

ODYSSEY ORACLE

CONQUERING CAMPUS



"Once I had my ID in hand, I felt so official."

--Jelissa Williams

"I felt really happy to go to the UW."

--Umaima Mohammed Saed

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*"All of us fit into the
puzzle to form one great
picture."--Nickitia Cooper*

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EMBRACING DIFFERENCE



There were times in my life where I would feel different, or be judged for what I would wear or the way I talk, so I can relate to Blake. In lots of ways I used to be afraid to show the music I listened to, or voice my opinion, but then I learned it's ok to be different. Being different makes you special and memorable, and you shouldn't act out to be remembered. Being yourself is the only way to stand out. Stand alone and the right people will come to you. Also I learned to embrace others that are different because being around those like you always is boring and keeps the mind narrow. **(Steven Jones)**



I have always felt like I differed from others. I keep a small circle around me because I was always "different." I've always felt like grapes in a room full of oranges. For instance, in my family, even at a young age, my older and younger relatives would call me Granny P because I was reading and writing while they played. In high school, I hung around my friends because they were my friends, but once I hit my sophomore year I quickly realized I was way too advanced for the pettiness and drama they were creating in their lives. It took my junior year to let them fall off my tree like escaped leaves. Transitioning into adulthood, I am still "different." However, I like to think of that as unique. **(Shayba Pierce)**

When I first arrived to Malaysia in 2006, I didn't speak English. I didn't even know the alphabet. A few weeks afterwards, I went to swim and there were many kids there. They



were Indians, Malaysian, and Chinese, and they were communicating in English. They asked me questions, but I remained silent the whole time. I felt I didn't fit in. In the end they said bye, they actually waved their hands and I waved back. Sign language was my new language after that. **(Mustafa Mohammed Saed)**



A time when I feel different than others is when I am in a classroom. I feel like everybody is looking at me because I am from a different country. Sometimes I feel different from others when I see people being smart and talkative, and I feel not smart and shy. Another time when I feel different is when I go places with my children and I see everybody spending a lot of money, buying many things at the store or the mall, and I am not able to buy things for my children or even food. **(Guadalupe Tinajero)**



When I first came to Madison from Detroit, I had never really been around white people. I felt so out of place when I first went to school. I was one of two black kids in class. I had to catch the bus home. I remember there was this girl on the bus, and I sat next to her. She looked at me and said, "Niggers have to sit in the back." I had never been talked to like that. I hit her, and she called the cops. I had to sit in the cop car until they took me home. That was one of the loneliest moments in my life. **(Carnell Perkins)**



I was that girl that never would sit in the front of the room because I didn't want to be called on to read. I sat in the back of the room so I wouldn't be noticed by the teacher and have to read. I listened to how everyone read out loud and didn't stumble on even one word. I said to myself, why can't I read without stumbling across words? I felt so different from everyone else because it felt like they were smarter than I was and read so well. In all my classes I made sure I sat in the back just so I wouldn't be called on to read, and I just prayed that my teacher wouldn't call on me. I love to read, but sometimes I didn't because I got frustrated with words I didn't know, and it made me not want to read any more. This is why I'm different from others. (**Jalisa Galvin**)



I think most of the time when I'm in a group of people, I feel apart from their conversation just because I am a unique woman. Most people categorize and genderize men and women, and I am kind of in limbo. So I'm more prone to not judge or label someone because of their cover! (**Luna Santos**)



When I first moved to Wisconsin from New Jersey, I felt out of place. It's like those around me knew. I would get the crazy looks and stares. After three years, that faded away. I became a cheesehead. (**Jelissa Williams**)



Polygamy was well-practiced during my parents' generation, so I grew up with 1 ½ moms and 14 siblings. I never thought anything was wrong with my parents' rare relationship until I

started attending school. Then I realized that everyone only had one mom and one dad and only one or two siblings. And although my family was big, my privileges felt small. (**Mai Neng Thao**)



About a year ago, I was arrested due to a domestic situation between my son's mother and myself. While I was held in the Dane County Jail, I felt the most out of place and different from everyone around. I know this for a fact from spending a few days around six to eight other guys who had all previously been arrested, whether for a repeat offense or something new. My short time in DCJ is where I felt the most unlike those around me. (**Joseph Young**)



I am always my own person. As I was growing up, I've always been the only girl out of my mom's children. So I grew up as a tomboy. I had my boyish ways, so when I finally got into school and saw a bunch of girls, it was awkward. All I wanted to do was play sports with the boys. But one day my best friend and I started talking in class and she was somewhat like me, in that we had a lot in common. As the days went on, we started doing girly things like getting our nails and toes done, doing each other's hair, things that girls should and would do. Now, I'm both a tomboy and a girly girl. (**Katia Robinson**)



I feel different all the time. When I was around a bunch of my old friends that I grew up with, they would curse, stay out late and party. I outgrew them. (**Arkeshia Sallay**)



When I was younger, I attended a Christian school. I was the only Hispanic in the whole school (which was Kindergarten through 8th grade). I attended this school for a couple of years, yet I still never felt like I fit in with everybody else. My class, along with the rest of the school, consisted of Caucasian students. I always felt like I was an outcast and underneath others. **(Marisela Tellez-Giron)**



My family moved when I was in first grade to a neighborhood that was more known to have black, African American residents. We were poor, but still I did try to fit in, unsuccessfully. The school district had created changes that would have children from my neighborhood bussed way across town, past the nearest one, to a school in a neighborhood that was the polar opposite of our own. The children that were now my classmates were white, Arab, and Asian; suddenly I realized how ignorant I was, how unkempt I was, and how detached I was. I was also ashamed—ashamed to be in my skin, ashamed to live in my house, ride in my car, and to be called by my name. I realized that acceptance was a luxury I could not obtain. **(Tamara Thompson Moore)**



My life in high school was different for me. I moved to a different city and was ready to start a new life. I remember being a freshman in high school, and I got a Kurt Cobain book bag. I personally loved it, but none of the students in my class knew who he was. Things got even worse for me when the students in class talked about their interests and it came to me. I got so many negative comments and questions. “Rock

music is the devil music.” “Oh, you like white people music??” It really upset me because I felt this is the time in life where we should be exposed to diversity and different walks of life. . . . I respected my classmates, but I felt they were not open to the thought of accepting my mindset and ideals. **(Kala Taylor)**



I feel like I don’t fit in life in general. I’m uneducated, I live in a small house, and I try to make sure my children have the best of everything. When you live in a wealthy community, everyone around you has good jobs and nice houses and their children don’t have to wear hand-me-downs or have used sports equipment, and you’re around this all the time at your children’s school, birthday parties, sports and so on. I often don’t feel like I fit in. At work I don’t fit in. Everyone is an executive, and I feel like the runt, the little hamster no one notices or acknowledges, but most certainly keeps the wheel turning. This is all the time. **(Ashley Wills)**



This goes back to elementary school. Trying to find my ground and make new friends, I was the lone stand-out among the rest of my peers. I towered above everyone else in height and was often mistaken to be on staff. **(Kelly Dixon)**



I was unlike my classmates because I was reading novels while they liked reading short stories. Also, all my friends liked watching movies, but I never liked movies. I married when I was 17 years old. Other girls told me, “That’s so early. Let’s enjoy our time then think about responsibility.” **(Shaimaa Ahmed)**



I have had many instances where I've felt different, like I didn't fit in. With maturity, exposure and experiences, I've learned that I'm not really supposed to fit in, and that the world shall fit around me.

(Nickitia Cooper)



I dare to be different. I'm the one who likes to think outside the box. I'm into things that may be uncommon to others. Like on a Friday I don't look forward to going to the club. I look forward to being with my children and

husband. I feel I'm very unique and love challenges. With that being said, I challenge myself all the time to differentiate myself from the next. You say tomatée, I say tomato. LOL I get told I'm a young person with an old soul.

(Bettye Emmanuel)



I found out I was pregnant in my second semester at college. As time went on and I got bigger, I felt the attention and eyes staring at me and my belly as I entered the room. That was the only time so far that I felt as if I

didn't fit in. **(Jayvonna Flemming)**



When I was 17, my mom decided we had to move to the USA. At first, I was excited. Then I was sad because I was going to leave behind my dad, house, stuff, school, friends, and family. We came to the USA, and we

didn't know the language. The city was beautiful, but it wasn't my city, my neighborhood, my house. Everything was new to me and my sisters. For weeks I felt out of

place. I cried and felt frustration, but I couldn't change things. I didn't want to make my mom feel bad about the decision she made. **(Karina Gómez)**



I spent my whole life feeling like the odd one out, not being either willing or able to conform to what was expected of me. I tried to be a good daughter/sister/wife, etc., but I always somehow felt like I failed. I was

different than others I compared myself to. I got in a lot of trouble in school from both other students and faculty because I was so different and asked too many questions. It took me all of my childhood and most of my life to finally realize that it was OK to be different/unique/non-conforming. I am different, and that's ok.

(Raven Fabal)



I have a learning disability, so it seemed like I never fit in in school. Many times I would have to go outside of class to take tests, and I knew people wondered why I was the only one who took a test outside of

class. I'm also a terrible speller because of my learning disability, so my self-esteem has lowered because I feel stupid.

(Karina Herrejon)



I started feeling different ever since I left my country. When I went to Malaysia, I couldn't speak English, so it was very hard for me to communicate with others. I started to feel alone without friends because I am not like them and I can't speak English. But I didn't give up. I started to learn English. After a while I got some friends who helped me speak with them. I was very happy when I got a friend who helped me to feel I am not alone and I could speak with her. (**Umaima Mohammed Saed**)



This describes most of my life. I seem always to be just a few steps to the left of popular opinion. My most recent experience was at a Wednesday night prayer meeting. Coming from a family of ministers and also raised in a religious cult, I understand that I hold some opinions and beliefs way, way down deep on the inside, and that I am quite comfortable and confident about expressing my views. I know my willingness and ability to identify and speak about systems and strongholds that have been in place since the beginning. (**Lisa Partee**)



I often feel out of place in every situation until I get to know the people around me and start to feel a part of the group. I sometimes feel people are ripping me apart from the time I walk in. (**Rosalyn Richmond**)

I feel different almost daily. I believe in continuous growth and learning. Much of the time I'm surrounded by people who are



satisfied with their current situation. My brother jokes all the time that I care about saving the world. Really what he is saying is that I want to do right for less fortunate people. I recognize growth. (**Tory Latham**)



I feel different all the time. One example is in a school setting. I have felt different and afraid I would get the wrong answer. Another time when I have felt different is growing up. My mother is white, and my father

is black. As I got older and was in and out of foster homes and group homes, when I did come home, went out in public, and would call my aunt my mom, a lot of people would just look at me like I was weird, and it made me feel weird. I still kind of feel like I don't fit in now because I am so different from my siblings. I'm 22, and yet I still don't fit in! (**Tasha Thompson**)



I used to feel out of place and unwelcomed as a child/teen because I was adopted. I was unsure of who I was and where I came from, if my name was my birth name, my birthday was correct, and if my siblings were

really related. My biological mother died when I was three years old, and I had been in foster care since birth. My older siblings got to have memories of our mother. Since I did not, I felt no connection to my siblings. I was darker, bigger in size, and did not share any facial characteristics with them. After I was placed in a foster home at the age of six, I still felt no real connection to anyone. At times of loneliness, I still feel out of place. (**Brandice Hatcher**)

CONSIDERING “THE CIRCUIT”

“In ‘The Circuit’ I wanted to chronicle part of my family’s own history, but more importantly, to document the migrant experience of many, many families whose hard work helps to develop the economic power of our nation.”—Francisco Jiménez

I found inspiring the fact that Francisco’s life was so hard but he succeeded in life despite many obstacles, including language, instability, and poverty. I can relate Francisco’s story to my life. First, we both had experiences in school due to speaking different languages. Second, I came from a Mexican family that also moved to the United States looking for the “American Dream,” shelter, food, an education for me, as well as my children. Third, my older brothers used to work in Fresno, California, just like the author. I have heard many similar stories from my brothers. **(Guadalupe Tinajero)**

He went from being a deported illegal immigrant to becoming a high school and college graduate. He was so young but was able to understand the tragedy of his family situation, at the same time using it to motivate himself. I’ve lost a lot of very close family and felt as if I had no one left in this world, but somehow I’ve been able to steadily accomplish goals by using my losses as motivation. **(Joseph Young)**

I can relate to Francisco Jiménez’s personal story because some of his experiences are also mine. I know what it is like to move often and have less success in school as a result. Not being accepted or “fitting in” made differences in my life. Just like he had to face obstacles and overcome setbacks, I did also. I am inspired by what he and I have in common, and I am moved by what differences there are because it provides so much perspective for me. **(Tamara Thompson Moore)**

It’s inspiring that he had nothing of materialistic value, no one who could truly help him from his circuit, yet he was able to pursue an education and

make a better life for himself. He maintained positivity and always kept with him the love and the words that his family gave him. **(Karina Herrejon)**

I found it inspiring that even when he had to move all the time, places to places, he never gave up on his dream to learn. He took a lot of advantage when he had the opportunity to go to school. He did a very good job and was learning the language and asking questions when he wasn’t sure about something. I relate with him because my family and I had to move to this country to seek a better life. Also, the language was difficult to learn and understand, and the Latino community wasn’t large enough. We had a difficult time trying to communicate with people and helping them understand our culture. **(Karina Gómez)**

I find Francisco Jiménez’s life struggles such as his language barrier inspiring because I had also experienced similar traumas that discouraged me from speaking freely. I recall many occasions where I really needed help with an assignment but I felt too stupid to ask for help. As I felt more discouraged, I fell further and further back on school work. **(Mai Neng Thao)**

I found it so inspiring that even though his family had to constantly move, they lifted one another’s spirits. . . . I was bullied a lot in school. There were times when I wanted to quit, but my sister Semajer was there for me and keep me in check; she was my rock. In high school I worked a lot as well. I lived with my mother and sister Joy, who has Autism. It was hard because my mother barely made enough money to get by, and I had to work every day of the week to make sure bills were paid.



In the end I graduated high school, and I am still on my way creating success for myself, I still struggle and work 40+ hours a week, but I feel hard work and dedication will get me to where I want to be in life. It worked for Jimenez.

(Kala Taylor)

I find it beyond inspiring to see someone who has

come from such a poor and difficult origin become as successful as he is today. And as sad as it is, this is the type of lifestyle the majority of Mexicans live or have lived as some point trying to reach the American Dream. I can definitely relate to the 'limitations' some schools/teachers enforce on Spanish speaking students. There were multiple times where it was prohibited to speak Spanish to others in class because of the teacher or others not understanding the language and automatically assuming they were being bad-talked in Spanish.

(Marisela Tellez-Giron)

'It doesn't matter whether you work in the fields like I do or you're president of this country, we're but human beings and we should be respected for who we are.' Those are words from Francisco Jiménez's father. My grandmother used to say that to me all the time. As I got in high school, I noticed a lot changed. It's not about who you are—it's what you've got to offer or who you know that gets you ahead. I myself, like Francisco, bounced in and out of different schools. I grew up in foster care, and I moved from place to place often. It was so hard being behind in class. There are certain teachers that don't want you to make it or that tell you you're far behind. There's nothing you can do: you have to take summer school. I realized as I got older that I have to believe in myself. Others think you're just as worthless as you do. **(Jayvonna Flemming)**

I found that he loves his father. He is very strong because he did not give up in school, even though he did not know how to speak English. He improved himself until he became a successful person. I left Iraq when I was 11 years old. Then I went to Malaysia. I did not know how to speak English at that time, but I did not give up. I started teaching myself until I learned how to speak English, and my dad helped with that. Now I am trying to improve my English more in the Odyssey Program so I can be successful in the future, just like Francisco Jiménez.

(Umaima Mohammed Saed)

I think it's inspiring how the author overcame so much adversity to find the education and home that he always wanted. It took a lot of courage to persevere as he did. As for my relating to him, my mother moved us around a lot when we were young and after daddy left. It seemed she was always seeking some perfect place that she never found. We were very poor and often had to move because she had not paid the rent.

I know that this is not the point of the story I just read, but the emotions of the writer and the way I felt in my younger years were very similar. I got shuffled from place to place, from Florida to Georgia and back again, over and over. The sight of a bunch of cardboard boxes packed up was usually the way I found out that we were moving again. I also had to work to help support the family. While my work was nowhere near as grueling as the writer of The Circuit's work was, I too knew what it was like to be tired, hurting and exhausted, coming back to a "home" you never knew if you were going to be able to stay at for long. **(Raven Fabal)**

I found his family has great values such as love, faith, respect and hope that if they work hard, they will break through. All these values encourage him to learn and not give up. This story is related to my story. When I was living in Malaysia illegally, I was a refugee there, but I tried to protect my kids and give them love. That love helped them to challenge their conditions. **(Shaimaa Ahmed)**



I'm totally inspired by Jiménez overcoming all the obstacles he faced in life to become an award winning professor. I relate to much of his story from my own experiences as well as most African-Americans in our school systems. Also the experiences of my son come to mind. Until about three years ago no one recognized what is now being called the African-American language. I was told that I wasn't speaking English because I didn't pronounce words as my teacher did. My son's struggles are similar to those of mine as well as those of Francisco Jiménez. He was in a dual language immersion program from kindergarten until two weeks ago. Teacher and students alike made him feel unwanted and not smart because he spoke with an accent they were not familiar with. **(Tory Latham)**

I find it inspiring that Mr. Jiménez had limited schooling as a child and didn't let that get in the way of his future. I moved around a lot as a kid also. It was hard but I survived. It made me stronger as an adult. **(Carnell Perkins)**

Well, I find the story inspirational because of the foundation laid by the parents. They remained tenacious and moral while enduring hardships. I can relate to enduring hardships while keeping my head up and maintaining a sense of treating others the way I've wanted to be treated. I can relate to making the best of a situation not so

good and being hopeful. **(Nickitia Cooper)**

I am inspired by this author's resolve and determination to achieve an education. He held on to his hopes, dreams and goals, not just for himself but also for his younger siblings to have a chance at a better life than being migrant workers. I can only imagine how, if the tables were turned, I would function being able to speak limited English as well as being constantly reminded of how poor I was compared to other children of that time period. Personally, I did not grow up with a silver spoon in my mouth. I was lucky enough to have clothes and a roof over my head. I had no real life direction as a child, and it was drilled into me at a very early age that when I was able, I would have to work first for everything I desired. I had to settle for not being able to achieve more of what I would hope for later in life—the update to this will be my success story! **(Kelly Dixon)**

I find it inspiring that he came from so little and had such a will to do well regardless of circumstances. I feel like we are the same in the sense that he is self-conscious of his language barrier and I'm the same in my reading and writing. **(Ashley Wills)**

He is very outspoken. I can relate in a lot of ways. He says what others think and want to say. He was the different child, which is how I refer to myself. **(Bettye Emmanuel)**

What I found that inspired me was when he said his mother was a gifted poet, and she didn't know how to read or write. She told stories that she created in the Spanish language. People wouldn't think she was a poet or writer. **(Jalisa Galvin)**

I find it inspiring that he couldn't read/write because of him moving around so much, but he never stopped wanting to learn. I can relate because I moved around a good bit as a kid— not as much as he did, but I remember having to leave behind friends I liked. We had to move after a couple of years so we would have to go to

different schools. Also, my whole life has been hard work. Everything I have I've worked for, and I've always believed it paid off. **(Steven Jones)**

He started writing stories at a young age. From his story I can see how patient he was and he didn't give up. I think my family and I are patient too. **(Mustafa Mohammed Saed)**

I too come from beginnings that were fraught with challenge and very probably a set of expectations that were either unfair or unrealistic. **(Lisa Partee)**

I find inspiration through his background, that through all the instability, poverty, and lack of education, he still pulled through and became a smart, successful, and educated individual. Everyone can use some help, advice and a lending hand. With the right support, anything is possible. I can relate because I too come from an unstable, poverty-stricken background. I felt that I had nothing to offer and nowhere to go, so why even try? Later in life I met wonderful people, was inspired, and was made to believe that I didn't have to be a statistic—a single black girl from the projects with a baby that was going to end up on welfare. Against all odds, I would grow into a beautiful woman, married to a wonderful man, and in college with career goals. **(ArKeshia Sallay)**

I think Francisco Jiménez is a great person who not only was able to break those hard struggles he went through, but also was able to achieve his goals to go to school and college--not just any school, but Harvard University, one of the most prestigious universities in the United States.

I can relate somewhat with his story. I am an immigrant woman who not only found it was hard to continue school but also to attend it. My family and I moved tons of times during my high school years, to the point of almost

not being able to attend it. My 11th grade was the hardest for me to attend because of my extracurricular choir class. It started at 7 AM before school started; I lived on the far west and had to go to the east side. I had to wake up at 5 AM to take the first bus out of three to get there, and most of the time I would be late. I would be angry, sad, and mostly embarrassed about arriving late. Not only was I late, but I was also the only Latina and had trouble with dance routines. I had to get help during lunch or even after school to keep up with the class. It took too much work and time, so by half way through the year, I ended up dropping it; I could not resist the pressure and embarrassment of being the only one late.

But, thank God, I was able to graduate from high school and am the first one in my family to continue my education even after my graduation. **(Luna Santos)**

I find that Francisco Jiménez never gave up, through all of his struggles. He was consistent and persistent, as well as myself. I think that I can relate to myself having to move a lot. Having an unstable home sucked. He didn't seem to give up, which I love! It reminds me of myself! **(Tasha Thompson)**

I was inspired by the fact that Francisco Jiménez did not give up on himself. Despite his lack of confidence within himself and his personal situation at home, he never stopped fulfilling his dreams. It was almost like his circumstances motivated him to do better and want better for

himself. There were points in my life where I had to move as a child to a better environment due to changes in my mom's job. Even as an adult now, I have had to move to be closer to a job or because the apartment was in my price range. All in all, I want the best for my children. Sometimes change can be a positive thing. **(Jelissa Williams)**



WANDERING WITH WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

My Heart Leaps Up

*My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky.
So was it when my life began,
So is it now I am a man,
So be it when I shall grow old
Or let me die!
The child is father of the man,
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.*

I believe “My Heart Leaps Up” defines what I believe for myself. Your inner child will never die unless you grow. I am very attached to my good childhood memories. A child is a father of a man. (**Luna Santos**)

The poem expresses his love for nature, the love he had since he was a child, and the way that carries on throughout his life as an adult. It also expresses the beauty of the scenery and how he felt in the absence of nature. If that feeling ever dies, so will a part of himself. The present is the result of the past. (**Jayvonna Flemming**)

In “My Heart Leaps Up,” it seemed clear to me the joy the author experiences when he sees a rainbow in the sky. He creates a time frame when he says, “So was it my life began,” which I believe refers to the author’s childhood and a reflection as he looks back. Even though he is now a man, he is still a kid at heart and experiences the same emotion from a rainbow as when he was a

child. He demonstrates that this emotion will continue to occur no matter how old he gets. The author makes a bold statement that delivers the message of him wanting to die rather than not being able to see a rainbow (nature) again. I was confused towards the end of the poem, specifically the line, “The child is father of the man.” I would think it would have been the other way around. (**Marisela Tellez-Giron**)

I understand “My Heart Leaps Up” because when he says his “heart leaps” when he sees the rainbow, I think about when my heart leaps when I see my daughter every day. I love it when she says, “Mommy, I love you.” However, I don’t see “the child is father of the man” point. I had to read this over and over. I’m used to the idea that when you’re older, you’re wiser. (**Jalisa Galvin**)



I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud

*I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils; . . .
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance . . .
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought. . . .
For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.*

In “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud,” I was taken to that moment when he described the cloud. I felt the peace and solitude he felt as he passed the daffodils. I felt the swaying of the daffodils was their friendly greeting to the cloud. **(Kala Taylor)**

In “Wandering Lonely as a Cloud,” I got the impression of discovering self-contentment. The beginning of the poem expresses wandering and loneliness. Then toward the

end, it conveys a message of peace with the self, to be OK with being alone.

(Mai Neng Thao)

It was clear that in the poem “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud,” he made himself one with nature. He let go of reality and the existence of being human to become one with nature. He is also giving nature some human characteristics, like having faces and dancing. **(Joseph Young)**

“I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud” seemed clear to me that he was one with the cloud, wandering lonely, but the daffodils gave him substance and life. On his couch, he’s not happy nor at peace, but then he reminisces about the daffodils and again he is free.

(ArKeshia Sallay)

The meaning of “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud” seemed perfectly clear to me. It is often what I do when visiting a beautiful place in nature or coming across something of nature, pure and beautiful, thriving even in the city. I capture the picture memory of this beautiful scene, and in times of less comfort, I



recall it to the forefront of my mind to comfort and soothe myself. To me, this makes sense because those of us who find nature so awe-inspiring tend to savor those images, feelings, and memories as much as we can—to save them in memory just as one might save a photograph to a computer’s memory, to be called forth when needed again. **(Raven Fabal)**

NOTICING NATURE

Elements of Nature

If I had my way, I would spend all day capturing your beauty through winding roads, layered with willow trees, massive sunsets, and rejuvenating sunrises. **(Kelly Dixon)**

Nature is one of the most precious phenomena on earth. In my childhood, I appreciated those dense patches of cosmos, their radiant colors blooming in the morning. My heart was full of joy. As we ran around the wonderful flowers, I felt as if I was living in a different world. The song of the birds brought peace to my soul. The melodies of the birds and the different sounds of the different insects and wild animals were like a chorus of angels celebrating our arrival. The cheerfulness of the birds and wild animals showing their interest in us made this experience even more rewarding. **(Guadalupe Tinajero)**

I am swimming in the blue ocean and watching the yellow of the sun. I like the brown of the sand, and I like the light blue of the sky. **(Shaimaa Ahmed)**

The scent of springtime air just before rainfall is like a mother's familiar smell to her newly born infant. My presence resounds within me as a humbling and content feeling, quietly enjoying the company of small creatures hiding in the tall, wise tree with branches that seem to stretch wide to embrace its age-old friends—dawn, dusk, and starlit skies. The glistening surface of the water makes slow, mysterious ripples in my direction, as if to greet me. I inhale the moist, inviting smell and accept nature's shower as the cool water touches my skin and the thunder gently rolls in the distance. I am renewed.

(Tamara Thompson Moore)

One of the most vivid memories I have of nature and my response to it began on a beautiful summer day just after I had turned nine years old.



At that time, my family lived in a cramped studio apartment above the garage of my mother's boss. The old house was of wood construction, and our second floor part of it made creaking noises in the night as the house settled around us. There were some cracks around the windows that whistled on windy nights, and it wasn't very nice having to share what I remember to be one big room between all of us—mom, daddy, brother, and me. It made me feel poor, so I spent as much time outside as I could.

I always loved being outside when we lived in that house because, for all its drawbacks, the old house was situated right on the beach! If I walked down the long beach to the south of the house, the mangroves grew thick beside the shore. I loved collecting shells and the skeletons of horseshoe crabs and playing with the conchs as I sat in the warm sand at the edge of the water. This was what I called "my perfect place."

On the summer day in question, I had taken refuge in my perfect place from the arguments going on at home. So I played on the beach, collected my treasures, and made a little camp under the mangroves where I sat and watched the gulf waters and the circling gulls. I must have been day dreaming and lost track of time because the next time I remember looking up the sky was an

eerie dark grayish-yellow color! The waves were high and fierce now, rolling into shore with a crash-slap-crash sound! I huddled deeper into the mangroves as the rain began to pour down, big, fat, warm drops that made deep depressions in the sand. I didn't want to make a run for home because I was pretty far down the beach, and, also, the lightning was flashing as fast as the thunder that hurt my ears!

This, I would realize when I thought back on it later, was my first real experience with a tropical thunderstorm. I was in awe of it, afraid of it, fascinated by it, and yet I loved it so much because of its passion, its strength and, yes, its beauty. Now those yellow skies held huge galloping rolls of inky black clouds and those clouds were rolling into and over each other on their way toward my shoreline! Oh the magnificence of it all! I can still hear the cacophony of noise, the wind whipping the trees about and frothing up the waves! It was a little frightening yet somehow enchanting—inspiring! And while it made me feel very small, this storm also made me feel strangely honored to have seen it, to have been a part of it.

After the storm blew over, I made my way back to the room I shared with my family over the garage of my mom's boss, but this time I brought the memory of that magnificent storm with me and I felt better, smiling a secret smile every time I revisited the memory of "my" storm. No one had noticed my absence and that was just fine by me—I was wet and tired and happy!

I have since seen many storms rolling off the Gulf of Mexico and many beautiful lightning shows in the skies off the Florida coast, but never has the passionate nature of a tropical storm so touched me. And in my mind, I can see it still.

(Raven Fabal)

As I arrive I look around, searching for my favorite spot. I sit right where the hot beach meets with



the moist sand that is kissed throughout the day by the waters of the ocean. I reach out for a handful of the thin grained sand and feel it so softly, so delicately in between my fingers. Such a bright white pigment color reflects underneath the clear light blue waters, showing off its precious collection of shells with colors as light as the sand itself, and others with more of an orangey brown color looking similar to rust.

As I look out into the vibrant deep blue waters, watching how the waves roll one over the other, I can taste the salt of the water within the air. Freedom is what I am feeling as I walk towards the deep ocean.

Then I felt something soft quickly touch my leg, and to my surprise there was a big group of fish swimming around me. Their skins were so full of such vibrant colors. It was like seeing half the rainbow colors meshed to become one beautiful shade. They swam around me without a worry; it was like we were friends. The sun's rays were so strong; I could feel the intense heat piercing through my skin. It didn't feel as a sense of burning, more of a kiss from the sun itself, making its presence felt.

There weren't enough hours in the day for me to enjoy my day at the beach; nonetheless, I witnessed the most precious natural mural right in front of me. The sun said its goodbye as it painted the sky with a tad of yellow and splash of purple and pink. **(Marisela Tellez-Giron)**

It was on December 30, 2012, that I finally arrived in Daytona Beach, FL with three of my friends. I was 22 and never had visited another state besides Wisconsin's neighboring cities such as Chicago, IL, St. Paul, MN, and Detroit, MI. Daytona's 60° weather was a blessing compared to Madison's frigid temperatures.



That evening after unpacking into our new oceanfront home for the week, we celebrated our victory of surviving an excruciating 22-hour drive and got drunk off of Rumpleminze. After building our liquor confidence, one of my friends shouted that she was going swimming. Feeling inspired and dangerous by her "I don't give a *@#*" attitude, we all scrambled for our towels before anyone with enough brain cells left could talk us out of doing a drunken midnight swim in the ocean. We ran out of our condo and jumped into an elevator, bringing us down closer to our next adventure.

Before reaching the ocean, we were charmed and interrupted by the hotel pool. In order to reach the ocean, we had to cross the chlorinated pool, and so we did. Crawling out of the pool with adrenaline buzzing through our bodies, we blasted through the gates of the hotel that confined us, running to embrace the ocean linking hands. Enveloped by the warmth of our liquor blanket, we invited the icy Atlantic Ocean to swallow us whole; in return, it let us taste its intoxicating potion.

It was then that I finally realized I was no longer in Wisconsin—that I really was bathing in an ocean for the very first time, and that I could finally cross that off my bucket list. There was an overwhelming abundance of electrifying commotion dancing through my core, causing me to feel a sense of unspoken

tranquility.

We all crawled back to Daytona's soft sandy beach and for a long while, just laid there in silence and absorbed the moment. The stars littered the vast sky. The sound of the waves came in a rhythmic beat that harmonized with our harsh breathings. The chilly ocean caressed our feet first, and then outlined our bodies, washing up to our heads. It was then that I finally reached an understanding of living on the edge and I wanted more of it. I was somehow released from myself and had no awareness of time. **(Mai Neng Thao)**

The sound awoke me from my light sleep. In that moment I could smell the freshness as the wind gave me a hint from the window. I wanted to feel it. When I went outside and let the wetness overtake my face, I smiled and enjoyed the fresh rain. **(Rosalyn Richmond)**

This past weekend I went to the garden with my friend Kaitlin. As I walked in the garden I could smell the raspberries and horses. The raspberries were a bright pink color and the apples were a beautiful blood red. As I made each step I could feel the leaves cracking beneath my feet. I loved the juicy and sweet taste of each apple I ate. I could smell the cows in the upper valley because their poop smelled like the sewer. **(Kala Taylor)**



When I was younger, my siblings, my mom, grandpa, and I would always go to a park with a hill that was so huge it could swallow the park if it wanted to. It was full of grass, no bald spots. The grass was a deep green with a few dandelions popping out. For many years, when I had the energy and when my grandpa and mom were absorbing some of our energy, we would roll down this green monster. At the bottom of the hill all I could think about was crawling back up to the top. Even with the beads of sweat and a tint of green on our faces, we wouldn't stop until the sparkling ray of sun was gone. **(Karina Herrejon)**

The ground was a hard, cold, unforgiving mattress. I lay as still as I could for if I moved, it seemed that every pebble I lay upon moved with me. The tent had the smell of an old basement, damp and hovering like the night air that seemed to cling to every fiber that I touched. Wet drops of rain raced down in a battle to the bottom. My mom's voice was soft as she filled my thoughts with the memories of her youth. I listened to every word as if they were her last. Stories filled forever a bookshelf in my mind. The stars danced in the sky, lighting the top of the trees like snow. I closed my eyes with the sound of my mom's voice and the feel of the cool wind playing on my skin. **(Karina Gómez)**

My first Wisconsin summer: as I stepped off the bus, I wondered where the driver had placed my suitcase. The wind felt like a spring day in Louisiana, but it was the middle of the summer. Snapping out of my trance, I saw my mother smiling at me. I walked to her and she said to me, "Hello." As a momma's baby, we hugged a deep embrace. "Go find your suitcase," she said. I said, "Yes ma'am," still fighting not to start daydreaming. The weather was so great, much better than the brutal Louisiana summers. . . .

We left the station and arrived at her home. It smelled like so many meals I had smelled so many times before. The aroma made my eyes light up and belly rumble. "Are you hungry?" she asked. I replied, "Yes, ma'am." Before I started to fix my plate, I saw there was a balcony. I quickly ate because I was very hungry from the long bus ride. The balcony and I would be one as I soaked in my first Wisconsin summer. **(Steven Jones)**

One of my favorite things to do is run. It's that place where no one can judge me and no problems matter. It's a space of release from all the anger I have built up and all the anxiety of meeting new people. I love running. I love feeling the sweat running down my face as I gasp for breath because I can't stop and I don't take breaks. I just go, with tears running down my face and the smell of clean air. It feels new. No worries. No problems being wanted and no trouble fitting in. I feel nothing when running, yet I'm lying. I feel everything. Taking my shoes off and rubbing my feet in the soil, it's so cold, so disgusting, yet refreshing. **(Jayvonna Flemming)**

As the moon illuminates my face, I notice how everything else around me is luminous. I ponder to myself how this could make out to be a perfect scene in a video I have in mind. The frogs croak, echoing in tune with the shearing of cricket wings—a perfect image to be seen. **(Joseph Young)**

When the Clouds Burst . . .

Somewhere, a long, long time ago, I heard a passage: "I will look to the hills from whence cometh my help." But I find myself, more and more often, looking to the hills for the clouds. I watch as they keep moving, changing, and passing by. I wait and I work and I watch for the day when those clouds will burst.



I imagine that I will shuck off the heavy, sticky, sickly-sweet garment of the unfamiliar, the *bigwideache* that has covered me all up inside—keeping me still and smothering me. I'll lay down my bag that is full and heavy with odd and misshapen rocks and pebbles that I have found and carried with me for a long, long time. But oh, my God! When those clouds burst all over me, I will be made clean. I will be made unbroken. And I will be fixed just like new. I can just feel those cool, fat drops of newness glide
and slide
over me.

They sink into me and find all those secret, tender, hurt and haunted places that nobody knows about, and there were never any words for these things so I could never speak about them. I could only be told through grrrrunts and grrrroans and mooooans. That *bigwideache* will be delivered out of me. I can almost hear that ripping and renting as it struggles to cling to me.

I cry as I bleed (the *bigwideache* had a very strong hold on me), and I watch as the blood flows freely and cleanses my wounds. Nobody runs from me, nobody is made sick by the sight of me, and nobody runs to stop the offensive stream. And in my imaginings, it didn't matter that people didn't know me, didn't love me, didn't like me, hurt me humiliated me looked over me through me never at me like they could smell me . . .

And on that peculiar and spectacular day, when the clouds burst, I will have become all that I need to be. Nobody will recognize me, although they think they may remember . . . I will take my first deep breath in a very long time, and I will step forward (never back again) and I will be Strong, Wild, and Free. **(Lisa Partee)**

I am one with nature. My body reacts to the soft, fluffy, gliding smile, as if I am the cloud. I am immediately at peace once I surrender myself to it, solitude. I lie down in the grass, hearing and feeling it crisply crackle beneath me. I close my eyes and my nose immediately picks up the scent of fresh cut green grass with a hint of honey lingering from the calmly buzzing bees. I feel my body release all its tension and fall deeply into a serene, calm like state. I am soft, heavy-less, serene, calm, and slowly gliding like the clouds. I am at peace and one with the clouds.

(ArKeshia Sallay)

As the rolling of the sky seems to fade into the dimming light, I place my shoulders, legs, and heels on the grass. I gaze at the specs of light that seem to be far away, but close enough for me to wish. I wonder, do all the stars have worries, does the moon get sad, does the sky feel the breeze on the wind that moves my hair? Do the birds get scared as the airplanes pass by, or do the trees open wide when the refreshment from the sky falls upon its wings? **(Brandice Hatcher)**

Nature Strikes Back

I grew up in the south on the Atlantic Ocean; I always loved the water. The ocean was murky and dark; you couldn't see through it. You never knew what was lurking under your feet. One time I went swimming and boogie boarding with friends when all of a sudden I felt something large and slimy under my feet. It moved before I could move. I screamed like I was being attacked and rushed out of the water. To this day I don't know what that big slimy creature was, but I won't go back in without my water shoes. **(Ashley Wills)**

I think back on a school trip I went on with my daughter. I think it was the Cave of the Mounds. I'm not sure, but wherever it was, the temperature was about 104° (exaggerating). The bugs were thinking like humans, and the gravel under our feet was from Mt. Rushmore. It felt as though I was traveling through the Underground Railroad, literally. The trees were very vivid and tangible, but they provided no shade to produce a nice breeze. My daughter and I stuck it out to the best of our abilities. When the mosquitoes beat us to our destination as we ran from them, I knew it was time to go and so did the teacher. She asked me to head us out of there, and I was more than obliged to accommodate her. **(Nickitia Cooper)**

My sister asked if I wanted to have a picnic at the park. I said, "That sounds great." When we got there we put out a pink blanket on the grass, unloaded the food, and set it on the blanket. You can imagine what happened next—bugs started flying everywhere. I had to cover up the food because the bugs were trying to get on the food. I couldn't sit on the blanket long because the bugs started flying up my nose and just bothering me a lot. I was swatting at the bugs half the time I was on my picnic with my sister, so I could not relax. **(Jalisa Galvin)**

I have been outside in nature. Cold. No,

freezing. Crickets. Spiders. Ants, and lord knows what else. Sleeping on a hard, nasty, dirty, paint-chipping picnic table. Hearing the sounds of crickets; fish jumping out of the water. Car horns and lights. Come to my conclusion...I was actually living with nature outside. **(Tasha Thompson)**

In 1994 my mom moved me, my brother, and my two sisters to the Robert Taylor Projects in Chicago, IL. Within a week of us staying there, we had to walk to the grocery store. It was raining very badly, as if they were April showers but it was November, midday. After making it to the store all soaked, like a washing machine that broke before the drain cycle, my mom finished shopping maybe 45 minutes in. We then had to walk back home. My mom had the groceries in the cart along with my two sisters who were at that time five years old and two years old. We took the cart home with us.

We had to walk through this big open field about the size of Camp Randall that was full of mud. We attempted to get through this field and had no luck. We began to sink in the mud. I felt helpless as my mom was two to five feet away from me. Within minutes birds had begun to fly around us. Before I knew it they were attacking us.

This was one of the scariest days of my life. The fire fighters ended up coming to our rescue. Now I have a phobia of birds. **(Bettye Emmanuel)**



Poetic Responses to Nature

Sitting outside on the grass
 Feeling like dull needles are poking the back of my legs
 The cool breeze tickling my arms, making the tiny hairs stick up
 The sun beating down on my flesh, feeling like a warm blanket keeping me from freezing
 The sound of birds chirping, but there's not one in sight
 Faint sounds of laughter of the children playing
 Couples walking hand in hand, whispering sweet nothings in one another's ear
 This is what relaxation must feel like
 No worries or stresses of what tomorrow might bring
 The atmosphere is so serene
 Flowers in full bloom
 Those roses are definitely red
 Those violets...definitely blue
 Spring
 Beyond beautiful
 As I inhale deeply and exhale I feel refreshed
 A new day to make memories that'll last a lifetime
 Mmmm, Spring **(Jelissa Williams)**

Raindrops fall freezing cold
 I walk through them
 a lonely soul.
 Raindrops fall freely, constantly
 upon my head.
 Raindrops helped me feel free today
 when most days I feel dead.
 The prison yard is closing
 time for head count then off to bed.
(Carnell Perkins)

The light of the moon meets the ripples on the surface
 lightly scented Christian Dior and cherry lip gloss
 rushing hesitation and plodding anxiousness

first lakefront date **(Tory Latham)**

The tree was too long, and I felt too short.
 It was a warm day, the sun and its family was all out.
 The pool was warm, warmer than boiled water.
(Mustafa Mohammed Saed)

A place just like a dream.
 When I look at it, I see the beauty of the sky on it.
 When I look at it, it takes me somewhere really far.
 When I look at it, it makes me feel like a bird.
 A place that I wish to be in all the time.
 When I go there I write my problems on a paper,
 then I put it near the shore to take it somewhere really far,
 so I can be like a light bird. **(Umaima Mohammed Saed)**

DISCOVERING WILLIAM BLAKE

*On Another's Sorrow
Can I see another's woe,
And not be in sorrow too? . . .
And can he who smiles on all
Hear the wren with sorrows small . . .
And not sit beside the nest,
Pouring pity in their breast? . . .
Think not thou canst weep a tear,
And thy maker is not near. . . .*

I think the poem is about having empathy for another—to put yourself in someone's shoes and sympathize with them, or to try to fix or comfort them. But the promise of God is that all problems are given to Him so that we can know true joy. "He doth sit by us and moan." God feels our pain. **(Ashley Wills)**

The poem that moved me is "On Another's Sorrow." The words that moved me were, "Can I see another's woe, and not be in sorrow too?" I cry when others cry, so this stood out as if describing me and how I react. **(Rosalyn Richmond)**

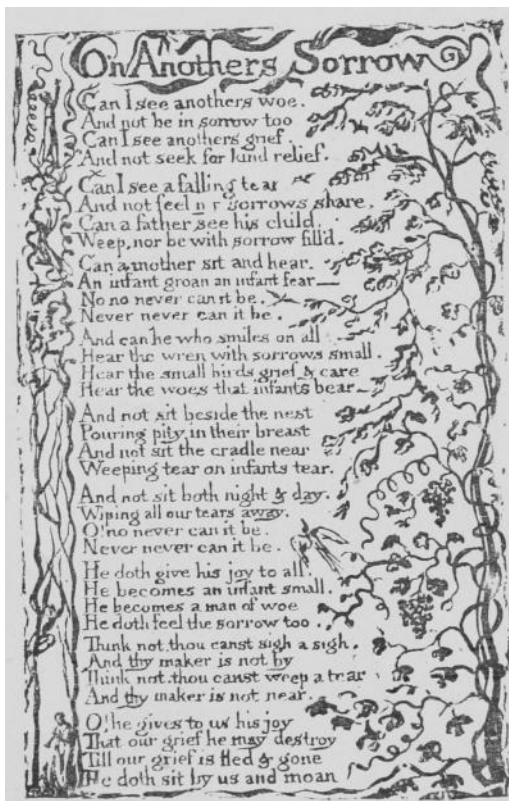
Many people don't know how to show empathy. It has even become difficult to show human kindness. I think in "On Another's Sorrow" Blake wanted to talk about how we lack empathy. Sometimes we are not willing to crawl into someone's hole because we don't want to share someone's pain. We try to find a way to avoid connecting with people or feeling with people. I think

empathy is not only ethical but helps us survive. "He doth give his joy to all; He becomes an infant small; He becomes a man of woe; He doth feel the sorrow too." I think this means that if you are willing to give whatever you have to others, you become small, humble, and a person who can feel pain, too. **(Karina Herrejon)**

I was most moved by the poem "On Another's Sorrow." This poem spoke to me in so many ways because with every line I read, I felt and lived another's sorrow. I feel like I went through and felt every emotion that was presented there. I was just a friend or bystander with no emotional connection to this person, but I witnessed his/her woe and was in sorrow, too. I have seen others shed tears, and for no reason but just that I felt their pain, I too shed a tear, whether it be for a stranger or a beloved. I was the mother and the father and I felt the sorrows

of my child. I feel I'm so in tune with others and my surroundings that I feel their sorrow, their happiness, and their desire as well. **(ArKeshia Sallay)**

The poem I chose was "On Another's Sorrow." This poem mainly speaks on the emotion of empathy, just asking is it possible to see individuals suffering or in pain and not feel the same pain yourself. "Can I see a falling tear, and not feel my sorrow's share?" I personally cannot see someone crying and not feel that same emotion. **(Jelissa Williams)**



The Little Black Boy

*My mother bore me in the southern wild,
And I am black, but O! my soul is white;
White as an angel is the English child,
But I am black, as if bereav'd of light. . . .*

My initial reaction to Blake's "The Little Black Boy" was surprise that he chose the words "southern wild" to describe the birth place. Then I wanted to know more about why the character described his soul as white. I personally related with the expression of frustration of what is perceived to be "blackness" and the resistance in identifying with what is perceived to be "whiteness." . . . My interpretation led me to see that the religious associations with light and dark are influences. **(Tamara Thompson Moore)**



"The Little Black Boy" moved or interested me because I can relate to the emotion it stirred in me. I'm familiar with the natural need to direct a little black boy living in this world among little white boys and the differences created between them. I felt he was being directed and comforted towards a belief in a higher power. **(Nickitia Cooper)**

Infant Joy

*"I have no name:
I am but two days old."
What shall I call thee?
"I happy am,
Joy is my name."
Sweet joy befall thee." . . .*



"Infant Joy" interested me because I could relate to the poem. When I was reading the poem, the word "joy" popped out at me. When I hear joy, it makes me think of happiness. "I am but two days old." This affected me because it made me think of when I had my daughter and she was just one day old. **(Jalisa Galvin)**

Infant Sorrow

*My mother groan'd! my father wept.
 Into the dangerous world I leapt:
 Helpless, naked, piping loud:
 Like a fiend hid in a cloud.
 Struggling in my father's hands,
 Striving against my swaddling bands,
 Bound and weary I thought best
 To sulk upon my mother's breast.*

"Infant Sorrow": I have a son, and I remember when he was a baby and would cry. I thought he looked so sad. I tried everything, but only his mom's arms would stop his crying.

"Struggling in my father's hands into this dangerous world I leapt." (**Carnell Perkins**)



depressing situation. In saying to Tom, "You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair," the speaker did an act of kindness for poor Tom, helping him to cope with his lot in life.

The Chimney Sweeper

*. . . There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head,
 That curl'd like a lamb's back, was shav'd: so I said
 "Hush, Tom! Never mind it, for when your head's bare
 You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair." . . .*

In "The Chimney Sweeper" from *Songs of Innocence*, what struck me was the second verse about Tom Dacre. The speaker showed Tom how to see at least some good in a sad, possibly humiliating or degrading (for having been forced to lose his silvery curls) and

The dream that Tom had afterward ("And by came an Angel who had a bright key, / And he open'd the coffins and set them all free") seemed to me to be his way of putting things into a context he could accept more than just the bleak certainty that each tomorrow would be just as damned as the day before. That dream helped him preserve a small part in his mind for a sliver of hope, and therefore his sanity.



This all reminds me of times in my life when I've suffered pain, loss, humiliation, and depression from the place in life where I was, from doing what had to be done, no matter how odious, when I had no other options. Sometimes the only way to keep moving forward was to find a small point of light—some hope—or some small, even possibly imagined benefit to hang onto. (**Raven Fabal**)

Nurse's Song from Songs of Innocence
When the voices of children are heard on the green,
And laughing is heard on the hill,
My heart is at rest within my breast,
And everything else is still. . . .
The little ones leaped & shouted and laugh'd,
And all the hills echoed.

In "Nurse's Song," the image of "My heart is at rest within my breast" made me feel happy. I felt like I heard the children laughing. In this poem I remember myself playing and how sad it was when the sun went down. This poem makes me think about summer.

(Mustafa Mohammed Saed)

"The Nurse's Song" moved me while reading. It reminds me of the beautiful summer days when children love to enjoy the weather and play. Parents have to eventually convince them it's time to come in, and normally the sunset is the curfew. The part in the poem that says "My heart is at rest within my breast" affected me because any mother can relate to this sense of happiness and comfort to see their child or children laughing, playing, and being happy.

(Marisela Tellez-Giron)

When the voices of children are heard on the green,
And whisp'rings are in the dale,
The days of my youth rise fresh in my mind,
My face turns green and pale. . . .
Your spring and your day are wasted in play,
And your winter and night in disguise.



I chose the two "Nurse's Songs." I read the first one from *Songs of Innocence* and liked how sweet and loving the woman was, filled with joy to see these happy kids play until the sun went down. But in *Songs of Experience*, the woman is more cold and sad and sees these kids wasting their lives playing. It was like reading yin and yang poems written in different worlds. It was just really cool to see how they are very similar but contrast with each other.

(Luna Santos)



The Garden of Love

*I went to the Garden of Love,
And saw what I never had seen:
A Chapel was built in the midst,
Where I used to play on the green.*

*And the gates of this Chapel were shut,
And Thou shalt not writ over the door;
So I turn'd to the Garden of Love,
That so many sweet flowers bore.*

*And I saw it was filled with graves,
And tomb-stones where flowers should be:
And Priests in black gowns, were walking their rounds,
And binding with briars, my joys & desires.*

“The Garden of Love” made me feel a bit of resentment toward religion. In this poem, religion is referred to as something dark and corrupted, almost like a control system to administer power. The Chapel has taken over the Garden of Love. Where flowers once bloomed, now sits a sea of death. One image that really stuck out at me was the briars binding joys and desires. The briars remind me of barbwire and confinement (**Mai Neng Thao**)

*The School Boy*

*But to go to school in a summer morn,
O! it drives all joy away . . .
How can the bird that is born for joy
Sit in a cage and sing?
How can a child, when fears annoy,
But droop his tender wing,
And forget his youthful spring?*

In “The School Boy” the poet wanted to portray the child when he goes to the summer school like a bird in a cage. He thought in the summer he should play and feel joy all the time. Children in summer have a lot of fun and can do many things they can’t do in the winter. (**Shaimaa Ahmed**)

EMBARKING ON AN ODYSSEY



I think the course is called Odyssey Project because Odyssey is a long trip during which many things happen. Also this trip is like self-discovery. I wish this class will help me discover myself, and I am sure I will learn many new things to get my

confidence. **(Shaimaa Ahmed)**



I think this course is called the Odyssey Project because it is a course that allows many different kinds to feel and find their ways through an intellectual journey. The beginning is feeling to me as though I've wandered upon a discovery into

a world of the unknown, with the ability to enlighten me. I feel the Odyssey Project is designed to provide knowledge and understanding, literacy and art that some may find confusing or unclear. Odyssey appears to be tailored to fit the needs of those who struggle with their perceptions of how different learning can be for people.

(Nickitia Cooper)



We are all here for various reasons and some may be similar in nature. The name of this course makes me think of new beginnings. As a child of the seventies, planning my journey was never a reality. I am

here to achieve the educational and motivational goals that were never suggested to me while growing up in south Madison. I hope to open my mind further past the road block that kept me from moving forward, make new connections along the way, and see the potential I will have.

(Kelly Dixon)

I believe that any major change/experience in one's life is only a step to the one beyond, and that step leads to the one beyond that, and so forth. The opportunity presented by the Odyssey Project is, in



my opinion, a chance to make the next steps or series of experiences in my own journey positive ones—to add to my Odyssey, which began long ago and will continue until my time on earth is done. I have never had anything like this incredible

program come my way before. I intend to make the absolute most of it, add these experiences to my own path and perhaps, if I am able, help to enhance the odyssey of someone else.

(Raven Fabal)



I believe it's called Odyssey Project because there is a group of people working towards helping others make a change in life for the better.

(Bettye Emmanuel)



I feel this class is going to take me on a mental and spiritual journey of my own. Any teacher can hand a student a textbook and tell them to do an assignment, but in this course I feel not only will I be asking

questions but I also will be creating questions on my own. This class will challenge me on a deeper and more critical level than any class I will take. In the end I feel I will see and think about the world differently. **(Kala Taylor)**



Odysseus was imprisoned on the beautiful nymph Calypso's island Igygia for a decade because she was possessed by love for him. Odysseus had no way of escaping. Hermes was sent to rescue Odysseus from Calypso. He persuaded her to let

Odysseus build a ship and leave, but when he set sail Poseidon, god of the sea, sent a storm to wreck the ship. Poseidon held a grudge against Odysseus since he blinded his son Polyphemus. Odysseus eventually returned home, claimed his kingdom,

reunited with his family, and restored peace to the palace. I think this program was named the Odyssey Project because . . . obstacles in life may prevent us from succeeding, but we now have the support and that extra push, like Odysseus did to reclaim his kingdom, to help us get to where we're trying to go. We have to believe in ourselves.

A project is defined as an individual or collaborative enterprise that is carefully planned and designed to achieve a particular aim. With structure and support for us, the impossible is a little more possible. There might be some hurdles along the way, but as long as I stay determined and focused I will get to where I'm trying to go. Success can't happen overnight. **(Jayvonna Flemming)**



I think it's called the Odyssey because it's a journey for the people that are in the Odyssey Project. It will be an Odyssey for me because it will be a good journey. **(Jalisa Galvin)**



When you decide to return to school and be in charge of your future again, it is an Odyssey because in this day as adults we are busy with different responsibilities. To stay focused and not quit is an Odyssey. For me this class is already an

Odyssey because I have never read or written so much in English before. Facebook (social media) is totally different than the books that were written by important people and with a lot of meaning. **(Karina Gómez)**



An odyssey is a symbol of strength and the overcoming of trials when there is little hope. It will help me get back into the hang of learning and education. **(Brandice Hatcher)**

Before this class I had never heard before of the name Odyssey. I had only heard and used



"journey." I think "Odyssey" from the definition the dictionary gives means much more than journey. I think this course is called the Odyssey Project because the course will end when class ends but will continue for the rest of our lives.

Our education will continue not only through lectures but also through life experiences. Every day when we are willing to wonder about someone's culture or interests we are embarking on a journey. I think that this class is the beginning of my educational journey. **(Karina Herrejon)**



I think it's called Odyssey because we're all brought together to help one another on this journey as well as find our own voice, way/path and encouraging one another, even if we have different beliefs and paths. Being different broadens our minds

and helps us grow and see things from different points of view. The key is to remain objective no matter what and, most of all, stay the course.

(Steven Jones)



From the definition and reading the Oracle, I think it's the designed path for growth in the program. This doesn't really make sense to me because growth can go anywhere and is dependent on the individual. I believe Odyssey can/will bring my undiscovered and untapped creativity out. I never knew the actual definition of Odyssey, but I would have thought it was something to do with an "unlimited adventure." **(Tory Latham)**



I think it's called Odyssey because it's going to be a challenging class. It's not going to be easy but not difficult at the same time because of the great teachers and students. **(Mustafa Mohammed Saed)**



I think the course is called the Odyssey because we will begin our journey through this course to be successful in our life. I am going to study really hard, and I will do all my homework to be successful.

(Umaima Mohammed Saed)



For as long as I can remember, my private self-talk was always framed in stories. I don't know why, but I have always looked for themes, trends, or anything that made the insanity of my life tolerable and assured me that I was not just

suffering for suffering's sake. It has always been so important to me to be able to assign Value and Purpose and Significance to my experience. More often than not, my internal dialogue would be describing a "journey" that I was on. It was only five years ago that I began to write about my life. But to answer the question, this course being titled "Odyssey Project" is very appropriate, in my opinion. It is simply giving a name to this leg of the journey. What I think is so exciting is that in the definition of the word "Odyssey" one can anticipate "epic" experiences and deeper intellectual and/or spiritual understandings. **(Lisa Partee)**



I think it's called the Odyssey Project because it is a journey into a better future. It will be an Odyssey for me because I will be learning a better way to walk into my future. **(Carnell Perkins)**



I think it is called the Odyssey Project because of the epic journey this course takes your mind on, to explore inside the minds of the people who paved the way before me. This class is for me because I am eager to learn new and interesting

things. It will get me reading again.

(Rosalyn Richmond)



This class can be an Odyssey for many reasons. First, it will help me gain a lot as far as my mind state on school. Second, I can learn a lot about my history and things that I didn't learn in high school. I feel the reason this class is called the

Odyssey Project is because it helps others that are willing to build and have a future. **(Katia Robinson)**



I think this course is called Odyssey due to us taking a journey through history in order to define ourselves. Through our journey we can relate to others' fortunes and misfortunes, using this journey and information to apply to our own personal

journey in life. Through history we learn that there will be fortunes and misfortunes. The journey might be long, but it can be an adventurous and rewarding learning experience. **(ArKeshia Sallay)**



Well, I believe this class is called Odyssey because it is an unknown journey that is full of things that all of us are going to gain knowledge from. It will be full of surprises that will unite a group of people with the same goals but with different

backgrounds, culture, gender, and religion, just like Odysseus's group of men who were different but with the same goal to get back to Troy. **(Luna Santos)**



I think this course is called the Odyssey Project because it is a long journey that is filled with adventures as well as challenges. This class is an Odyssey for me in fulfilling my dreams and career. I know for a fact already that I will

learn so much from this course and gain an unforgettable experience. **(Marisela Tellez)**



I think this course is called the Odyssey Project because it's symbolic of the unknown 'changes of fortune' we are about to endure. Every experience and adventure we take will deliver us a step closer to our goal. It most certainly will not come easy, but if we are obedient to what we desire most, our ultimate destination will most certainly be rewarding. **(Mai Neng Thao)**



From the definition and my understanding, I think the course is called The Odyssey Project because it's going to be a year-long journey full of new and exciting adventures! I definitely know this will be an Odyssey for me because I've been through so much already. To get where I'm going, I'm going to have a long journey. I am absolutely thankful and blessed to be in this program; to be given a second chance! **(Tasha Thompson)**



I think the name for this project was chosen because it is intended to be an agent of change for the participants embarking on the journey. My intentions are to utilize the opportunity I've been given to change and improve the course of my life's fortune. **(Tamara Thompson Moore)**



I think the course is called the Odyssey Project because, for me, Odyssey is the journey in which we're going to discover many new exciting experiences that will help us to build new knowledge.

However, there might be many challenges and obstacles that are going to make us doubt the relevance to continue or to stop in this journey. For me this Odyssey is like a box full of surprises. I am going to be taking stuff out of it. There might be very good things. There might be surprising things, even things that I might not like.

What matters most is that I am ready to start taking things out and ready to make this journey an unforgettable experience.

(Guadalupe Tinajero)



I believe this course is called the Odyssey Project because it's a journey containing different events and experiences that can be challenging but also beneficial to the individuals who participate in the program. The class is like an

Odyssey for me because there will be obstacles that may hinder me from making to class, being on time, or completing assignments by the due date, but I will overcome those trials and tribulations. I have goals as well as dreams. I will not let anything stand in my way nor hold me back. Odysseus faced a lot of hardship, but he made it through. Langston Hughes wrote a poem called 'Dream Deferred' where he asked what happens to dreams put on hold. My dream was to go to school and obtain a degree or two. I had children. Yes, I was thrown off track, but I'm back in the right land. I will not let my dreams be postponed because of my life's many tests. **(Jelissa Williams)**



I think the course is called the Odyssey Project because we will encounter experiences that give us knowledge or unlock understanding throughout our journey together. **(Ashley Wills)**



This course is called Odyssey Project because it gives opportunity for us to feel or believe that success is not achieved in only a limited amount of ways, and it's never too late. This class is an Odyssey because I wanted to be the first of my mom's children to go to college, which I did. But I did not finish. So this is my change of fortune to go back and finish what I started. **(Joseph Young)**

MEMORABLE MOMENTS ON UW-MADISON'S CAMPUS

When we took the class trip to Union South for ID cards, the most memorable moment for me was taking more photos for Odyssey and actually getting the ID card. I was so happy that I now have a UW-Madison student card and that I am getting credits!

My second memorable moment of that night was at the Chazen Museum—walking around, reading, and learning about the art. It was amazing to me to see art from SO long ago, signed by the artists—that gave me goose bumps! I was not a huge art fan, but as of last week I am!! Thanks. (**Tasha Thompson**)

My visit to the UW campus was AMAZING! As I got off the bus, my life felt complete to know I am a UW student. Also, while on campus we went to a UW art museum, and there was this one picture called “The Overpainting of Christ” that blew my soul away. Most of the trip was very nice. (**Katia Robinson**)

I enjoyed the smile of glee from all the students, enjoying the art. (**Rosalyn Richmond**)

I believe my most memorable moments were those of all of us taking pictures, headshots included. We joked, jumped around, and problem-solved together to make sure all of us fit into the puzzle to form one great picture. (**Nikitia Cooper**)





There was a piece at the Chazen done by Karen La Monte (1967) that stood out the most to me. It was mystical, unique, and something I would love to have if money allowed. **(Kelly Dixon)**

On the trip we went on to get the ID cards, I was excited about that. The place was great. I was lucky because I got my ID quickly and took some pictures with new friends. I felt like I knew them for years.

The art museum was one of the best museums I've ever seen. There were great paintings. I remembered my uncle that day because he likes drawing. **(Mustafa Mohammed Saed)**

I found our trip to the museum true to how I tend to process emotions. I didn't really know how I felt until I was at home and quiet. I could not understand why I felt as though I wanted to cry at different points during our tour. I think it was partly because I was saddened by the fact that it took 49 years for me to find my way back to the life I originally was supposed to be living. I'm grateful that, at the very least, I have time now to enjoy these things and share them with my baby. **(Lisa Partee)**



I was waiting for this day. I felt really happy to go to the UW. It made me feel that I will continue my education there, especially after I got my ID. I will never forget that day. The museum was really nice. Thank you. **(Umaima Mohammed Saed)**

When we went to the Chazen Museum, I felt back to the past. The pictures were talking with me and telling stories. When I went back home, I dreamed with pictures. Some of them were

sad, so they affected my mood. Others were hopeful with shining, colorful, and pretty faces. **(Shaimaa Ahmed)**

The trips to Union South and the Chazen Museum of Art were both memorable experiences because I had done neither. Sitting on the bus, I was anxious to get where we were going. Once I had my ID in hand, I felt so official. Now I'm wanting to wear my ID everywhere I go. "Why, yes. I'm a part of the UW." **(Jelissa Williams)**

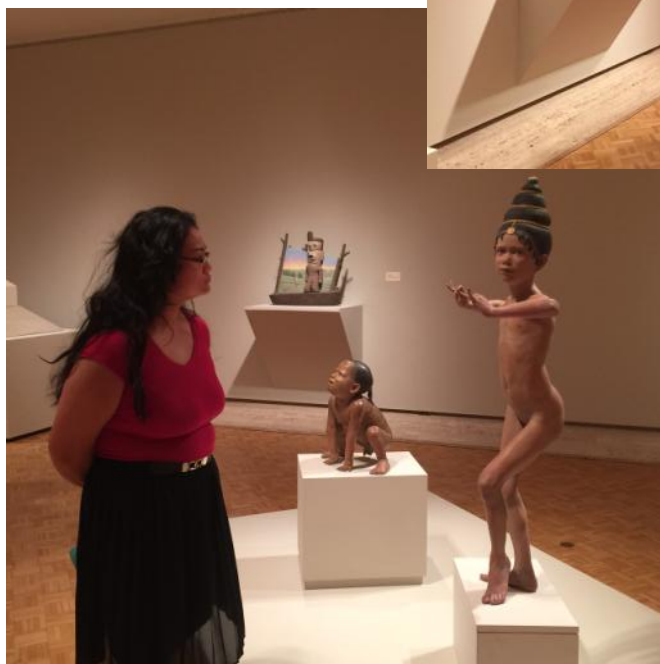


I really enjoyed how the art work is displayed during different periods of time. I felt like I was traveling through a time capsule. I loved how the change in art work was so visual and bold, demonstrating the traditional art work of rich people evolved into more creative sculptures. **(Marisela Tellez-Giron)**

The class trip was simply wonderful. I pass by that place every morning. I enjoyed seeing all of the wonder and diversity there. I felt each piece of art told a story. I learned a lot from each artist I read about. The Union South is a beautiful place. It's nice to know there is a place where I can relax and do my work as well. It looks like a lot of effort and creativity went into that building. **(Kala Taylor)**



seeing all those impressive pieces of art and photographs. I didn't understand a lot of the pieces of art. Some to me were hard to describe and to understand. **(Karina Gómez)**



My most memorable moment was arriving on campus to receive our IDs. I've always loved the feeling of registering for another year of school. Being excited to learn and not knowing what's to come gives me something to look forward to. Receiving the ID also said to me that I was making progress with my life. For a long time, I felt as if my life was at a pause. Now everything seems to be moving again. **(Joseph Young)**

I was excited about our field trip. I didn't know what to expect.

The most memorable moment was when I received my ID. It is a dream become reality for me. I really enjoyed that time. "Picture time" was really fun. This was the first time I took a picture with a huge group of people—people from different cultures.

I have been at Union South plenty of times due to my job, but it was my first time in the Chazen Museum in the 16 years I have been living in Madison. It was a very different experience,

The museum was a memorable event for me. This was the first time I have been to an art museum in this country. The paintings were amazing. I could not stop looking at them. The

statues were also beautiful. I was impressed by the good work people made during that time. Everything was a wonderful experience. I appreciated the opportunity that you gave me. Thank you! (**Guadalupe Tinajero**)

Our class trip to the Union South was incredible. The downtown vibe, all the people, the energy, and all the students studying really got me excited for what is to come for me. It really made me a little jealous that I missed out on the university life.

The field trip to the Chazen Museum was awesome! I was a little hesitant about the trip because usually a museum doesn't get me excited, but it turned out to be the most amazing experience I've had in a long time. I found myself bragging about it to my co-workers and advising them all to go for themselves. Thank you for sharing this opportunity with us because otherwise I never would have gone. Now I can't wait to take my children. (**Ashley Wills**)



Talk about expanding and learning! I really enjoyed the entire experience. I had such a profound feeling of pride as we went to get our UW identification cards! I have spent a lifetime



just treading water, doing what had to be done, day to day, but now I can look toward the future with hope and enthusiasm.

I am very much in love with Art. I was astounded by the variety of art styles and the extensive collection available for viewing at the Chazen Museum of Art. My own complaint: I could

not spend more time there. I plan to return very soon! (**Raven Fabal**)

There was a beautiful piece with such delicate, detailed strokes of paint brushes. Fruits in a basket were neatly placed on a table. Honestly, it was a rather boring painting at first glance—beautiful, but boring. It wasn't until Gene Phillips had imparted meaning behind the painting that I'd started to really appreciate it. The apricots and figs in the basket are expensive with a shell wine cup. Only those who can afford it can eat like that. (**Mai Neng Thao**)





The memorable thing is when I saw the fox and the rabbit. It seemed like the fox was about to eat the rabbit, and the rabbit looked very scared because the fox's mouth was open. That was memorable to me.
(Jalisa Galvin)



I love art, and it always amazes me how the form of art and its mentality depends on the time period. In early centuries it was sculptures and paintings of things and people (images). Then images are of dreams and imagination but still have meaning. Today art is wild, horrifying, and disturbing, showing more free will.
(Brandice Hatcher)

The event was one of the most unforgettable moments in my life. Not only was I able to have a fun educational trip with my classmates, but I also got a sustainable thing, which is my ID. That was the first time I ever saw my name posted with my actual picture.
(Luna Santos)

I really do not know a lot about museums, so it was a great experience to have a guide with us telling us about how museums work. It is fascinating to know where the art came from and how it is decided where the art will be placed, according to time and significance. Many times I do not feel comfortable being in a place where it feels like only white people belong. I feel like this is true for most places downtown.
(Karina Herrejon)



I missed the trip with class, but my meeting with Kevin went great. My meeting went so great that we went to get my student ID. Then I walked to work from Union South all the way down University Avenue.
(Steven Jones)