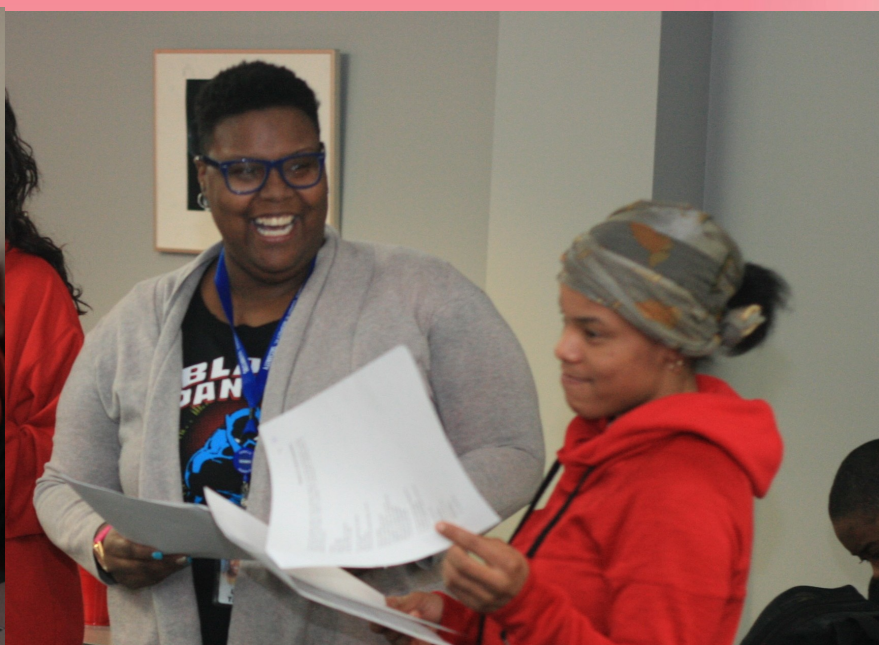


YEAR 15, ISSUE 7

FEBRUARY 28, 2018

# ODYSSEY ORACLE

## ODYSSEY CLASSMATES



### In this Oracle . . .

I Love .....	3
Perceiving Prejudice.....	12
Responding to Martin Luther King.....	19
Feeling Proud .....	28
Seven-Word Poems.....	30
Reflections.....	31



Emily Auerbach, Project Director; Oracle Editor  
Kevin Mullen, Assistant Director; Oracle Editor  
Emily Azad, Odyssey Coordinator  
Beth McMahon, Oracle Designer

emily.auerbach@wisc.edu  
kevin.mullen@wisc.edu  
emily.azad@wisc.edu

608-262-3733 or 608-712-6321  
608-572-6730  
608-262-3885

[www.odyssey.wisc.edu](http://www.odyssey.wisc.edu)





# I LOVE ...



## **I love being an aunt.**

Seeing my nieces and nephews grow and learn new things inspires me and pushes me to keep striving. Even during my darkest times in life, they are my light.

Every time I see my nieces and nephews, they are always so happy and full of energy. I'll forever remember the days when they were born. I'll always remember when my oldest niece wrapped her tiny arms around me and gave me a hug and kiss and fell right asleep in my arms. It's the little things in life that will stay with us forever.

**(Maya Rasheed-Bracey)**



**I love my family.** I love how we laugh hard and smile even when my day is bad. My family encourages me to keep going on good days and bad days. I love my family even when they upset me to the point I want to run. Nothing will change my

determination to succeed. The feeling is like seeing pink glitter everywhere at my favorite spot in the fall under a pink rosy tree. I will push so hard to prove myself through my actions, never giving up no matter the weather, situation, or place. I will prove my life to be the example for my family. I feel pink and fuzzy, like a pink teddy bear from a pink Victoria's Secret store, with giggles. I love my family more than the pink sunset in summer that sets before the pink moon!

**(Ta'Tiana Clacks)**



**I love the smell of coffee.** When I walk into the grocery aisle and smell coffee, it reminds me of waking up on a Saturday morning listening to the hot water drip into the little glass coffee pot sitting on the kitchen counter. It fills my soul with warmth on these dark, cold winter days where time slithers by slowly, especially if you're bored. The coffee smell awakens my sleepy spirit. When I grind the beans into a fine, dark-brown powder, my heart skips a little beat in anticipation of the

warm liquid that will drain into my belly from my mouth and give me a little skip in my step. I love the smell of coffee. The thick, white, sweet cream will finish the cup, and you're finally ready to drink it. I love the smell of coffee in the mornings.

**(Tyjeana Galloway)**







**I love my mom.** I love the warm, cushiony feeling of my mother's hug, the strong mousse perfume smell from her hair. I

love the big bright perfect teeth in the smile she gives me, so honest and welcoming. I love the secure feeling I only get with her, the only person I can always trust. I love the way she shows me that she cares for me by always asking me if I am okay. I love coming home after a long, stressful day simply because she's there. I love that she loves me. I love my mom.

**(Carla G. Herrejon Tinajero)**



Feeling rested improves my overall mood and prevents many bad attitudes. **(Hailey Sjuggerud)**



**I love Ameer Laquan Gibson with everything in me.** Ever since you came into this world, Ameer, my life has changed.

Everything about you is perfect. The smile on your face brightens my day up. Each day is a new and fun experience. You teach me motivation and to never give up. Whoever knew you could love someone more than yourself? You're the best person I could ever have created. **(Alexis Law)**



**I love my family.** I love the way we help each other in hard times. My brothers, my mother, my daughter, and my love companion are the most important persons in my life. I love the way we gather together during special times

and the feeling of security I feel when I'm with them. My family is very supportive, caring, and noble. I get chills just thinking about being without them or not having them cross my path. I love all my family members because they make me very happy. Having dinner, lunch, or breakfast with them makes any time very special. I thank God for giving me such a wonderful family. **(Guadalupe Hernandez Nuñez)**



**I love getting a good night's sleep.** Not only does it help me focus and look better to the world, but it also keeps me from having puffy resting bitch face and lots of side eye.







My Azaekus just so happens to be a Cheese Head. He is now three and will turn four in April. If you have some cheese in your bag and didn't know about it, he will find it and surprise you. My family and I and anyone who has witnessed one of Azaekus's "cheese acts" will love and adore the love he has for cheese. One of the most recent cheese acts he did was when we had a bag of premium cheese platter. Thank goodness it was still in a bag. Azaekus not only snatched a handful of cheese but also snatched the bag of that cheese platter, running away with it in excitement. We, of course, caught him in the act because the platter was almost half his size!



**I love and adore my three little children.** I am very lucky to have had my moments of "LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT!" I never thought I would encounter this feeling, but I did after each of my labors. When people ask me how I did it with no painkillers, I

reply each time with the same answer: "Labor is just so beautiful and all worth it. The pain was breath-taking but it's only for a moment and the prize is love at first sight all over again."

No one, not even her partner, will ever understand the love any mother has for her own children. There are moments when kids will be kids and will cause trouble and throw tantrums, but it doesn't outweigh the sweet, innocent moments from them, especially the honest, darnedest things they say. "Here, sit here. Now you're ugly. Let me put

make-up on you," Chalyse said at age three, pretending she's doing a make-up tutorial while putting make-up on her Auntie Bee. "See, now you look beautiful!" Chalyse is my first baby and is now five years old. She's learning how to imagine things as an alternative. "Mommy, I can't ride the bus in the morning, yes, but I can imagine I'm riding the bus!"



Kinnaius, Kinnaius, is our little, mischievous sweet angel and just turned two in December. The moment he knows he's done wrong, he gives the most adorable, sweet, and warm smile back at you. We've learned to say no to that tool he's been using. He always comes up and gives you random wet kisses. He's also a leg hugger, too. He always does it at the most inconvenient times, like when you're cooking in the kitchen!

If it wasn't due to time, I would have more children and do it all over, again and again. Let me remind you again that labor is beautiful. The pain during labor is breath-taking, but it is all worth it. I wish I had more time and could keep these short years of them being this small and cute forever. They still adore and cling to me now, but I'll adore and love them forever. My babies were my first loves at first sight. **(Bao Thao)**



### **I love my son**

**Julian.** Julian is the best gift I ever received. I love everything about him: his smile, his laugh, his kind baby spirit. He makes me feel like there's a reason I'm here and I'm worth something. I love being his mom. **(Keziah Bester)**



ways. One example of a hairstyle you can have with natural hair is you can wear a wash and go. All you do is wash your hair, put your favorite conditioner in your hair, twirl small strands of hair around your finger, and then either air dry your hair or sit under the blow dryer. Another way you can style your natural hair is by putting your hair in a mushroom. This is my favorite style because it's a nice and easy hairstyle, especially if you don't have time to do your hair in the mornings. In the winter, it's always a good idea to have your hair in a protective hairstyle because winter hair tends to be dryer and get damaged. A few protective styles I use are braids and twists. If you are going natural, it's best to keep heat out of your hair. It will make your hair healthier. **(Arioun Jones)**

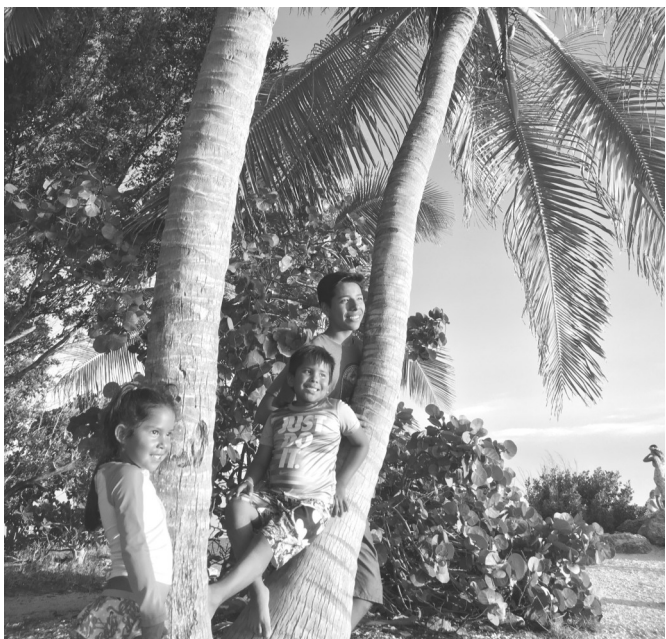


**I love having my own quiet personal time.** My own space would consist of nice hot peach tea with a teaspoon of organic honey, served in my cup that looks like a camera lens. Although I said quiet, I would have some neo-Soul music playing in the background, preferably Eryka Badu or Lauryn Hill. Incense would be burning and I would be at one with my thoughts. I love having peace of mind because it helps me release my inner creativity and all the stress I have built up. My quiet time is like a high to someone else—the universe is not there, and I'm just all alone. This is when I'm most happy. **(Sch'Royce Brown)**

**I love my natural hair.** With natural hair, you can change your hairstyle in many different







**I love my children.** I love when they try new things or come with new ideas, or when they have their own opinion about different topics. I love when they fight for what they believe is right.

I love to see when they play together. I love their capacity of imagination. I think I am just in love with them, and I feel very lucky to have them.

**(Victor Rojas)**



**I love the stars.** The history behind them is almost mythical. They are hard to understand but easy to accept. I love the way stars shine. When I look up into the sky, it's almost as if I

can really see and feel their energy. I swear some wink at me, as if to say 'we are watching you.' I love the multitude of them, millions and billions and trillions of stars. I can pick one and make it mine. I feel like the stars have wisdom. I feel like they can see the good and bad. I at times

feel that the stars are my angels. I feel that each star may represent something or someone. Maybe one is Barb, Nick, Kirstin, Mom, or the child my ex didn't keep. Maybe they are my protectors. I love the stars because they make me feel welcome, in a way. I know that I'm made up of stars so I am a piece of them, connected in some chemical compound way. I love the stars for the peace they give me. When I'm upset, sad, or even happy, I can stare at the stars and feel nothing but comfort. I love the stars for their mysteriously beautiful confusion. I love the stars.

**(Nathaniel Robinson)**



**I love food!** There are so many kinds of food to love! I was a picky eater at one time and didn't want to try anything different, just eat the same things. As I have gotten older, I can appreciate great food. I love

the way food smells, and I love the feeling it gives me. I love how some if not most foods have an extra nutritional value. I love the taste of food, crunchy or soft. Some textures don't make me feel as good about the food, but if I know it tastes good then I will fight through it. I love food that comes from personal recipes families have mastered and given its own twist! I love food!

**(Tandalaya Taylor)**





**I love my children.** I'm the mom and the dad because there's something inside of me that just has always wanted to take very good care of them. I always want the best for them. I always protected and advocated for them to the best of my ability. I've always strained to give them the best of myself as a dad, friend, and role model, especially when it was hard.

I see myself in them and want to nurture them but also communicate with occasional "tough love" because of the emphasis on focus, discipline, and consistency as vital components for personal, professional, and emotional success. I've been in everyone's class to make sure they were doing OK.

Since they were young, I'd cook, bake, help with homework, and pass out on the floor, and they would put a blanket on me. It still happens.  
(Bruce Moore)



**I love my bed.** Why? I love my bed because it never cheats on me. Instead of a boyfriend, I've got six lovely pillows and a comforter waiting for me when I get home. My bed never argues with me. I just love my bed. I wish I could be

in my bed all day, every day. My bed is my best friend. When I'm having a bad day, my bed knows how to cheer me up. You can never go wrong with your bed unless it's a bad one. I love you, bed.  
(Lisa Simmons)



**I now can safely say that I truly love myself.** There was a time in my life when I didn't love myself. I didn't love the way I walked, talked, or looked. I was so depressed; I found out that it was depression shortly after I escaped the jungles of Chicago to embark on a new life in Madison, Wisconsin.

When I moved to Madison, I strangely found there was time to reflect, mostly about all the people I hurt. I started to think about all the people that died: my mother, my father, and my friends. These negative thoughts became a dark cloud that followed me everywhere. Things became so bad, I didn't want to go anywhere or talk to anyone. I isolated myself from my new world; I felt my mental health was decaying, so I went to my doctor. Within ten minutes he wrote a prescription for numerous medications, and they seem to have made things worse, intensifying my depression. I wanted to end my life. I never imagined my life this way.

Someone I knew recommended I see a therapist. I thought a therapist was only for the weak, or for people who are psychotic. I dismissed the idea because I didn't fit any of those categories. It seemed like I was doing a prison sentence inside of myself, and I didn't see a future. So I mustered up the courage to go see a therapist. I felt like I was facing death row. When I talked to the therapist, she opened up old wounds, but with every session, I began to heal. So with my experience with depression I learned a lot about myself. I LEARNED TO LOVE! (Derrick Allen)







**I love the comforting, warm, and beautiful features of autumn.**

It starts off with the crisping of the air after a long, hot summer. The days begin to get cooler, and the nights get colder. Everyone starts pulling out big comfy sweaters,

warm jackets, and fashionable boots. The change of the season brings the perfect weather for camping, fall picnics, hay rides, and visiting pumpkin patches around Halloween. It's also a great time to start up bonfires and backyard fire pits or (if you prefer to stay indoors) relax by a fireplace. While enjoying your time inside, it's nice to fill the house with the delicious scents of cinnamon, sugar, and other spices.

The part I adore most about autumn would have to be the leaves. I almost love seeing them as much as I love seeing flowers in the spring. It's very comforting to pass by the different brightly-colored leaves and watch as they gently fall to the ground. I'd have to say of all the shades I have encountered, I believe the radiant red ones are the most eye catching. As a child I remember the excitement I felt when it was time to rake the leaves. We would gather them into a huge mountain, then run and jump headfirst into the top of the pile. Then we pretended to swim through the massive amount of leaves until reaching the bottom.

Even at this age, when I walk down the street and hear the dry leaves crackling under my feet, it brings me back to some of those happy, care-

free memories. Thinking about everything I have mentioned in this paper still warms my heart and brings a smile to my face. Those are some of the many reasons I love autumn. **(Angela Carpino)**



**I love the sound of silence at three in the morning,**

when even the birds have fallen asleep and my brain has clocked out for the day. Since silence doesn't have a sound, let me explain this paradox more. I've never realized how

consumed my life is with noise--from phones ringing off the hook and the friendly customer service voices I hear during my work day to the horns beeping and the signal lights ticking on my way home. Home sweet home has nothing sweet about it with two kids jumping up and down screaming that they're hungry. So I begin to prepare dinner, and the chicken frying never seemed so loud. I finish this task quickly because my craving for silence has taken over.

"Eat, bathe and bed" is what I am repeating in my brain. Once that is accomplished, you would think lo and behold I finally will have what I've been looking forward to all day. No! Now my neighbors' dogs are barking at the moon. So I wait until three AM. At three in the morning, the kids are deep in their dreams. The dogs are quiet. The birds aren't chirping. The cars aren't passing. My brain is too exhausted to think, and I hear silence.

**(Charnice Anderson)**





### I love love

I love rainy days counting under my breath under a train bridge, to the sound of passing sirens, I love . .

.love, like raindrops murmured in applause dying against the steel of the buses straight-pipes housed hope like every beat of my heart

On the back of every city bus in the world

love is a ride to feed a toothless man, a

half-eaten sandwich or kind word

His love was dressed in the silence

of a knowingly oppressive nation, I mean his eyes were the eyes of the world, to listen is

more love than I can handle, viewing the humanity

His cufflinks, tattered like lost cities of freedom,

I had never dreamed of how common this love was.

As we wheeled, words spun and ricocheted against God's light, splintered on our ride.

I mean this ride is the capacity to have feeling in my heart at all. (**Adrian Molitor**)



**I love taking my dogs to the pet store** and having them sniff at their treats and toys. I'm in love with my dogs because they're my beloved children. Experiencing them socializing with other puppies and their owners gives me a huge

satisfaction because I know they're just having the time of their lives. Visiting the pet store is like the mall for them, but a free mall because they know when to have me pick up the toys and treats that are going along with them.

I love my dogs more and more every day, and I will spoil them for as long as they live. I encourage everyone and anyone to have a dog or at least a pet. I don't consider taking care of them as work but as putting in extra love. If you take care of something or someone that you dearly love with all your heart and they're dependent on you, you look at them as family and not work or duties. I would have to say I'm the privileged one to have Baby Buck and Hunter in my life.

For as long as I can remember, I have always wanted a dog, cat, turtle, or even a fish. Now I have two dogs

a.k.a. my two babies and I want another

pair of dogs to add to my family. I feel such a close connection with animals in general because they, I believe, are capable of love. When you're growing up as a child, like myself, with no one to love or know what it's like to be loved, you feel a sense of abandonment, emptiness, resentment, and, in some cases, betrayal. If my mother and father had nurtured me and given me love, I don't think I'd have such a great respect not only for dogs but for all animals. Just because these creatures are animals, it doesn't mean they're not intelligent. Their sense of when something is "wrong" or "something doesn't feel quite right" is just like our instincts and intuitions. . . .

If it weren't for my dogs, I would still consider myself worthless and look at life as a long sentence, even though I've never been to jail. A dog can really fill your heart with only the purest love in the world and can make you feel like a million bucks sometimes.

This is why I love taking my Baby Buck and Hunter to the pet store and having them sniff out their treats and toys. (**Selena Muñoz**)







**I love my kitchen** because I can cook and feed my family. I love my kitchen because we can eat together and talk as a family. I love my kitchen because I can make everyone happy with the meals that they love ❤️👩🍳

**(Sayury Peralta Vivanco)**



**I love being barefoot and pregnant.** I love it because it is humbling that I was blessed with the opportunity to carry life. As a woman, I can't create life. I can only carry it. I can only be the vessel that brings it into fruition. So to be barefoot and pregnant, I get to experience the amazing wonder of having life grow inside of me while walking upon one of God's greatest creations.

Not every woman gets to experience that. I'm grateful that God thought so highly of me that he not only gave me the ability to carry his gift but also the responsibility to teach it. **(Tori Armour)**



**I love my newfound confidence.** You can tell from the sway in my hips and the way this lip-gloss shines on my lips that I've come to grips with my newfound confidence.

The girl that was here yesterday no longer has a place in my world, gone forever. This woman emerges, and in your face she does this ballerina twirl. Go on, girl, it's your world.

The woman you see today is who I am, and true to myself I shall remain. Ameshia Sade is here to stay.

There's no need to compete. Why? Because I am me and it just don't make sense with this newfound confidence.

I don't have time for nonsense, so please miss me with it.

Yes, I one day will be the perfect Queen patiently awaiting the arrival of my King

I love my newfound confidence **(Ameshia Turner)**



# PERCEIVING PREJUDICE

***prejudice: pre-judging others; having preconceived notions toward others based on their race, religion, gender, appearance, age, etc.***



In my freshman year of high school I took an embedded honors English class. We had to write a book report and I had been working hard all week to make sure mine was perfect. Once we got our reports back, I was proud to have

gotten an A. The white boy next to me, who I'd known since middle school, grabbed my paper. He looked at it and said, "How did you get an A? I only got a C."

I just looked at him and asked, "Why did you grab my paper without asking?" He replied, "You only got an A because you're black and the teacher doesn't expect much from you." I didn't know if I was mad, sad, or mostly confused, but I replied, "I got an A because I worked hard for it and I'm smart. My color has nothing to do with my intelligence." (**Keziah Bester**)

It was a sunny day in the fall and all the trees were changing their colors. It was a happy day for me because we were thinking that our hard work had paid off and luck was on our side; we were moving to our nice, quiet new neighborhood. It was special for me because I remember I worked for about two months cleaning and fixing the house before we could move in. I was happy because finally I was moving to a house. I wanted my kids to have the same experience I did growing up in a house where you can change things and have



more freedom and privacy. That day a white lady came up to me and asked if I would be living there. I kindly said, "Yes." She responded by saying she would be watching us and would call the police if she saw anything unusual. That day I felt unfairly pre-judged. (**Victor Rojas**)

My friend and I were at Wal-Mart in the self-checkout line ringing up our items. Once the cart was empty, we were ready to pay and leave. Upon receiving the receipt, we walked towards the door to leave when the manager asked to



check the receipt. We let her check to make sure everything had been rung up correctly. After that, we stood by the elevator and talked and at least three Caucasian people walked out; not once did she stop any of them. I asked her why she didn't check anyone else's receipt, and she had some weird excuse that I didn't want to hear, so I politely thanked her for the explanation and walked off. (**Ameshia Turner**)

It was a sunny day in the fall and all the trees were changing their colors. It was a happy day for me because we were thinking that our hard work had paid off and luck was on our side; we were moving to our nice, quiet new neighborhood. It was special for me because I remember I worked for about two months cleaning and fixing the house before we could move in. I was happy because finally I was moving to a house. I wanted my kids to have the same experience I did growing up in a house where you can change things and have





I have encountered prejudice several times with my family. One time I went to the Dollar Store with my brother to get something that they didn't end up having. This Caucasian lady came up to us and asked if we spoke English because

she had just called the cops. I answered with, "Why? We didn't do anything!" She said she saw me and my brother taking too long in one aisle and stated it looked like we had placed something in our pockets. My brother was 14 years old and I was 15. Twenty minutes later, the cops showed up, and my mom came and talked to the lady. She asked why she accused us of stealing when our pockets were completely empty. I will never forget this unfortunate experience. **(Selena Muñoz)**



It was early in the morning and I was sitting in science class in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. The day was going well until this boy disturbed the class by telling a few of his friends about a new car his mom had just purchased, which was a big black

Navigator truck. He was really excited and told us all that he was going to see if his mom could give a few of us a ride home so that we could see how it rides on the highway. The teacher interrupted by asking us to keep the noise down, and the boy replied, "Yeah, let me just finish my story about my mom's new Navigator truck." She laughed in disbelief and said, "Honey, please, your mom lives on Allied Drive. She can't afford anything that new or expensive, so please sit down and hush." The whole class dropped their jaws and had big wide eyes. He reacted in a very angry way and had to be escorted out of the class. She wasn't suspended and didn't have to apologize.

**(Sch'Royce Brown)**



The latest form of prejudice I witnessed was at my job. A former coworker of mine thought he was above the people who came here from foreign countries. Before realizing this, I would talk to him and crack jokes throughout the

day, thinking he was just a grumpy old man who was upset from losing his fiancée and just needed a laugh. It seemed like it was helping him so that he didn't seem so angry all of the time.

Unfortunately, this didn't last too long. I think he started getting comfortable with me and would make jokes about the Nepali people that worked with us, saying they listened to snake music, that he was tired of hearing them speak in their language, and that it felt like he was working in an air-conditioned sweatshop. I would tell him that he shouldn't say those kinds of things and that it sounded racist. He would always tell me that he wasn't racist and that he hated everyone the same.

One day I was at my locker and noticed he bugged a line of Nepali women that were punching out. He leaned in, pretending to talk to me, and started putting in his number. Before he could finish, I stopped him and asked what he was doing. He looked back at the women and said, "They can wait." I told him, "No, you can wait in the back of the line just like everyone else." He looked at me as if he wanted to do something, but instead he stomped and grunted a few things under his

breath as he walked off without punching out. The women in the line laughed and said it was about time someone said something to him. I never spoke to him again, and he ended up quitting his job shortly after that. Nobody misses him.

**(Angela Carpino)**







In 2006, there was a fight that happened right outside of the school. Everyone in that fight was issued a ticket, including a boy who just so happened to be on the sidewalk and saw the fight. The school staff . . .

said the boy who was the bystander had the same to do with the fight whether he was just looking on or was part of the actual fight. The truth behind why they had issued him a ticket was because he was of the same color as all the other boys who were in the fight. They didn't drop the ticket until one staff member that disagreed decided to demonstrate the situation using the staff members themselves. He said, "Say Ms. H and I were arguing and I punched her in the face. Because Officer P was next to us when this all happened, does it make sense to issue all three of us a ticket?" (**Bao Thao**)



I was 16 years old, and my wrestling team went to a McDonald's for lunch during our tournament. Most of the guys on my wrestling team were black, some were Hispanic, and a

few were white. After we got our orders and sat down, the manager walked up to us and told us we had 15 minutes to eat our food and leave. We looked around at the other wrestling teams and noticed all of them were white. The manager didn't ask any of the white wrestling teams to leave in 15 minutes. A lot of the guys on my wrestling team were pissed and didn't want to leave, but our coach told us we had to

leave, so we left. I was pissed, hurt, and disappointed. We won the tournament that weekend. (**Bruce Moore**)



Growing up a Jehovah's Witness (JW), you are taught that all religions are false except for the JW's. Imagine being raised a church-going family filled with holiday traditions and hopes of heaven

if you live right, all dashed when your mom and dad up and one day decide the only way we are going to be saved is by converting to JW's. It was hard at first learning to live without Gospel music and being told not to be an idol worshiper and have your Brown Starsky and Hutch thrown away after saving your allowance for two weeks to purchase it. Well, by the time I turned 12 years old, I'd started feeling superior to anyone that wasn't a JW. I didn't realize I'd been brainwashed to be prejudiced and to have preconceived preferences of deliverance. It took a while to realized that I'd become something or someone that I'd never approve of, a person that thought they were better than others. (**Ruthie Allen**)





A few years ago I was working for a staffing agency where we would go to different clients' homes and do CNA care. The agency called me and told me that I was approved to go to this lady's house, but that she preferred not to have any African Americans or people of color care for her. She said that she might be okay with me, though, because I wasn't as dark. That conversation made me really uncomfortable, but when I went to the lady's home, she wasn't mean to me and she didn't kick me out. I wasn't sure if it was because I had lighter skin or because she didn't mind I was black. **(Barbara Rodgers)**



Last summer I took my kids to the Northside Farmers Market. They sell the usual vegetables and have some food carts along with tents with goods for sale. My children, up until recently, were somewhat spoiled and were used to me buying them at least some small thing if I could make the effort to take them somewhere. Basically, I knew beforehand to bring some spending money. So, my son went into the tent selling rubber duckies and soap and brought a rubber ducky to just outside the front door of the tent to ask me, his mother, to buy it. The owner of said pop-up shop came rushing out and grabbed his arm and twisted the duck out of his hand really hard. She didn't see me until after this when she looked around like, "Did someone see me do this to a kid?" She caught my stare and looked ashamed and hustled away. I, in turn, told my friend I had to leave or I was going to end up going to jail. I made my mother and my kids leave. I cannot help but think

the woman doing it thought it was okay to put her hands on my six-year-old son because he is black. I saw the woman again at the Willy Street Fair and she still looked shameful and avoided eye contact even when I stood in front of her little tent telling my son, "Do not go anywhere near her." **(Hailey Sjuggerud)**



I went to a gas station, and the employees followed me around because they thought I was going to steal something since I'm black. They followed me from aisle to aisle. When I looked at them, they pretended like they were

fixing something in the store, when really they were going behind me to make sure I wasn't going to steal anything. One time, a white person walked in and the employees kept following me and didn't watch the other person in the store at all. **(Arioun Jones)**





A time that I encountered prejudice was when I was 20 years old. I had just gotten my first job doing in-home care after working in a nursing home for three years prior. The family was from the Middle East and just needed me to care for

their mother when they were at work. Being that I was so young and quiet, I guess they assumed that I was not a hard worker or didn't have enough knowledge to do my job. They would send a family friend over to monitor me until they saw how well I took care of their mother. They started to compliment me and my work, and I really gained a good relationship with the client and family, but it took time and I definitely felt judged in the beginning. **(Maya Rasheed-Bracey)**



Well, it all started out to be an amazing day for me and a few of my friends. We saved up for tickets to the White Sox game located on the south side of Chicago. The year was 1993, and I was just 13 years old. We were so excited for this day

to come; we had been saving up for a least a month to buy the tickets, and now the day had arrived. We caught the number four bus on Cottage Grove and took it to 35<sup>th</sup> Street, where we transferred over to the 35<sup>th</sup> Street bus, which took us to the Dan Ryan Expressway. We walked over from the train station to the stadium and proceeded to the game. All was well at this point, and it was an exciting game. The team spirit was most definitely there, and the Sox had won the game in extra innings.

Now that the game was over, it was time to go home. Boy, were we in for the long haul. Because of our excitement, we made an almost fatal mistake of walking to Bridgeport, the all-white community behind the stadium. At first, everything seemed fine until we got under the ride lot. We were soon greeted by a group of boys not much older than us calling us names like, "Poach monkey, niggers,

darks" and so on. At this point, we were scared s\*\*\*less and started to run. When we saw a police car we flagged it down; what a bad move that was. We were patted down and accused of breaking and entering, but they didn't arrest us. They took us, put us in their car, and drove us to 26th and California to a Mexican neighborhood where we believed we would be hurt or killed. At the time that this happened, there was a gang war going on between blacks and Mexicans over turf. However, to our disbelief, we weren't f\*\*\*ed up but helped by the gangs. They said we got a pass because the police were the real enemy and to get moving.

**(James Davis)**



It was about 6:00 PM and I was doing laundry when I decided to go across the street to buy myself some laundry soap. As I entered the store with a can of soda in my hand, I noticed the guy at the cashier staring at me. I thought it was normal, like he just wanted to see

who had entered the store, so I continued searching around to see if there was a snack that I wanted to buy. I noticed that he was still staring at me and following me with his eyes wherever I went. This guy seemed mad at this point, so I started to feel very uncomfortable. I approached the counter to pay for my stuff, and before I even got a chance to place the laundry soap on the counter, he said, "You can't drink soda without paying for it first." I instantly replied, "Excuse me!" I was very mad at this point. He responded with, "You have to pay for that." I told him that I was sorry but that the can of soda wasn't from his store, it was from a vending machine at the laundromat across the street and that he could check his cameras if he wanted. I was very mad, but I still felt he wasn't going to believe me. I left the store without anything because he was filled with prejudice the moment I entered the store. He had a whole story and conclusion in his head without asking me for the truth. **(Guadalupe Hernandez Nuñez)**





Braids are a part of African American culture, and some African Americans believe that no other culture should wear them. I saw on Facebook a white girl that had just gotten her hair

done in braids for the first time in her life. She thought it was so beautiful and different, but on the other hand, people thought she was trying to be black and bashing her. I felt embarrassed that black people were bashing her over a hairstyle because anyone is entitled to wear anything they want. Why should we be mad she wanted to experience something new and different? The white girl was sobbing. I personally wrote her and told her that I was glad she stepped out of her comfort zone and that it was amazing. Any hairstyle is for any color and any culture. **(Alexis Law)**



Back in high school, there was this girl laughing at the slavery video we were watching in social studies. I asked her what she thought was so funny, and she said that she wasn't laughing at the video and was

just looking at her phone. However, I wasn't the only one feeling this way; the teacher did, too. Let's just say things got ugly and I got the last word. She went crying to the teacher, who told her that she needed to apologize to me and explain what she was laughing at. Ever since then, I just get up and leave because I feel like people want a reaction from me and to make me look like the bad guy.

**(Lisa Simmons)**

Sometime around 12 years old, I had been in a relationship for five years with my daughter's father. His mother is from Poland and his father Italian descent. They were born in a



time of segregation, especially in New York where my daughter's grandfather grew up. . . . One day, while I was sitting at home, the phone rang. The number that came up was a casino in Indiana, a

number I didn't recognize. I answered the phone and it was a man with an accent that I couldn't place exactly. He asked for me and told me to listen carefully and that if I didn't, someone in my family very close to me would end up hurt. They said they knew that I was pregnant and that I was black and added that they couldn't have a black in their family with their last name. . . . Needless to say, when I had my daughter I was hesitant to tell them. I waited until I was 32 weeks along and there was nothing they could say or do. I didn't even want to tell them. Now, they aren't the worst grandparents in the world, but they are very far from the loving grandparents that she deserves. After nine years, they have come farther than I thought they would and I had to forgive them. It is always in the back of my mind, though. **(Tyjeana Galloway)**



My most formative experience with prejudice was in my various groups of friends growing up. I was usually the only white person in my different groups. When I was fifteen, I was charged with my first crime, my friend as well. I always received

probation while my friend would get sent away. By the time I was sixteen, I was in an alternative incarceration program, and all my friends were serving years in Wales or Lincoln Hills. I knew those judges and probation officers were racist.

As an adult with a criminal record and facial tattoos, I find people are afraid of me. People at Madison College most certainly treat me like I might rob their backpack or whatever. Some days I feel like roughing those people up, but that's not how I live today. For me to find a job takes some serious work. I don't give a s\*\*\* most days; I love so many great people and I give back. I get in where I fit in. Sometimes when people treat me poorly, I imagine how poorly those folks treat minorities and people of color. I know I have more privilege than many others.

**(Adrian Molitor)**



A time that I experienced prejudice was on the job. It was my week to hold the on-call phone, which was the phone that was contacted if there was an emergency out in the field.

This night I had the son of one of our elder clients call. He said that our

staff did not show up to help his father with his nighttime routine, which consists of preparing dinner, cleaning the house, and helping him to bed. This gentleman had every right to be upset, as anyone would be. What he said next, though, I will never forget. His words still burn my ears and sting my soul. He went on to say it was not his job to help his father, and added, "I am not his maid. I am not his nigger." This was the first time in my career that I was put in a position where I had to contemplate if my job was worth keeping.

**(Charnice Anderson-Morris)**



When I was in my freshman year of high school, there was a white boy who was riding the bus with my fellow classmates and me. Everyone was yelling and talking loudly, and he said, "I wish you black bitches would shut up." I asked him what he said.

He told me. I heard what he said, and what was I going to do about it? He reached out and slapped me because I was screaming in his face. Then I started punching him in the face and dragged him off the bus.

The police were called, and I told my story. I told the police that he hit me first and I was defending myself. That was when I learned there were no self-defense laws. I felt prejudice from the white officers because they said I was the aggressor just because he was a white male. I made it my business to never get in trouble again unless I knew it was worth it.

**(Tandalaya Taylor)**



Blue and red lights flashed in my rearview mirror. "F\*\*\*," I think to myself as I look at the passenger side. I said, "Don't say any dumb s\*\*\*."

Boom, boom, boom! Startled, I look back out of the driver's side window. I roll it down and there is a bright light

flashing in my eyes. The officer impatiently asked, "You know why I stopped you?" My only response was, "No, sir." Young and afraid, my passenger began shaking. The officer asked, "Why is he shaking? Got some s\*\*\* in here?" I replied, "No, why did you stop us?" The officer then told me to get out of the car. He threw me against my car, my ribs hurt from the collision. "What the f\*\*\*? You didn't have to do that," I said. The officer replied, "I know young dumb niggas ain't up to no good." The never-ending search for drugs, guns, or whatever else the officer could find all while I was in handcuffs felt like forever. Irritated to no end, I ended my night with a nice voice saying, "Sorry for the mix up. We thought you had the appearance of a suspect." My reply was, "All black people look alike, my fellow African brother." Irony. **(Ladaro Taylor)**

# RESPONDING TO MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

*Students responded to Dr. King's long, eloquent "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" by writing letters directly to him, as if he were able to hear voices from 50 years after his assassination. Here are excerpts.*

*Dear Dr. King:*

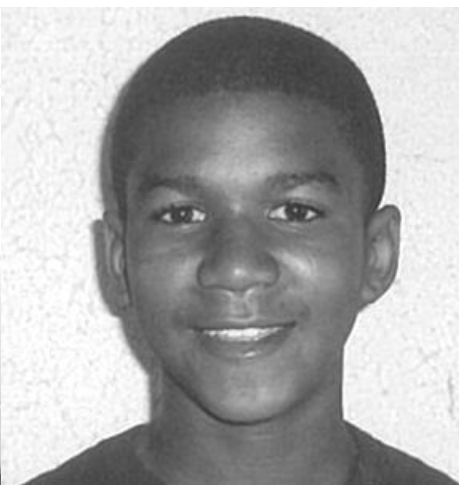
I am embarrassed to admit this is the first time I've read your letter. Each word you wrote had me captivated for the whole hour and a half it took me to finish. From beginning to end, each word you wrote left me feeling empowered and proud of who I am. You really understand us. It's unfortunate that one has to even write a letter defending something that we have no control over: the color of our skin. They claim our brownness is a weapon; they are threatened by pigmentation. Can you disarm flesh? Dr. King, I, too, look at my seven-year-old son and try to find the words to explain to him that just because he is darker he is in danger. He could be the next Trayvon Martin or Philando Castile because they won't look at him and see potential or the king I have raised him to be. They will only see a black man. They will fear him because he is black, with no explanation of why they are afraid. They will retaliate against his presence. Dr. King, I look at my three-year-old daughter and want her to be proud of who she is and who she will become. I am quickly saddened at the thought that she, too, might be turned down from a job because her

name is too black and her skin is even darker. When will it end? When will we reach those majestic mountains you speak of?

As you mentioned in your letter, the oppressed cannot stay oppressed forever, but as long as we are afraid to make some noise, we will be. Dr. King, they want us to make an appointment to meet at the table they are head of and discuss why the laws are unjust. Maybe we could meet if the table were round. I can't even turn on the news anymore without seeing an innocent young black man being gunned down by the police, just because he was "armed" with being black. That is dangerous. We need more gadflies. We are hurting. We've cried enough tears to fill the Mississippi River. If only a couple more people would turn around in the cave like Socrates did, they would understand that things don't have to be this way.

In closing, Dr. King, I would like to say thank you. Your letter was life changing. For Black History Month, I will read your letter to my son and daughter. Their small, maturing brains may not understand it as I have, but I will expose them to

your greatness. I will expose everyone I come in contact with to it for the rest of my days because being black should be celebrated every day. I wish I had your patience and tenacity to write more as you did from Birmingham Jail, but life is calling. Back to my reality I go: the reality you worked so hard to change.  
(Charnice Anderson-Morris)





When you speak of “the clouds of inferiority” forming in your child’s “mental sky,” I too have experienced that. You would think in 2018 the storm would have moved, but it has only gotten worse. The conversations have gone from inclusion to the possibility of imminent death. I too have seen the sun of inclusion set and make way for a sky filled with sparkles of inferiority, disdain, and fear. The hardest conversation I had to have was when racial slurs were spewed at my children. I had to watch their souls shatter through their chocolate eyes as I explained the storm of inequality.

You say “justice too long delayed is justice denied.” Justice for our brothers and sisters has been denied again and again. Our brothers and sisters are being gunned down in the streets like animals. They’re being gunned down without a second thought by the very people who vowed to protect us. Justice is like a tent that we don’t fit in. The system was created and enforced against us. Still today there is no proper way for us to defend ourselves or shed light on the injustices that have cloaked our people for hundreds of years.

I wish I could tell you that things were different, that the storm has subsided, but the reality is it’s still raging. We will continue to fight to see your dreams of equality realized. (**Tori Amour**)

. . . Even though it is over 50 years since you wrote that letter from jail, even though we have been given the right to do more in this day and age, we still struggle with racial injustices. It’s not in the same form as what you lived through; it’s hidden in our politics, our work force, our policing,

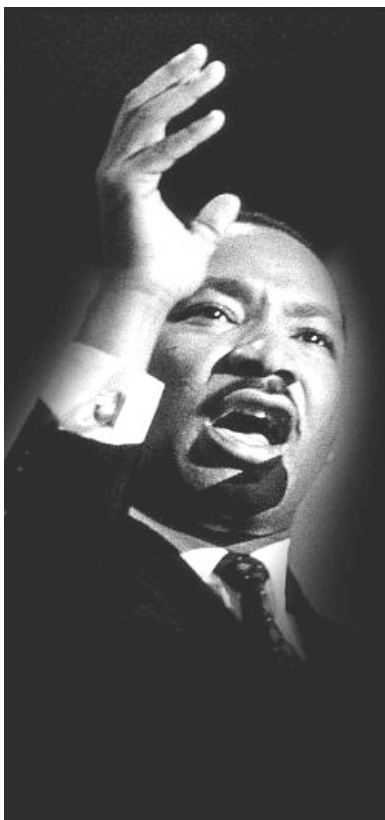
and our justice system. There is still poverty in our neighborhoods and injustice in housing and the economy. Even though our country preaches equality, it seems to be equality for some, not all.

We have a president who is outspoken in his racist views, with part of society too preoccupied to worry about this and another part not strong or powerful enough to make a difference. I have seen a more powerful monster that I think needs to be recognized as well. There is a war among us brothers. Our streets are blood-soaked with killings but at the hands of ourselves. I personally blame society as a whole for this. We need more organizations like SCLC, like MUM, like the Odyssey Project. We need more people like Rosa Parks. We need more Martin Luther Kings right now. We could use you, Doctor. We could use your courage, wisdom, and fearlessness. Thank you for your bravery. (**Nathaniel Robinson**)



"Letter from a Birmingham Jail" was a wonderful response to your fellow clergymen. I was particularly impressed by your use of Scripture to explain our struggle for freedom. When your fellow clergymen call you an outsider, you masterfully reply that "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." If this idea were put into practice by every human being, we would be living in a better world. I like that you educated us on what true justice is and that law and order exist for the purpose of establishing justice. . . . You had me see that an unjust law is what Hitler did in Germany. You also voiced your disappointment with the church. For me, as a child of Christ, this hit home. You said, "In the midst of a mighty struggle to rid our nation of racial and economic injustice, I have heard so many ministers say, 'Those are social issues with which the gospel has no real concern.'" Dr. King, those words are still being said today. I found a new respect for your work, Dr. King, and truly appreciate this letter. **(Derrick Allen)**

Reading your letter made me identify so much with what is going on in my life right now. I was brought to the U.S. as a baby, and ever since I can remember, my family has always been afraid of someone knowing our legal status and having to be deported. Not just my family but also friends and other families feel this way. We don't have the right to drive because we can't get a driver's license. We can't travel because we could get deported. We can't get the job we want because we don't have a social security number. We cannot go to a university because of the same thing [no financial aid]. I sometimes



feel like I am being segregated because of this. "Anyone who lives in the United States can never be considered an outsider anywhere in this country." I like how you said this. I feel like this is how everyone should feel.

**(Anonymous)**

. . . It's very brave and courageous of you to stand up for our people and be the backbone of the struggle while putting yourself in harm's way. You, as well as others like yourself, chose to sit behind bars and teach your fellow brothers and sisters how to fight peacefully for their rights, take the consequences with heads held high, and not back down. You showed them to never adjust to

segregation and lose their sense of "somebodiness." . . . The clergymen writing the letter . . . wrongly defamed your character by referring to you as an extremist, saying your nonviolent acts would only incite civil rights disturbances. Then to warmly commend the Birmingham police for keeping "order" and "preventing violence" was disgusting and disturbing, to say the least. Those eight prominent "liberal" clergymen who wanted you to leave integration up to the courts should be ashamed of themselves, as well as the Christian religious leaders who believed that integration was a social matter to be kept out of the church. . . . Like you said, Hitler legally murdered the Jewish people even though it was morally wrong, and the good Germans illegally helped hide people because it was morally right. Laws made are not always morally right. . . . I commend and thank you again for the service you have provided this country. **(Angela Carpino)**

... Your strength and courage to change the world amazes me. ... I can't imagine the amount of sleepless nights you and your family may have endured. You led countless marches and performed many powerful speeches. "Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly": this sentence stuck with me the most in your "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." ... Although you have caused a significant amount of change in the U.S., there is still so much that needs to be done for equality. Police brutality might just continue to get worse before it gets better. After having our first black president, I thought things would turn around for the better, but they didn't. It was almost like how being constantly told "wait" was like "a tranquilizing thalidomide." It's like seeing your favorite food, eating it, and then having it gone. There was a temporary satisfaction, only for things to go back to how they were before or worse. ...  
**(Maya Rasheed-Bracey)**

... I think you gave a good example when you said that it's very difficult to explain to a six-year-old daughter when she asks why she can't go to the public amusement park advertised on TV and "see tears welling up in her little eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored people." That touched me very much because I remember when my older son started to go to daycare where there were only white kids. They were saying that my kid was made of chocolate, and they didn't want to play with him because he was different from them. When my seven-year-old son started kindergarten and did not speak fluent English, the school started putting bad labels on him. He suffered in that school.

I agree with you when you say that "Anyone who lives in the U.S. can never be considered an outsider anywhere in this country," but a lot of people do not know history—or I think a better way to say it is they do not want to know about the history of

this country, the country of immigrants. It is very sad to see how many people in 2018 still believe in and support white supremacy. ... President Donald Trump said Mexicans are criminals ... and Muslim people are terrorists. ... A lot of people are afraid of us because they do not know us. They do not know that we are humans too and have rights the same as they do. ... **(Victor Rojas)**

... If you knew that Birmingham would bring you to the point of writing this letter and not actually getting justice, would you still have come? Do you feel like your fighting is in vain, or do you feel like your fight is still burning? Police brutality is at an all-time high. There were more times when the non-violent campaign got people hurt than actually got them justice. ... How do you feel the movements you created compare to the "Black Lives Matter" movement? ... Have you ever felt a white person had an ulterior motive to destroy or infiltrate what you stood for? ... *"Like a boil that can never be cured as long as it is covered up but must be opened with all its pus-flowing ugliness to the natural medicines of air and light, injustice must likewise be exposed . . . to the light of human conscience and the air of national opinion before it can be cured."* I'm familiar with how the boil was used as a metaphor, saying it couldn't heal properly without air and pus being removed. I also know that the boil has to heal from the inside out. Release the pus and pack it with gauze. People need to understand that it comes from the inside in order to make a difference on the outside.  
**(Tandalaya Taylor)**







retaliating?” Last semester in class we learned about Socrates. I see an allusion in your letter to Socrates and trying to create more gadflies. “We must see the need of having non-violent gadflies to create tension in society that will help men rise from the dark depths of prejudice.” I love the idea of trying to change the group mentality. If

I’ve read your letter and have been filled with sadness and sorrow. If only America really stood by what it preached: that they are the “motherland of freedom.” Then what you wrote—“society must protect the robbed and punish the robber”—would be a reality of real justice. . . . Today when people sit in court, people of color are punished with life when found guilty of robbing, but when people of color are robbed there is no justice or fair trial. Even at the end of the day what we really ask for is a peace of mind when the judge decides to say “court is adjourned.” Maybe if God had only created men with one less ability—the privilege of seeing—and they could only “see” from hearing, the idea of “people of color” wouldn’t exist. No one should have to grow up being scared because of the skin color they were born with. I am crying and I am hurt that still today this is America’s reality. We should be ashamed because what we preach isn’t what we’re practicing. **(Bao Thao)**

I loved the impact your letter had on me. I can only imagine what it’s done to others. . . . It amazed me when you showed leadership to set up workshops for the non-violence movement to prepare for the consequences of not standing up for yourself and your rights. “Are you willing to accept blows without

you can get one person to speak up and speak out against the group, then you can change society. . . . Segregation is an extreme form of bullying. Most don’t see it as such because they were raised that way; it’s just been passed down from tradition to tradition. It’s unacceptable, and we must put a stop to it. . . . It’s amazing that you stood up so strongly for what you believed in to try to change society. We need a non-violent movement against bullying in all forms for future kids and generations because bullying comes in all shapes and sizes. Thank you for your leadership. **(Barbara Rodgers)**

I am writing as a fellow supporter as well as a fan of your amazing journey to address racial injustice. . . . Dr. King, I highly respect your “sacrament” and your statement that “injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” I totally am in agreement with your four-step formula to plan safe, effective “protests” to ensure our rights. Why did you select to resist with non-violence? That’s very difficult, as the natural reaction is to defend yourself. . . . You write, “Too long has our beloved Southland been bogged down in a tragic attempt to live in monologue rather than dialogue.” . . . I admire your ambition to achieve the God-given right to freedom. **(Ta’Tiana Clacks)**

. . . Your letter was from 55 years ago. While some things have changed, some things have stayed the same. We as a people still deal with racism, discrimination against blacks and other minorities, and groups of people silently standing by. Big conglomerate ministries do little to be bothered with the social ills of today other than worry if they can still be tax exempt while taking in millions. As you mentioned, “If the church of today does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authentic ring, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the twentieth century.” Today, too, they do little to turn the tide of the masses in the face of the return of neo-Nazism, prejudice against Mexicans and the idea of building a wall between us, and America’s never ending treatment of black people as outcasts when they are in fact part and parcel of the U.S. . . . I appreciate you as a man of God and a moral and just human even though others have let you down. **(Hailey Sjuggerud)**

After rereading your heroic passage, I found myself living through time with you. I like the fact that you mentioned Socrates, St. Augustine, and St. Paul because it shows you’re full of fruitful, valuable education. Another point I really liked was that you mentioned how laws can be deceiving and can lead to broken promises, and you write that when someone is “affected directly” it affects “everyone

indirectly.” This is still true today. People still have dreams, especially first generation Americans like us who have a great responsibility on our shoulders for our immigrant families. Dreamers still deal with “unjust” laws that interfere with our capability of moving forward. Our president right now is the definition of a broken promise. **(Selena Muñoz)**

I recently read your “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” and loved it. I want to start with one question: Why do we need to be called “white” or “black”? I’m not the color black, and they’re not the color white. . . . I feel like this war will never be over because everybody can’t get along. . . . I learned that it doesn’t matter what race you are: you should stand up for what you believe in because if you don’t, you’ll never get the justice you’re after. You have to be a gadfly in order to wake people up. I wish we didn’t have to keep talking about this because it’s getting old. When you wrote, “Justice too long delayed is justice denied,” what really hit me is that it has taken Americans so long to finally get justice. Now that we have justice, it doesn’t really feel any different because unjust things still happen and nobody’s stopping it. Is the war really over? Thank you for committing your life to us. . . . **(Lisa Simmons)**



. . . I love the message and life's energy in "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," but I must admit that racism is still alive and thriving today. . . . "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" is a truly profound inventory of all the excuses that organized religion and white moderates made concerning the movement. I have in the past used this letter as a mirror, asking myself: am I living as the hypocritical white moderate claiming to be doing the good work, or am I living as a humble servant of the truth, using my own privilege to contribute to the lives of my friends and family in need? The answer is both, but . . . I am paying attention.

**(Adrian Molitor)**

I am a 27-year-old Latina woman living in the United States of America. I too am considered a minority in this country. . . . Thank you for your courage and your dedication to fight for freedom and equality. Thanks to you, I am sitting at my kitchen table writing this letter and not in a cold, lonely cell like you had. You would have been proud to have Barack Obama become the first president of color, and he was re-elected. I finally felt like we were all equal—well, at least that was what I thought. But as you can see now in 2018, things have changed. Ohhh, they have



changed so much! Now all of a sudden, racism has come back and some people think everyone with a different skin color is a criminal. I have been called a criminal, drug dealer, and rapist, all by our new President Donald Trump! It all seems very unbelievable. Some people think I don't belong here, which brings me back to your own words, "Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow provincial 'outside agitator' idea." . . .

Dr. King, you are so famous for your "I Have a Dream" speech, but your "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" has more truth than anything. I felt a great connection to your words. . . . I hope that one day people can respect each other and see past skin color, just like you did. I hope there are more people like you and fewer people like the one we have sitting in the White House. Dr. King, I also have a dream!

**(Guadalupe Hernandez Nuñez)**

Your words inspire me. After being arrested for peacefully protesting against racial injustice and segregation in Birmingham, Alabama, you still found a way to make your voice heard. I love the simile you used when

you said "like a boil that can never be cured as long as it's covered up but must be opened with all its pus-flowing ugliness." I feel like this quote connects to today's society because racism cannot be swept under the rug. It's something you need to talk about in order to make it better. When it's all out in the open, that's the first step to taking it forward. . . . This letter made me think and feel the pain people have felt for generations.

**(Keziah Bester)**

I know it had to be hard to love and care about people who didn't love you back. In the letter you wrote you could have called them out for who they are, but instead you didn't. You used a good introduction. It takes a strong person to care about people who don't see you as a human being. The quote in your letter "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere" is a powerful and true quote. If there is slavery in one place, then there is slavery everywhere. Everyone needs to be treated equally. (**Arioun Jones**)

. . . Your speeches about the right to vote, ending segregation, and equal pay speak to my heart, soul, and every fiber of my being. My family and I have experienced many negative situations in all of those areas in our lifetime.

I am a son, father, brother, uncle, and grandfather and not normally prone to tears, but as I read the letter you wrote from jail in Birmingham, I wept, fully understanding the magnitude of the reasons why you marched and knowing the inevitability of all of the participants going to jail. . . .

Like that of most African Americans, my heart shares the same feelings and heavy burdens of our ancestors related to the heinous crimes of slavery encouraged by laws to empower and foster prosperity economically, socially, and academically. . . . Not once did the clergymen of God consider the barbaric history of slavery or the Ku Klux Klan and their spiritual and emotional reign of terror in the black communities that is alive and thriving



and protected by some of the same laws that protected slave owners. Not all but enough police officers in power who swore to protect and enforce the law, as well as elected officials whose civic and moral responsibility is to create and enact moral and equal laws for all, have morally and ethically misled this country for far too long.

Unjust laws have been systemic and deeply rooted in the fabric of our society like the blankets mothers made for us as children. Stitch by stitch, patch by patch, to cover and comfort us, their spiritual and emotional blankets unfortunately kept most of us in darkness, in an attempt to smother us, causing untimely and premature deaths spiritually, while leaving many with mental, emotional, and social maladies. Those maladies in many ways inflicted deep, generational, and lasting harm, not just physical. It's like a wicked, wicked version of Plato's "Allegory of the Cave." . . . Some of their laws were . . . carried out on the backs, legs, hearts, and very souls of our ancestors. I have an overwhelming sense of anger, sorrow, and loss. I find myself fighting back tears that well up in my eyes and heart, so you must excuse me momentarily as I think of our

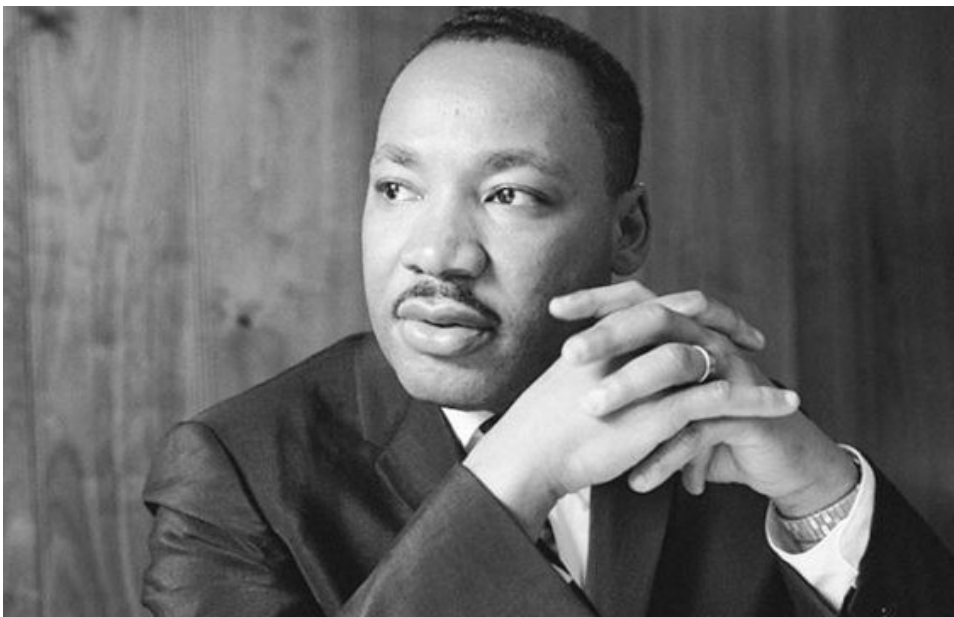
resilient, honorable, but still broken people, with a bend-but-don't-break mentality, which makes me so proud my heart soars.

There were no equal laws to protect our families from harm. This very day, I think about the lynchings, rapes, whippings, and castrations, not just of men but of families and communities like Rosewood, Florida, and Greenwood, Oklahoma, carried out with impunity and total disregard for our human lives, rights, or freedoms. The by-products of slavery continue to haunt us to this very day. But there are resounding rays of hope, for we are resilient and proud people, evidenced by your work, the work of others, and where we are as a people today. We have definitely made significant progress, but we have a long way to go. . . . Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta, Nydia Velazquez, and Celia Cruz have passionately championed for some of the same goals for the Hispanic population. We need to not forget Malcolm X, Fred Hampton, and others . . . We need to encourage teaching everyone how to become leaders and teachers. . . .

We need to harness the true meaning of after-

school programs for children for academic success to raise teachers, accountants, bankers, doctors, lawyers, politicians, businessmen and women, realtors, scientists, stockbrokers, and more. Call them "Beacon Houses" for all the right reasons, and create networks of them. In those "Beacon Houses," confidence, empowerment, hope, and determination thrive, like newly blooming seeds in a flowerbed with an abundance of sunlight. We need to teach math, English, science, history, consistency, and self-esteem to our children. . . .

We need to better utilize church board members and pastor associations to find positive ways to leverage community banks to support their respective communities. . . . We need to continue to rise up! We need to not only strive for our rights to vote, have better pay, receive quality education, and end segregation. Our children need to see teachers and administrators that look like us—black, brown, yellow, and white. We should not choose to wait to be given what we have already earned with our blood, sweat, tears, and lives, for it was already given to us in the Constitution!



We need as a collective to work together proactively to eradicate all forms of the disease of emotional, social, and economic enslavement, not only for ourselves but for our children and their children. . . .  
**(Bruce Moore)**



# FEELING PROUD



I am proud that I am going back to school and facing my fears of speaking to new people. During high school when I knew there was a presentation or even just the first day of school when I knew we would have to introduce ourselves,

I would skip class. I don't know why I have so much fear of public speaking. In this class, I feel braver, and I am proud because I haven't skipped a day, even though I know sometimes we have to read something we wrote or read a paragraph.

**(Carla Herrejon Tinajero)**



Being 20 years old with an infant is a new experience and the best experience ever. I'm proud I'm able to take care of him the way I do. My son makes me a better person and pushes me to be better. Waking up and seeing his smile is the best

feeling ever. I want to show my son a hard working woman so he can do the same. I want to send the message to him to never give up and keep trying. Even at night when my baby keeps me up, he motivates me. **(Alexis Law)**



I'm very proud that I was able to learn English by speaking and writing it. I feel this has been my greatest accomplishment in life so far because it has gotten me far in life. English has helped me achieve the life I have now because I was

able to overcome the language barrier. I believe without the knowledge of English, I would have stayed in the cave like the rest of the shadows in "The Allegory of the Cave." I would only know my restrictions and think that was life. This was until I found English, which is my light. I also believe English is not only my greatest accomplishment but also my greatest guidance thus far. . . . This has

been my ultimate fear, and overcoming it has given me great courage. Like a previous Odyssey alum has stated, which will always stay with me forever, "Success may feel difficult sometimes to reach, but it's not impossible either." I always remember this every time I encounter an obstacle and give my best to overcome it. **(Selena Muñoz)**



I want to brag about me beating cancer. I was extremely sick for many months. In November 2015 I started a cough, which I thought was a common cold. I went to the doctor every month for four

months with various diagnoses. I knew something was wrong. My last attempt to get better was a trip to the emergency room. I was in the ER for seven hours and heard the news that I had leukemia. I wasn't sure what that meant, but I called my mom and told her they think I have cancer. After hearing the news, I was admitted into the hospital. Three days later I would have my first dose of chemo that would last three days. I would lose my memory for two days because of something that was supposed to save my life. I was on the verge of dying; my liver was out, and my heartbeat was out of control. My mother had to come and sign papers for me if they couldn't revive me.

From that point on, I was admitted into the hospital to take chemo one time a month for three days for six months. This cancer I have is T-cell lymphoma stage four. It was called aggressive before I found out it was stage four. I had a stem cell transplant in December of 2016. I had to create my own stem cells, which took me a few attempts, but I finally collected enough stem cells to put my cancer in remission. That was a very traumatic journey for me. I am proud of myself because there were many times I wanted to give up, but I wanted to live more. **(Tandalaya Taylor)**



I am proud of myself for coming to Odyssey. I was in school full time my first year of college and working two jobs when I found out I was pregnant. It took a lot to finish the first year, especially because I had to drop a couple classes, but I

finished. After getting sick, I decided to stop working and not go back to school until next year. However, with my family's encouragement and Professor Emily's help, I decided to sign up for the class. Once I was accepted, I knew it would be hard, but I refused to give up. It's making me a stronger person. **(Keziah Bester)**



I am proud of how I handle my job. As a business owner, I have to make sure that I have enough work for my team, I have to talk to customers, and I always make sure to have money in the bank to pay for the materials and my team. I

also always find time to pick up my kids from school or from their music classes. **(Victor Rojas)**



One of the biggest things that I am the most proud of is being able to continue my life and not be a statistic. My dad was never around for me; he would come and take me out one day and promise me that he would be around more, but

when he dropped me off, I didn't hear anything from him again. Most girls who don't have their father in their lives often look for the love they are missing in other boys. I was proud of myself for not being the victim of that and not letting myself be a statistic. Something I am also very proud of is breaking my family's generational curse of pregnancy at a young age. **(Arioun Jones)**

I pride myself on being a kind-hearted, giving person. I often put others first in most situations because I genuinely care about others' feelings, whether I know them personally or not. I make it a point to save up all of my family's old clothes, toys,



and other belongings. Twice a year I donate them to Easter Seals of Wisconsin.

I've also donated small sums of money to different charities during my life. When I was younger I lent money to children with cleft palates. I read an article about them in a magazine. That article and the pictures really touched me, so I sent \$50 towards the medications for the surgeries. A few years later I received a letter and some stickers designed by the children from the St. Jude Hospital. They were so cute that they swayed me into sending them what I could afford at the time. It was only \$20, but I figured anything would help. If I see bell ringers and cashiers asking for money at the end of the sale, or an organization outside of a supermarket, I'll give them something. When I see homeless people outside asking for change, I always give something, even when the people with me comment on how they need to get a job or that they're going to spend it on drugs. I don't let it affect my decision on helping them out; I even give it to people that don't ask.

Once my sister and I were at the Food Court, and there was a man sitting with a bunch of bags. He was looking around at others eating and would look down as they turned their heads towards him. I wanted to give him something, but I didn't want to embarrass him. So when we finished eating, I sent my sister over to give him the seven dollars I had left in my wallet. As I got up to throw away my food, he came up to me and thanked me. Not wanting to embarrass him, I kind of quickly said, "OK, you're welcome" and walked away. I remember looking back and seeing him look around, sort of offended, and I think I ended up embarrassing him anyways. After that, I just started walking up to people and leaving money next to them if I see them at a fast food restaurant, not wanting to take the chance of offending anyone else again. I don't think anyone should have to feel less than themselves for receiving the things they need. **(Angela Carpino)**

# SEVEN-WORD POEMS

## Seven-Word Poems

*I wish the rent  
Was heaven sent.*  
—Langston Hughes

The spring brings life to the dead. (**Nathaniel Robinson**)

I wish my life had less strife. (**Lisa Simmons**)

People always on time are truly sublime. (**Hailey Sjuggerud**)

I wish cancer got cancer and died. (**Tandalaya Taylor**)

I wish life was like a dream. (**Angela Carpino**)

My heart bleeds, my seeds flourish vigorously! (**Bruce Moore**)

Difficult moments will make us more courageous. (**Victor Rojas**)

Chocolate, poetry  
For the soul  
Devour one (**Bao Thao**)

Equity, equanimity  
For you're alive, healthy  
Amen! (**Selena Muñoz**)

Alone  
But not lonely  
I cherish that (**Sch'Royce Brown**)



# REFLECTIONS



## **My Secret is *The Secret* A Book Review by Selena Muñoz**

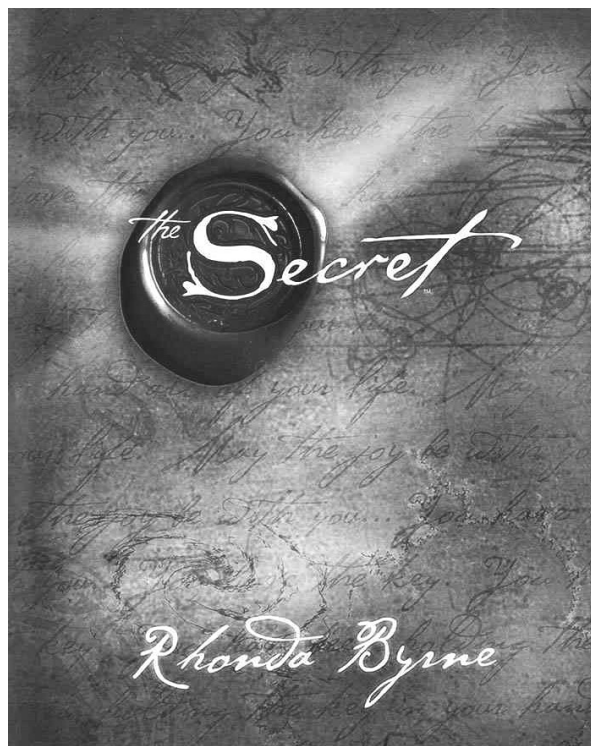
One of the worst days in my life led to one of the best choices I have made: reading Rhonda Byrne's *The Secret* that night. Jennifer Bell (Odyssey '10) introduced me to *The Secret* to make me feel better. I was in a sticky situation with my ex and needed a prayer. I was 19 and ready to give up on life. Ever since then, I think about it in everything I think. Even right now as I write about it, I am hoping the book will inspire those who need a prayer. After reading the book, I just had to see the film; the film revealed that it doesn't matter who you are or where you come from. Everyone can use *The Secret* in them, some more than others.

*The Secret* is the most healing book you can give to your brain when you're the most stressed. The more I read it, the more I felt healed. What I mean by this is that I felt like my prayer was answered and the universe was giving me the best opportunity. The book revealed all the answers to health, wealth, and myself. *The Secret* talks about how everything is made up of energy. What you put into life is what life throws back at you. For instance, if you go to class and hate it deep down, you will fail. If you go to class with positive energy, it will give you a positive impact such as an open mind. An open mind is knowledge. This is *The Secret* working through energy.

*The Secret* believes in you. It reminds some people of how beautiful life can be, and it inspires those who feel they've finally reached "the bottom of the barrel." The book gives you not only great inspiration yourself but also shows how giving positive energy is equivalent to doing your best in everything and anything you do. *The Secret* reminds you to put yourself first and that you have the greatest interest in your health, wealth, and yourself. *The Secret* is a giant wake-up call to get back up on your feet through good energy for yourself and the world.

At times I take coincidences as blessings in disguise, whether it's bad or good at the moment. If it's bad, I take it with good energy, thanks to *The Secret*. *The Secret* also prevents "snowball effects" when you feel the urge to give bad energy to bad situations. . . .

I highly recommend this book to anyone and everyone. It has been the best guidance in the "good" and the "ugly" that I've had in life thus far. For some, *The Secret* might just be another philosophical book. Others like me will be reminded of how precious life can be with positive energy and to be humble because life itself is the greatest blessing, even though we might not feel like it at times. I hope you read away and that lots of good will come your way.





### **Paying It Forward** **By Adrian Molitor**

To “pay it forward” may mean looking backwards on one’s life to see the human experience as an offering or gift to the next man or woman in need. Chances are it’s just another way to remind folks to be decent and help one another. When I began my own personal genesis around six years ago, folks told me that my greatest tool to be of service to other folks’ sufferings would be my experience. At the time, that idea seemed abstract or at least irrelevant to my struggle. Years later, I feel this light of experience viciously burn in my own progression one day at a time or, in times of my own vulnerability, one hour at a time. One act of kindness can be the small spark that can turn into a blaze of positivity in another person’s life.

I don’t really know where the term “pay it forward” came from. What I do know is that many people have shown me the way over the years. I recall a Social Studies teacher from my alternative high school planted a seed in my mind about my own leadership potential that I wasn’t ready to cultivate until I found myself in a state of physical and emotional desperation. We truly never know the impact of our words or our intentions . . . . Paying it forward to me is the idea of staying true to my own values while remaining open-hearted. You cannot transmit something you haven’t got. I spent most of my life trying to survive my own situation and mind without taking time to think of others and their needs.

In 2012 after a period of incarceration, I relapsed back into stealing, homelessness, shooting drugs, and heavy drinking. My life had been this way since approximately 1995, when I started to drink daily. After picking up a few new cases in 2012, I checked into an impatient treatment center. I had been alone in my mind since I was a child and never let people too far into my experience. While living in this treatment center, I didn’t trust a single counselor or staff member. I was on yet another habitual pattern to prison time or overdose until a woman named Justine took a summer internship at the center. She was a wild white woman with dreadlocks past her waist, tattoos on her neck and arms, and the eyes of a former junkie who clearly now had a solution. Justine was a counselor who planted seeds of hope without any strings attached. The three most important parts of helping are identification, authenticity, and having little expectation of fruition.

On a choice May afternoon, Justine informed me that she had shot speed and smoked crack for over 20 years of her life. She told about the youth centers and jails she had lived in in Southern California, where she was from. She also told me that for a man as far gone as I was, I needed a formal mentor in a 12-step program not only to help keep me from another relapse but also to show me how to live sober. I knew in that moment that she had what I wanted in life. I live for the empowerment of doing all the things society and family tell me I am incapable of doing. Justine was in her mid-fifties working on a master’s degree, yet based on her appearance, the world still judged her as a drug addict. I wanted to be like her. I already was, just minus the recovery. . . .



I did exactly what she said. I found a mentor named Henry. He was a six-foot-plus, black boot-wearing Good Samaritan. Henry was born and raised on the east side and grew up listening to punk music, getting drunk, and shooting drugs. When I met Henry, he was around six years clean, worked as an electrician, and told the truth like his life depended on it. Henry showed me how to live. He picked me up from treatment and took me straight to a meeting. He bought me a cheeseburger and told me a bunch of s\*\*\* about God that I do not recall to this day. Henry was one of the most hilarious people I have ever met.

After a few months of sobriety had passed, I remember eating some of the nastiest beans on the floor of Henry's apartment and listening to old bands like The NY Dolls, The Misfits, and The Minutemen. I had been telling Henry about my state of poverty. I could pay for cigarettes, child support, or food. I was living in an abandoned building on the east side. He told me his girlfriend could get me a dishwashing job. Henry had already shown me how to help others and tell the truth. Now the job was a big, big deal. He took me to a super hip restaurant full of hip people fermenting things and acting extra special. I literally went from making up to \$400 a day in cash tattooing as an active addict to being a 33-year-old dishwasher earning \$10 per hour. At that job, I paid off over \$10,000 in back child support. Within the first two years of my sobriety, I had re-entered my sons' lives, developed a spiritual life, and started mentoring others.

This story is a brief recollection of two people who allowed me to identify, authenticate, and give back. This is only the beginning of my odyssey or, in my case, my odysseys. I feel like I have lived so many lives and touched even more.





## My Review of the Movie "Fences"

### By Bruce Moore

This movie is outstanding. "Fences" is one in a series of six plays written by Pulitzer Prize winning black playwright August Wilson, and the film is directed by Denzel Washington. Denzel Washington and Viola Davis play the main characters in the movie, which is set in the 1950s in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

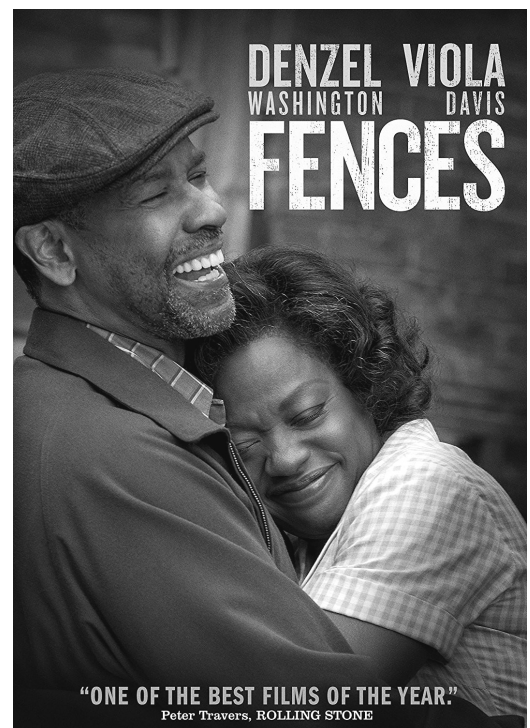
The movie is about a black family: a middle-aged father and mother, an older son (34) before his marriage, a teenaged son, and the father's brother, who was mentally disabled in the war. To me, the movie shows the world what it was like for a black working class family in the 1950s. It shows love, hate, suffering, sacrifice, resilience, and the ability to cope. It also displays the difficulties related to a black man changing his perspectives and the hurt and havoc it wreaks on the family's dynamics. The father had dreams of becoming a professional baseball player, but he was too old when he got out of prison; bitterness ensued.

The movie mirrors my family in many ways. My father was like Troy Mason, the father and main character. Troy was hard, hardened by a difficult childhood. He was one of eleven children. His father was a sharecropper, so as soon as children were able they had to pick cotton. His mother ran off and he never saw her again. He said his father was as mean as the devil and he meant it. At age 14, he got whipped by his father with the horse harness. That's when he fought his dad, lost, and left home. My dad and I almost fought, and he threatened to "take me out" when I was 17. Troy felt that life had not been kind to him, and white people were not to be trusted. Troy spent time in prison for murder and turned his life around, but he was still bitter and hardened from his earlier life experiences.

Troy was also funny, kind, and loving at times. He loved his wife and treated her well most of the time. He reminds me of my father. At times, Troy had difficulty showing and expressing his feelings--his love and his fear. He could not tell his son that he liked him. His son once asked him, "How come you never liked me?" and the father replied, "What law is there says that I got to like you? Liking your black ass was not in the bargain."

That statement and others have a devastating effect on a young man's self-esteem, and it could make a son hate a father. It could also destroy normal family dynamics. I remember my father telling my mother, "I'm not going to spend time with him--he ain't gonna be s\*\*\* anyway." I can recall the hurt, pain, sense of loss, and damaged self-esteem. I also experienced dislike and hate for my father related to what he said to me as a child.

Soon after, Rose says, "He wants to be just like you," and Troy tells her, "I don't want him to be like me and have a life like mine." He meant that he wanted his son to have a better life,





but he couldn't tell him that because he either didn't know how or did not want to show his true feelings at that time. The father eventually fought the son and threw him out of the house. Soon after, the son joined the military. The son never knew that his father would brag about him doing well in the military until after the father dies. Occasionally, my father would show newspaper clippings of me to his friends and brag some too.

The mother, Rose Mason, reminded me of my mother. Rose was beautiful, proud, strong, caring, wise, and resilient.

She was the glue that held the family together. She was this awesome wife, mother, friend, and sounding board. She was the calm in the storm. She was consistent in caring for her family and loving her husband. She came from a family where each child had a different father, and she was adamant about not having her own family repeat the same cycle. My mother was like that, too. She worked hard at being a mother and a wife, and she helped others in her community.

The mother was devoted to her family and her husband, but the husband changed. In doing so, he changed the entire family's dynamics when he told his wife that he had been cheating on her and his girlfriend was having a baby. Troy broke Rose's heart when he told her, "It hasn't been easy for me, standing in the same place for eighteen years," meaning that there are parts of his life's struggles that he wished he could change but couldn't. Rose's reply was so poignant when she said, "Well, I been standing there with you!" Troy spends more time with his girlfriend and less time at home.

Troy's girlfriend eventually dies. Rose takes the child to raise and becomes a stronger woman as she grows through the situation. She never truly forgives Troy for breaking up the family. Troy, too, changes as he realizes how his choices and actions have affected his family. He changes for the better, but the situation breaks him down some, and he eventually dies. I cannot give the ending away, but I can say it was unexpected and truly awesome.

During the movie, Rose wanted Troy to build a fence in the backyard. This fence was started and stopped and started again, based on what was going on in the family. Troy's friend said Rose wanted the fence to either keep things in, possibly meaning family, or to possibly keep things out, like anything that could or would break or destroy a family.

To me that fence represented an emotional fence that some families like mine and my parents had. It started and stopped, bent but never broke, and provided safety and security. It would allow in only the things that encouraged, protected, and uplifted the family. Before the movie ends, the fence is finished.



### **A Thin Yellow Line**

**By Tori Amour**

She is who I yearn for and cry for in the night.  
 She is who I hope to be when greeted with first light.  
 She is who I used to be before I lost my sight.  
 She is who had the smile that made the world so bright.

She is who had the dreams and the will to fight.  
 She is who knew the wrongs and tried to make them right.  
 She is lost and I am here in her empty shell.  
 I fight, I scream, I claw and crawl seeking a way out of this internal hell.  
 I lay in wait with secrets to tell that no one listened to before I fell.  
 Now alone in my cell I wait to be saved and shown what's real.  
 She is me and I am her. She is strength and beauty divine.  
 She is love and wisdom intertwined.  
 She is my heart and soul and mind.  
 She is . . . Mine.

All my life I've walked a thin yellow line. Racially I'm mixed but ethnically I'm black. I've struggled with not fitting in socially, not looking like my family, and trying to be comfortable in my own yellow skin.

As a young girl living in a predominantly black area, I never really fit in. I wasn't "black" enough for the black girls, and upon moving found myself too "black" for the white girls. I was stuck in the middle, not really fitting in anywhere. It was as if my blackness was diluted and my whiteness was tainted. I always felt like I had something to prove.

I am the first yellow child on either side of my family. My elder sisters are black, and my dad's kids are white. Although my oldest sister would joke about me being dropped off by gypsies, when I was with my mom my place was never questioned. When I was with my white family, my presence always required an explanation, even among extended family. I always felt like my dad's fluorescent secret. My black features are undeniable, and I was made to feel that negated half my bloodline.

Despite my yellow hue, I am a black woman. It has been a long, tumultuous journey. I was raised by strong black women to be a strong black woman. Growing up, my blackness was suppressed, but as an adult I found it is my strength, my power, my pride. I never felt as close to or have been able to relate to my white half. I've never been a true part of that culture. I've had to suppress my blackness to fit the white mold.

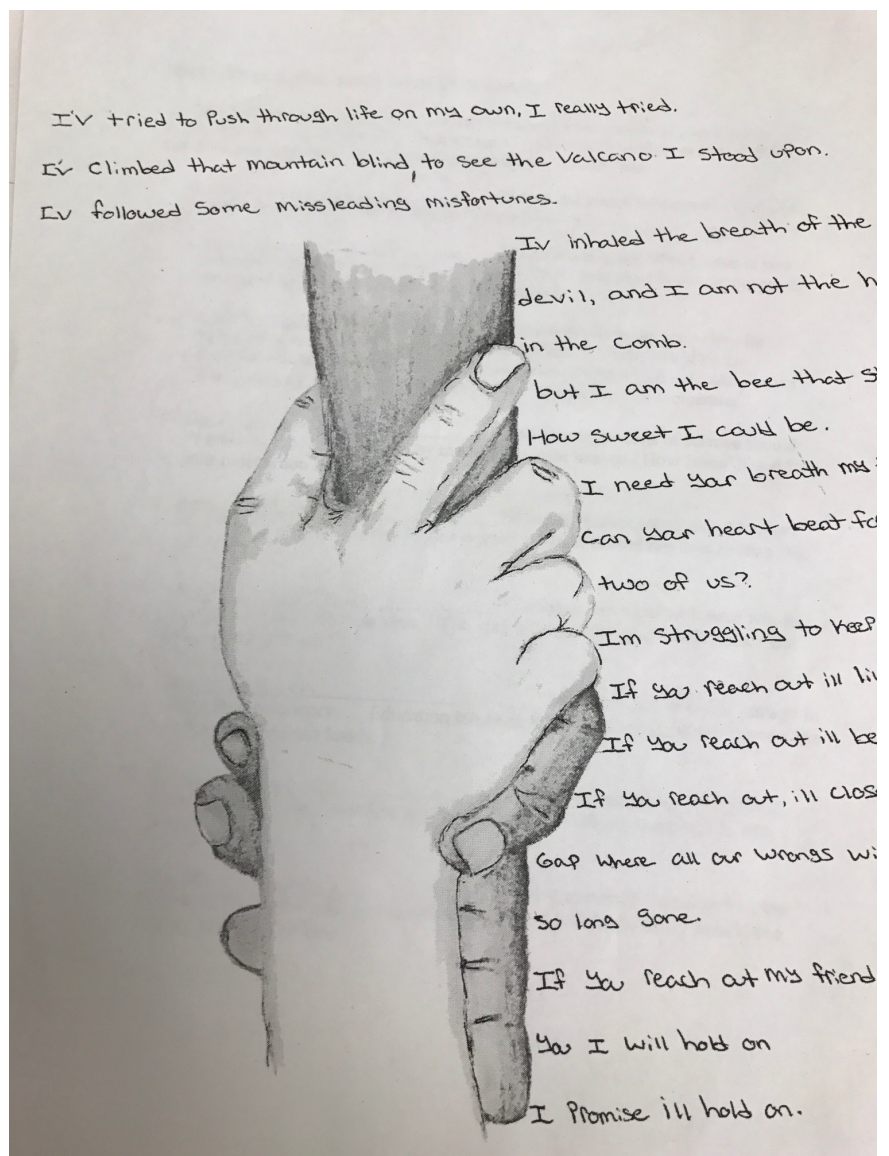
I am what I am. From my lips to my hips, from the deepest depths of my soul to the tips of my toes, I am a black woman going through life on my thin yellow line.



### If You Reach Out

I've tried to push through life on my own, I really tried.  
 I've climbed that mountain blind, to see the volcano I stood upon.  
 I've followed some misleading misfortunes.  
 I've inhaled the breath of the devil,  
 and I am not the honey in the comb

but I am the bee that stung.  
 How sweet I could be.  
 I need your breath, my friend.  
 Can your heart beat for the two of us?  
 I'm struggling to keep balance.  
 If you reach out, I'll live.  
 If you reach out, I'll be strong.  
 If you reach out, I'll close that  
 gap where all our wrongs will be  
 so long gone.  
 If you reach out, my friend, I  
 promise  
 you I'll hold on.  
 I promise you I'll hold on.  
 (Nathaniel Robinson)





## A Badger Experience

*Thanks to Odyssey donor Alec Y. Chang, two Odyssey students (Selena Muñoz and Guadalupe Hernandez Nuñez) had free tickets to a UW basketball game against Michigan State.*

From picking up my Odyssey classmate Guadalupe to cheering on the Badger basketball team, I had one of the most amazing times in years. Even though the Badgers were defeated, the experience is something I will cherish forever. It was such a great privilege to be able to go to a game and experience what it's like to walk with other Badger fans to and from the Kohl Center Stadium. I felt like I fit right in with the rest of the UW students. Never would I have thought I would be able to go to a basketball game with such an awesome classmate and best friend. I hope to do it again sometime....

While Guadalupe and I walked down State Street, we stopped at the UW shop and had a chance to see all the gear and accessories UW has to offer. My favorite was sticking glittery Bucky tattoos on our faces. . . .

Watching Badger basketball was intense. The Badgers were always about ten points behind Michigan State, but as soon as they were able to catch up they would always get behind again. Watching long shots go in was really fun. It seemed like we were the loudest ones in our section since we were the only ones cheering (it was our first basketball game).

Guadalupe and I took many selfies during game breaks, and we talked about how we were going to do in acting [Shakespeare] for our next class assignment. So it was nice to go over our next homework assignment during downtime. One of the coolest things I experienced was seeing Mike McCarthy in the stadium cheering on the Badgers as well. He looked so different without Green Bay Packers gear. . . .

I'm so thankful and grateful for this wonderful experience. It is definitely a good start for 2018 and makes me feel so proud to be a UW student. Go Badgers! **Selena Muñoz**



Dear Donor Alec Chang,

I want to thank you for the Wisconsin basketball tickets. Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to experience my very first college game. It has been such a great experience. The minute I walked into the Kohl Center, I felt such excitement. It was so amazing, and I was very happy.

I want to confess that before this experience, I never ever thought of going to any of these games, but after today I'm looking forward to going to other ones, just as I did today. I had such a great time, and all because of you. Thank you so much!

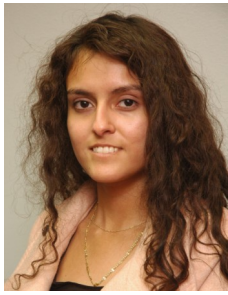
After I had my daughter, I thought I never could experience college life, but today was so special [as a UW Odyssey student attending a UW game] that my life has changed: I know it's never too late. What you gave me has been more than just a ticket: it has been a great learning experience. I will remember this moment forever.

Sincerely,

**Guadalupe Hernandez Nuñez**







### Love between Seasons By Carla Herrejon Tinajero

My painting inspired this poem, which I wrote in Spanish and then translated into English. The story behind the poem is losing someone you love by them being incarcerated or deported and hoping the other person still remembers you.



Amor entre estaciones  
Una atardecer de otoño,  
cuando los árboles desprenden sus hojas,  
preparando vestirse de blanco a la llegada del frío invierno,  
y los patos emprenden su partida hacia tierras muy lejanas,  
Me gustaría que consigo lleven  
Todas mis palabras que demuestran cuanto te amo.  
Este corazon que por ti, por tu amor a salido el invierno para entrar  
primavera floreciendo como girasol  
todo este amor.  
Esperando la llegada de los patos que partieron al llegar aquel invierno,  
que me digan que cuentas cada dia para podernos ver de nuevo.

Love between seasons  
An autumn sunset, when the trees shed their leaves,  
preparing to dress in white at the arrival of the cold winter,  
and the ducks start their departure to very distant lands.  
I would like to carry all my words that show how much I love you.  
This heart wants your love to come out of the winter to enter spring

blossoming like this sunflower with all this love.  
Waiting for the arrival of the ducks that left when winter arrived.  
Tell me you count every day until we can see each other again.



### Mictecacihuatl, Aztec Queen of the Underworld By Guadalupe Hernandez Nunez

This painting represents Mictecacihuatl, an Aztec goddess queen of Miclan (the Underworld). Her role in Aztec mythology is to watch over the bones of the dead and preside over the ancient festivals of the dead. This is very important to me because it represents a very important holiday: The Day of the Dead, or Dia de los Muertos. This holiday goes from October 31 to November 2 and symbolizes a day to celebrate the dead. We believe that the dead come back once a year to visit and reunite with their family. I got the picture for the painting from the Internet but painted it myself.