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ODYSSEY ORACLE

BEING DRAMATIC



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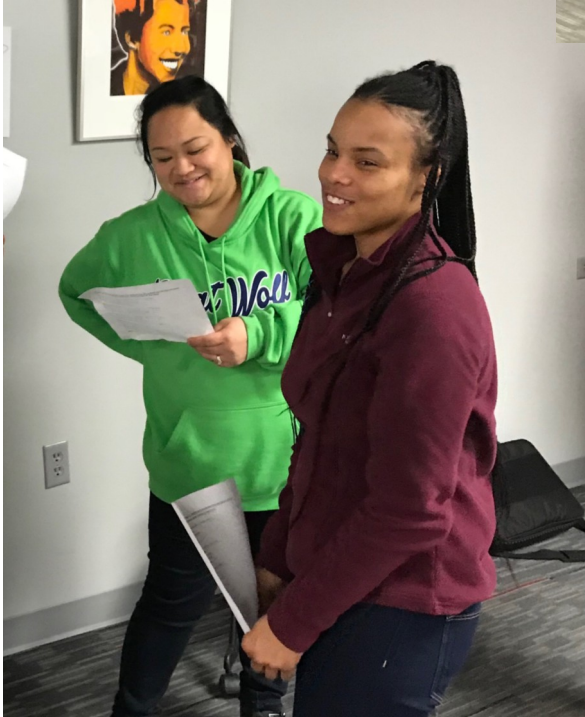
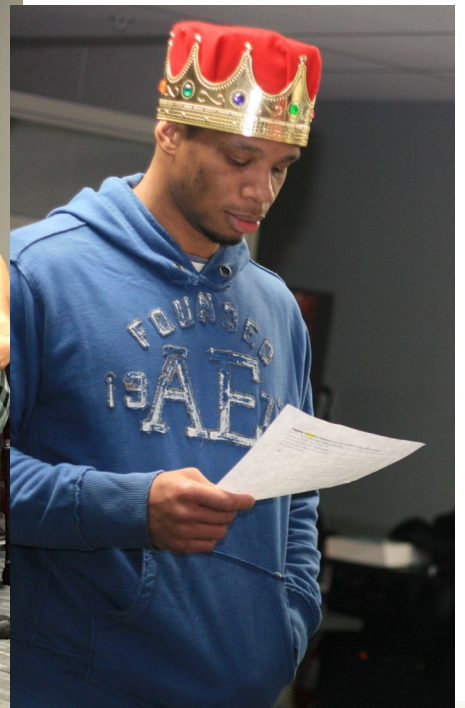
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ACTING WITH DR. BARON KELLY

I was blown away by the experience. I felt very fortunate to be able to work with an actor of this caliber. I had a lot of fun. I had no idea I could read lines and come across with so much feeling. Baron helped me bring that out. I was very nervous standing up in front of everyone, but it was very important to me that I knew my lines by heart. It meant a lot that he stayed with us the whole class time and really put effort into helping us develop our characters. The improv was the first time I'd ever done anything like that, and he was trying to get us all involved. I could tell he was paying attention to each of us personally when it was our turn. I felt that he was very genuine, and I hope that our paths cross again. He seemed like a very gentle yet powerful man. I know it was very special to have him work with us. It was a wonderful night, and I'm glad my daughter got to participate as well. It is something that opened up a little window for me, and I'd like to see how far I can take it. I will never forget this night. Thank you, Odyssey! **(Tyjeana Galloway)**



I had a lot of fun working with Baron Kelly. It made me think a lot about when I did theater in high school. We did a lot of warm up exercises, games, and acted out some scenes. It was amazing and I enjoyed it a lot. **(Keziah Bester)**

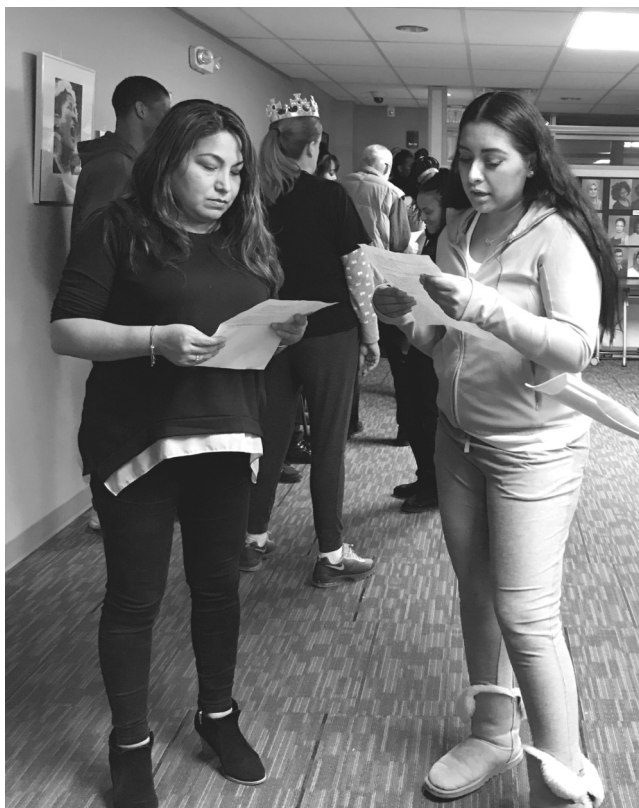
My experience with Baron was excellent and allowed me to interact with my classmates. I also discovered that I really like to act. I was able to do free talking and create my own way of playing. I was very happy to participate. **(Sayury Peralta Vivanco)**

I was surprised at the different insight the acting coach, Baron Kelly, brought. The different techniques, like breathing, brought insight into how to speak louder with more substance in front of people. I have difficulty with this, but before class was over it seemed a little easier to do and I was more relaxed. **(Hailey Sjuggerud)**



Last week with Baron was amazing. Even though I had stage fright, I enjoyed watching everyone let loose and act out scenes. **(Tori Armour)**

My experience with Baron Kelly was wonderful. I learned that I might be good at acting. I found a voice like Emily said I would. We learned breathing techniques and tongue twisters. I wish we could have had a week with Baron. **(Derrick Allen)**



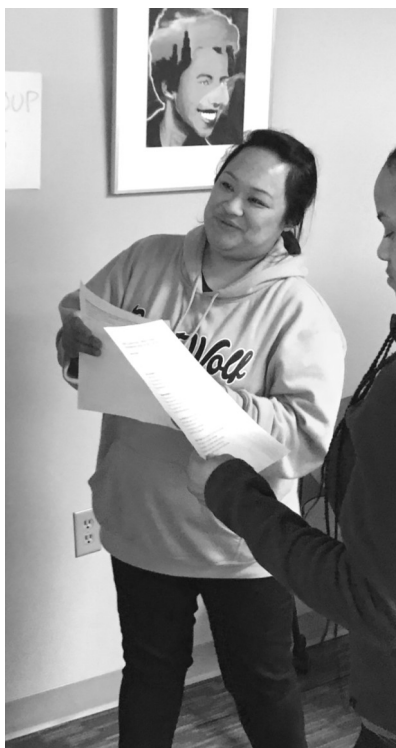
It was very fun working with Baron Kelly. He was a little intimidating at first because you can tell he wanted to bring the best out of you when it came to reading your *Macbeth* lines. I learned a lot about vocals and how different your voice can sound using breathing exercises. **(Selena Muñoz)**

The main thing I can say is that I was exhausted after class. I took for granted how much energy acting takes. I always enjoy the vulnerability that large groups require. I really liked the laundry improv scene; it was great. The breathing exercises were a great reminder of how tense I can be. **(Adrian Molitor)**

I had a good experience. Maybe in the beginning I was a little scared and shy, but after we did the warm up

exercises and the first play I started to like it. I think Baron is a good teacher, and I think all people need to have some classes like this. It is always a good skill to have, the skill of expression. **(Victor Rojas)**

Just wow! Baron Kelly is so awesome. I learned so much that day. For example, I learned how to hold my breath to talk for a longer period of time and to be more confident in talking. I can tell you that on that day I had such an amazing time. He is such a talented man, an inspiration to others. The fact that he took time out of his schedule to come here was just amazing. All the activities we did that day were super fun, and I feel that I learned so much from him. The few minutes he was here talking to me, he gave me so much confidence. I remember you said that many people felt they found their voice when they met him. I can tell you that I feel the same way. February 14, 2018 is a day I will never forget. Thank you! **(Guadalupe Hernandez Nuñez)**



My experience with Baron was a wonderful privilege. He was a fun and very encouraging teacher. I'm hoping we get to work with him again in the future. With the little time we had with him, I learned a lot. I'm afraid of public speaking, but I wish I would have taken advantage of that little time to hop in and act. Thank you again, Baron, for giving us your encouragements and your time. **(Bao Thao)**

This was an extraordinary experience, and his energy was amazing. He taught me how to become what I am reading and how to turn into the person I am portraying so the story can come to life. Given a brief chance to come out of character, I found that stepping out of my comfort zone was an opportunity that made me just that much more comfortable with who/what I want to be. Having agoraphobia is detrimental to any stand-up comedian. What is crazy is he worked with me for about two and a half hours and we talked a bit when class was over, and all he had was compliments and very good feedback. He believed in my dream. Thank you, Baron.
(**Ameshia Turner**)

Working with Baron Kelly was an awesome experience! I still have some anxiety related to standing and talking in front of a group, but he made everyone who wanted to participate feel at ease. It was fun playing the different characters, and the exercises that prepared us really helped to get everyone relaxed. I felt challenged, and I had a really good time. I would really like to do it again, including the improv. I went home and could not stop thinking what I could have done differently, better, and with more emotions and words. I still keep thinking I'd like to act at an improv event sometime, maybe, but again in class, it was awesome!
(**Bruce Moore**)

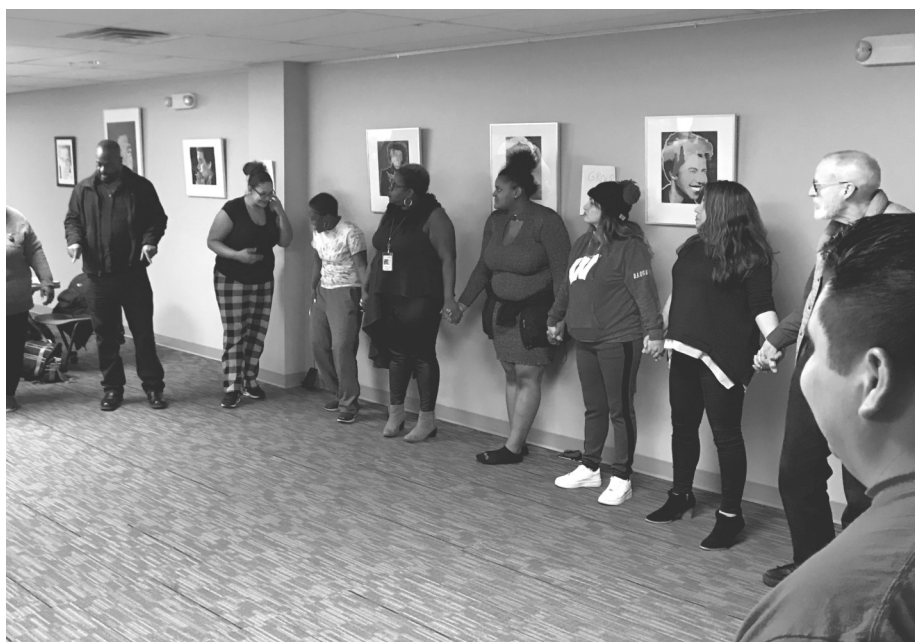
My experience with Baron Kelly was pretty cool. My favorite part was the ball activity because it showed us how to express ourselves through the force of the ball and facial expressions. It helps you express yourself without always using anger. This ball activity also helps

you work as a team and to pay attention to how others feel. (**Sch'Royce Brown**)

At first I was a little nervous to participate in the class activity. I have stage fright and fear the "all eyes on me" part. I was unsure of how well I would do. I was also worried that I would mess up a lot. Once Baron pulled me out and put his back on mine and did that technique, I was more comfortable. It amazed me to see the huge change not only in myself but also my other classmates once I saw and heard them speak. I think Baron did a great job of ice-breaking and getting us comfortable to do some of those warm-ups and then getting us in the play. I had a great experience. (**Nathaniel Robinson**)

It was fun and stressful because I've never done anything like that before, but I loved it and it was a great experience. (**Lisa Simmons**)

Working with Baron Kelly was fun and exciting. He taught us how to put more energy into using our vocals, like speaking with more force. We were able to act out different roles with each other. Baron really helped us get into character. I am thankful for the experience. (**Barbara Rodgers**)



METAMORPHOSIS: BECOMING BUTTERFLIES

As a caterpillar I inched my way through a field of
knowledge
Devouring leaves of Plato, Socrates, Hughes, and
Douglass
I encapsulated myself in my cocoon of reflection
and love
Emerging a beautiful butterfly with wings of purple
and blue
Strong and ready to fly and spread my
knowledge to the world.

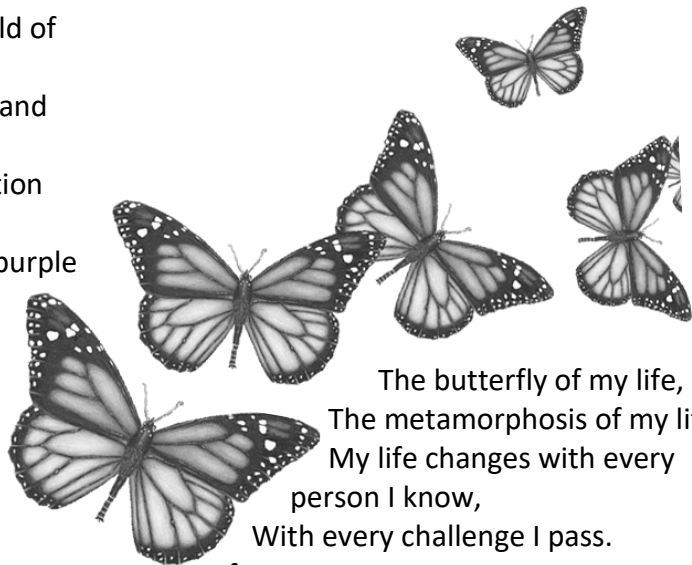
(Tori Armour)

Metamorphosis
From dispirited to joyous
From struggling to prosperous
From uneducated to sophisticated
From caterpillar to butterfly.

(Charnice Anderson-Morris)

I ain't no butterfly. Most lives I've lived
I'm cocooned in the past, trudging through the
wreckage.
Every day I wander about, connecting to other life,
Confined to the silken strands of my home.
I am a cocoon, the human ego my chrysalis,
A teardrop from a dove falling into the ocean
My only connection. **(Adrian Molitor)**

When I was a child I was a
warm and fuzzy caterpillar
playing in nature,
basking in the sun of Janesville.
The rains of change came.
My family moved to Madison,
and soon I became a teenager
entering into my own cocoon,
growing to become an adult,
then breaking free
to stand on my own and fly.
(Hailey Sjuggerud)



The butterfly of my life,
The metamorphosis of my life,
My life changes with every

person I know,
With every challenge I pass.

If you see a cocoon,
Help get the butterfly out so it can fly.
If we cannot fly, it's because we need more help
(Victor Rojas)

I am a butterfly
constantly evolving.
The catch to me is you have to
be patient in order to see
the beauty that comes from me.
I am free, I am beautiful.
I am a butterfly. **(Maya Rasheed-Bracey)**

Start as a cocoon in a small place, no room to
breathe,
trying to stretch out but not with ease
not understanding the growth that will be
presented to me
I just stay to myself until I'm ready to roam,
Roaming around absorbing everything to see.
Keep it to myself without feeling too much.
Wrap it up around me and now spread my wings to
fly
Spread my wings while spreading my information
to those around me.
Let them absorb what I have learned.
(Tandalaya Taylor)

Change can be unfamiliar.
 Change can be unclear.
 Change can go unnoticed.
 Sometimes we don't change
 because of fear.
 A caterpillar, I may
 go unseen as I rest in my cocoon,
 but the transformation that's happening
 you won't see until I bloom.
(Nathaniel Robinson)

I am a butterfly
 A butterfly so pretty and meek
 Also very gentle and very sweet
 Tucked away as a larva
 Wait until you see my color, it'll be marvelous
 And I'll evolve into something so neat
 Colors so extravagant almost as if bleeding ink

Fly high butterfly, just seeing you makes me feel
 alive
 I've wished I could fly, I swear I've tried and tried
 Such a free spirit, give me your life, I wanna live it
 Seeing you is such a delight
 lets me know the sun will soon shine bright
 Your colors light up so pretty, and I love the way you
 shine in the light
 Waiting patiently for spring just so I can watch you
 spread your pretty wings. **(Ameshia Turner)**

Odyssey has given me, like a butterfly-to-be, the
 wings to learn. Now it's up to me to use these
 wings to make my dreams and goals a reality. **(Bao Thao)**

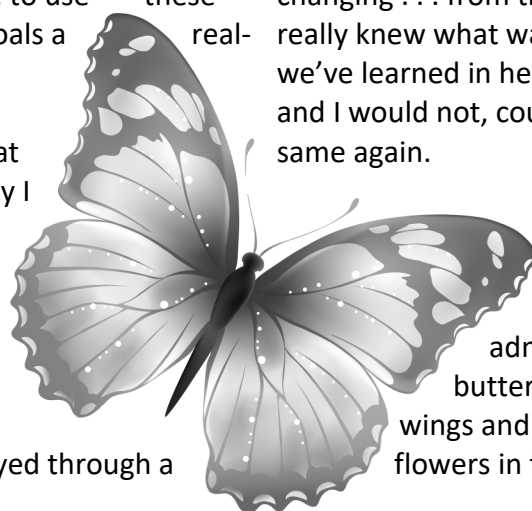
The O in Odyssey was the egg that
 transformed me into the butterfly I
 am today. It was a long odyssey,
 but every stage in my life taught
 me the greatest lesson. As soon
 as I broke out of my egg, I broke
 out of my allegorical cave. I had
 to nibble to be strong enough to
 get on my 16 feet. Once I journeyed through a

few bumps on the road, I found a paradise of food. I
 became full with such fruitful knowledge. I knew it
 was time to transform myself . . . into a hard shield, a
 cocoon. During my cocoon time, I was growing as a
 person but didn't even know it. When I broke out of
 my shield, I finally saw my purpose. **(Selena Muñoz)**

I feel that I am in the process of transformation! I
 believe that I can write better now than I ever could
 before, but I have a ways to go. One of my most
 important goals in the Odyssey Program was to
 learn to write well enough to enable people to feel
 and see what I write! I want to be able to bring my
 poetry and my stories to life. I've been compli-
 mented on my writing numerous times by my peers
 and all of my instructors. My ability to write has
 developed and become bright and beautiful colored
 wings that allow me to take myself, my family, and
 my peers many places while in the Odyssey
 Program. God, it feels so good to fly! **(Bruce Moore)**

Like an egg, I started this Odyssey soft and
 vulnerable, lacking in protection.

The first transformation gave me color like a larva. I
 was still ugly to some. The information I relayed—
 only a few persons listened. They saw me as boring
 and slow, but I was busy consuming—consuming
 knowledge like the larva consuming leaves. Another
 look at me and all you saw was a cocoon. I was
 protected. The overwhelming nonsense of the world
 didn't bother me at all. No one knew I was
 changing . . . from the inside out. No one except me
 really knew what was going on inside me. The things
 we've learned in here opened my eyes and heart,
 and I would not, could not physically ever be the
 same again.



Now hopefully everyone will
 see what I've become. I'm
 embracing my new body and
 admiring my colorful wings. Like a
 butterfly, I'm free to fly—to spread my
 wings and join the others, feasting on the
 flowers in the sun. **(Tyjeana Galloway)**



The day I was born, I started my metamorphosis. Just like an egg, I needed to be taken care of, and my mother and family did exactly that. My second stage (larva) was when I started to have knowledge of my surroundings and explored myself. I have spent most of my life as that. There was a point in my life when everything stopped! I started to find myself and who I was. Just like a caterpillar, I felt that I was alone in my own world. I went through many changes and felt I wanted to stay in the caterpillar stage, in my own world with my own rules.

But the day that I really felt a change and became a butterfly was the day I became a mother. It was time for my final change, the moment to come out and smash the walls down. Now I just want to fly, spread my wings, and show the world the beauty of my knowledge. Every person can be just as beautiful as a butterfly. Just because we start like an egg doesn't mean we can't change into something much more beautiful. (**Guadalupe Hernandez Nuñez**)

I am one that keeps to myself, but since I've been involved in Odyssey, I have been able to speak and even act with multiple people. I love this life-changing moment. (**James Davis**)

Beautiful, pretty pink butterfly, your cocoon lies deep inside a big palm tree, waiting to become the beautiful mom of three. Ta'Tiana, you will be transformed for nine months for Beauty, Kairo, and Truth, becoming the gorgeous, pretty pink butterfly. (**Ta'Tiana Clacks**)

I've transformed from a person who thought her educational path was over to a person who now

thinks it has just begun. I'm opening my mind up to new areas of learning. I've broadened my vocabulary, strengthened my grammar, and built up my punctuation. My mind welcomes new information, so I'm growing mentally and am slowly transforming into the finished product I am meant to be. (**Angela Carpino**)

I was an egg with no clue of what the world would bring. I was a caterpillar learning new things. Now I'm in a cocoon ready to turn into a butterfly, spread my wings, and fly. (**Carla Herrejon**)

Butterflied Evolution

On June 30th, 2017 [at my interview], the egg (me) was laid onto the leaf of Odyssey. September is when the metamorphosis started—now hatched, a newborn small, tiny, and petite into this foreign world needing to grow something within that I knew nothing of. One thing I did know was this stage was short lived and I needed to be all that I could be. Something beautiful would emerge from this skin that I dwelled in for such a short time, but I needed food (knowledge) to grow in the skin I was in. Even though my foundation was already in place, it was still a race against time. That very leaf that held me as I was placed there gave me the power, the food (knowledge) that I needed to move on to the next stage in metamorphosis.

Now that I've reached my peak and I've had enough to eat, it's time for this ugly ducklapillar to get its beauty sleep. Stuck in this stage, scared to do what I want, asking is it the time or the place, going back and forth this: is just another stage? Don't be afraid, trying to maintain, wanting everything to develop correctly so when I appear it'll be a Queen, the beautifullest butterfly you'll ever see. (**Ameshia Turner**)

ENVISIONING ODYSSEY

Odyssey is a Phoenix.
Born of the ashes of our trials and tribulations,
Our faults and past failures.
She feeds on knowledge and determination.
She soars to success and redemption in the endless
sky of life. **(Tori Armour)**

My Odyssey is a phoenix.
Out of the ashes of addiction
and confliction
I rise
to find a purpose for life
to soar the skies.
My Odyssey is a phoenix.
(Tyjeana Galloway)

Odyssey is an Easter egg,
Filled with a great surprise,
A beautifully wrapped
Christmas present
You almost don't want to disturb,
Filled with a heartfelt gift.
Odyssey is the gift you
Didn't know you needed. **(Hailey Sjuggedrud)**

My odyssey is a true journey of life. I might have
been in class with everyone, but I still know no one
in here knows me. I am something special. . . .
(James Davis)

Odyssey is a mountain.
Climbing slowly, trying not to fall,
Slipping, grasping to pull back up,
Strength and dedication until
I make it to the top.
You're almost there. Don't stop! **(Alexis Law)**

In Odyssey we are musical instruments,
all part of this mismatched journey called life.
From day one, we began practicing, performing,
and working on our rough edges,

perfecting the notes.
Our final concert together is quickly arising,
and we are all prepared.
As we head back into the world,
we have songs we're anxious to share.
(Ruthie Allen)



Odyssey is a family of tough love.
Kevin and Emily will push me to read
Out loud or stand up in front of the
Class because they know I can do it.
After reading out loud, I feel powerful,
Like I can do anything. **(Arioun Jones)**

My Odyssey is a long road.
As I drive this journey
I may catch a flat
Or make a wrong turn.
As long as I continue to drive
I'll reach my destination.

(Charnice Anderson-Morris)

My odyssey is a book. Every page I turn I learn more
and more. I get more involved the further I get. I
never want to put it down because I am frantic to
see what the next page holds, understanding that
the next chapter of this odyssey brings more insight
into this life. Changing each page shows that the
plot thickens, and it becomes a great read.
(Tandalaya Taylor)





and challenged to grow. We were given so many wonderful, enlightening, awe-inspiring options to choose from. I often found myself lost because of the many “ah-ha” moments I found myself having each and every class. Academically, I’ve never had a more positive experience in my life. I don’t want to leave. Odyssey instructed, inspired,

The Odyssey Program is the light at the end of the tunnel. It is the light to Heaven. It is the light that lights your candle when it needs to be relit. It’s the light lighting your allegorical cave! **(Selena Munoz)**

Odyssey is a rock to forge ahead in the world. Brick by brick, we build or reinvent our legacy According to design. . . . **(Ta’Tiana Clacks)**

My odyssey is a movie. All of us have a story. We all demand that it needs to be heard. Because of this class, we all got the chance to be us. . . . **(Lisa Simmons)**

Odyssey is the new Bible for education, an idea that needs to be all over the globe. All of us who know about this have the responsibility to share it with the world. **(Victor Rojas)**

Odyssey is refuge, shelter from the storms of suffering when the thunder cracks too loud. Odyssey is the book I choose to open that pours relief on the storms of suffering, reality. Odyssey is a pause from the storm to dry my cheeks and say my prayers . . . **(Adrian Molitor)**

Odyssey is a bar of gold that will be melted into any shape students desire, but it will always have the same purpose. The value will be given by each and every one of the alumni. **(Guadalupe Hernandez Nuñez)**

My Odyssey is this vehicle that we are empowered

empowered, and nurtured. **(Bruce Moore)**

My Odyssey is something unfamiliar, a beginning at the end of a journey. The journey through Socrates, Frederick Douglass, and Emily Dickinson has been beautiful and heartfelt, but a new leg of our journey awaits. **(Hailey Sjuggerud)**

Everyone’s Odyssey will be different, but by taking that step to pursue your Odyssey, that is what makes all of us connected. **(Bao Thao)**

Odyssey is a fresh start to a new beginning, where I feel like all the work that I do matters, where my writing speaks for me when I can’t, where everyone’s unique knowledge expands mine. **(Carla Herrejon)**

My Odyssey is an angel. Each of my classmates represents the feathers in my wings. Because of Odyssey we will fly high together and reach our goals. **(Barbara Rodgers)**



BECOMING A METAPHOR

I am a star.
I will stay bright and shiny
for others to look up to.
I'll always be there
when guidance is needed.
(**Bao Thao**)



Controlled burn
Small fire so things don't get out of hand
Controlled area to wipe things completely out
Creating something from a fresh start
Turns into something beautiful from the rubble.
(**Tandalaya Taylor**)

I am the fire.
I can be good
or bad
I can heat
or destroy.
I am just the fire. (**Victor Rojas**)

I am a bull. Sometimes I see red.
I confront problems head on.
Even with a feeling of dread,
I kick up my heels and charge ahead.
(**Hailey Sjuggedrud**)



I am a bottle of wine.
I only get better with time.
Nobody would ever be able to guess
the process it took for me to get
to where I am today.
I am a bottle of wine.
You have to handle me with care,
otherwise you'll lose me. (**Maya Rasheed-Bracey**)

I used to be a fixer upper.
Now I am a standing profit with
hard work that screams from the outside of a house
to the barre ground basement of a Victorian!
I used to be a fixer upper,
but now I'm a victorious Victorian at last! (**Selena Muñoz**)

My mind is a porch
that some dogs go to die under
My heart is just the micro-pulse
of the cosmos, the dust trailing
a star that the untrained eye
will never see.
My body impermanent,
a house for this incarnation,
fleeting and beautiful. (**Adrian Molitor**)

I am a pomegranate.
I don't show my feelings to people I don't trust.
I have to protect myself from people
who most likely are going to disappoint me.
It's hard for me to let people in. . .
When I can trust you with my feelings,
I can be the sweetest person ever,
and I would do anything for the people
I know I can trust. (**Arioun Jones**)

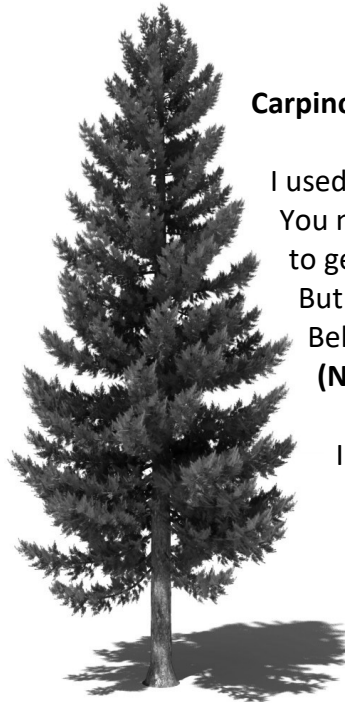
I am a book.
People look at me and
judge me by how I look.
Inside I am a caring and
generous person. (**Arioun Jones**)

I am a pine tree, strong, beautiful.
 No matter the weather, I'm still standing.
 I am a pine tree. My branches are strong,
 strong enough to protect my family.
 I am a pine tree, strong, strong enough
 to hold a swing for my daughter
 to play, to rely on, to be happy.
 I am a pine tree that came to this world
 with a purpose.

(Guadalupe Hernandez Nuñez)

I am a Greek mythological phoenix.
 Like the phoenix, I am born again, first by
 finding
 Christ and second by my adversities.
 Refreshed, I arise from the ashes of life.
 Unlike the 500 years it takes the phoenix of Greek
 mythology,
 I regenerate on a daily, weekly, and sometimes
 monthly basis.
 I was abused in my marriage and tough divorce,
 Alone I raised five children while working two jobs
 and sometimes attending school.
 I rose.
 Through my recent homelessness,
 I'm now living in a brand new mobile home.
 I rose.
 Numerous joys and ups and downs,
 still like the phoenix I rise.
 Sometimes life seems to combust in and around
 me,
 but like the phoenix I rise.
 Determined to complete this journey of the UW
 Odyssey,
 I find myself reborn on a weekly basis.
 Upon completion yet again, I'll rise
 More knowledgeable and aware of how to
 continue my journey. **(Ruthie Allen)**

I am an orange.
 I have layers that need to be peeled back.
 I have a sweet side underneath.
 When I open up, I am hard to resist. **(Angela**



Carpino)

I used to be Wisconsin weather.
 You never knew what you were going
 to get.
 But now I am the sun hiding
 Behind the clouds waiting to shine.
(Nathaniel Robinson)

I am a bird, pushing to break out of
 my shell and open my eyes to a
 new life.
 Coming from the darkness has
 me craving opportunities the
 light can bring.

I'm cracking through my
 barriers, hungry for a fresh beginning.
 I want to overcome obstacles, explore different
 places, and face the challenges ahead of me.
 I have stumbled a few times trying to take flight in
 pursuit of my goals.
 I scurried back to the security of my nest,
 waiting to feel when the moment was right to try
 and try again.
 I'm ready to grow and change into the successful
 being I am destined to be.
 I now feel the urge to break free from the
 comforts of my surroundings,
 spread my wings, and soar as high as this world is
 willing to take me. **(Angela Carpino)**



LOVING LANGSTON HUGHES

Still Here

I been scared and battered.
My hopes the wind done scattered.
Snow has friz me,
Sun has baked me,

Looks like between 'em they done
Tried to make me

Stop laughin', stop lovin', stop livin'--
But I don't care!
I'm still here!

Oh, how I loved the poem "Still Here" so much! This poem means they're still here. Everything has been thrown at them, and everyone has tried to break them down. The poem means somebody tried to take everything from them, and they didn't succeed in making them go away.

I feel like this fits my life perfectly because this was the way I felt while having cancer. Someone tried very hard to keep me in negative spirits while going through cancer. I felt like why me? What I have done to deserve this? The wrong I have done in my life didn't make me feel like I deserved cancer. At the end of that odyssey, I was still here, and I'm still here no matter what. **(Tandalaya Taylor)**

The narrator in "Still Here" has been through a lot in life. This person has been scared, battered, and treated poorly. It seems like this person is alone with her back against the wall. The speaker shows us what it is to have strength, courage, and to never give up or let anyone change you who are. "They done tried to make me stop laughin', stop lovin', stop livin', but I don't care. I'm still here!" This narrator refuses to let anyone steal her joy in life, even though they tried.

What I can take from this poem into my own life is to not let anyone change who I am or steal my joy for life. I've been put in situations where I was at my lowest, with my back against the wall, trying to make sure those I cared for were good. Some of those same people tried to kick me while I was down. They say, "Sometimes the people you'd take a bullet for are the ones behind the trigger." Even though I felt betrayed, I won't let it change me. It only will make me stronger and wiser. **(Barbara Rodgers)**

God to Hungry Child

Hungry child,

I didn't make this world for you.
You didn't buy any stock in my railroad.
You didn't invest in my corporation.
Where are your shares in standard oil?
I made the world for the rich
And the will-be-rich
And the have-always-been-rich.
Not for you.

In "God to Hungry Child," God only likes rich people and believes in certain things. I think this God is a fake Christian. This God is basically only going to help rich people. This God makes the rich people feel good about themselves so they can help only when they want to help.

I feel like this God is wrong, and I don't believe in it. Why only help the rich people when they have money when there are a lot of people struggling? What gave this God the right to pick out certain people to be rich? **(Lisa Simmons)**

"The South" written by Langston Hughes is my favorite poem out of the ten I have read. The poem begins with Langston Hughes saying the "lazy laughing south." I can't help but to think of the summertime and people sitting around laughing and too hot to move. When he says "with blood on its mouth" in the next line, I think about the Jim Crow south with the murders and lynching. The next couple of lines are pretty much the same idea until he begins to talk about the moon, sky, and stars. Describing the

south as a woman, Mr. Hughes sees the ugly side but also finds the beauty in the south. I like that he refers to the south as a woman. He talks about his relationship with this woman and how she spits in his face and turns her back on him. This reminds me of my own past relationships.

The South is like my own personal Odyssey. For me, it was my move from Chicago to Madison. Chicago was a different type of beast, not like Jim Crow but filled with self-hate: it was my own people doing the killing. Chicago is beautiful with her sky-line, wonderful restaurants like Maxwell Street Polish, and jazz music. This woman is also seductive with her drugs, gangs, and fast life, so I too had to leave her behind for another up north, Madison. I'm still trying to figure out if she is a kinder mistress.

(Derrick Allen)

The South

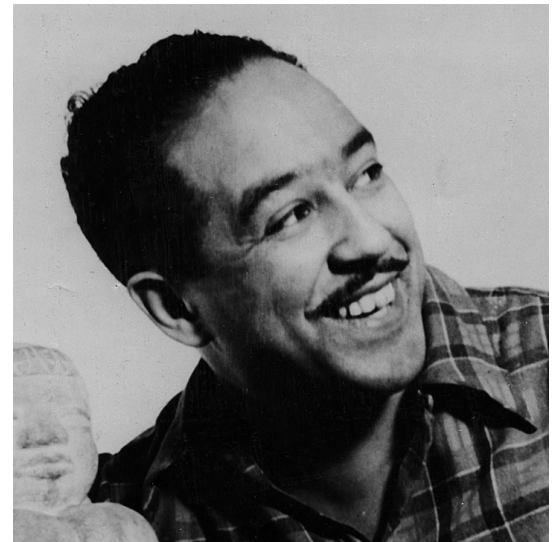
The lazy, laughing South
With blood on its mouth
The sunny-faced South, . . .
The sky, the sun, the stars,
The magnolia-scented South.
Beautiful, like a woman,
Seductive as a dark-eyed whore,
Passionate, cruel,
Honey-lipped, syphilitic —
That is the South.

And I, who am black, would love her
But she spits in my face.
And I, who am black,
Would give her many rare gifts
But she turns her back upon me
So now I seek the North —
The cold-faced North,
For she, they say,
Is a kinder mistress
And in her house my children
May escape the spell of the South.

I think this poem tells how a young colored boy is so used to segregation

and being forced to sit in the back of the bus with the other colored people while white people sit in the front. Langston Hughes uses a merry-go-round to get his point across. The merry-go-round doesn't have a front or back, so the boy doesn't know if he is allowed to be on the ride. He feels like he's not wanted or cared about. He's wondering where is the horse for a black kid.

Something I can take away from this poem is basically to make everyone feel welcome as a person, no matter their skin color. **(Arioun Jones)**



Merry-go-Round

Where is the Jim Crow section
On this merry-go-round,
Mister, cause I want to ride?
Down South where I come from
White and colored
Can't sit side by side.
Down South on the train
There's a Jim Crow car.
On the bus we're put in the back—
But there ain't no back
To a merry-go-round!
Where's the horse
For a kid that's black?

The Negro Mother

Children, I come back today
To tell you a story of the long dark way
That I had to climb, that I had to know
In order that the race might live and grow. . . .
Three hundred years in the deepest South:
But God put a song and a prayer in my mouth.
God put a dream like steel in my soul.
Now, through my children, I'm reaching the goal. . . .

Remember my years, heavy with sorrow -
And make of those years a torch for tomorrow. . . .
Make of my pass a road to the light
Out of the darkness, the ignorance, the night.
Oh, my dark children, may my dreams and my prayers
Impel you forever up the great stairs -
For I will be with you till no white brother
Dares keep down the children of the Negro Mother.

In "The Negro Mother," Langston Hughes writes, "God put a dream like steel in my soul." I believe the dream is that of freedom. To further validate that, the "Mother" states, "I am the dark girl who crossed the wide sea /carrying in my body the seed of the free." Along with freedom, I believe the poem speaks of strength and inspiration. Reflecting upon "my years heavy with sorrow," the mother inspires us to "make of those years a torch for tomorrow" and to guide us "out of the darkness, the ignorance, the night." The Negro Mother not only represents a single physical being but also the strength and inspiration carried within all Negro mothers.

I've always felt that there's nothing stronger than a black mother. Within her she carries the strength and wisdom of all those who came before her. That strength and knowledge bind the souls of black mothers, and they become the village that raises black children. Growing

up, I knew my mother was my mother. But every black woman treated me as if I were her child as well. In my own everyday life, I tap into that strength by mothering not only my own children but also all children in my presence. It's hard, but black women never fold. We carry the weight of the world on our shoulders. Without this unspoken bond, we wouldn't have the strength to continue. (**Tori Armour**)

Langston Hughes likens the enslaved Negro Woman as the carrier of vessels or children of freedom. I also like how he referenced working in fields and the disrespect shown as all leading to a better future. Our ancestors always had hopes and dreams of freedom, but so many did not get to see their dreams come to pass. This mother talks of not

being able to read and write . . . but one day her children will be able to read and write. This mother also talks of not forgetting and not growing tired in this fight by spirit as long as whites try to keep us down.

This poem makes me think of various struggles today, such as young men and women being unjustly beaten and denied rights of equality. I find myself telling and reminding my grandbabies to not be complacent and to not take for granted their freedom and education. I feel like the Negro slave mother today because I also find myself telling my sons how not to act so their lives are not taken. I'm often reminded of the inequalities that still exist, from employment to housing. I am that modern day Negro Woman of this day, encouraging our young to hold their heads up and keep their dreams alive, encouraging them as long as some white brothers and sisters try to keep us down. (**Ruthie Allen**)

I, Too

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed--

I, too, am America.

"I, Too" talks about the past and future. He will see and learn, and when the future comes, he will teach them and be better than them. He's talking about the past and future of American people. Now the oppressed Americans are waiting until they get stronger and will be on the other side of the table, being better and treated as part of the American family.

I relate to this poem because I can remember when I came into the US. I didn't feel a part of the country because I didn't speak English and did not know anything about American culture. So I waited and worked hard to learn and get better, and now I'm on the other side of the table feeling a part of it. . . . Now I share with Americans what I know and can do. But it's not 100% because I'm still working on it.
(Sayury Peralta Vivanco)

Success

Here I sit with my belly full
And he who might have been my
brother
Walks hungry in the rain. . . .
Success is a great big beefsteak
With onions on it.

The way I view this poem is that it says once you've made it to the top, don't forget those who were around. Be mindful of the people who were your supporters before all the fame. Giving back is always the way to go once you've reached all your endeavors. The descriptions he used of steak and rain clearly separate the two types of people: those who are still struggling, and those who are wealthy.

Honestly, I think of this all the time. Once I become wealthier, I want to give back to the community. Most of the time while people are reaching for their dreams, they have silent supporters. That's why it's best to give back. It will make you look bad if you let money change you. . . (Sch'Royce Brown) *[Editor's note: we hope Sch'Royce will donate to the Odyssey Project when she becomes wealthy!]*



Helen Keller

She,
 In the dark,
 Found light
 Brighter than many ever see.
 She,
 Within herself,
 Found loveliness,
 Through the soul's own mastery.
 And now the world receives
 From her dower:
 The message of the strength
 Of inner power.

He is talking about Helen Keller, who became blind and deaf at the age of 19 months. She lived in a silent dark world that she knew nothing about how to live in. He lets us know that eventually she finds her light, and she goes on to accomplish many things, things that people with sight and hearing don't even do. She was able to find the inner light in her soul. When she found that light, she shared it with the world. She found her light through a teacher who helped her open up and learn to communicate and live, actually live in this world, and continue to teach others that were blind or deaf as well as people without disabilities. **(Tyjeana Galloway)**

"Helen Keller" describes the beginnings of her life when she probably felt alone in the dark with no one to talk to and not much substantial education to entertain her mind. . . . Helen was a quick study, learning over 500 words the first year Anne Sullivan taught her. I read about Helen Keller and Anne Sullivan in elementary school. Both Helen and Anne were amazing people, turning tragedy into not only personal triumph but success as well. Hughes mentions Helen Keller's "dower," or worth as a human. Showing others how to overcome obstacles and find more from life is priceless.

"Helen Keller" relates to me as having felt in a dark place and looking for a way out, a crack of light in the darkness of despair. I have gone through things that felt absolutely horrible at the time, wondering what was next and how to approach the situation. The feeling of strength and inner power comes from dealing with these bad situations, moving past them, finding a solution, and overcoming them.

(Hailey Sjuggerud)

Dreams

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

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

In the first line, Langston Hughes says, "hold fast to your dreams," which means to secure your dreams tightly. If you let your dreams die, your life will become a broken-winged bird. Using a bird is very powerful. Although most birds go unnoticed, a bird is one of the animals that can overcome gravity and fly. A bird is meant to fly. I imagine a bird that is unable to use his wings would become very distressed. He also compared letting go of your dreams to a barren field frozen with snow. A field that is unable to grow crops is lifeless, with nothing growing above ground and nothing living underground because it is frozen. Letting your dreams go is equivalent to dying, not physically but mentally and emotionally.

Even though this poem seems so simple, to me it meant more than the beautiful words on

the page. I've found myself letting my dreams slip away multiple times. For me, being reminded to hold on to my dreams is fuel. I know sometimes life will use everything in its power to loosen my grip, but it's up to me to defy gravity and to prevent myself from becoming a broken-winged bird. (**Charnice Anderson-Morris**)

I feel it means don't let chances go. Keep dreaming because everything goes by fast, and you might lose. Life is plain without dreams.

I knew about the Odyssey program a long time ago, but I didn't realize how great it was until three people told me. I feel like this poem relates to me because I was going to lose a great chance of being in this program. My life was going to be boring. (**Carla Herrejon Tinajero**)

Hold on to your dreams and goals. If your dreams and goals die, life will be without guidance. Hold on to your dreams and goals, for if you let them go, your life will have no growth and will be frozen. The images he uses are a bird without wings. Just like us: we were given hands and feet with a mind of our own. If we don't make good use of it, what was the point of those privileges that were given? He also used the barren field, a dead land of no life or growth.

I wouldn't have a purpose and wouldn't know what to do if I didn't set goals. I wouldn't know what to do as a person if I didn't have goals to meet. Life would be pale and gloomy, foggy with no guidance. Lost and unhappy my heart would be. To even think of no goals, my heart is lost. (**Bao Thao**)

The poem "Dreams" talks about the importance of hanging on to dreams because without them life is meaningless and empty. Without dreams, life has no meaning at all. In the poem, Hughes uses words like "broken-winged bird that cannot fly" to describe a life without dreams. He also talks about "life is a barren field frozen with snow," which talks about a life without any meaning or goals.

I can relate the poem "Dreams" to my life. Everything that Langston Hughes says applies to my life. There is no point in waking up if there are no goals in life. As for myself, goals and dreams are what gets me going every day. (**Guadalupe Hernandez Nunez**)



“Dreams” by Langston Hughes is about struggle and keeping your dreams. He talks about a “broken-winged bird” who struggles to fly, and he’s basically saying to hold on to your dreams. I like this because he’s saying no matter what struggles you face or what obstacles are in your way, you must keep your dreams. Life has meaning. No matter what discrimination you face, you have to believe in your purpose. Giving up on your dream is like giving up on yourself **(Keziah Bester)**

. . . For as short as the poem “Dreams” is, there is much meaning and a sting when he mentions “if dreams die” and uses a metaphor such as a “bird’s broken wing.” I believe just the phrase “if dreams die” can go both ways. Dreams can die if you don’t follow through with your personal goals in life. Or if you have a child, dreams might be on standby temporarily, or your dreams can die if you become severely ill with cancer or suffer a disability, whether it’s from a car accident, depression, or mental illness. So “die” can be an “innocent dream dying” or a “guilty dream dying.”

“Life is a broken winged bird” is very much true. A bird with its broken wing suffers like many people with broken souls. Broken souls from repetitive effort and work make you feel like you will never be good enough. Struggling in life just to get by with food and shelter with kids and no help is very much like a bird with its broken wing. Like birds and people, miracles can happen. An injured bird can end up in front of help, like a savior from the Humane Society, to treat it. And with people, miracles can happen if it’s finding a good job, winning the lottery, or finding love. . . .
(Selena Muñoz)

I believe Langston Hughes is telling readers to hold on to their dreams and never let them go. When their dreams die, an important and vital part of them dies as well. Their lives will become meaningless because dreams are what keep people going and make lives worth living. When you let your dreams go, life become a barren field with ice-covered snow. You’re dead on the inside, left physically existing on the outside, with nothing left to live for.

What I got from the poem is that everyone’s naturally born with dreams. They could be of obtaining a certain career, owning property, creating something, or traveling somewhere. Those dreams are what give people a reason to wake up every day and keep going. When a person’s ability to dream and pursue goals is taken away, so is their ability to strive to be better than the person they were the day before. It takes away their reason to live life fully, and they only survive to exist until the day they die. **(Angela Carpino)**



Sketch by Stanley Sallay, Odyssey '07

POEMS AGAINST INJUSTICE



Racism

Racism, too weak of a word
but strong enough to destroy.
Why are you even alive?
You are the reason love is not around.
Racism, you never seem to help,
but some just decide to give you a home.

Racism, I hope one day you metamorphosize
and just turn into love. (**Guadalupe Hernandez Muñoz**)

Walls

Does the wall on the border
make sense or not?
A wall to separate the good from the bad:
which side is the good,
and which is the bad?
A wall to not let people in,
or a wall to not let people out?
See what we do outside the wall.
Some animals live in the zoo,
and some animals live in the wild.
When we build walls around us,
what kind of animals are we? (**Victor Rojas**)



Black Men

Our black men are getting gunned down.
Innocent men shot because of the color of their skin.
Our history is no mystery,
But they choose to ignore us,
Wanting our voices to fade away like history. (**Arioun Jones**)



Poverty

Poverty only thrives in broken systems
with children marginalized, their family not invited to
the scott-free donor who keeps his hands clean.
Tax write-off not enough. (**Adrian Molitor**)

Poverty

Poverty will always be hungry.
You can feed poverty by helping and donating,
But once you run out, poverty will go to other places,
Like Third World countries. . . . (**Selena Muñoz**)





A Vicious System

They say death has no color,
but in the United States it seems to.
It starts out as a lurking grey area
where justice,
law,
and order

hang

in the balance.

An unequal balance of mothers
to brown-skinned children crying.
Too many white people denying
a vicious system of discrimination.

Some say retaliation
in the face of racism. (**Hailey Sjuggerud**)



Poetic Justice

. . . Confusion starts to set in, you don't know which way to turn.
You got to take a sudden risk, I mean isn't that how we learn?
Mistake #1 was being young and having fun, as for Mistake #2,
it was a good lesson, it's how you grew.
Whoever said we wouldn't make Mistake #3?
Just because we're human, you decide to throw away the key?
Or is it 'cause we're black, which we know you clearly see,

that we're not treated fairly and with equality?

I don't mean to sound naïve or dumb, without a brain,
but the only way for change is if we vote for a new campaign.

The prisons are overpopulated, and the jails are getting full,
while the police are using self-defense as a deadly tool.

Yeah, you're probably saying that I sound like a fool,
and why don't we go help ourselves and try and get in school?

But to limit us for our color, isn't that kind of cruel?

I mean, what's the real reason for this separation?

You can't really argue that it's not discrimination
if all of the blacks are being thrown in segregation.

It's no longer the war on drugs, it's war on the black race.

It's the new Jim Crow era destroying lives that we face. (**Nathaniel Robinson**)

SONGS OF OURSELVES



Song of Tori

I am a mother strong and wise
Learning, teaching, guiding,
guarding
I must learn in order to teach
I walk hand in hand to guide
I will guard and protect my

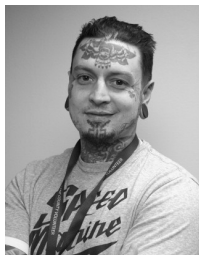
children with my life
I am a mother strong and wise.



Song of Charnice

Marked at birth with this
birthmark
Marked at birth with this good
heart
Marked at birth to withstand
the dark

Marked at birth with this birthmark



Song of Adrian

I am not just a canvas to speak
of on the city bus.
I am Adrian Ty, son of the
universe's gentle speed.
Not just a dish pit body soaked
with grime on my torso

when I run the trash out, 1:30 AM . . .

I am the father of twin miracles.

Miles Leo and Isaiah Randell Molitor
saved my life time and time again, my truest
friends.

Not just the black tar roofer burning in the sun
for my sons: my broken knees and back could
never pay you back for your love. All I ask in
return

is you live your lives with invisible ceilings,
that you love the world with your hearts
stronger than Dad.

I am a father on fire, a warrior's
gentle touch.



Song of James

I am James, the one everyone
around me
depends on to make s**t
happen.
I'm the one who never can
depend on me.

I'm the one who wants the most out of life.

I'm the one who doesn't love myself.

I'm the one who works to challenge myself. . .

I'm the one who is going
to move forward and make it.



Song of Selena

I am Selena, *como la flor*, like
the flower,
A flower with many roots and
piled
With the dirt from my native
land.

Como la flor, I'll be soaking up all the sun I
can,

Like my Aztec ancestors did. Like the
butterflies

That freely lay themselves on me,

I will grow from a naked stem to a petal-full
flower

Like the mane of a lion.



Song of Arioun

I'm short with a BIG presence.

My natural hair will give you life.

One day I will be somebody's wife.

God plays a big part in my life.

I smile to keep from frowning.

**Song of Guadalupe**

I am love.
Love is the one key that opens
any heart.
Love is the answer to destroy
hate and racism.
Love is in our blood ready to be

turned on.

When you feel like you are not worth it,
just remember it was love.
Because of an act of love, we all are alive,
and an act of love is why we continue to
survive.
Love will be all I am
until the moment that I die.

**Song of Hailey**

I am from the cold winters of
Wisconsin,
the granddaughter of farmers
and hard workers,
engineers and business
owners,

the daughter of a single mother,
one day becoming one myself.
Religion doesn't move me as much
as kindness.
I am a strong woman,
of many strong women.

**Song of Tandalaya**

Gun shots ringing, bullet shells
posted
School walking, cancer
surviving
Moving mother, whole hearted
Music inspired, Odyssey

touring

Author in training, Black and proud
Food adoring, actress motivated
Goal reaching, living life
A mother surviving

**Song of Bao**

I was born in Thailand.
The blood that runs through
me is Hmong.
Madison is my home, and one

day maybe

I can call Hawaii my home, too.
Hmonglish is what I've adapted to speaking.
My family still believes and practices
Shamanism.
Its magic helps heal our souls and bodies.

I am very blessed and very
determined.

**Song of Ameshia**

I am Ameshia Sade . . .
Born March 7th, 1986 in
Detroit, Michigan, at 7 PM at
Children's Hospital.

Born third of my mommy's three births, two
alive, one deceased.
I don't how she achieved burying a child, but
damn she's a beast.
Born fifth to my dad, he's the bestest friend I
never had
and I'm proud that he's my dad.
It's Pisces nation, so why you hatin'?
A hardworking mother, I have my starting five,
just call them The Fab 5.
They're my motivation, my reasons for being
alive.
I'll teach you all how to cook and even
sanitation.
When it comes to them, there is no such thing
as pride.
Day after day, I strive to be all that I can be
and to provide.
So many trials and tribulations, and we were
knocked down.
We got right back up, no hesitation.
Only thing I know is hard work and dedication.

I work hard to build this foundation
 just to see the smiles on all their faces.
 Moved from state to state thinking Damn just
 let me be great
 just to realize that thought process was just a
 mistake.
 Highly educated, my kids are what keep me
 motivated.
 they will never flake on me not even if it's
 anticipated I am.
 We are a team, and when the team works the
 dream works.
 African American descent, I'm beautiful
 and most of all intelligent.
 Everyone I come in contact with, I treat them
 with respect and am elegant.
 Ameshia is very unique, understanding, and
 last but not least very sweet.
 Don't be so quick to judge a book by its cover,
 you don't know my life nor my struggle,
 so let's see if you're able to walk my mile and
 let me see it with a smile.
 You can't, so please watch me take a bow with

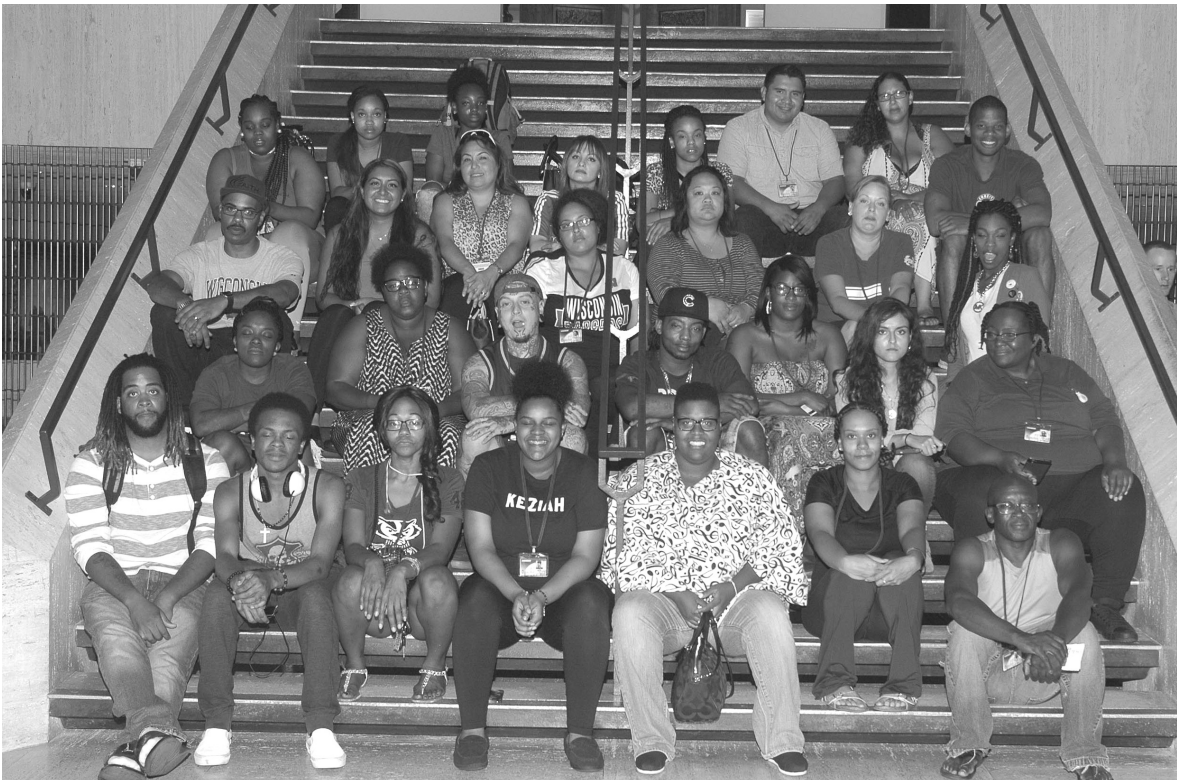
skin so thick it's hard to get up.
 Underneath, layers of pain like blood racing
 through my veins,
 blood pressure always high, never maintained,
 when your heart still beats after all the
 traumatic trauma it has sustained.
 Always true to myself, and that'll never
 change
 I am Ameshia Sade.

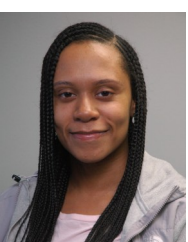
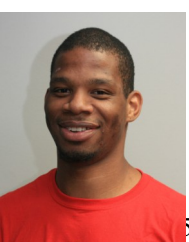
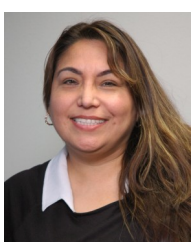
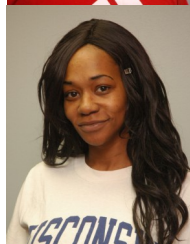
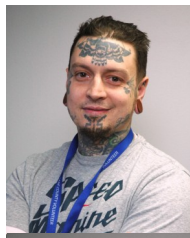


Song of Nathaniel

Difficult but loving
 caring and sharing
 sometimes I overthink
 live life on the brink
 I enjoy the stars, I enjoy the
 sand

I enjoy the vision of what I was and who I am.
 I am Nathaniel, one of a kind but come from a
 few.
 My background is rocky, my struggle if you
 only knew.
 I am somebody.





Song of the Odyssey Class of 2018

Inspired by Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself"

We are the Odyssey Class of 2018.

We have lived in Madison, Chicago, Janesville, New Orleans, Tucson, Memphis, and Mexico.

Our ancestors were born in China, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Norway, Ireland, France, Mexico, Spain, Ecuador, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Cuba, "some place in Africa," Wisconsin, Mississippi, Florida, Indiana, Illinois, Georgia, Missouri, New York, and Washington D.C.,

Speaking Spanish, English, Spanglish, French, Nahuatl, Arabic, Hmong, Hmonglish, Polish, and Sign Language,

Calling themselves Shaman, Methodist, Catholic, Lutheran, atheist, Muslim, Baptist, Buddhist, Pentecostal, Coptic, and nondenominational.

We have worked as a dry cleaner, dishwasher, flooring installer, caterer, Dollar Store cashier, waitress, dental assistant, cook, farmer, cleaner, carpenter, welder, potter, gardener, business owner, counselor, CNA, bilingual medical registrar, truck driver, garbage man, UPS driver, tank driver, Hazmat operator, bus attendant, McDonald's cashier, beauty consultant, YMCA childcare provider, house painter, taco wrapper, and lawn mower at a cemetery.

We are determined, friendly, loving, strong, happy, dreamy, smiley, lovable, affectionate, caring, difficult, hilarious, inspirational, passionate, driven, motivated, deep thinking, gentle, short, shy, aggressive, smart, respectful, kind-hearted, quiet, optimistic, good-natured, inquisitive, reserved, beautiful, and blessed.

We are the Odyssey Class of 2018.



Odyssey Project

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Please join us for a powerful evening!

Odyssey Class of 2018 Graduation Ceremony

Great Hall, Memorial Union

800 Langdon St, UW-Madison Campus



Wednesday, May 2, 2018, 6:30 – 8:00 pm

Reception Following

You are cordially invited to attend the inspiring and memorable graduation ceremony for students of the UW Odyssey Project class of 2018. Please join the faculty team—Project Director Emily Auerbach, Associate Director Kevin Mullen, Marshall Cook, Jean Feraca, and Craig Werner—in celebrating students' successful completion of six UW credits following two semesters studying great works of literature, American history, and philosophy.

PROGRAM

- 6:00** Check-in, refreshments, and music
- 6:30 to 8:00** Program featuring recognition of Odyssey supporters, remarks by Judge Everett Mitchell, and dramatic readings by graduates
- 8:00** Reception, refreshments, and music



"The Odyssey Project is a gem because students display the depth of their souls and talents."

--Judge Everett Mitchell

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