness for my other child's birthday, and I make sure he's full of cake, ice cream, and smiles. **(Bettye Emmanuel)**



I feel that people [at my job at the hospital] have no clue—paperwork not filled out, empty shelves. I feel people are

soulless. I say good morning, I say hello, and I get grins and uncomfortable stares. I feel people have no work ethic. We are given instructions for our assignments, and not even the first task is done. The standard for an item is ten; there are five left and my coworkers don't stock it. I feel people don't care. I'm finding items that have expired in 2009! 2009, hell they didn't give a damn! I feel people are self-centered. You finish your work at noon. Some of us don't get a break at all during the day and what do you do? Hide and take a damn nap. So yes, yes I am feeling that I have the February Blues; I am feeling that this is PISS OFF February and I hope folks get it together in March. **(Kala Taylor)**



I've got the February Blues; the days are short and the minutes are long. As there is little shine, my nutrients are drained. My skin is itchy and flakey. My eyes are watery, yet I'm still so thirsty.

I've got the February Blues, as I have to re-face the pain of my family, the hurt, the beating, the starving, the disrespect, and the dehumanization. I've got the February Blues because in 2016, my family is still dealing with the pain, the hurt, the beating, the starving, the disrespect, and the dehumanization. I've got the February Blues; I'm just pissed.

**(Brandice Hatcher)**



I've got the February Blues – laughing through the tears. I try to make my family happy. Now that the holidays are over, I am feeling more relaxed, but a bit overwhelmed. From holidays and my kids' two birthdays, to working

to become a better woman, girlfriend, mother, and person--all I can do is continue to do my best and work to fulfill my obligations. I will no longer continue to beat myself up for past mistakes. I will just work at a better me because I've got the February Blues. **(Tasha Thompson)**





I've got the February Blues. I have so much on my plate and at times I want to cry and give up; but when I put on my rap music, I feel better and say, "Jalisa, you got this." I just keep myself busy. I have people that will make me

laugh. I just know that these February Blues will blow over and won't keep me down for long. I'm not going to let these blues take over.

**(Jalisa Galvin)**



I've got the February Blues when I look outside – the streets all alone, the trees without life and the cars with all the dirt; it seems that even they feel the sadness of the month. There are a few birds flying in the sky and some

squirrels playing outside. The only hope is to think of the new months to come.

**(Guadalupe Tinajero)**



I felt the blues on February 18<sup>th</sup>, when I knew a regulation towards Latino immigrants had been passed. Now I can't wait to race to the March Green! **(Luna Santos)**



I've got the February Blues now that my favorite holidays are over. I have turned one year older again, and this year has gone by in such a hurry. It is that time of year where the holiday spirit has died off and everything has turned pink and red. February Blues leave me

without any prediction of the weather to come. We could get hit with a snowstorm or receive a warm good morning kiss from the sun, welcoming Spring already.

**(Marisela Tellez Giron)**



Ughh! February! I'm so glad you are just about over. You definitely made sure you were an UNFORGETTABLE month, to say the least. Kids were sick for two weeks, which meant two weeks off work and school. Wow! Missed

income and homework steadily piling up while I'm HOME still doing WORK. One child down and then the other up; just alternating between the two. Runny noses to stuffy noses, stuffy noses turn to colds, colds turn to upset stomachs, upset stomachs to diarrhea, diarrhea to vomiting, vomiting to the flu, the flu to ear infections, and back around AGAINNNNN! I definitely took a LEAP this YEAR! Now I'm soooo ready to MARCH into the next month! Nothing will stop me from enjoying my 25th birthday! You thought you had me, February, but watch me bring it to you like it's never been brought! I'm still claiming 2016 as my year: a few minor setbacks for a major comeback. Ahhhh haaaaa! (I stick out my tongue.) **(Jelissa Williams)**



# CREATING AT THE CHAZEN



**Homer Boss**

**Young Woman in Black**

A woman in black

A woman that has been working too hard

A woman that has made sacrifices

A woman that is tired and ready to break

A woman who has been through nothing but roughness and "Hell"

A woman that is barely living

A woman who is strong

A woman in black (**Katia Robinson**)

**Giuseppe Angeli**

**Sleeping Country Girl**

I like this painting because it makes me feel relaxed and calmed down. I need to sleep like the girl in the picture and forget all the stress around me. The girl is deeply sleeping. She looks like she was very tired and finally got a chance to

sleep. I can imagine how this girl will feel after waking up. I think also she is dreaming of something cool; maybe she is dreaming of walking in a garden and around her are a lot of colored flowers, or maybe she is dreaming she can fly in the sky with many colorful birds. Or she is dreaming of swimming with fish. Also, the picture colors were quiet and nice. I don't like many colors in pictures because that makes me confused and I can't focus on the other details. The size of the picture was good, not too big or too small. (**Shaimaa Ahmed**)



**Su Sinping**

**Busy People No. 1**

My stride is long and my pace is steady.

No goal in mind and no place to reach.

Steam is the fuel I'm burnin' strong,  
for my eyes verse a story of tragic song.

I pass the flowers, the smiles, and the second chances.

What's left? Just me and my long stride  
and a path to somewhere. (**Kelly Dixon**)



**William-Adolphe Bouguereau**  
**Little Girl with Basket of Apples**

Her eyes are talking to me. They are telling me that she is not happy, but she is pretending that she is. She likes apples; she collected them from the tree behind her. Her eyes are telling me that she is tired from collecting the apples, but now she has enough to keep for the next few days. (**Mustafa Mohammed Saed**)

Through the picture, I can see the kindness and love coming out from her eyes. The apples that she is carrying show that she wants to give and help others. She holds her hands together from her shyness. (**Umaima Mohammed Saed**)



**Klaudii Vasilievich Lebedev**  
**The Fall of Novgorod**

It is one of the months where the snow started falling like a heavy stone on people's hearts. They couldn't go to work or buy food. They die from their sickness and hunger. All they can do is pray for God. (**Umaima Mohammed Saed**)



**Jozef Israëls**  
**In Grandfather's Arms**

Being held by the only thing that keeps him close at night,  
 he hasn't even put up a fight. He may be getting used to this life.  
 Grandfather is holding him tight. Everything is going to be okay.  
 Alone, wondering when she'll walk back through that door. . . .

I'm starting to adjust. This just hurts me to the core.  
 But don't be afraid, you're in Grandfather's arms,  
 safe and sound. (**Tasha Thompson**)

As I sit in your arms, not knowing one day you'll be gone  
 A love so deep, the father I never had  
 That safe and secure love that I know will never hurt  
 So pure, so genuine, so real  
 Enjoying your presence, you're everything to me, Grand-daddy  
 If I can have one more time, one more hug,  
 one more moment when it's just us, you and "LITTLE WOMAN"  
 Till this day, Mom, you're lost  
 There's a little hole in my heart that'll never be stuffed  
 I didn't get to say goodbye  
 I don't want to say R.I.P.

I know you're watching over me in the dark times  
 and even when the light is barely shining through  
 Your love is with me forever. (**Jayvonna Flemming**)





**Edmund Friedrich Kanoldt**  
**The Greek Coast**

This picture reminds me of the way I feel when I feel the loneliest. It feels as if I'm out in no-man's land, unaware of what's coming through the current or which way the current will be coming in. (**Nickitia Cooper**)

**Mateo Cerezo**  
**St. Francis Receiving the Stigmata**

Is it not your job to protect me? What have I done to deserve such pain and suffering? The wounds I hold are much deeper than just my skin. I find myself kneeled before you at the hour of dawn, questioning your motives and looking for answers, which I have

not found in the holy book. What do thou want from me? Is this my ultimate test to enter heaven, or am I paying for my mistakes? (**Marisela Tellez Giron**)

The darkness surrounds him. He is at his lowest, lost and empty inside. When he gets on his knees and prays to the Lord, he can feel the skies filled with demons he pushes aside. There, that mighty light is our heavenly father. He shines his light on him. He protects him from the darkness, from the overall nothingness that is the son of Satan. (**Kala Taylor**)



**Francisco Camilo**  
**Adoration of the Shepherds**

A child has been born and blessed us all with his birth. The angels above must be celebrating a new life on this earth, for he is one of our own that will bring generations to come. Such a sweet baby in the arms of a devoted mother. Fear not for we will all care for and protect you. (**Marisela Tellez**)



**Judy Fox**  
**Jaguar Knight**

What did I do wrong? Please, tell me you still love me. I'm sorry; I swear I didn't know that hands and feet were so vulnerable. Tell me you'll forgive me. Please don't hit me. (**Mai Thao**)

**Theodoor van Thulden**  
**Justice and Abundance**

Justice is represented by a woman with the modest clothes and a conservative attitude. Abundance is represented by a woman with a more open character, and exposed. As humans, we always judge people by their appearance and their actions. We can easily judge people by the way they look, how they dress, where they live, and what their job is. We can say that a person with more modest clothes and less money is a person with no education and not so intelligent, and a person with more money is more intelligent and successful; but the reality is people are people and we are all created by God. (**Karina Gómez**)



**Louis Ritman**  
**Pink and Blue**

In my kitchen, bright with light blue, purple, and pink, I sit with my hands folded up with my flowers, fruit and tea on the table. I'm just unhappy because my parents told me I was too young to have a baby, so this morning they took me to get rid of the baby. I'm so hurt that my parents made me do this. I know I'm young and not ready to care for a child, but I can't believe I did something like this. I can't talk to my parents at all because this is something that is going to be on my mind for a long time. (**Jalisa Galvin**)



**Linda Lee**  
**Fraternity**

This looks like a man who was burned alive and forced to drown at the same time, the penalty for his crime(s). (**Joe Young**)

**Karel Appel**  
**Clown**

This picture tells me you should not judge someone by what you see on the outside, but what's on the inside. You have to be able to see through the messes of someone's life to see who they really are and understand them. (**Joe Young**)



**John Steuart Curry**  
**Chris L. Christensen**

Men in Denim Built This Land, Men in Suits Destroyed It. Business and control has weaseled its way into the pockets of the men with their hands in the dirt. Men in the city have ruined this country with eyes of profit, while men in the country with eyes for the land and hard work build it up. These men are controlled by regulations and laws made by men in suits in their high rise buildings working their nine to five. (**Ashley Wills**)

**Walter Griffin**  
**Scene at Fleury, France**

He's surrounded by nature with clear skies that make me feel the pure air that he's breathing. The house is a Mexican style and the water is essential for living

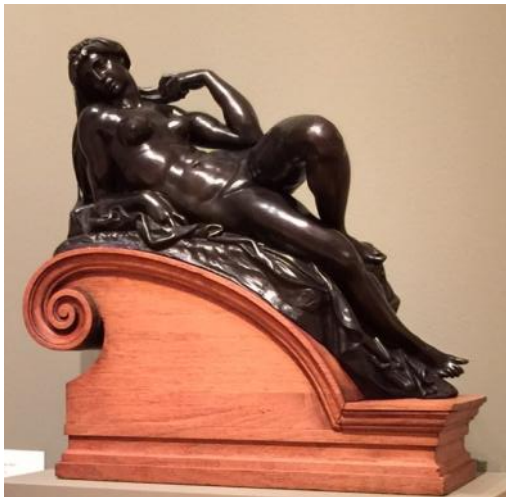
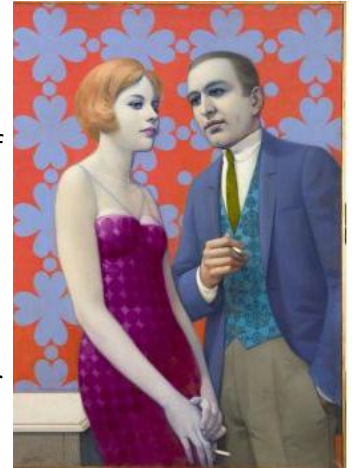
and the horses represent the help that the human needs to cultivate the earth. Freedom is present. He could fish without hesitation. The weeds and trees are as green as the color of nature. The sun is coming out to illuminate the beauty of the scene. The man is humble and riding his horse, which makes me remember my father. (**Guadalupe Tinajero**)





**Robert Grilley****Pink Lady**

The picture I want to write about is called *Pink Lady* and I chose it because the title is deceiving. There are actually two people in the painting and lots of times women aren't the focus. I thought it was interesting that was the focus of the painting. It struck me as a kind of sad portrait because both people were smoking cigarettes, showing solidarity, but both seemed to be looking off in space, almost like they were bored. It might have been they were daydreaming, but I wrote about it because it raised so many questions in my mind when I saw it. I'm probably overanalyzing, but art definitely makes your mind wander; I was daydreaming at night. **(Steven Jones)**

**Massimiliano Benzi****Morning**

Hands

Never given too much to handle

Always got my hand in something

Everyone first

Never self

Hands stay dirty, not from my own laundry

Kids to adults

This somehow makes me feel good

Just know you can make someone happy over the little things

Helping hand

Hand of all in the family **(Bettye Emmanuel)**

**Walter Friedrich****Girl in Arbor**

She hides herself from light and grows from the cool breeze the shade provides.

She's tired, oh so very tired, but her imagination runs wild like her surroundings.

Pondering the future with a few specks of light.

She's the brightest and she'll come but strong.

**(Karina Herrejon)**

**Charles Sprague Pearce****The Shawl**

She is secure like sunflowers in a field

She moves as if she knows exactly who you are

She stands proud like a mountain

And in all her glory she has a thousand questions, but she stands tall

Dressed like the sun, people look in admiration because she knows her value.

**(Karina Herrejon)**



**Thomas Satterwhite Noble****80<sup>th</sup> Birthday**

She learns of the world slowly but eagerly  
 Young and ready to conquer the world  
 One day she'll stand up and free herself. (**Karina Herrejon**)

**Daniel Maclise****Scottish Lovers**

This painting reached out to me due to the deepness and contentment of the two obvious lovers. They came to their secluded and special place in order to enjoy one another, as well as one another's love of their

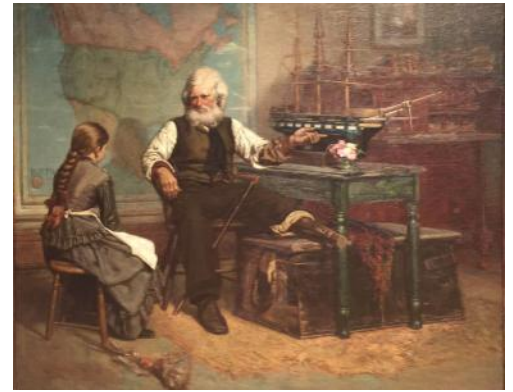


hobbies, his bagpipe and her love for painting. Nature's peace, solitude and wild life engulf them. Here they experience the calmness of the slowly wading water, as it gently slaps up against the rocks. He takes a moment to carve a small expression of their growing and everlasting love to be held and captivated in the small of nature's gift, the same tree that holds them captive, nestled so cozily under the soft wrestle of the leaves. To them, all is right in their world no matter how small the cozy little space. Their love persists, flowing continuously through their veins, at the steady wading watery pace, resting so securely in that tree. (**Arkeshia Sallay**)

**Arnulf Rainer****Christ-Overpainting**

This art shows me pain, hurt, and damage that's been done. I can relate to this painting because it reminds me of what I'm going through now in my life. It also shows me that Christ is still living despite what he's been through. It makes me feel like I can survive through my hardest times and know, even while being torn down, that nothing will stop me, I have plenty of people supporting me and behind me every step of the way. (**Katia Robinson**)

Christ symbolizes eternal life, strength, endurance, salvation, freedom, sacrifice, unconditional love, and forgiveness. There are so many different beliefs and different religions. Every person has his or her own opinions about Christ and whether or not he died for us so that we may have everlasting life once this world passes us by. I wonder what the meaning behind this painting was. There is so much controversy when it comes to the topic of religion! Speaking for myself, I believe in Christ and what his death symbolizes. "Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his footsteps. He, himself, bore our sins in his body upon the cross, so that, free from sin, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed." (Peter 2:21-24) (**Jelissa Williams**)





**George Kars****Woman Dressing**

Her hair is wrapped

Shoulders bare

A loose garment covers her breasts and abdomen

She seems to be fastening her shoes,

which indicate where she is going.

Will she be seen by many people, or only a few?

Are her choices in apparel influenced by who will see her?

Is she cognizant of how we sometimes alter our appearance,  
revealing certain features while hiding others?

Is her hair wrapped in fabric only for the home as she prepares to depart,  
or will she wear it wrapped? I think about the Tignon law.

What makes me identify with this piece of art is this woman's tone of skin.

Her relaxed and calm demeanor seems to express a half smile.

She is startled by the person coming to take her photo.

Maybe she expects them?

Does she feel vulnerable?

Is she inviting the other person to come in and look at her?

Does she want them to see her?

Is she tired?

Maybe this is a uniform of some sort.

Then again, isn't everything some form of a uniform?

Why did she choose these shoes,

hardly comfortable or as easy to walk in?

Her face is made up,

Fingers cased on her ankle.

Did the man who painted this intend to paint a "woman of color"?

Was this painting controversial in its time?

Is the artist seeing her as human

or as an exotic sexual 'thing' rather than a woman?

**(Tamara Thompson Moore)**

**Kenyon Cox****Diana**

This picture reminds me of so many characters of my imagination and in my real life. First, it reminds me of the goddess Artemis, known by the Greek name Diana. She is the goddess of the Moon and the hunt and also protects Nature, women, and girls. Also, in the picture Diana looks sad from coming down to earth to do her job with nature and feminine protection. She looks very pale, and her background looks dark like morning or dawn. Maybe it's her final day on earth, and she does not want to leave her protectants. Diane was not a super feminine figure, but she would haunt the evil of those who would cause harm to her protectants. **(Luna Santos)**



**Karen LaMonte****Hanako**

Others sculpt your life in the image they want to see of you but do not include who you are.

From womb:

--Aww, it's a girl. That's who they acknowledge you as.

At birth:

--She looks just like so & so.

--She's got good hair.

--She's a big baby.

--She's stubborn and is going to be a handful.

Childhood:

--Wear this.

--Act like this.

--Learn this.

--Speak like this.

--Behave like this.

--Play like this.

--Listen to me.

Teen:

--Start thinking about your future.

--Be more mature.

--Go to this school.

--Major in this subject.

--Associate with a certain group.

Adult:

--You should dress like this.

--Marry this kind of person.

--Be at a certain point in life.



Do you ask who I am, where I want to go, what I want to be, when I need you, and why I ask these questions?

*"I am not my skin, I am not my hair, I am not my clothes, but I am the soul that lives within."* —India Arie (**Brandice Hatcher**)