

# ODYSSEY ORACLE

## CONQUERING CAMPUS



### In this Oracle . . .

Conquering Campus.....	3
Personal Odysseys.....	10
Considering "The Circuit" .....	12
Oracle Ovations.....	14
Noticing Nature.....	15
Feeling Different .....	18
Food Memories.....	20
Chazen Choices .....	27



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# CONQUERING CAMPUS

As a teenager in the 1970s, I would visit the University of Wisconsin campus and dream about going to school there. When I was 17, I accepted the fact that I was not college material. It hurt a lot and in many different ways was kind of like this hole that I could never fill no matter how hard I tried. I will be 57 in a few weeks, and now I have a UW student ID and the privilege of being able to take a course and use the library as a student. It feels like sweet redemption after forty years! Visiting the campus and getting an ID: for me, that entire experience was something overwhelming and wonderful at the same time. I won't ever forget it. I've walked through parts of campus and studied in the library as a non-student over the years. I've sat in the library reading and watching the sun rise. I've taken my daughter Sidney to the campus and to the museum, but not as a student. Now I can take her there as a student, and for me that also is very special. **(Bruce Moore)**

Last week's trip for me was truly amazing. I have walked in and around Union South hundreds of times for work. While working as security at Union South, I was always envious of the students studying and enjoying the facility. I often hoped one day I would be able to participate as a peer with them, so to walk into that building as a student was an amazingly humbling experience. I feel that my dreams are becoming reality. Receiving my student ID card solidifies my dreams and gives me tangible hope for my future. I haven't been to an art museum since I was a child. I enjoyed drawing inspiration from the work of others. **(Tori Armour)**



Wow, well, the trip was just amazing. I really did enjoy the art, the paintings, and the different cultures. There was one painting that really got me thinking of a girl with a deep look. The weird part of this painting was that her eyes would follow you at any angle. This was amazing because I got to show it to some classmates and I felt really happy just talking to many of them. However, the most memorable moment that will mark my life forever is just getting my UW ID; it is like something really amazing. That ID just gave me full confidence. I work downtown and I see students every day, but I never thought that I would become one. I know I will cherish that ID forever because it is the beginning of a new moment in my life. I really enjoyed this trip; it was very fun and it felt like a family with all of my classmates. **(Guadalupe Hernandez Nuñez)**

A memorable moment for me was the top floor with all the colorful sculptures and paintings that brightened the room. I enjoyed it most because I've always been a person interested in lots of colors because I feel it is a great way to express yourself. (**Sch'Royce Brown**)

My class trip was amazing. I have always wanted to go to college, so getting my ID card was unreal. The Chazen Museum of Art was unforgettable with the different paintings and sculptures, and the storm made the evening even more special. (**Derrick Allen**)

Union South was a very good experience and made me feel special to be labeled as a student at UW. The Chazen Museum was so amazing. Learning about the different pictures and statues made me look deeper and analyze the meaning. The museum was a good learning experience. It made me look at history so much differently. (**Alexis Law**)

I was very excited to go and get my UW student ID. I have been here in Madison for more than 12 years and have been on campus and in all the unions, and now I can finally say I am part of this monster of a terrific university. Since I came here, I have always wanted to be a part of it. Later at the museum, I liked it but I felt we were not there long enough. I love the art and maybe next time we can be there longer and with a guide. (**Victor Rojas**)

The art museum in general was very memorable for me. It was great to see the art changes as the years flew by. The evolution in artwork today also shows that we have been more open-minded about new things, along with accepting of the different types of people, cultures, etc. that we're not familiar with. It was also uplifting because of the different types of artwork that were put in there and chosen to be put in there; it, too, shows me that each and every one of us is an individual form of unique. I also loved that we

all were given a chance to express our connections and voice about an art piece. A lot of times we see something and think something of it but never get to voice our opinions and express how that one thing feels and why it moved us as a person. I'd also like to thank you all for giving us this opportunity. I will be visiting on my own time for sure. (**Bao Thao**)





I enjoyed walking through the halls and admiring all the different pieces of artwork. I loved the different colors and shapes of some of the sculptures. Seeing the way the painting styles changed during the different periods was a learning experience in itself.

**(Angela Carpino)**



Last Wednesday was my first day in the Odyssey class. As one can imagine, I was extremely excited about being a part of this class. We went on a field trip to get student IDs, which I didn't get because my information wasn't loaded. The class went to the Chazen Museum of Art, which I had never been to before. There were quite a few pieces that caught my attention. One of my favorites was a bronze-like metal statue that showed the strength of a woman carrying a big animal. She wasn't afraid. There was also a piece that showed a woman that was combing her hair and it looked like she didn't have a face. It was the feature piece I decided to write about. There was even religious art that was there. Some of the paintings showed God like he was a darker complexion. . . There were even two animals that had their penises out. **(Tandalaya Taylor)**

Once the buses pulled up to Union South, my fellow classmates and I started to exit the bus. I had thought to myself that this is real; we have arrived at the starting point of a lifelong journey. When it was my turn in line to get my photo snapped for my ID, I had a knot in my stomach from being so nervous, in part because I observed students that were already there looking at our group like, "Who are they? Where did they come from?" Once my photo was taken, I walked around mingling with students. A sense of pride overcame me and feelings of self-worth. **(James Davis)**

When we arrived at Union South, I proudly waited in line until my name was called so that I could get my picture taken for my ID. The process went very quickly, and before I knew it, I was standing outside in the lobby with everybody that had gotten their IDs. We were all smiling and talking amongst our fellow classmates when the photographer came and gathered a group of about eight people (me included) of all different backgrounds and he had us come together for a group photo. We proudly held up our IDs and smiled. He told us to get closer and act more like family; he even told some of us to stand up on the table for the picture. Seeing the finished result of the pictures was nice – everyone looked genuinely happy and we definitely looked like a family because in that moment, none of our differences mattered. **(Maya Rasheed-Bracey)**



I was very excited to go to the Union because I had the opportunity to talk and interact with a lot of my classmates. I was very excited to ride the bus, even with the hot weather; I was soaking in water. However, I had so much fun. This was my first time in the art museum here in Wisconsin. I didn't even know it existed. I was so happy to see so many art pictures, sculptures, and weird figures that I had never seen before. I was also able to talk to different classmates and make friends. My experience getting my ID was cool and gave me a lot of hope to see myself in the future as a student pursuing a career. The only thing I didn't like was how my picture turned out on my ID. I am not photogenic LOL, but I was happy to have it. At the end I saw an art piece of a woman lying down with her hand on her stomach and I identified myself with her. This tour will be unforgettable for me. I learned a lot and met new friends, and it made me realize I can do it. I love my teachers and tutors and the program. Thanks again for the opportunity.  
**(Sayury Peralta Vivanco)**

Last week we went on our Union South trip to get our UW IDs. It was the simplicity of that day in Cancun, Mexico, at spring break in the sun. The thrill, sun on my back, wishing like a child waiting for Santa Claus. Empowerment rose from the heat surging through my body. I will be a part of a family of knowledge. Walking through a rush of free emotions displayed through imagery used in a form of expression through art. My feeling was a rebirth of my significance to the world. I want the success so badly. I can feel it in my bones.  
**(Ta'Tiana Clacks)**

I was very excited when we took the yellow school bus down to campus. I knew we would be taking pictures for our student ID's, so I wore my red and white Badger t-shirt for the occasion to show my school spirit. It was nice to get the ID back right away, unlike the DMV, which gives you a paper copy and makes you wait a couple weeks to receive it by mail. Being on campus looking at the other students really made me feel like a part of the UW students. The Chazen Museum was wonderful. The detail in the different sculptures really blew me away. Some were white marble, while others were dark and made out of bronze. I always took a particular interest in paintings of noble people from the 1700s, but I got a new respect for the simpler drawings that use less color. I noticed that most paintings were oil on canvas, and later when I was home, I googled, "Why do artists prefer to use oil on canvas?" The answer was because of the drying time, the longevity, and the ways they could emphasize different shades of the same color. It was so hard to pick a favorite! I enjoyed it all.

**(Tyjeana Galloway)**



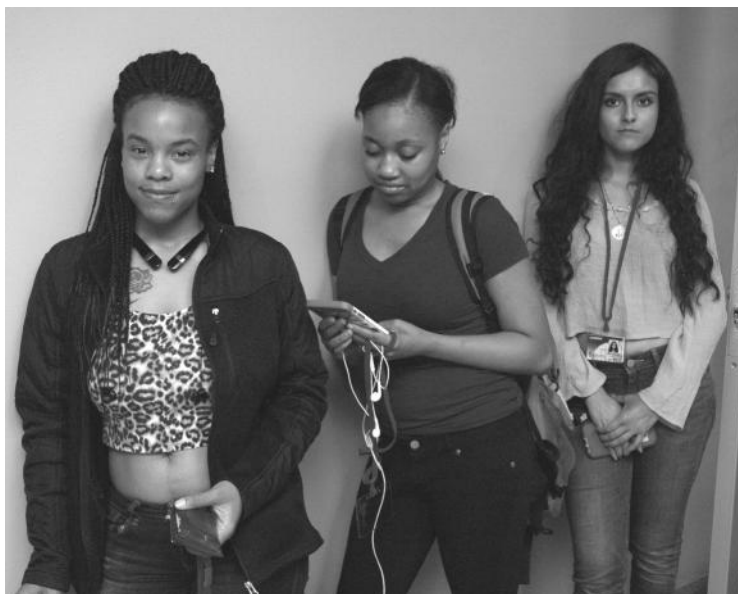
Last week when we went to get our ID cards at Union South, the most memorable part of that was actually receiving an ID card. I felt like it added an identity to us, being students of UW Madison. It was also nice to see the other students who are also enrolled working on homework and meeting with their friends or just on their way to class. The most memorable part of visiting the museum last week was seeing how the art changed over the different time periods, like the different supplies they used to create the art, or just the different ideas each artist had during that time. Each century had a piece of art that stuck out to me. I also have not been to a museum in years, so it was nice to visit one that held all those incredible pieces of art and get a brief background on them. **(Charnice Anderson-Morris)**

Stepping on the stairs of the big bright yellow bus gave me shivers through my body and reminded me of elementary school days. Inside the bus felt like a sauna, and the seats made it worse since they were leather. Once we were making our way to the UW campus, I felt an excitement. Once we stopped at the place to get our IDs, I felt nervous, as though I didn't belong. The building was huge and gray from the outside. The inside was lively with all the young students. It also felt like I was stepping into a fancy hotel – nice, clean, shiny. Going through the busy students, we got to a plain looking office. Waiting in the long line, I thought we'd take forever, but it wasn't long before it was my turn to get my UW ID, which made me feel excited and proud. **(Carla Herrejon)**

As we were entering the campus, I was thinking of how much I wanted

ice cream – lo and behold, there was an ice cream shop near the entrance! I naturally got in line for some ice cream. The ice cream shop was next door to the office where we got our ID's, so I was able to get my picture taken right after finishing my delicious dessert. After we got all situated with our IDs, we went to an art museum. As instructions were being given, my attention was drawn to a strange sculpture titled "A Congress of Fools." I remember staring at it to figure out what it meant. Kevin and I started talking about it, and the sculpture made sense when he recalled an alum describing it as the voices in his head. **(Reggie Reed)**

There were several memorable moments for me. Last week, for instance, getting to know my classmates was very comforting. Sharing ideas and thoughts about the paintings at the museum was like an icebreaker for me. Having to be back at the museum after five years was very refreshing. I felt like the paintings at the Chazen Museum were food for our brains. With such proportionate paintings of all sizes, there was so much left to the imagination; we were all trying to think and see. **(Selena Muñoz)**



I went to Union South last week for my first class field trip. The anticipation for this event before it occurred was something like a child waiting to go to the zoo. I was excited, stoked, and restless. The days before the event were really stressful and draining for me, so knowing I'd be able to go to class and get on a bus to go experience something I never had before really comforted me in a mysterious way. I had no clue what I would see and how I would react to the history behind the art at the Chazen Museum. My curiosity was at an all-time high. Once I arrived at class that Wednesday for the field trip, an unwanted sense of nervousness crept within me. I knew we were getting UW Madison IDs, which anyone would feel was a great blessing, accomplishment, or opportunity. For me, I sensed a little fear and anxiety. I asked myself if I deserved this credential: I have the same privilege as all these other students, but I took a different road to receive my admission. Knowing how hard it is to get into the university, I felt humbled, but also a sense of shame. A lot of the guilt also stemmed from my personal life and issues I was having outside the classroom. I felt undeserving of everything. I felt overwhelmed and distracted, but at the same time, I felt a bit at peace and grateful for everything that was being offered. I will use this opportunity to open new doors. I am curious what the future holds. **(Nathaniel Robinson)**

The bus ride was hot, tense, and familiar. When we arrived I felt like a charity case waiting for the UW ID that I was given. I looked around and realized how exhausting my full-time admission to this super uptight campus will be. I also felt vigilant when I imagined being at the School of Social Work in Fall 2018. I am grateful I don't have a silver spoon. When I get my degree I am going to give back to the community that kept me alive. I am going to go ahead and inspire others to lead a life different than mine. I smiled for my picture. I was proud. I had a girlfriend who worked and did installations at the Chazen. I thought of her. I

looked for negative space in the paintings because I study contrast in my subliminal. I realized that I really felt good with the group. I guess you get in where you fit in. I always have. I don't like William Blake's poetry, but I do like his philosophy concerning the intention of art and the artist. Concept without experience is bullshit. Art that doesn't come from the pit of your stomach is not genuine. I live like that also. **(Adrian Molitor)**

I felt a sense of accomplishment as I boarded the yellow school bus to head to Union South for my UW ID. As I stood in line to wait my turn to take my picture, I thought of all the things I could do with my new ID. When the worker handed me my picture, I immediately posted to my Facebook #official badge kitty! It dawned on me on the bus that I'd never been to an art museum. When walking, my thoughts drifted to learning. Walking through the doors my thoughts switched from learning to curious. I wondered what type of art would I see? Will there be something that stands out? To sum up my trip, I can say it was interesting and curious all at the same time. **(Ruthie Allen)**





My favorite part was the colorful glass sculpture. It honestly looks like something that would go in your bedroom or living room. It was designed beautifully and is unique. I loved everything about that piece. **(Lisa Simmons)**



bright, colorful, and shiny things too. **(Hailey Sjuggerud)**

My most memorable moment was when I took my ID and the guy misspelled my name. It was annoying the first ten minutes because he had my state ID with the correct spelling on it, and he still spelled my name wrong. Something I liked about the trip was going to the art museum and seeing all the different pieces of art. My favorite is the glass piece that I picked out. **(Arioun Jones)**

Last week my UW continuing education class for adults went on a field trip to the Chazen Museum, with a short stop at the Union South building on campus to pick up school IDs. We also received semester-long bus cards and Quizno's while waiting for our chartered buses. The first stop on our bus trip was to Union South for the new IDs. It has been remodeled since I was there last with a pretty new décor, including soft lighting, new wooden tables, sparkly floors, and modern accessories. It was a very inviting atmosphere that I thought I would like to be a part of. I felt very positive and hopeful of my future school career. It also made me think I should take my sons to places like Union South to eat or for fun so they feel comfortable with the idea of college. Next on our list was the Chazen Museum. I liked the intimate atmosphere of just our class being there after hours, so close to the artwork we could almost touch it. Some of the artwork interested me and some I had no connection to. While others liked a carving of a mass of fools named "Congress of Fools," I did not. I actually appreciated some of the older art, somewhat for the skill in painting and the picture it literally paints, as well as modern art and what it's saying. Sometimes I also just like

During the campus trip to the art museum, we got to see some really beautiful and interesting things. I remember when I was in Odyssey Jr we went on the same trip. Both times I saw

something creative and educational in the art work. **(Keziah Bester)**

My first crazy feeling was when it was time to get on the bus. Being a very quiet and shy person, I don't really like being around people that I don't know. Once on campus it was really weird at first, but once the ID was out of the way I think I opened up a little more because there were conversations going on around me. In the art gallery I was kind of off to myself, but that was the hard part. I knew the best way to relieve my anxiety was to tell jokes. That made everyone feel how I was opening up, and I felt as if we were a team. **(Ameshia Turner)**



# PERSONAL ODYSSEYS



**(Reggie Reed)**

This course is called the Odyssey Project because it provides opportunities for higher education. This class will be an odyssey for me because I'll leave with more knowledge, friends, and a higher sense of self-worth.



**(Barbara Rogers)**

I think the course is called the Odyssey Project because we will not only learn about the journey and experience of our history but of our classmates' history, too. I think the class will be an odyssey for me because I will be creating my own adventures in an attempt to reach success.



**(Adrian Molitor)**

My first thought was about the many changes of fortune that I've survived in my life. I would guess that the rest of the group has also been through endless suffering. In the present tense, I feel that change will continue through the winter. Joy and pain live together in every part of life.



**(Bruce Moore)**

This will be a long, life-changing journey with trials and new processes related to learning and achievement that will challenge me and change some of my perceptions of my life and the world I live in. As I go through the program, I will grow as a student and a person.



**(Maya Rasheed-Bracey)**

I think this class is called the Odyssey Project because we are all on different journeys in life, but we are all coming together to learn despite our trials and tribulations. I believe that Odyssey is the class for me because I have been out of school since I graduated from high school. Being accepted into the program just shows me that this is for me, and it is truly an honor.



**(Ta'Tiana Clacks)**

This project is an opportunity to display your lifestyle and your story in a poetic form to share with the world. Though the trials and tribulations that come with life, both good and bad, make it beautiful . . . what you put into your legacy to prosper is the highest level of your destiny.



It's a journey of learning, discovery, and longtime friendship. This class is an odyssey for me because I want to be a great writer.

**(Derrick Allen)**



**(Tyjeana Galloway)**

We're going to dive into things that may be difficult to talk about, but also this journey is going to show us amazing things about humanity, things we may have thought we would never be able to participate in or understand. It



This class is a journey because we are all at different points in our lives and we are embarking on a journey towards bettering ourselves and each other. We will have ups and downs, good days and bad, but we will ride this wave together.



things, and it's also a second chance for me to complete all my endeavors. It will help me meet new people that could possibly be on the same journey as myself. We all know that team work makes the dreams work, so we'll all prevail together. (**Sch'royce Brown**)

This class will be a journey of self-exploration. I've spent the majority of my life taking care of everyone else and getting lost within that role. My goal is to find out what I have to offer outside of the role of caregiver. (**Tori Armour**)



I think this course is called the Odyssey Project because it is a journey to further yourself into a new position in life by putting your all into whatever you do and going through new experiences.

This course is called the Odyssey because it an opportunity to open new doors, no matter how many times others have been closed. For some it may be their first step in their journey, and for others it can be a second or third chance to progress in life. This class is an odyssey for me because it will teach me new

The Odyssey Project might be the class for me because it pushes you further in life so you can accomplish something. Going through obstacles and hard times is all worth the journey. (**Alexis Law**)

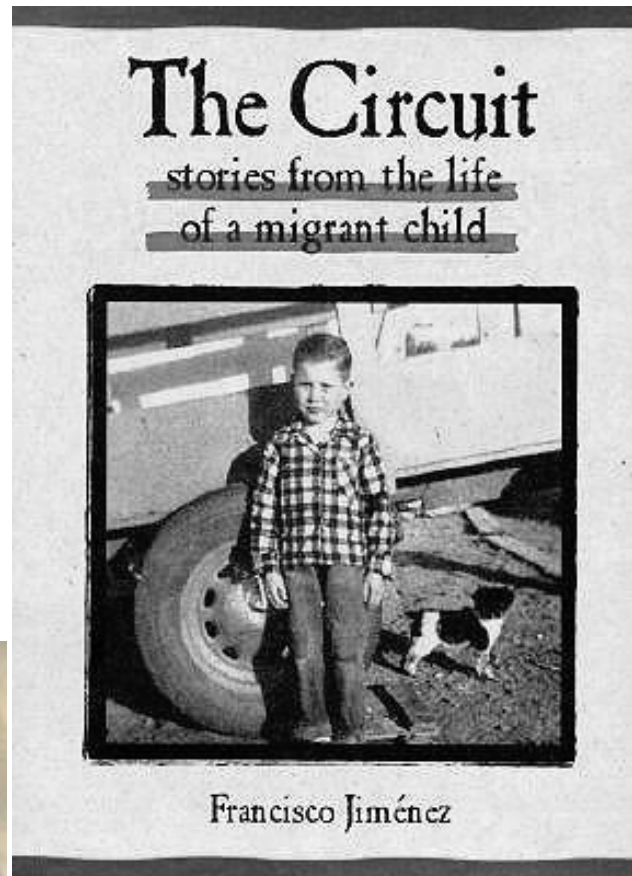




# CONSIDERING “THE CIRCUIT”

I can relate to this story by understanding how hard it is to learn a new language and read out loud because of the fear of not knowing how to read a word or pronounce it correctly. I have been reminded again that as soon as you think your life is hard and difficult, you find out someone's life is actually worse and yours isn't as bad as you think. **(Bao Thao)**

This story makes me think about being homeless in Chicago and Madison for awhile, and the idea of the circuit is true. Your itinerary includes particular events on a daily basis: wash up, get dressed, get breakfast, gather your things, and wander around looking for work and stable housing.



I remember living in this one hotel and returning from work that evening and getting the news that we had to leave immediately—no questions asked. It was just because the police had questioned my oldest son on the hotel premises, and that meant an immediate eviction from the dump of a motel we lived in.

This story evoked all the tales of my homeless adventures and how I overcame homelessness in Madison, Wisconsin. **(Ruthie Allen)**

I can relate to this story a lot. I worked in the fields in Mexico and here, so when he talks about long days in the fields with the heat, it just takes me back to that part of my life. I moved from Mexico and had to start school



I can relate to this story because my dad and uncles went through this when they first arrived here to the US. They didn't last long because they found different opportunities, but they did say working in the fields was very hard and tiring work. **(Carla Herrejon Tinajero)**

I can relate to feeling alone due to language. He spoke Spanish and knew certain English words. On this we differ, but I can relate because coming to Madison, I felt what I spoke was "ghetto," so I chose not to

here, and on the first day I felt very nervous, like he did. I love *corridos* too, so that is one big thing we have in common. I feel very connected to this story. **(Guadalupe Hernandez Nuñez)**

I can personally relate to the author when he explains how he felt ashamed to be who he was because everyone around him was different and couldn't understand him. That's how I felt in high school. Going from being with the same people from kindergarten to eighth grade, and then going to high school and not knowing anyone was hard to adjust to. **(Maya Rasheed-Bracey)**

I can definitely relate to this story personally because my brothers and I had to respond to a similar situation when our single mother was working two jobs. Because our mom worked the third shift, we woke up with her and got out of bed to go to our grandparents' until 4 AM the next morning; then they would go to work and our next babysitter would take us to school with her kids. **(Selena Muñoz)**

speak. **(Ladaro Taylor)**



# ORACLE OVATIONS

Upon reading the Oracle, I grasped a feeling of fellowship, a sense of belonging to a new family. One thing that struck me from the alumni writing was: "Don't you give up, no matter what." After reading Alice's story and comparing it with "The Circuit," I gained a sense that a family that sticks together through any struggle will overcome all obstacles. **(James Davis)**

There was a lot going on for me while reading this. I smiled at some of the things written. I was moved by some of the stories . . . I'm going out of my comfort zone, pushing some schooling into my schedule. Am I overwhelmed? Yes! This is a lot of reading, but I keep reminding myself I've come this far, and "Don't quit, Bao." Life will keep going, and I just have to make time for my own self while everything is happening. "Don't Quit" made me very emotional while I was reading it, but it was very uplifting. I thank all the writers. **(Bao Thao)**

Reading the Oracle evoked many emotions for me: motivated, overwhelmed, conflicted, blessed, anxious, excited, and validated. Most importantly, I feel that I belong and have more hope for my future. **(Bruce Moore)**

Reading the Oracle made me feel happy and confident knowing that a lot of students shared some of the same feelings that I have, and all of them have the same message: "Don't quit" . . . I'm looking forward to completing the program so that I can share my experience with the future students. **(Guadalupe Hernandez Nuñez)**

Before knowing if I was accepted into the program, I began reading the Oracles from previous students, and it was the most comforting and encouraging reading I have read in my entire schooling . . . Reading several stories of encouragement and

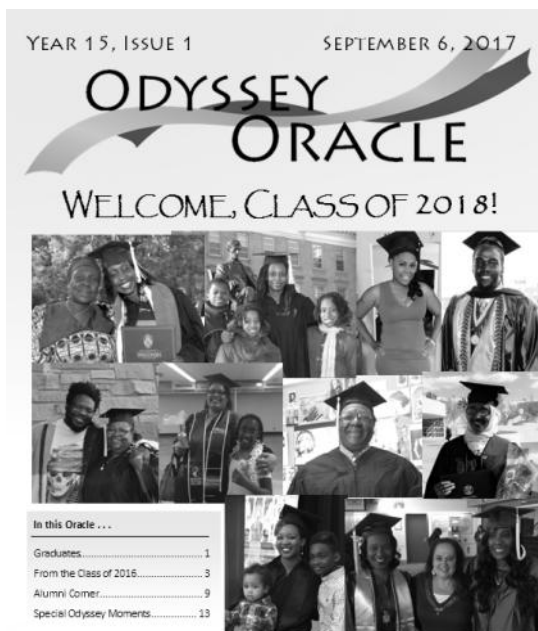
wisdom from intelligent students from previous classes made me feel like I do matter in this world, and I have a purpose. **(Selena Muñoz)**

Reading the Oracle made me feel welcomed and not as nervous as I was before reading it. I saw that a lot of people felt the same way I did . . . From reading the Oracle I learned that being in the Odyssey is one of the best things that has happened to me. No one wrote anything negative, and that makes me happy and proud to have taken the class. **(Carla Herrejon Tinajero)**

It made me feel so happy and grateful to be a part of such a wonderful program with such loving and amazing people. It also motivated me and made me believe I can achieve great things. **(Keziah Bester)**

I'm so impressed by the writings from Odyssey graduates and the fact that they have not ended their journeys when the program was completed. I see that this program and the things that we are going to learn have the power to change the rest of our lives. It looks like people that once had little confidence in themselves found their ability to shine and share their newfound gifts and talents with the world. **(Tyjeana Galloway)**

I think what people have written is very inspiring. It almost brought tears to my eyes to hear how everyone felt at first. I also felt discouraged on the first day since I am quiet and a lot of people seemed open to participating, and they were actually getting everything that was being talked about for the first time. The Oracle makes me feel more confident that I will go far during this year and after it is finished. It really reassured me that I belong in this class, and I am glad I have gotten a chance to attend. **(Angela Carpino)**





# NOTICING NATURE



I wanted to enjoy this place. I wanted to love being outdoors. I just wished the teacher had prepared me a little more. She didn't tell me that when you're sleeping the bugs chatter and the trees whisper, or that there would be shadows creeping around the window that were covered all in fur. Oh boy, that nature thing was getting scarier and scarier . . . If I knew then what I know now, I probably would have passed on going. That was my first time

I was in the woods—trees, branches, and leaves everywhere. I could feel the cold breeze of the wind hitting against my neck. Mosquitoes bit me, and I shrugged them off. It smelled like nature—I could smell some of the flowers that surrounded me.

**(Arioun Jones)**

I'm walking through a field and my eyes start watering, then I start sneezing. I continue to walk and bugs start swarming around me, and I start waving my hands frantically to get them away while tripping over branches and seeing raccoons run towards me. I'd prefer to stay out of nature's way.

**(Tandalaya Taylor)**

A few years back (I had to be about 18 years old), I was selected with a few others to go camping and search for gold. By "gold" I don't mean fancy jewelry; it was actually a rare and delicious fungus sprouting from the ground—a morel mushroom. I was prepared, but I wasn't ready, and enjoying nature is something that I lacked . . .

camping, and probably my last. **(Charnice Anderson-Morris)**

I visited the beach at Biloxi  
It was a beautiful sight  
The sight of the ocean warmed me  
My dreams of visiting came true  
Waves sparkling like diamonds in the sun  
A swordfish jumping just for fun  
The heat of the sun upon my skin  
Soft warm sand between my toes.

**(Hailey Sjuggerud)**



It was our favorite time of year again.  
 The sky covered with grey gloomy clouds,  
 yet so bright and beautiful with all the bright  
 colors.  
 The leaves yet to fall off the trees.  
 As you hear the gentle wind, it also plays with your  
 hair.  
 The branches sway, the leaves dance, and together  
 they sing  
 a sweet serenity all around you.  
 The squirrels gather to play one last time.  
 Glossy, dark, and as beautiful as night  
 we both stand and stay on this native land we call  
 home  
 watching the birds gather in the sky.  
 See you when the flowers awake.  
 See you when the flowers awake.  
**(Bao Thao)**

My connection to nature is lying in the grass,  
 looking at the bright white stars, feeling free to  
 think about anything and relax. I went to the park  
 just to get my mind off things, but as soon as I  
 looked out my window I wanted to go outside and  
 lie down in the grass, feeling a nice breeze on my  
 face while looking up at the stars. **(Lisa Simmons)**

This summer I went on a camping trip with my  
 boyfriend and his family . . . There were kids  
 running around everywhere,  
 families barbequing, laughing,  
 swimming, sitting around the  
 fire. We got on a hayride, just  
 going around the campsite. The  
 kids and families on the ride  
 were smiling and everybody was  
 excited. The vibes were so  
 positive I couldn't help but hold  
 onto my boyfriend's arm, close  
 my eyes, and smile. Taking it all  
 in, all of the love I was  
 surrounded by warmed my  
 heart like the fire toasting  
 marshmallows for s'mores on a



breezy summer night. **(Maya Rasheed-Bracey)**  
 Looking at the picture of daffodils reminded me of  
 my childhood in Sweden. I used to play with my  
 friends at the lake, jumping from a rope tied to a  
 tree into the lake. I still remember every detail like  
 it was yesterday—it was a sunny and beautiful day.  
**(Sayury Peralta Vivanco)**

There is nothing more soothing than to hear the  
 waters moving. When I'm in a bad mood, I sit on  
 the lake—15-20 minutes is all it takes. As the  
 waves come in, I fight through all the confusion.  
 There is never enough time to figure out life.  
 Depending on the weather, the winds cut through  
 me just like a knife. **(Ameshia Turner)**

Don't be afraid of the somber night  
 Let the rain wash away the hurt and sorrow  
 Let the agony dissipate like the embers of a flame  
 Let the soul rejuvenate with each crash of thunder  
 and  
 the bright lightning resurrect the heart  
 Allow yourself to be engulfed in darkness and let  
 your  
 dreams shine like the night sky.  
**(Tori Armour)**

Lying out on our red, white, and black plaid  
 blanket, the hot sun is beaming down on us. Cold,  
 wet popsicles melt, slipping  
 down the sticks, leaving  
 colorful streaks and  
 streaming down kids'  
 fingertips. A semi-cool  
 breeze comes by and lightly  
 brushes the open, grassy  
 fields and gently blows the  
 leaves on the trees, flowing  
 all in the same direction.  
 We're watching tiny bugs  
 buzzing about overhead as  
 large, fluffy clouds slowly  
 float by. **(Angela Carpino)**

The winds blow across my face  
 Fresh air soothes the mood  
 Birds chirping, hearing my thought  
 Peace is all I ever thought.

**(Alexis Law)**

Sidney was three, and while we were on a cruise, she saw people snorkeling and swimming in the ocean with dolphins. She asked if she could do it one day. I said yes if she learned to swim well enough to join a swim team. She did, so we went. I do not swim well, nor do I float, but we went anyway!

The water was blue and inviting on a beautiful sunny day in the beautiful Florida Keys! The waves appeared to be fighting each other gracefully, like rows of Blue Samurais. This was a dream I made a reality that at least appeared somewhat inviting. I was tory, yet I felt invited, but inside I felt such trepidation. I don't swim well, but the water was so blue and inviting I quieted my fears. I put on the snorkel, goggles, and flippers, and jumped in the water with Sidney. Initially she was scared, too, but water is her element. She draws strength from it and has always seemed to do so since she was a baby and I took her for her first swim class when she was one.

The waves seemed to welcome us, pushing us gently to and fro, like the rocking of a child in a cradle at first. As we swam away from the boat and looked down in the water, the waves appeared to open, permitting us to view the beauty of the coral in the Keys that she kept hidden to all those above her. Our guide tapped on some coral and, like magic, so many fish appeared, so bright colored they appeared to cover the entirety of the spectrum—red, yellow, blue, green, striped, spotted, and solid colored, flat fish, round fish, small fish, medium-sized and large fish. The small stingrays, small sharks, coral, and plants were as colorful as the fish. We were so taken

aback by the beauty of it that all my fears appeared to dissipate. We looked at each other and shared a thumbs up!

By this time, my child was so comfortable she began to swim away farther from our boat. The waves seemed to simply, slowly, gently carry her away, like they wanted their time to play with her, too. I was a bit envious, but in a sharing mood. She smiled, with snorkel in her mouth, as I motioned her to keep going with our guide. It was a glorious sight to behold on that beautiful, sunny day last June. It was like another level of clarity was reached by simply diving in and swimming for it.

After a while, the waves and salt seemed to grow heavy on me. Once again, floating for me became difficult. The sea, I don't think she likes me. Somehow I took in some salt water, and the waves became more choppy. At that point, I remembered that I couldn't really swim. I was finding it difficult to stay afloat in the Keys. It was odd, my last thought: I wanted to get out, but I also wanted to stay. By this time, Sidney and the guide were about fifty feet away, so I just smiled and got out of the waters of the Keys and into the boat. I had pictures to take and more memories to make of my child, snorkeling, in the waters of the Keys.

**(Bruce Moore)**





# FEELING DIFFERENT, LIKE WILLIAM BLAKE



The way William Blake felt most of the time with his poetry and art is the way I felt during childhood. Growing up speaking a different language was intimidating even though I was born here. Because of the cultural beliefs my parents

had, really the only time I spoke English was in my ESL classes. My dad didn't really encourage English at the house, not only because he didn't know how to speak it but because he didn't want my brothers and me to forget Spanish. Luckily in our early teens we were able to speak complete sentences, even though they were a little chopped at times.

Another reason why I felt like an outcast growing up was my studies. Most of the girls I grew up with in grade school were into smoking cigarettes at 12 years old and hoping to get pregnant by their boyfriends by the time high school hit. Because I was the only girl in my year who wore glasses and completed my homework, I got bullied a lot. I didn't even want to go to school, even though I loved being in class, because of mean girls. Most of these mean girls were in gangs and so were their brothers and sisters. I was happy to be out of that once I reached high school, but little did I realize things were going to get worse before they got better. My English was too much of a barrier to trying to fit in. I felt racially profiled most of the time because I was the only Hispanic girl on an all-Caucasian cross-country team.

There were many times I cried and many times I felt hopeless. Going to work was my escape, not

only because it would take my mind off stress but also because I was supporting my mother and two brothers, so much so that I was working 75% of the time and not really prioritizing school like I should have. But I found light again when I got my diploma and graduated high school. It was the first moment in life where I actually felt for once like I was winning. **(Selena Muñoz)**



I remember when I started elementary school I felt very isolated and weird because I didn't know what anyone was saying to me. I would feel strange because no one would understand me either. I felt lost and sad. I would also cry because I was only five years

old. **(Carla Herrejon Tinajero)**



When I was in eighth grade I got accepted into a program at school because I had excellent grades. I was so excited and couldn't wait until the program started. I walked into the class full of students, and everyone was staring at me. I felt a little weird because I was

the only African American in the program. Also, the students were looking at me like they were wondering how I got into such a high program. Some of the students wouldn't talk to me and made me feel invisible. So my mindset was to show them that I'm as smart as they were and that was the reason I got into the program.

**(Alexis Law)**



I come from a family of eight children, five girls and three boys. Up until my baby brother Sam was born, I was the darkest child in the family. Being the darkest and oldest, I always felt I was punished the hardest and not loved. I will be

the first to admit I was naughty and rebelled against parental authority. I often ran away, lied, and stole.

The thoughts and feelings of being treated differently were just feelings until I was visiting with my mom and she just opened up in a conversation one night. She confessed to different treatment, punishment, whippings, etc. We discussed how she felt when I was born dark skinned like my birth father and how the first five to six years of my life were spent with my Great Ma Bea. All I can say is I'm glad I forgave her a long time ago; that's the only way I was able to heal way before her confession and apology. I was 42 years old at the time of her confession. **(Ruthie Allen)**



When I was younger, I was very insecure about my birthmark on my face. It was different. No other kids had one quite like mine. They would laugh, ask if I was burned, or point it out at inappropriate times. Later in life, I realized it is what makes

me "unique." People will forget my name but never my face. **(Charnice Anderson-Morris)**

My life was unique. I was always very flamboyant and intelligent, so it made me a target growing up in the inner city of Chicago. People of less fortune would become ruthless to fit in. My mom always worked hard and so did my dad. We didn't have our in-laws around, so it made me feel unlike my peers who had cousins, aunts,



uncles, and grandmas. But as time went on, I learned god-sisters still wished to build a larger, solid, genuine foundation. One day I will have that love and be still blessed. **(Tatiana Clacks)**



When I was younger, my mom would take the family to church. We would go every Sunday, so when I attended middle school and even high school, I would feel different than the other kids. They would curse and act out in class, but me knowing how I

was brought up felt different. It was a good difference, though. Some of my friends would want me to participate in the stuff they were doing, but I would always separate myself from it. **(Arioun Jones)**



There was a time when I went to a tailgate at Lambeau Field. We took the bus with people I didn't know, and there was a lot of drinking and arguing. I felt out of place because I don't drink and I'm a laid back type of person. **(Derrick Allen)**



I definitely knew that I was different from others. The way I wore my hair and the type of clothes and patterns I chose really made me stand out. Some would say somewhat hurtful things, but deep down I knew they liked it and wanted to be just like me.

Sometimes I caught kids doing little things that I had already done, such as putting colored pieces in their hair or copying certain jewelry that I would wear. **(Sch'Royce Brown)**



I could write you a book about separation. Half of my stories would be reality; the other half would be my ego drawing me further and further away from feeling human at all. If you put me in a group, I will naturally separate. Vulnerability seems to be the gospel of growth. You know I've almost died, seen people died, abandoned folks, and been abandoned.

I feel different on campus at Madison College-Truax. Those people have never seen a man covered in tattoos. It is no longer my job to fake my way through it. I feel different than the person reading this. These are just the waves of my life, and I'm learning to surf. (**Adrian Molitor**)



I recently moved back to Madison from Rockford, Illinois. I felt like an outcast in the home I shared with three other roommates and their children. No one cleaned the house, so every day there were dishes piled high. The cat and dog were being neglected

because no one wanted to take the dog out to potty-train her, and the cat's litter box was always overflowing with smelly canlumps of cat dung! The children ran through the house all hours of the night breaking things and screaming at the top of their lungs. I didn't feel comfortable there at all because I wasn't raised in that type of environment as a kid. I had rules, like clean up after yourself, flush the toilet, and wash your hands. I'm not a neat freak, but I prefer to wash my dishes daily so they don't pile up into a crusty mess. I also know that if you have pets, you must potty train them and take them outside. These folks would walk by the dog's piddle on the floor and complain that the house stinks. I would clean

for hours and complain about the adults not reining in the kids and their destructive behavior. I felt alone, like no one else cared about the home or our furniture. (**Tyjeana Galloway**)



When I started at my present job, I noticed that the majority of the people that I work with are from Nepal and mainly spoke their language more than English. It was hard at first to understand what they were saying and become friends because they all mostly spoke their own language to each other. But eventually it became easier to understand them, and we have all grown closer. We have built real friendships after the year of me being there. (**Angela Carpino**)



There were many instances in my life where I didn't fit in. I took some pretty important parts away from my life. There was a time where I felt plenty of bad things kept happening to me, like when I was going through cancer and didn't understand why it was

happening to me. I knew people who were robbing people and people who were all around not good people. Those I loved were dying from cancer but shouldn't have been because they were genuinely good people.

I felt like I would never get over moments when I was hurt by people I loved. I had given my all and never let them down. They betrayed me and took the importance of our relationship away. I never understood why I didn't fit into the world we all existed in. I learned that me not believing in what they believed would take all of the levels of love we had away. (**Tandalaya Taylor**)



I've always been "different," not in a bad way (I'd like to say to myself), but I have always been the odd one. Being born in Madison, I went from preschool to eighth grade with the majority of the same people, but in high school I wanted to branch off

and try new things. I applied to go to an out-of-district school, which was Verona. I got accepted, and the closer it came to the first day of school the more nervous I got about taking this new step in life. I had all types of things running through my mind, like "I don't know anybody here." I got bullied in middle school, so I was automatically assuming that I was going to have the same problem in high school. I was used to being around a more diverse group of people, but I found myself being one of only three black students in classes. Everyone knew each other, so everybody had their "group" of friends already. It was hard, and I can honestly say I did not ever get through that phase my whole four years of high school. **(Maya Rasheed-Bracey)**



It was the summer of 1996. I was picked to become a member of the American Legion Premier Boy Stater. This odyssey was like no other I ever embarked on. I was chosen with a handful of other boys from Chicago public schools to attend this once in a lifetime experience. Unlike the

other kids chosen to represent CPS, I was the only black kid. Hell, there weren't more than ten African American boys out of 1,000 boy staters all from over Illinois plus a staff of about 150. So I was most definitely out of my element. Since it was one of the first times I traveled outside of the city limits, and I do mean far outside of the city, I never really had encountered white people outside of doctors' appointments and police officers that rarely patrolled my neighborhoods. The club was based on mock politics. We were split up into counties,

cities, Republicans, and Democrats. When it came time for me to express my views and stands on issues, I was viewed openly and publically as a rebel and trouble maker, simply because my peers never saw nor experienced anything when it came to urban living. Neither had I experienced their life or culture, though TV sure made it relatable. **(James Davis)**



. . . Sometimes people at think being bilingual is awesome and you have advantages, but not everything is the color of roses. Because I am bilingual and have a thick accent, most people at my work don't consider me in their opinions or think I have brains. They never ask me about

what I think or feel. . . . Sometimes it makes me sad, sometimes I cry, and sometimes I feel alone. They don't know how many times I research the cases, investigate, and especially take the time to read and do my timeline to figure everything out. I take it to another person to check my grammar first and be corrected. They can't imagine how hard it was for me. I feel sometimes that my coworkers think that I don't exist or my voice doesn't count, but they want my help to reach their goals. They ask me for help because I don't say no. Through the years I have demonstrated to them that I know my job and am not ignorant, but they still always make me feel I don't exist. That is the reason I decided to go back to school and prove I can do it. . . . So far, being in this class I have been discovering myself little by little and that my life is an odyssey. I didn't know the meaning of the word until Kevin and the tutor explained it to me, and it is funny because doing my homework made me start talking about my personal life and family and how I have been living in this beautiful country that gives me the opportunity to grow and have my family. Doing the homework also reminded me of all the places I have been before I came here.

**(Sayury Peralta Vivanco)**



# FOOD MEMORIES

I still remember it like it was yesterday. Everyone was gathered together, with multiple conversations and children running wild, myself included. It was that time of the year when we were all jam-packed in my grandmother's house, the one time a year we all came together to indulge in the tasty meal for Thanksgiving dinner that she spent nights preparing. If we didn't agree on anything, we all agreed her food was definitely for the soul and prepared from the heart. The ham was baked to perfection, and the mac-and-cheese was golden and crispy around the edges. To this day, I still don't know how she accomplished that. The sweet potatoes flavored the whole house with the cinnamon and sugar mixture she used to add sweetness to them. The greens were my least favorite food, but I would do anything to have hers again.

My grandmother was the glue of my family. Her food was fuel that still energizes us today. Many have tried, but no one has come close to the meals she used to prepare. After she left, food hasn't tasted the same. **(Charnice Anderson-Morris)**

A few weeks ago, when it was still hot as an oven outside, my boyfriend decided to make something affordable since we didn't have much here at the house. Living in a city like Lake Mills, there isn't much around. As soon as he threw a stick of butter on the hot pan, I knew it was going to be hard taking a nap while he cooked. He threw some garlic and some mini shrimp in the butter, and it just made the entire house smell like a chef's kitchen. It was the best! My boyfriend decided to cook my all-time favorite rice (4-minute rice from Uncle Ben's). Cooking that with butter just made me run to the kitchen and help because I couldn't resist the excitement. By the time I got into the kitchen, he slowly

poured the buttery, garlicky, sautéed shrimp into the hot steamed rice, and I was drooling by that point. It was too hard to watch the butter from the rice melt with the butter of the shrimp. As soon as I thought we were about to eat, he poured some aromatic lemon pepper and parmesan garlic onto the rice full of butter and shrimp. Just when I thought it was ready to eat, he splashed a pinch of salt and a handful of squeezed lemon onto the simmering shrimp, and my sinuses cleared up. I have never been more ready to eat than on that particular day. **(Selena Muñoz)**

When I was young, I remember waking up to the smell of guayaba. My mom and grandma had been picking guayabas from the trees outside and making a milkshake for breakfast. On this visit, I would get a guayaba or strawberry milkshake every morning because that's what grew in Michoacan, Mexico.

Guayabas are a small, round, yellow fruit that grow on small trees.

You can pick them off a tree like an apple and eat them.

When you bite into them, they are juicy, and they can be sweet or sour. The color on the inside is a pale yellow, and it has a lot of tiny, round, white seeds. I haven't been able to have that same taste since being at my grandparents' house. **(Carla Herrejon Tinajero)**





When it comes to food, there's nothing like when my mom gets the urge to make spaghetti with a meat sauce to die for. In addition to "The World's Best Spaghetti and Meat Sauce," she typically makes perch or catfish with a gorgeous salad full of colors. The meat sauce is packed with freshly picked herbs chopped and diced to perfection. When she sautés the veggies, you can smell it two blocks away in any direction. Beware: it's one of those meals once prepared and eaten that will cause you to suffer from sleepitis.

The food-based memory I have is of *tallarines rojos de pollo con papa ala huancaína* (James Davis)

(spaghetti with red chicken sauce and boiled potatoes with huancaína sauce). This plate reminds me of when my dad and mom used to take us outside of the city to have family time with them.

This food brings a lot of good memories with my parents and brother before our family was split. This food reminds me of my mother and how she cared for us and also how my deceased father played with me, carried me on his shoulders, and showed me things around the beach. I could smell the ocean breeze and used to play with my collection (muymuys) of ocean animals. My mother always spoiled us and cooked our favorite meals for the family. The taste of the spaghetti reminds me of my country, Peru. The taste of the ethnic food and fruit is not easy to find here in America. I have been here for years but still find it hard to find my favorite fruit, grandilla. Any time I go to the lake here and spend time with my kids, I am reminded of the days I spent with my parents at the beach. (Sayury Peralta Vivanco)

My grandma's cookies are well known (among family and friends). She came up with the recipe on her own and has been making the same cookies for as long as I can remember. They are oatmeal cookies, and she adds in nuts, chocolate chips, cranberries, raisins, etc. I remember how her face just lit up one day when I asked her if she could teach me her "secret" recipe." We actually ended up making them that same day. She had me mix everything together with my hands. They were so sticky, but the smell of cinnamon, nutmeg, and all types of sweet spices filled the kitchen. I helped prepare the cookies for Sunday dinner at my grandma's house. They turned out well, and I was so proud, telling everybody that I helped make them. I didn't realize how much work was put into making the cookies, but once I tasted them I quickly began to understand why. There are no cookies out here that I can even compare them to. They are truly one of a kind, made with love, and they truly melt in your mouth at each bite. (Maya Rasheed-Bracey)



bowl, thinking we were being sneaky. **(Angela Carpino)**

It's Saturday, September 23, 2017. We're out in a cabin with our family for a family get-away before winter comes. Each person has been assigned to help with prepping and making a meal. I was assigned to make breakfast this morning. We made your typical American breakfast: bacon, sausage, eggs, hash browns, and waffles with whipped cream and mixed berry sauce.

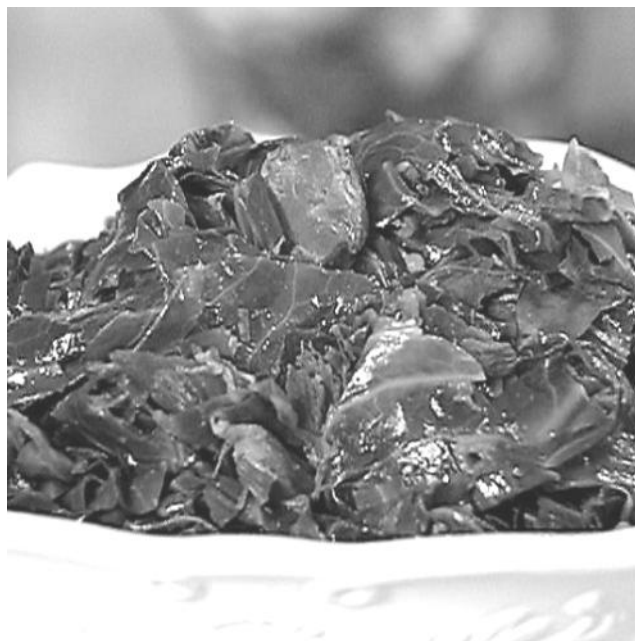
I have so many memories of good food and bad food. There was a time when I tried meat in a can (Spam), which I hated. My mom used to fry it up, cut it in slices, and make us sandwiches for lunch. The other kind of meat in a can was Vienna sausages with crackers. I actually enjoyed those—my first taste of hot dogs. Then the most dreadful was potted meat. I'm not even sure what that was made out of, but it was not tasty. These meats in a can brought me back to a different part of my life when my mother had to make do until we got more. That is one of the fondest memories that I have for eating meat in a can.

**(Tandalaya Taylor)**

My favorite food memory is when my mother showed my sisters and me how to make her lasagna for the first time. We were all gathered in the kitchen taking out the ingredients. My mother was seasoning and browning the ground beef while tending to the sauce. We each got to prepare a layer, following the steps given to us. When we were done putting it together, she picked up the pan and turned to the stove. As she was lowering it into the oven, I remember us pinching the leftover mozzarella out of the

What stood out was the waffles and mixed berry sauce. It's simple but super delicious! I only get to have it once in a blue moon. But when I do get it, it reminds me of when I was in Headstart. It's truly one of my favorite times. When I'm reminded of those moments, it puts a smile on my face. It was a time where anyone would wake up early just to go to school. It was a time where Monday-Friday wasn't known yet. We would wake up early every day, even on Saturdays and Sundays, but be told there's no school, and we would be sad about it. It also was a great time where independence was automatically given. I was that small and was able to trust the world and walk about a mile to school. It was a time where we only played with what nature gave us to play with: sand, rocks, sticks, leaves, and grass. But those were the best years because we used our imagination, and that brought our adventure farther than already having images to look at from the computer. Life was simple like this dish of waffles and berries, but it was the best time because our imagination was not limited. **(Bao Thao)**

When I would go to dinner at my grandma's house, it would always smell like greens cooking. An earthy, unique smell would engulf you as you entered her kitchen. She would put garlic and ham hocks in the pot with the greens, and she'd serve you a huge, steaming plate of them. Along with those greens would be a healthy pile of black eyed peas, which I hated! She'd say, "You better eat all your food, or you'll be an old woman before you get up from the table." The black-eyed peas would turn to mush in my mouth with every bite, and they were very peppery. I found a way to conceal the fact that I wasn't eating the black-eyed peas: put them in my napkin and then excuse myself to the bathroom so I could toss them in the toilet. Sorry, Grandma! **(Tyjeana Galloway)**



It is very hot, fresh out of the oven, with lots of layers shown once it's cut into pieces, full of cheese and meat, leading to a warm sizzling feeling on your tongue from the cottage cheese once you take that first bite. **(Sch'Royce Brown)**

I walked into my mother-in-law's house and was hit with an amazing smell! I recognized the smell of onion powder and garlic salt. The scent of seafood also filled the room as we walked toward the kitchen to take a peek at a pot filled with sticky rice. "It's gumbo!" I said with excitement. My wife told me to sit down and wait. As I sat waiting, I heard the stirring of a large spoon hitting the pot. Before I could turn around, a large plate of corn, onions, and okra was upon me. As she set the plate on the table, it seemed like the shrimp and crab were swimming in the sticky rice. I didn't hesitate to indulge in this Louisiana Delight. The first bite was filled with sausage and a strongly-flavored stock. I fell in love. Everything came together to create a wonderful taste. I'm truly thankful she made this great meal. **(Derrick Allen)**

A food memory I have is eating egg rolls that my mom made me. The egg rolls smelled like a delicious Chinese restaurant. I was eating them with my friend and wanted to save my plate, so I told him when he was done to save the sweet and sour sauce. He ended up throwing it away. At the time, I was frustrated because the egg rolls were really good, especially with sauce, but it was also funny at the same time. **(Arioun Jones)**



Thanksgiving is where you are around your family and are thankful. Our tradition is to make dressing, which is my favorite. The flavor, texture, and spices make it tasty. The corn meal mixed with turkey makes your mouth watery. You mix the two things together until it's moist and thick, and then you put it in the oven to marinate together and get that lovely juicy smell. Then when it's done, it's gold, crispy, soft, and ready to serve. **(Alexis Law)**

I was at my best friend's house, and her mom had decided to go out of town for the weekend. At the time, we were 18, so the first thing that came to our minds was to throw a party, but then again who would drive all the way to Sun Prairie to go to a party? So we said, "Let's cook instead of buying food all the time." We only could cook the things that were in the house. We made baked potatoes, blueberry muffins, and salad, but after that we didn't know what to make next. It was funny because neither of us knew what we were doing. We don't cook at all. My best friend burnt the eggs a little, but I still ate them. The pasta turned out pretty good. The whole experience was good because we were learning how to cook on our own. I hope we do it again because it was pretty fun. **(Lisa Simmons)**

Growing up at or near the poverty line sometimes means an occasional hole in a shoe or shirt. It means hand-me-downs and wishes of being too fat, short, or tall so mom and dad would be forced to get that new coat or a few pairs of new jeans. Being at or near that line also meant a missed meal here and there or beans and chicken until the smell of it makes you sick and turns your stomach. Have you ever eaten egg sandwiches for breakfast and

dinner three to four days a week? I remember this one week, thank God, it was Daddy's pay week. Payday Friday came, and we had nothing in the house to eat. I remember wishing for the sandwiches we called chokes: thick meat, thick cheese, and dry white bread. It was around 11 PM, and my dad called my mom and asked, "What do you want me to bring in?" She turned to us children and said, "What do y'all want?" We all yelled, "White Castles!"

My memory is when my dad brought home 100 White Castle Sliders, no cheese, no fries, and no soda. White Castle Sliders are small square beef patties cradled between two buns and onions served up in a blue and white decorated box. I remember from our second floor apartment we anxiously watched for Daddy's car to turn that corner of 66<sup>th</sup> and Ashland.

The night seemed to drag on. It seemed to take forever for Daddy to make it home. We all had drifted off to sleep and were awakened to see this huge white paper bag filled with White Castle Sliders. For the first and last time, we ate Sliders, as many as our tummies could hold. **(Ruthie Allen)**





Most of the time, my mom would wake me up early in the morning, and we would talk while she cooked. Christmas dinners were very special, and I have the fondest memories of those times.

First I want to tell you a bit about my mom. She grew up in the Mississippi Delta. Her family members were sharecroppers, so she started picking cotton at an early age. When she got a little older, she was given a choice: either to continue picking cotton or learn to cook and work in the kitchen instead. She chose to learn to cook and ended up loving it for many reasons! Some of those reasons are why I believe they called it "Soul Food." It changed minds, hearts, and perceptions.

She would usually have the radio playing gospel music. One of her favorite artists was Mahalia Jackson, who sang songs like "His Eye is On The Sparrow" and "My God is Real." She and I would hum aloud to the music as she cooked.

She would start preparing most of the meal the morning before, and I would watch, help, and taste a lot! She would clean the chittlins twice, put them in a large pot with seasonings, a large whole onion, and potato, and put the large pot in the fridge until early morning. Then she would clean, season, and marinate the turkey and put it in the fridge. Next she would make an awesome potato salad from scratch and, of course, I got to taste it as she was making it! It was as if it just melted on my tongue. By that time, the sweet potatoes would be done. She baked them with cinnamon, nutmeg, molasses, and other spices. When she would take the top off that large casserole dish, the aroma, ah, so sweet, would float through the entire house!



While this was happening, I was picking the stems from collard greens. They were stuffed in a big brown paper bag, and it would always take me a long time to do it. My mom would always check on me to make sure I was "doing it right." I never minded because I got to taste everything during the cooking process! Then she would make the cornbread dressing with the boiled leftover turkey parts, and I got to crack the eggs and would always get a

tablespoon of the dressing before she put it in the fridge. While tasting I didn't talk; my responses were usually just smiles and nods of approval. I'd help her wash the greens twice before she would put them in a large pot, season them, and add in pork neck bones and onions.

The last things she would make were corn bread and the desserts. She would always make sweet potato pie and yellow cake with chocolate frosting, all from scratch and always using butter! I would get to help her by handing her some of the ingredients and cracking the eggs. She didn't have to measure things because she knew it all by heart, which I found to be amazing. She seemed to just float through the entire process, and I would just sit and stare in awe of her mixing magic and love in our kitchen. As I watched, I'd help sift the flour, taste and pour in the baking powder, and crack and put in the eggs. After we finished all the mixing, I got to lick the bowls and the spoons and would watch her put the pies, corn bread, and cakes in our big oven. . . .

A nap was out of the question for this boy as long as my mom was cooking Christmas Dinner. I could smell the cakes and pies, and again the aromas

would just fill the whole house, one after another, then altogether. I would just sit there with my hands on my chin, smiling, imagining myself eating cake and pie. The time seemed to fly by when she was cooking, and it was my bedtime, but I knew she was going to wake me up early to help finish making Christmas Dinner, like she always did. True to form, she woke me up early to help her finish cooking.

I was out of the bed in a flash, cleaned up and ready to go! The turkey was already in the oven and the chittlins had already been boiling, too! I would look at the presents under the Christmas tree with anticipation, but for me, it was more about helping with the meal and the desserts!

I got to help clean up the kitchen and set the table for our Christmas Dinner because we usually had an early family dinner, then another family dinner with guests. My reward for helping was my small sample of everything, including cake and pie. My mouth would be watering, and I would just stare and smile at my small plate before eating it because it was special in many ways. I got to help and watch my mom do magic and love in her favorite room. She would tell me that her cooking ingredients always included love. I never ever doubted that.

My mom died when I was 23. She was my best friend. My daughter Sidney and I cook and bake, and Sidney gets to crack the eggs now! **(Bruce Moore)**

My food memory is the last time my family and I prepared Easter dinner with my grandmother, not knowing it would be the last time. Peach cobbler was the one I remember her liking the most; my



grannie would make it from scratch. Not knowing then what I know now, there is a true meaning to cooking with love. As kids, we would watch her use many different ingredients, measuring them one by one as she mixed and blended them. She would talk so we would know what each one meant to the outcome, almost like a tutorial. From fresh peaches to butter to

the required spices to the bag of flour to make the crust, it was a work of art.

It was something special, a perfect memory, but at that time, we wouldn't have called it that. From the front of the house to the back, there was a joyful sound. We were together as one with so much love in such a small place. The holidays, as I remember, were filled with special memories with my loved ones. I wish I could turn back time just to relive those special moments. **(Ameshia Turner)**

My mother and father worked very hard to maintain a home for my siblings and me. I recall my parents staying up all night preparing Christmas dinner, always making my favorite hearty meals from my grandmother's recipes that my mother says she will pass down. We had greens with turkey neck from my dad's farm from Georgia, the fresh picked ham was from the "best part," as my mom would say, and there would be macaroni from scratch with pasta from Italy that my brother brought from Illinois. My family all brought a special piece to complete our dinner. I miss those holidays. I can smell the love. **(Tatiana Clacks)**

# CHAZEN CHOICES



***Still Life with Watermelon* by Servein Rusein**

I see grapes of all colors and sizes, nectarines, plums, and citrus of all sorts. Bounty is yours for the taking, while the watermelon cleanses and refreshes your soul. You sip champagne and have dreams of gold. (Ruthie Allen)



***Jaguar Knight* by Judy Fox**

I see two naked young women alone, but they seem powerful. They look like a symbol of strength to get through something. The two women are like warriors and symbolize war and fighting the enemy. (Alexis Law)



***The Fall of Norgorod* by Klaudii Vasilievich Lebedev**

I felt drawn to the sharp snow, white on the ground against the tones of the characters. What looks like a death also looks like extreme satisfaction as the leg cuffs are fastened. The peach haze and muted mist on the top half create such amazing contrast. Three-fourths of this is negative or white. Russia is a cold ass place, literally and figuratively. (Adrian Molitor)

***Theseus Combating the Minotaur* by Antoine-Louis Barye**

Theseus Combating the Minotaur stood out for me because I love mythology. For me, Theseus is the hero, the higher self, and the Minotaur is the animalistic part of my being. Man is always at war with himself. (Derrick Allen)







***What was then will never be again* by Jim Dine**

History really has no end.

What was then will never be again.

(Nathaniel Robinson)



***New Couple* by Judy Moonelis**

I will change. You will change. Our love will stay the same. Different feelings, same troubles. Each day we are a new couple. (Charnice Anderson-Morris)



***Murrini Glass* by Giles Bettison**

Colorful

Square patterns

Looks like an airplane view of a busy city or small town

Natural colors

Why was this material used?

What made this artist choose these colors? (Sch'Royce Brown)

***Day Dreamer with Rock* by Michael Lucero**

I gather from this peculiar piece of art a

sense of mankind going through various changes from weather related to the stars to the moon and beyond. I also get the impression the artist is still giving you the sense of nature, both past and present. He takes you far under the ocean and also under the earth itself. He represents all colors and creeds of life itself, from the good to the bad, from happy to sad, to light to dark, from night to day, from the desert to the glaciers. (James Davis)



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

This painting particularly stood out the most because it has a dark side, but the way the artist painted it is very deceiving. It's dated from the 1900s, which I still believe is old enough where people could pay their way ahead in life. She represents a class of elegance but also betrayal. The woman with the long dress represents what she wants in life, a long life. Her face shows much arrogance but also how wealth can hide secrets very well. (Selena Muñoz)





***Girl in an Arbor* by Walter Friederici**

I see a girl in a quiet place. She feels comfortable. There is pain and sadness in her eyes. She seems troubled and looks deep in thought. She's holding a piece of black clothing that appears to have blood on it. She looks as if she's mourning the death of a loved one that has recently passed away, or possibly missing somebody who has recently gone away. (Angela Carpino)

***Knee bend artwork (nude female)* by Frank Gallo**

This specific piece of artwork stood out to me (the nude lady) because of how she's bending. The fact that she is nude and smiling shows that she's confident in herself and living carefree, really expressing her womanhood. Another reason it stuck out to me was that the lady was of some color (not white). (Maya Rasheed-Bracey)



***Woman Combing Her Hair* by Alexander Archipenko**

It was different when I saw the sculpture versus when I read the name of it. I thought it would be the faceless woman. They showed a woman who was there representing me as a woman. You can't see the journey one may have been through based on the look on a person's face. She looks like a fully functioning human – no worries, no issues, no cancer. There is a faceless woman living a wonderful life. She can still be combing her hair as a woman. Equality, sexism, torture, degradation. This woman has no face but she lives a wonderful life. Everything is shown in your face, not the faceless woman. (Tandalaya Taylor)



***The Dead Bird Double Vase, The Frontier Vase, The Rainbow in the Fountain Teapot* by Anne Kraus**

The vases each tell a story poetically. You can feel the moment and how the artist seems to have felt these things herself at one time. I wonder if she was depressed. She didn't live very long. Did she kill herself? It reminds me of Beyoncé's "Lemonade" and sentences my friends and I wrote for Art in high school. (Hailey Sjuggerud)







***Disfigurine***  
**by Justin Novak**

Poverty, deceit, complacency, and betrayal are all signs of weakness. This weakness is shared between us all, but what happens when a community is struck by all at once? The "Disfigurine" answered just that. The three men, eating while being eaten, display what we go through as poor Americans living today. Drugs, prostitution, dead end jobs, murder, stealing and envy eat away at us every day while we consume the daily bullshit we believe is freedom. I should call it "free doom" in this case. These three men represent what we

go through every day. We see someone with a car, so we eat away at his happiness, not realizing the fact we are being eaten away at by someone just as envious. The sad part is that I looked at the three men foolishly, thinking to myself, "Why can't they stand up and heal each other's wounds?" Stupid statue. The sad part is that the rich are looking at me the same way. (Ladaro Taylor)

***Coney Island* by Peter Gourfain**

The people in the painting appear to be entertaining and warming themselves by the fire. Someone is playing the guitar, while some are tending to the fire; some are just laughing and talking and enjoying the evening as a community. There is one man on a horse with a gun, and the people near him are not smiling. I think the people in the community are slaves and the man on the horse is the overseer.

I see birds that represent freedom, headstones representing former slaves. There are also three characters in the lower left that could be voodoo characters. There are more characters with expressions going from guarded to happy and more. This painting sticks out to me because it represents the entirety of an African American community during slavery: Life, nature, plantation life, family, community, and good times. It warms my heart. (Bruce Moore)





***Sleeping Woman in Pink and Blue Dress*  
by Akio Takamori**

The picture is an Asian woman lying down and holding her stomach. Her face wasn't happy. I picture myself with her when I was sick with leukemia and I was undergoing chemo, but I didn't know I was pregnant. When I found out, I was very happy, but at the same time I didn't know what to do. I didn't know if I should keep the baby or not. Doctors told me I'd have to wait until the baby was more developed so they could run tests and make sure he was OK and would be OK. Every night I lay down thinking, "What should I do? What will it be, a boy or a girl?" Every night I rubbed my tummy and lay in my bed while talking, telling him/her that I am happy but at the same time sad. I lay in my bed rubbing my stomach talking to him/her, telling him/her that I would love him/her no matter what, and asking him/her to forgive me depending on the decision I made. (Sayury Peralta Vivanco)

***Lakshmi* by Judy Fox**

I imagine I am sharing a dinner with the locals. They invite me into a nice-sized dining hall filled with smells of meat that must have been simmering in a large pot or over an actual fire. I'm far from home because no one looks the same and I don't fully understand the language. I imagine



my host is walking me out to the back garden to partake in smoking some sweet tobacco out of an elaborately decorated hookah. A young child comes running out of a nearby room where the smell of Hindu kush heavily perfumes the air. A seated small group of men are watching something...a

figure...moving, dancing slowly. I wish I could remember if I heard the faint sound of a flute. For a few moments, I am just as captivated by this young nude, brown-skinned girl. She doesn't seem scared, but she isn't aggressive. I know the young girl is being sexualized in this form. Her dark brown thick hair has been immaculately built into a tower almost. She has baby hairs all around her pretty face. There is a gold band that twirls around each part of her tower hairdo, but she is without any clothing. She has the look of an innocent child. I believe she is an obedient girl, not knowing the depth of pain that

will come to her when she realizes her little body no longer belongs to her. It has become nothing more than a vessel of sexual perversion to these men that all clap and cheer and smile with brown-teethed smiles – smiles that are followed by thoughts and actions. A few moments later, the host is sitting me down and pouring hot tea. There is no more mention of the girl, just as there hadn't been any of the times I'd visited. She disappears just as quickly as she pops into view. I will never be told her name, Lakshmi....and I never ask. (Tyjeana Galloway)



***Vergüenza (Shame)* by Kukuli Velarde**

This piece of art really caught my eye. It showed how people are ashamed of their bodies, and they show this to their kids. The statue is really deep. In the middle of the throat there is a mouth really wide open, like deep down they just want to scream. Shame of bodies and sexuality: it's just too deep and beautiful. (**Guadalupe Hernandez Nuñez**)



when you think there is no exit from your predator, but at the same time I can understand the predator. In this art, he looks like the bad guy, but he has no choice; it is who he is and it's how he survives. It is like how you make very hard decisions. (**Victor Rojas**)

My young,  
Home, hungry and alone.  
Waiting, waiting  
I must catch you!  
I'm tired, can no longer keep up  
But I must!  
I must go back home with no empty hands  
Not this time.

Shame and pain, the in-depth purpose of burden of the way things stay inside so deeply to suppress. The inner pain reflects the after pain, but who will accept you for all your flaws? Is beauty skin deep? (**Ta'Tiana Clacks**)

There's not enough time but I must

Eyes to eyes, I see you.

My young,  
Will forever be home, alone, and hungry  
Waiting, waiting  
I must run!  
I'm tired, I no longer can run but I must  
As I must go back home to nurse my young.  
Not this time.

Eyes to eyes, I can no longer see.

(**Bao Thao**)

***Orange and Purple Implied Movement* by Harvey K. Littleton**  
It's pretty, the colors are pretty, and I like how it comes up and curves. (**Arioun Jones**)

The colors are pretty and my favorite color is the purple one. It looks like something you would put in your room. (**Lisa Simmons**)

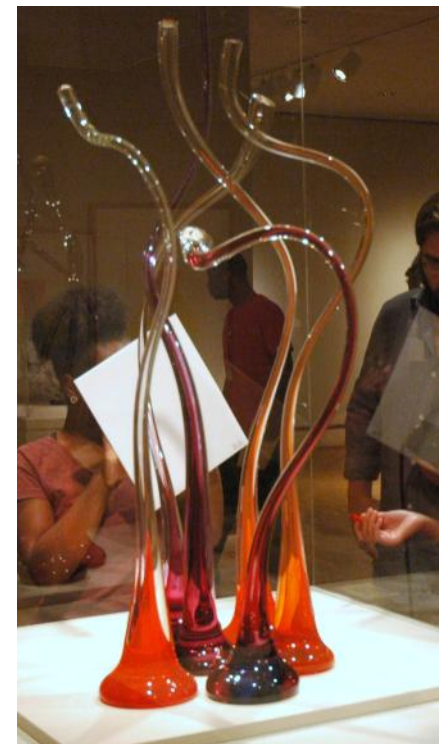


***The Question that Devours* by Beth Cavener**

Why is the piece a question mark? Is the question are you predator or prey? Can you change and how? I think this question "devours" people because the only way to determine what you are is through soul searching and facing hard truths about oneself. Sometimes those truths are too much to bear. (**Tori Armour**)

"The Question that Devours" says a lot to me.

When I saw this piece of art, it was like I could feel the pain of the rabbit. It's very sad to feel that way



***Photography in this Oracle by Dick Baker, Colleen Johnson, and Odyssey staff and students***