

ODYSSEY ORACLE

ODES TO ODYSSEY

When I first joined class
I was broken like glass
but I have gained so much knowledge
in college now I am strong
like platinum
as the books I stack them.
My future was a misery till I met Emily.
UW Odyssey gave me confidence.
I stand tall as a tree. (**Derrick McCann**)



When I think of Odyssey 2013,
I can see the dream team of knowledge,
a team of thirty now after so many
adversities bound for college,
so much knowledge in such a small place,
thirty lives that no one can ever erase.
When I think of my class,
and what we represent,
I think of Odyssey 2013,
a group ready to re-in-vent.
(**Michelle Whitman**)

In this Oracle . . .

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The Odyssey Class of 2013 ain't no joke.
We came from the bottom and now
we're at the top.
We became close friends and family
sharing our stories,
looking ahead for better worries.
We ain't stopping here, we gonna
keep climbing
until we reach the top
because we are Odyssey soldiers.
(**El-Rasheedah Wilson**)





Odyssey 2013 proved to be a place for me, for us.

Beauty, peace, acceptance of every distinct difference—enhanced, entranced by the transformative knowledge openly given. Escaping the “cave,” rising to see the light of the mind’s “sun” shining upon new and uncharted horizons. I can’t is not the Odyssey truth.

It is I can, we can and will, We did succeed.
(**James Morgan**)

This class of thirty is a rainbow, vibrant in all its color. Our differences bring us together. Our similarities make us laugh. We listen to one another. We shine together. The energy in the room is amazing every Wednesday night. We help each other grow through our discussions. We help each other grow through hearing the spoken words of pieces we’ve written. We are a beautiful mosaic. We are a puzzle that fits. We are fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and friends. We are Odyssey 2013. (**Sharisse Hancock**)

On this road was a journey, a journey only I could see, I’m glad to have these helpful steps to be there for me, These steps came in all sorts of races, languages, and ethnic backgrounds,

ideas, and traditions, but the love and support was all the same. On this road my amazing, inspiring, courageous, supporting cast of classmates has always been the helpful steps to my never-ending journey.
(**Tosumba Welch**)

This class of thirty in 2013 is an ocean wave. We’ve all had times where we’ve had our ups and downs. We ride high, crash low, but always seem to settle back into a confident and calm rocking motion. (**China Moon Crowell**)

Doctors, lawyers, professors are what I see when I look at the 2013 class of Odyssey.

Our minds are like sponges willing (wanting) to soak up knowledge all because we are deserving of going to college.



Once this course is completed, on to bigger and better.

As Odyssey grads that is our destiny, Thanks to the Odyssey Project, which is led by Emily. (**Jasmine Banks**)

My classmates, my teammates, My classmates are my teammates. The strong group of thirty. People from different places, different walks of life Gathering together every Wednesday.

We laugh and joke each day.

On the other hand, class gets serious. The discussions we have and the facts we learn

Bring all kinds of emotions From happy to sad, from angry to historical.

My teammates, From people who were complete strangers To a tight-knit family My classmates working hard together





Odyssey, my knowledge.
Through Odyssey,
I learned about American history.
I was never taught that
there were native languages
besides English.
I learned about diversity.
Through Odyssey,
I built my vocabulary.
Through Odyssey,
I am taking one step
toward my future. (**Jovite Rayaisse**)

To make everybody graduate
My classmates who make me want to come to class
My teammates, all survivors.
My classmates, I'm so glad to call you my
Teammates. (**Lewis Black**)

We are seeds so plant us plant us
We love Odyssey too.
We will grow so plant us plant us
We love Odyssey too
If you lead we will follow follow
We love Odyssey too
We love Odyssey too

The word is stop stopping
If you want different do something different
It feels great reinventing myself
in my educational world
It starts from the mind of thought
Then on paper, then you're doing it . . .
Something different,
Not world change but your change,
Changing yourself, growing your mind
with the help of others that really care.
Wow! I'll never be the same.
Thanks for the Odyssey experience. (**Angela Jordan-Jackson**)

Laughter, joy, and inspiration,
Learning from each other the value in opinions.
Although we are different shapes, colors, and
sizes,
Odyssey class of 2013
makes a perfect puzzle. (**Patrice Smith**)

This class is wild.
We are like third grade.
We giggle and laugh,
whisper and cry,
talk out of turn
with personal stories. (**Michelle Reams**)

When embarking on this journey
I didn't know what to expect,
Committing myself to go to class every
Wednesday?
What the heck!
Reading books, writing poems, and learning
of great men and women in history,
I loved the class so much that when they canceled
it during a storm I felt blistery.
The Odyssey Project is one for the books.
I've learned so much and will never forget.
The journey has started. (**Mary Millon**)





Odyssey class is not just a class,
but everything happens here.
Coming to this class has changed my
life
for the best.
It has helped me to be more open
and be able to express my feelings.
The teachers and the classmates are
like
families who support each other all
the time.
The class helps someone who had no
hope
to have it back and see further in
life.

As I look around I wonder
Who thinks about the struggles like me?
Who has been told the things I have been told?
Where will we all meet again?
As I think about both semesters,
I see so much growth.
My Odyssey class was destined for success.
We the Class of 2013 are the Odyssey Stars.
(**Brandon Williams**)

This class reminds me of gardening.
When you plant a seed,
it gets nourishment
and sunlight.
It grows and blossoms.
(**Tracey Cherry**)

A change has come
No more being told to be
quiet.
Who says now I have to?
I believe in today.
Do you?
I was told to believe in
myself.
You should no longer be
afraid.
But are you?
Fear used to be in my way
until I told fear to move.
Have you changed?
I have! (**LoLita Phillips**)

Since I came to this class,
I am a different person. (**Nancy Wambua**)

Odyssey Home
We have food
We have drink
We talk
We learn
We accept each other
We have all thirty of us
for a lifetime
We are all home for each other
Odyssey Home (**Tanatnan Chaipang**)



MAKING MORE METAPHORS

A crouching lion towards his prey,
using memory and patience to survey the region,
moving slowly and methodically
to set up the ambush,
I will leap into poetry, history, and writing
and dine, gorge, feast, and digest all that
they have produced.

Munroe Whitlock

I am a caterpillar wrapped up in a cocoon
keeping to myself
awaiting my chance to become
a beautiful butterfly
emerging soon

Shalonda Hilliard-Jones



I am a frog leaping for my dreams,
I am a frog that hates the winter cold.
I am a frog mistreated because of
my dark skin and different features.
I am a frog, one of the most
gentle, loving friends
if you get to know me.
I am a frog, most of the time
alone and quiet,
but when I meet the right team
this is for sure when my light will
shine.

Derrick McCann



I am a bird.
I love to fly and swim.
I like to fly to somewhere I've
never been
and somewhere that has a lot
of water
for me to take a break from
flying
and swim on a sunny day.
When summer comes,
I'll fly back to my home.

Tanatnan Chaipang



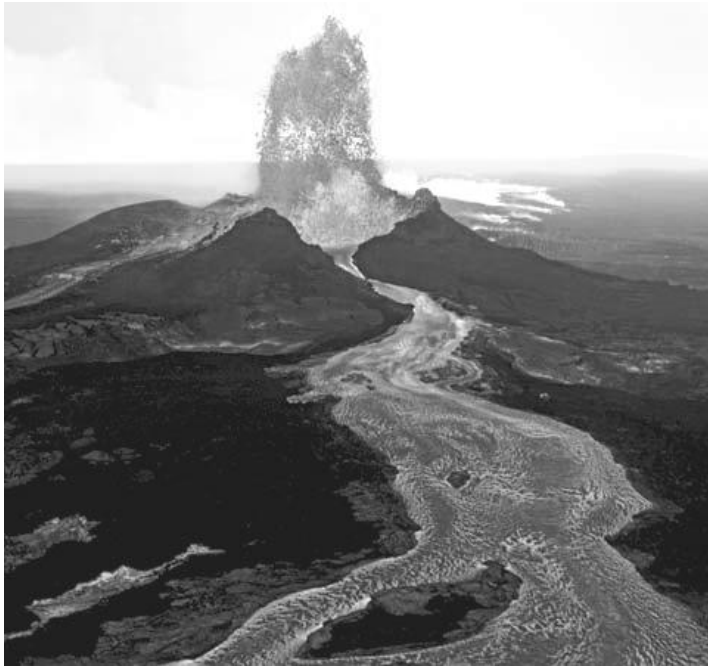
I am a body of water. I flow easily;
I often conform to whatever my situation may bring.
As quiet as I am, the ripples I make take great effect
when I want to make myself known.
I flow with the wind and stay in the background.
I have a calming appeal that everyone knows me for.
They often come to sit beside me to relieve their
anger
and relax their nerves.
Often I engulf those I love with support,
helping them float along whenever they get tired
of carrying the load on their own.
Sometimes I make a splash here and there.
For the most part, I am going with the flow,
allowing the wind to blow me in whatever direction.

Patrice Smith

I am an elephant,
Powerful and thick skinned,
Strong enough to power through any obstacle,
Not willing to let small things get through,
Wise and family oriented,
The master of my weakness.

Lewis Black

I am an erupting volcano
destroying the past so
I can begin fresh and new



I'm gonna be new again,
Clean, smelling good, crisp.

I'm new again,
Standing tall with no shame
Smiling and laughing
Proud to be me.

LoLita Phillips

I am a rose,
petals closed while cold
and uncertain.
I bloom in the warmth and joy
of a brighter environment.

Patrice Smith

for our future.
As I spew forth my lava,
I am producing diamonds, grass,
maybe even some trees and flowers.
Eventually I will clear out all the bad
I used to produce
and replace it over time
with good and new.

Eunice Conley

I am a bird who flies
freely
wherever nature takes
me.
I can't be boxed up
or locked up in a cage.
I have to venture
and spread my wings.
To and fro I go.
Freely. No cares. No worries.
I am free
to be the bird
with the brightest feathers.

Dominique Haskins

I was once old
Raggedy, torn, and used
Dirty but not to the core.

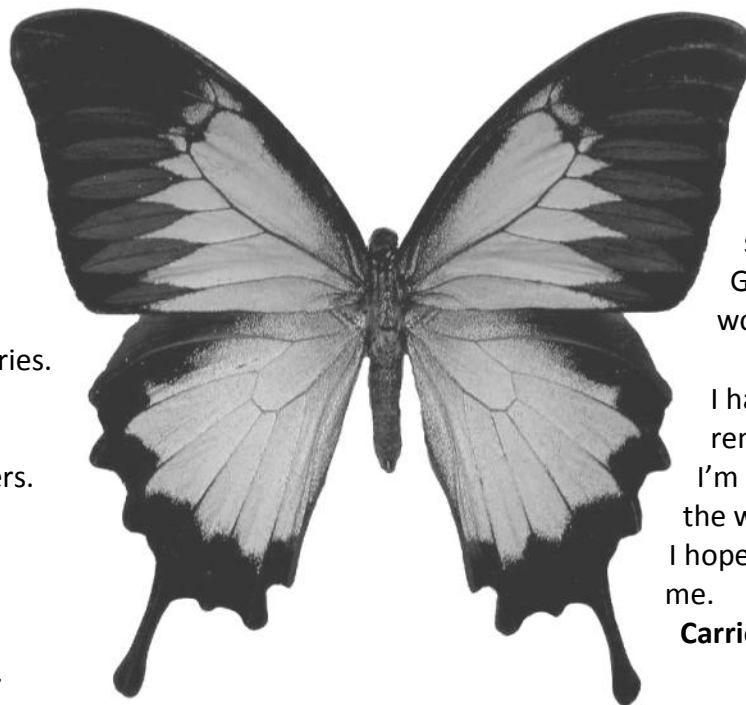
I am a butterfly and my world is my chrysalis.
My gifts are my wings made up of many colorful
parts
that are my experiences, which taught me to see
me.

Joy of life as when my sons were born.
Peace in nature and spirit when I watch a sunset.
Love of self and my creative power when I touch
something.

Hope of
celebration as I
dance with my
husband.
Compassion for
others when a
stranger hugs me.
Giving and sacrifice as I
work without wages.

I have awakened to a
renewed spirit and
I'm ready to fly and see
the world.
I hope the world is ready for
me.

Carrie Llerena Sesma



WITNESSING WALT WHITMAN



*"I celebrate myself, and sing myself,
And what I assume, you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me
as good belongs to you."*
The beginning of "Song of Myself" was powerful to me. Its power

comes from Walt Whitman initially celebrating himself. He goes further to say that whatever he thinks, we will and should think, too. The last part of the stanza shows his expression that everything within him that is righteous and positive belongs to his fellow man. **(Sharisse Hancock)**



*"I now thirty-seven years old in
perfect health begin hoping to
cease not till death."*
These lines caught my attention because Whitman claims to be in perfect health and hoping to move forward until the last day of his life. Personally, these words of

wisdom motivate me to continue to pursue my dreams. **(Angelica Cuahuey)**



*"You shall no longer take things at
second or third hand, nor look
through the eyes of the dead, nor
feed on the spectres in books."*
I chose this particular line from "Song of Myself" because it seems to correlate with what we are being taught in this class.

What this line meant to me was that instead of seeing things the way others did such as reading about it from books or ancestors, we should now see for ourselves and experience it through our own mind's eye. **(Michelle Whitman)**



*"Clear and sweet is my soul, and
clear and sweet is all that is not
my soul."*

This line to me simply says all souls are beautiful to him. He loves all people. He believes all are pure in heart. The inward man is who he speaks of here.

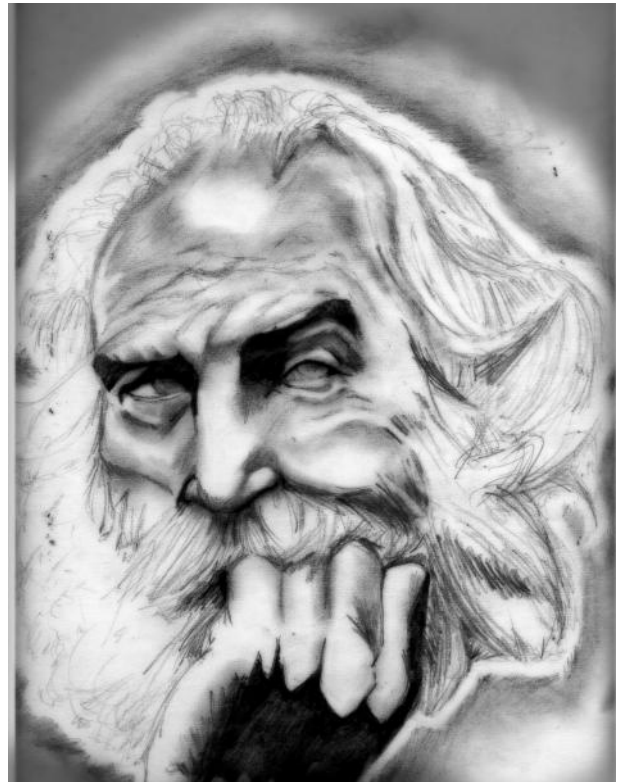
(Angela Jordan-Jackson)



*"You shall not look through my
eyes either, nor take things from
me. You shall listen to all sides and
filter them from yourself."*

I think this is saying that I will not get my understanding from others, not even from scientists, physicians, or teachers. I shall

listen to them but gather my understanding from myself. **(Munroe Whitlock)**



By Stanley Sallay '07



"I hear and behold God in every object."

I consider this to be a true and divine statement. After reading a book called *The Shack*, I have come to believe that my life is to be lived as if I am living heaven on earth. When Walt Whitman wrote the statement, "I hear and behold God in every object," I consider that the truth because I believe that God is everywhere. **(Jasmine Banks)**



That is a great line. I live day to day that everything is a blessing, everything is God in my life. It is not my doing but God looking over me. This means that you give God the power over your life and always acknowledge him and his great works. **(Derrick McCann)**



"The feeling of health, the full-noon trill, the song of me rising from bed and meeting the sun."

That's how I feel every morning I awake. I'm healthy, alive, and breathing, waking up happy that the sun is shining brightly on me. **(Shalonda Hilliard-Jones)**



"There was never any more inception than there is now, nor any more youth or age than there is now, . . . nor any more heaven or hell than there is now."

I think this means that we are exactly in the place where we are supposed to be at this moment.

Embrace life. Don't waste time worrying about things like age, starting over, wrong and right. Have faith that the good will prevail, and move in love with life for now. **(Carrie Llerena Sesma)**

"I exist as I am, that is enough, If no other in the world be aware I sit content, and if each and all be



aware I sit content."

These lines in Whitman's "Song of Myself" in essence describe my journey in search of myself. I'm of the opinion that each of us has an innate desire and need to understand our purpose in life. I believe that one of the primary gifts we encounter is simply to accept the "wisdom" that "I exist as I am, that is enough." These lines bring a degree of self-acceptance, self-knowledge, and love. **(James Morgan)**



"Has any one supposed it lucky to be born? I hasten to inform him or her it is just as lucky to die, and I know it."

I chose this line because I feel it and agree with it. I feel lucky and appreciate that I have been born. I'm enjoying my little life, but if one

day I have to die, I won't think it's bad. I think it's a good adventure for my soul. **(Tanatnan Chaipang)**



"I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass I love. If you want me again, look for me under your boot soles."

I love this stand-out part of the poem. I chose this as it spoke to directly to me. We're all going to return to Mother Earth in one form or another once our expiration date comes about. No matter the surroundings or the technology, we are reflective and a part of the cosmos. You can be here, in Madison, Wisconsin, or in Cuba, Laos, or Baltimore, Egypt; our existence in nature is any and everywhere. **(China Moon Crowell)**

"The runaway slave came to my house and stopt outside. I heard his motions crackling the twigs of the woodpile. Through the swung half-door of the kitchen I saw him limpsy and weak."

I chose these lines because of the way he described the slave as scared. The words he used made me



visualize what's going on. The slave was hiding and needed help. Walt Whitman must have been caring and brave. He helped the slave by putting bandages on him. This is meaningful to me because I like helping people.
(Tracey Cherry)



*"You shall not look through my eyes either, nor take things from me,
You shall listen to all sides and filter them from yourself"*

I chose this sentence because I really felt connected to it. I loved the whole stanza and what he had to say throughout the entire poem, but these few lines I've chosen have really stood out.

What I take from this portion of the poem is that people should get all facts and knowledge before going with someone else's opinions and believing in their anecdotes. Don't believe in one side of the story without listening to all sides. It's easy to place judgment before knowing all truths.

Akilah Freeman



"Hoping to cease not till death."

He does not want to end what he is doing until he dies, for he has a hope to keep on going. I have the same hope: until I die, to keep on trying any opportunity that I get until I achieve what I want. When things get rough or the obstacles

are all over and in my way, I will never give up, for I have determination to continue to live until I die. (Nancy Wambua)

EDITORIAL CORNER



Stop Racial Profiling By Sharisse Hancock

Does racial profiling exist in Wisconsin? I've found it does, both statistically and personally. In Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the Milwaukee Sentinel found that police stop black drivers seven times more than white drivers. The Sentinel's analysis of nearly 46,000 traffic stops showed that racial minorities are swimming in prejudice.

On a personal level, my father is an African-American man who resides in Madison, Wisconsin. He has been pulled over countless times for assumed traffic violations. Being an African American male is the key reason I believe he is initially pulled over. One may assume a black person in a nice car has to be up to trouble. One may also assume a black person stole the car, is

doing something illegal, or possesses something illegal in their car. All of these assumptions could potentially be true. However, in my father's case they are false assumptions. He is still pulled over regardless.

I also have been pulled over two times in the past year. I was assumed to have done a traffic violation. One of these occasions I was on the side of the road with my daughter in the car for 45 minutes. The officer was waiting on the response from running my license. I believe his assumption was that I had a record. I did not; therefore, I received a bogus ticket.

These personal experiences and the statistic above have formed my position that Wisconsin police departments should be monitored for racial profiling. I believe this will ensure that these situations do not continue to occur for minority citizens.



Black Boys Shouldn't Have Targets on Their Backs **By Munroe Whitlock**

African American males are dropping out of school at an alarming rate. The drop rate for young black boys began to increase in Wisconsin, especially in Milwaukee, in the mid to late 1960s. This was during the time when a President, two Civil Rights leaders, and an Attorney General were assassinated.

There was a decrease in the level of trust towards the U.S. government and a fear that the government did not have the black man's interest at heart.

By the mid-1970s and 1980s, it was more common for a black boy to drop out of school than to graduate. Police officers across the country began to target black boys and charge them with crimes they did not commit. During the 1980s and 1990s the floodgates that the U.S. government opened to cocaine trafficking were flowing like the Mississippi River.

By the mid-1990s and 2000s it became a trend for the police to clean up their open cases with any black boy's name where they could make the case fit. Cocaine continues to run rampant in low income communities. Yes, there is a target on the backs of black boys, and it continues to get larger.

We can fight the problem by volunteering in after school programs. There is research that supports an improvement in a child's desire to learn when that child is striving in education by the time they reach the third grade. Madison's school system plans to implement a program that is geared towards this goal. Come on, people, let's help!

High Risk: Black Athletes **By James Morgan**

The black athlete, whether the chosen sport is basketball, football, or boxing, must be required to



study the impact of racial stereotypes and the short and long term risks of their professions.

The United States has via its racial heritage, fear of black male intellectualism, and physical biology created areas—primarily sports and the military—to harness and contain the economic, political, and social mobility of black males. Black males, particularly young blacks, are bombarded with the imagery of richer status and mobility showered upon the athlete in our culture. Yet little or no attention is given to the risks of long term injury, physical, emotional and mental.

What must be understood is that the racial stereotype of the black male during the era of slavery exists in and is celebrated in the sports arena. The athlete is in boxing a "brute," a "killer," a "beast," "cunning," "swift," and oftentimes in need of "control" by his "coach" or "manager"; i.e. "master"!

Without exception, it is the black athlete who is potentially in harm's way: fractures, broken bones, brain damage, high levels of stress, and in some instances financial ruin, packaged, contained, and directed by his superior white counterpart or "coach."

The black athlete is deemed non-threatening in these various "entertainment" fields. Little is required of him in the application of strategic planning and/or execution, yet as in slavery and post-slavery America, his physical attributes command center stage.

Black athletes need to be required to study the historical significance of the concept of racial stereotypes, the impact of slavery, and white male fear of black intellectualism upon the "high risk" professions they're deemed qualified to participate in.

SONGS OF OURSELVES



Song of Tracey

By Tracey Cherry

I am short and stout
Quiet as a snake
But once you get to know me
And realize who I am,
I'm a friendly and caring
person.

I guess that is why at times
I shut myself down.
I try too hard to be there for others,
And be there for myself.
But for now I'm going to just take
One day at a time
And think about my ten grandchildren,
So many I can have a baseball team.



Song of Amber

By Amber Turner

I am who I am
A woman who came from a
woman's womb
Who grew vigorously through
the views of the world
And visual experiences of life

I am a mother who came from a mother's womb
Who bore a son, child and man.
I am a provider for my son, for myself, for my
family.
Who am I? I am powerful, strong, and persistent
I am built of knowledge which I will timeline to
my child.
I am who I am because I know who I am.

Song of Britney

By Britney Sinclair

I love the woman I became
The progress that I've made
The secrets and lies I overcame
I feel light, as I swiftly dance off my feet



I feel sound, as I listen to the
rhythm from the streets
I feel whole, as my heart is no
longer dead
Was misplaced . . . broken . . .
uncertain
Was deprived . . . starving . . .
caved

Lost so far within myself I gave so much to the
devil's hand
Now spirited . . . complete . . . at peace
Now revived . . . full . . . opened
Found so much within myself, I gave so much
into God's hand
I love the woman I became



Song of Dominique
By Dominique Haskins

I am who I am.
Don't try to change me
Or rearrange me,
Accept me for the person I am.
I cannot be boxed up. I have to
spread

my wings and fly. I am timid
at times, but comfortable in my
skin. I am a dreamer and adventurer.
I am who I am. I celebrate myself.
Who else will?



Song of China Moon
By China Moon Crowell

A goal setter, through struggle
and strife
Good girls are nice, but 'rarely do
they make history.'
I am my own worst enemy,
although a

trustworthy friend and harsh critic.
Definitive validation is no stranger on my
stoop, but it rarely knocks, and when it enters
it makes itself right at home.

The more I run towards the goal of the finish line,
the farther away it seems.
So I'll live and learn with the scenic route
and view the beauty of the world from
a plane, a train, or a pair of salsa shoes.



Song of Akilah
By Akilah Freeman

I am a queen,
a female monarch in my own
way.
In life's game of chess
I am the most valuable piece in
play.

I am a woman noted for her beauty and
accomplishments.
A woman of wisdom with little to repent.

I am a mother, daughter and sister.
I am a scholar, teacher, and leader.
I am unchained yet held prisoner to diversity,
obliged to listen and obey,
but no, I will be proud of what I have to say.



Song of Carrie
By Carrie Llerena Sesma

I can't sit still just idle,
I feel my hands to twitch,
Body wound, tight is the bridle,
Lights go on like a switch.

An idea comes upon the wall
Instinctively I must take it.
Leave the others, pass them all
The drive I cannot shake it.

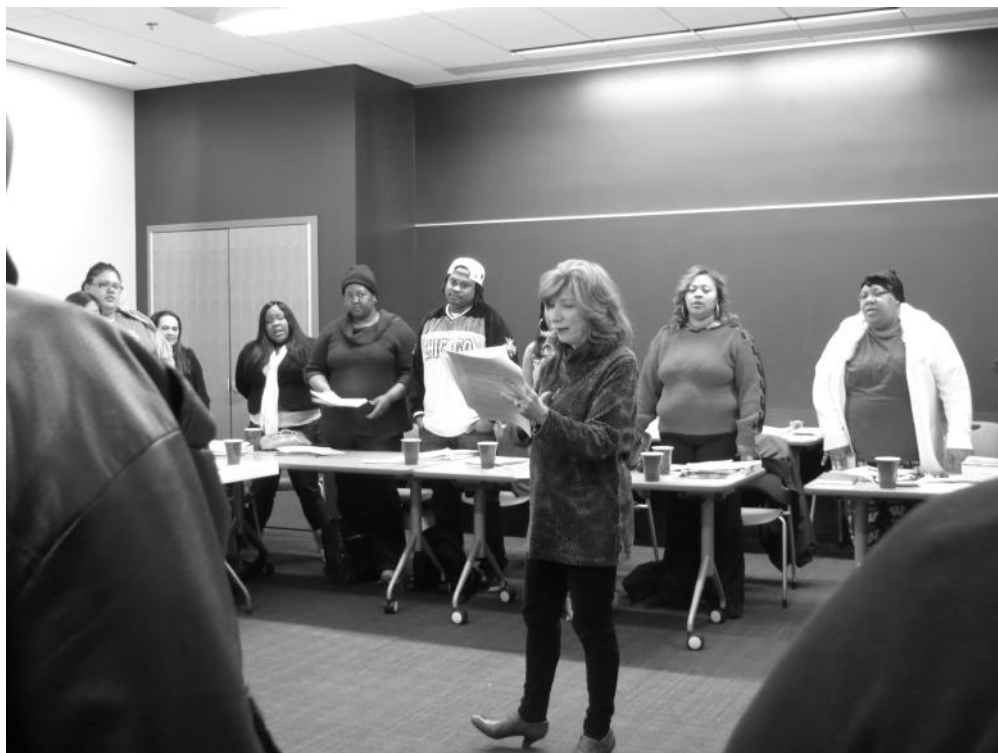
This heart of mine does smile
Inner joy and pure beauty
Can't help it, for others I go the mile,
As if it is my duty.

I have no peace with sleeping,
I dream of painting skies.
All mine, demands are creeping,
Thank God for the supplies.

I am the breeze that presses through me in the
night,
The colors everywhere at break of day.
I am a vessel full of refreshing life,
And the time that slips away.

I am full of hope and share it greatly,
When upon your face I see
The despair that robbed you of your smile
Let me rock you tenderly.

I am hands small like pots growing instantly of
life,
To make way for our garden.
I am the potter's wheel holding many forms,
Make it rain so it won't harden.



Love me
Love yourself
Don't hate
Being positive
Loving my life
Today, Tomorrow, and
forever.



Song of Tanatnan
By Tanatnan Chaipang

I am a little Thai girl.
I am five foot three



Song of Rasheedah
By Rasheedah Wilson

I am a woman of many talents,
Resting in the sun.
Many things are meant for me,
But few will get done.
I'm from a long journey of my
kind,

Swaying back and forth.
My dreams are becoming close,
I can feel them in my sleep.
My path was distant, not in my range,
I had to crawl, walk, and run to find.
My destiny shall come forth,
So it all begins.

inches tall and 115 pounds.
I love eating food, and sometimes
I eat more than a big man.
I chew real well before I swallow
So I can eat more and enjoy most.
When I'm full, I love to sing,
Sing out loud in my little quiet home.



Song of Jovite
By Jovite Rayaisse

I am an African woman,
proud to be.
I came from a small country,
Burkina Faso,
with sixty-three dialects.
Proud to be a woman with five



Song of LoLita
By LoLita Phillips

I'm me
Just beautiful as can be
Writing lovely
Talking and laughing always
Until the end of time.

languages.
With that, I cannot be lost in any African country.
I am a rare pearl,
Like my name "Jovite"
Joyful, smiley, no matter what,
I am an open hand to whoever comes.



Song of Tuwile
By James Morgan a.k.a. Tuwile

I honor myself, without
 conceit, and breathe
 myself,
 Shallow, deep and flowing
 over stones, straight,

jagged—cutting.

I am that which speaks in silent rhythms. . .

Beating in static pace—hummingbird-like,
 Elements of the African Elephant in
 memory,

Returning to the place where the Sun,
 Moon, and Stars are created.

I am without circumference, 360 degrees times
 seven,

The River Nile, where life is . . .

Life, I am a Black Panther, an Angelfish,
 A constantly changing, shapeless cloud formed
 In mystery—revealed in the “Eye” of the Storm.
 Sing me, singing you I AM that which
 Speaks in mystery, flowing over, flowing in
 Silent Rhythm.



Song of Shalonda
By Shalonda Hilliard-Jones

I may be quiet, timid, and shy,
 but I’m ambitious, eager, and
 anxious.

I sit watching, observing, and
 listening,
 learning every day.

I’m like a turtle in a shell,
 slowly coming out.

But one day I will be
 a courageous, extroverted woman,
 as my peers sit watching,
 observing, and listening to me
 as I teach them.

Song of Michelle
By Michelle Whitman

That sweet melody that soothes the soul,



the priceless masterpiece from
 grandparents of old.
 You look in these eyes,
 seeing forgone hopes of fortune
 and self,
 Attached to this body that’s toil
 worn,
 a mind full of knowledge waiting to

be born.

If you come even closer and look deep within,
 you will find sacrifice, selflessness,
 and a need to give back and not in.
 I am the homeless, the hungry, the thirsty, and
 unemployed,
 I-am-you, a treasure.
 I am in my song beyond all measure.
 Yes, I’m a work of art, one of God’s creations.
 Whatever my failures or achievements,
 I am in accordance with God’s plans.
 Today and every day know my song as that
 of bended knees and praying hands.



Song of Lewis
By Lewis Black

Lightning striking the dry ground,
 Setting fire to my camp.
 All there is and ever was up in
 flames,
 Why is this happening to me?
 Is this some type of game?



I got to get out of this awful place.
 Slowly the heat is getting closer.
 Scrambling, trying to find a way out
 But I can't.
 Panic and anxiety are setting in,
 But I went to Boy Scouts
 So I know how to be prepared.
 All my tools are engulfed,
 Damn, I'm starting to feel scared.
 I have no bucket of water
 No way to extinguish a path
 What should I do? Can't cry out for help.
 I'm in a desolate land all by myself
 I got to get out of this awful place.
 Heart is beating harder and faster
 Closer and closer the flames creep
 Faster and harder it beats as it moves
 Soon it will engulf me if I don't do something.
 Trees crackling, dry grasses fueling
 Everything turning to ash, the heat is intense
 Soon that will be me unless I find a way to save my
 ass.
 Scrambling, scrambling, trepidation, trepidation
 Walls of flames growing, engulfing me
 Flames getting really tight now,
 So much so that I can feel it on the back of my skin.
 I got to get out of this awful place.
 Kneeling down to avoid the heat
 But it has me now in the palm of its hand,
 I have no choice, I've got to give in,
 Realizing my time is coming to an end.
 So I pray then and relax myself,

At that very moment, the strangest thing happened.
 The inferno released, and breeze called in,
 Trees and grass rejuvenated, birds flying overhead,
 Nothing like before
 What's going on? I thought I was dead.
 Then it dawns on me, it was all an illusion
 I'm free. All I had to do was relax
 'cause it was all in my mind.



Song of Jasmine **By Jasmine Banks**

All I want to do is sleep. I want to
 securely lock up my house, the same
 way vacationers look up their
 summer home at the end of the
 season, put a sign on my front door
 that says no one is home, close the
 blinds, pull the drapes and six steps to my bedroom
 at the end of the hall, lock my bedroom door and
 put on the most comfortable top and bottom I own
 that are fresh from the dryer and smell
 unmistakably of Downy, climb into my black queen-
 sized sleigh bed, sink into my European pillow top
 mattress that is dressed in a crisp new set of the
 highest quality Egyptian sheets that have just been
 taken off the outside line to dry and smell
 overwhelmingly of the fresh spring air that they
 danced in but are as cool and crisp as a perfect fall
 evening, get underneath my new Ikea white as snow
 down comforter, lay my head on down pillows filled
 to feather perfection and made with love by an
 Amish woman, who for me has no name, that were
 given as a gift from a man that loves me
 unconditionally, crawl up like a ball in my bed as I
 listen to the winter song snowflakes make as they
 fall from the sky and change to April spring showers
 that turn into May flowers, and roll into summer
 days where the sun rises both high and brightly to
 tell the birds it is time to awaken the sleeping, which
 gently turns into fall as the leaves change colors and
 begin to descend from trees to replenish the earth
 from which they came. I have felt like that for the
 last eight years. Is that odd that all I want to do is
 sleep?



Song of Munroe
By Munroe Whitlock

Born very small and premature,
Emotionally sensitive and somewhat insecure,
Raised in a family of ambition and lots of fight,
Courageous and talented and willing

to work all night.

Isolation being my friend

Allowed me to become creative and dream without end.

Watching people, people watching became a joy of life,

Getting closer, learning of them, helped open my eyes.

Eyes wide open to the lives I beheld created joy and friendly

Relationships, removed sensitivity and insecurity,
And helped allow me to be me.



Song of Angie
By Angela Jordan-Jackson

I am a voice that's striving to succeed.

I'm a child that was born through poverty.

My song is happy, my song is sad.
It seems I'm going to make it

No matter what comes my way.

My scars are healing as I gain wisdom

For I was made for healing, so I hurt first.

But Wow! Now I'm powerful,

Manifested through the trials and tribulations

in life, I'm me.

Good morning, sun.

I am here.

Song of Sharisse
By Sharisse Hancock

I am Sharisse, loving and strong.

I strive to help all I come in contact with.

I love making people laugh and smile.



I experience joy any time my daughter is involved.

I am a mix of both of my parents.

I am funny like my Dad and caring like my Mom.

I see myself in my daughter's eyes.
Her eyes are mine and my eyes are hers.

I am full of energy most of the time.

I am positive and bring out the positive in others.

If I were to compare myself to something,
It would be the sun.

The sun is the earth's energy source
And helps many things grow.

I am bright and beam like the sun.

I love seeing growth in others.

I am Sharisse.

I love me unconditionally.



Song of Derrick
By Derrick McCann

Dreamer always doing what the world will say is not reality has a heart of gold the confidence of a warrior has a humble soul real as platinum a leader a living legend loves music and art God-fearing

man blessed beat the odds never take no as the final answer Momma's only son loves comedy and jokes strong black man a friend, uncle, son, grandson, nephew, cousin, father, a man with a story, once it



is told will change lives and inspire history in the making.



Song of Angelica
By Angelica Cuahuey

I am an intelligent woman who dreams of a better life.
I had encounters with numerous obstacles in life.
I am a friend, sister, mother, and partner

Who cares, loves, and respects others,
Who believes education is the path to success,
Who doesn't get flustered,
Calm, quiet, listening, learning,
Brave to take the risk of college,
All the while taking care of children, house, and responsibilities,
Wishing to be organized in all parts of my life,
I choose to be knowledgeable
With dreams of a better future.



Song of Nancy: Like a Stranger
By Nancy Wambua

I feel like a stranger living in a different country.
Sometimes I feel a little bit confused, experiencing new things,
having difficulties accepting another

type of society,
difficulties in getting to a new way of life and adjusting to it,
everything almost changed.
different lifestyle, habits, and culture,
eating different types of food,
difficulties in getting a job.
leaving my friends and family behind,
change of climate,
having frustrations of missing things that were familiar to me.
Everything I used to accomplish easily became hard to accomplish,
hopefully for a better future



Song of Tosumba
By Tosumba Welch

Well, rocks are my pillow, the cold ground is my bed,
The highway is my home, Lord, I might as well be dead.

I'm traveling and traveling, and it seems I have no place to go,
My mother's dead and gone, and my family drove me away from their door.
I've got one pair of shoes, don't even have a change of clothes,
I've got one pair of shoes, don't even have a change of clothes.
One day I'm gonna find my mother's grave, fall on her tombstone and die.



Song of Mary
By Mary Millon

This lady wears many hats.
She is a daughter, mother, sister, wife, cousin, friend, and even an enemy.

This lady is a mother who is proud of her kids, and missing one child so dear to her heart that was taken too soon.
This lady has been a caretaker, patient, student, worker, physiologist, lawyer and baker.
Some days this lady finds it hard to find herself with so many hats to wear.
Some days this lady never knows what script will be placed before her, what scene she is in now.
Some days feel dark and dreary, other days are lighthearted and playful—some more so than others.
This lady is excited by the possibilities of the future, yet haunted by her past,
she is scared by little yet terrified by much.
This lady is steadily moving forward sometimes feeling left behind.
This lady shines from the inside out, but is invisible to some.
This song is a lady and that lady is me.

DISCOVERING DEXTER GORDON

As part of a "Dexter at 90" program, Maxine Gordon visited South Madison to introduce the film "Round Midnight" starring her late husband, the legendary saxophonist Dexter Gordon.

Before meeting Maxine Gordon on March 13, Odyssey students had a chance to watch the film and listen to some of the recordings of the music of Dexter Gordon.

Thanks to Jonathan Gramling and Laurie Greenberg for the photos in this section.

I watched "Round Midnight." This movie was about a French music lover who befriends a jazz artist and attempts to save him from self-destruction. Dexter Gordon plays Dale Turner. He is forgotten in his home country, so he decides to move to Paris in search of a more supportive audience. He struggles with alcoholism, drug addiction, and depression. The movie showed the love of music and jazz. It was long, but it kept my interest. The best phrase in the movie was, "Even the most beautiful things that you find can be the most painful!" There was a lot of saxophone playing in this movie. (**Dominique Haskins**)

"Round Midnight" is a film that shows the life of a jazz musician (Dale Turner) who was living in Paris. Dale had a big struggle with alcoholism. . . . A Frenchman admires him for his music. He befriends Dale and tries to help him to escape alcohol abuse

because he was obsessed with his music. Dale's relationship with the Frenchman and his young daughter revives his spirit and his music.

(**Nancy Wambua**)

"Round Midnight" was a good movie with lots of emotions and a sad ending. The musician slowly loses the battle with alcoholism. Dale Turner's life could have been saved but nobody was there with him to help. He met a Parisian man, François, with his daughter, who was inspired by the musician. They start to build a good relationship. . . . The movie didn't say how or where he died. It was a sad ending for such a good musician. (**Jovite Rayaisse**)

"Round Midnight" was a movie that takes you a while to really get into. . . . Dexter Gordon was outstanding in his role as Dale Turner. I found myself actually thinking of Dale as a real person

instead of a character. François Cluzet was also great as a supporting actor in his role as Francis. One of the main perks of the film for me was the music. I love jazz, and there was so much talent in this movie. You can't help but feel the pain of seeing such phenomenal talent rise and fall and then rise again, only to end as incomplete as he began. If you can make it through the first half of this movie, it will be worth it. . . . This movie brought up memories of Billie Holiday and how the music industry can swallow you up in drugs and alcohol if you aren't well grounded.



This movie . . . is a must-see for any fan of jazz or Dexter Gordon. (**Michelle Whitman**)

I enjoyed "Round Midnight," the fictional story of saxophonist Dale Turner, played by Dexter Gordon. In this movie we see that Dale Turner has moved to Paris, in flight of a dispiriting music career in America. In Paris, he befriends a young man named Francis Borler, who admires him for his music. Francis basically sees the trouble that Dale Turner has gotten himself into with drug addiction, depression, and alcoholism. . . . The jazz music was great. Herbie Hancock was the musical presence in this movie as well.

I also was very pleased to have met the widow of Mr. Gordon. Maxine Gordon was much younger than her husband. She told us about going to The Oscars as well as the "Black Oscars," which is basically an underground awards show for the Black actors and actresses in Hollywood. I found that story to be amazing, as I never knew of such a thing. She told us of Dexter's strong personality, funny ways, and one-liners that left

people in awe of the things he said. He played with many other famous jazz musicians. It sounded like Maxine and Dexter Gordon had an incredible life together. (**Mary Millon**)

I listened to some audio of Dexter Gordon and really enjoyed it. It made me feel relaxed and peaceful. My daughter said she liked it also. I found him to be attractive in his day. His music sounds like he would have played at the Cotton Club in New York City. Nice music and nice drink equals Dexter Gordon. (**El-Rasheedah Wilson**)

Taking time out of my day to listen to some Dexter Gordon has become a soothing part of my life. His tracks "Don't Explain" and "Georgia on My Mind" are masterpieces in my eyes. I love jazz music. I always have cared for the sounds of a jazzy saxophone, the plucking of a bass, or an acoustic guitar, and I like the smoothness of a swift player's fingers over a keyboard or piano. I can't live without hearing a jazzy beat so warm that it relaxes the soul. It's as if I'm taking a stroll down a city light-filled park on a summer night or





having dinner in a small club where the only round of applause is finger snaps. Jazz is by far the most peaceful music I've ever heard. Mr. Dexter Gordon adds a twist to his music that puts his signature on the list of jazz legends. **(Akilah Freeman)**

When I first played "Lady Bird," the song reminded me of an old television movie, "Creature Feature." That song was the first jazz song that I fell in love with. That song relaxed me even as I waited for the monsters to appear on the television screen. I also liked "Georgia on My Mind." This song soothes me and helped my racing mind to slow down. Now I understand why people listen to jazz music. I never understood until now. It's like listening to a slow and mature conversation with myself. **(LoLita Phillips)**

Dexter Gordon, the American jazz tenor saxophonist, made music that really touched my mind, body and soul. I am amazed and speechless. How can the great soothing tones from one instrument change my mood with no words? Dexter Gordon's "Cheese Cake" took my worrying mind into a roller coaster of relaxation as I relaxed and closed my teary eyes. I see a vision one day of me getting dressed up in a suit and

tie. On my arm is a beautiful lady in a red dress, and on her feet are red heels. Somehow my pain turns to joy. I feel loved, embraced, and accomplished as the brilliant light shines on us, as if we are the last two people on earth. I open my eyes in confusion and frustration. Somehow I have daydreamed and realize my love was just a fantasy fictional character in my mind. Dexter Gordon has reminded me that there is great power when music and imagination are combined. This can send your brain and feelings to a world of your own.

Somehow I have found myself listening to a powerful work of art called "Where are you?" I seem to somehow find it difficult to stand still. I seem to rock my shoulders from side to side as I close my eyes. Somehow in my mind I picture a woman sent from heaven. She is extremely blessed, hair done, nails polished with a heart of gold. I don't know her race, but she has a glow of an angel. My heart beats for her. My body seems to lust for her touch, but maybe I need to stop daydreaming and make this a reality. Where are you? This great song really changed and empowered my self-esteem and confidence. I believe that my dream can become a reality. If Dexter Gordon's music can change my world in a dream and bring about a vision, then I am sure because of him I can change my world in reality. **(Derrick McCann)**



A Note From Maxine Gordon

The Odyssey Project was the highlight of my visit to Madison. Congratulations on your great work. Everything about Odyssey is wonderful. I am totally impressed and so glad to have met everyone. I plan to be back in Madison for the “Romare Bearden: A Black Odyssey” exhibit in the fall at the Chazen Museum of Art. I know the Black Odyssey event will be even better with the inclusion of the Odyssey Project. —Maxine Gordon



THE ART OF ROMARE BEARDEN



