

# Odyssey Oracle

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## I Love . . .

I love writing. When I write, I release many things. I heal through writing. Writing is an escape tactic I use when I don't want to be bothered with anybody or anything in the world. . . I love writing.

*I am a volcano,  
Erupting words into poems,  
Being pressured by life,  
I release comfort to you.  
I am a volcano,  
Erupting words into poems,  
Sharing a gift so precious  
With the whole wide world.*

**(Yolanda Cunningham)**



I love Odyssey because Odyssey makes me feel at home. Odyssey makes me feel like I have a family, friends, someone I can run to when I need help, a shoulder to cry on, a hand to hold on to when I feel like falling. Every day is a smile that was put on my face. Odyssey can tell me what's right and wrong. I love Odyssey, and Odyssey loves me.

**(Linda Thao)**

I love my kids because they are the only ones who love me truly, forever and ever. I love it when my daughter Heidi says with tears in her eyes, "Mom, please ask God for you to be my mom if we have the opportunity to live again in heaven." I love it when my son says, "Look what a beautiful mom I own!" How can I not love them? I love them more than I ever thought.

**(Elvira Rodriguez)**





I love how my son calls me Mommie.  
 I love how his smile brightens my day.  
 I love when I'm able to be Superwoman.  
 I love how one kiss makes everything better.  
 I love how when I cry, he cries.  
 I love seeing me in him.

I love him.  
 (Shaquida Johnson)



I love to see hard hits in football, like when the quarterback gets blindsided and his body jolts forward in a jerking motion. It's pure excitement when two athletes collide at their highest speed with bad intentions of destruction ahead. Now that's when you hear that crushing sound—shoulder pads on shoulder pads. The sound of crushing hits sends my blood jumping and my heart racing as fast as a race

car at top speed.

I tell you I love hard hits, like when the quarterback leads his wide-out on a route to be blindsided by a cornerback. It's like a car accident waiting to happen—blam! smash! I'm just waiting to see if he will get up. Will he be dizzy like a drunken sailor? It's all out of fun. That's why I love hard hits in football.

(Donta Starr)



I love standing in my driveway looking at the constellation of stars. On a clear night I can see the defined shape of the Big and Little Dipper clearly. I love when the seasons change and the leaves on the trees turn different colors—orange, yellow, red, and purple.

I love seeing the first heavy snow and everything in sight is covered in white. I love sitting in my recliner reading a good book on a rainy day. I love nature.

(Phyllis Anderson)



I love living a life worth living because it brings me joy. For me, 1997 was without a doubt the darkest year of my life. Addicted to the speed of life (and all the negatives the streets could offer), I just could not slow down. Then all of a sudden Boom! The lights went completely out.

On September 11, 1997, I woke up simultaneously with my infant daughter's mother, Detrice Thurman. We looked at our daughter's face while she was asleep. My exact words were, "Oh, she is so beautiful, ain't she?" I went to rub her chest and stomach as she slept. Detrice responded, "Yes, she sure is," as she touched her. Out of her mouth came a scream I'll never forget. My baby, Jada Ollieanna Judia Moten, was dead. She was icy cold, and all I could think about was dying with her.

Yes, suicidal thoughts knocked on my door... constantly. I had no desire to live. All I wanted was to not wake up another day missing my baby. I don't wish this pain and depression I'm speaking about on anyone, for that would make me one of the

cruellest persons to walk the face of the earth.

But all of that was 1997. Eleven years later, in 2008, God gave me another reason to live. He gave me my only begotten son, Eli Samuel Moten. Ever since then, I have been able literally to laugh out loud at my foolish thoughts in the midst of grief (my own) and thank God daily as he has blessed me with two more beautiful babies, the latest one looking a lot like Jada in her infancy.

Even though they don't exactly fill that empty space in my heart for Jada, they do bring me infinite joy. It makes my life worth living. This, my friends, is what I truly love: life!

**(Juba Moten)**



I love Lucille and Trixie. I met Lucy about six months before Trixie, but we are one now. Most people don't understand our relationship, but to us it's perfect. Sure, Lucy has been around the block. So what, she has some miles on her but she's low maintenance.

Trixie is always down to ride. When Trixie had her accident, I took care of her. She doesn't even care about that scare anymore. What I love about her most is that no matter what, she's always down to ride—until winter, that is, because she hates the cold. Lucy and I spend the rest of the year talking, singing, and playing in the snow.

But nothing is like spring when I can have them both—Lucy with that big backside I like and Trixie with her petite frame. It gets hard to choose, but I feel like the luckiest man in the world to have them. Alysia gets jealous and says, "Geez, Run, it's just a truck and a motorcycle!"

**(Run Barlow)**



I love that I have family because there are tough times that really have me down, and family just takes you to an ultimate high, a fairy place that nobody knows about but yourself. It makes you feel that much better because only you are in this place. Nobody can bother you, bring you down, or

touch you in any way possible. **(Bradley Barner)**



I love cuddling up to my man on a  
cold winter night  
I love watching the Bulls play the  
Heat  
Especially because they think they  
can't be beat

I love sipping a cognac nice and  
slow

When I'm at the bar checking out  
the flow

I love hanging out with my family  
Playing board games and acting silly

I love looking at old pictures of my mother  
She's my hero, she's like no other

I love coming to class on Wednesday night  
If I miss the class, I will not feel right

**(Marcia Brown)**



I love my mother. She is the sweetest person, and she means the world to me. When I was in sixth grade I got bitten by a wild dog. I was scared and in great pain. My mother was there for me. She had to carry me to a nearby clinic, which was a seven-hour walk from our home. There was no car, bus,

or bike to shorten our journey. She did this until all 15 injections for treating and preventing rabies were finished. If she had not been there for me, I might not be here today. I love my mother so much because she cared and saved my life.

**(Tatenda Bvindi)**





I love my fish. I have fish that love to dart in and out of hiding places, floating to the top of the water or hovering midway. What pretty colors they are, ranging from yellows, oranges, blues, purples, to grays. They are quick to eat food or each other if you let them.

**(Samantha East)**



I love every crazy, strange, and funny look Lucille Ball makes on "I Love Lucy." She has a way of putting a smile on your face and an explosive laugh in your stomach.

I love how she always tries to get into show business, no matter



what. I love how she lets the innocence of a little girl come forth when she's caught in a scheme. I love Lucille Ball.

**(Lorraine Garrett)**



I love my mother's homemade cupcakes and my birthday, not every year but when she can make it. I love my grandmother's brilliant and radiant personality. I love Common's new single for his hip hop video. . . . I love blue bonnets in the beginning of the spring. I love red robins in the beginning of summer. I love Derrick Rose for bringing the Chicago Bulls basketball team back in the spotlight. I love watching the Super Bowl every year because it usually falls directly on my birthday. I love Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. I love all four of my sisters and both of my brothers. I love reading Socrates and Langston Hughes.

**(Jesse Hamilton)**



I love the Holy Spirit. He downloads knowledge, he helps me to know who to pray for, and he shows me the error of my ways. . . . He says, "Good job." Once a stranger, he is now my best friend. Our conversations are so deep. He knows my ways and explains away

my fears.

**(Yetta Harris)**







I love to write. Whenever I write, I get a chance to explore my inner self. I love venturing off in time and letting the words just flow. It's like that monkey on your back feeling. To be able to share information from my mental vault is such a great feeling. Reeling readers in and getting them to think is my main objective. Connecting on some level of psychological plane is such a rewarding experience. I love to write, and I always will!

**(Terry Hart)**



I love having a free flowing and open mind, a mind that allows information to enter unadulterated or unfiltered. The ability to receive even the bitter and unwanted information that stings and closes the mind is a blessing to me. Naturally, one desires only positive and desirable information or

circumstances; however, an open mind accepts all and judges none. To me, an open mind is free. I am free, so an open mind is me.

**(Keith Johnson)**



I love my family  
Odyssey  
Without Emily I wouldn't  
have  
Been introduced to  
Literature.  
Rene and Diane have their  
part, too. . . .  
Coach showed us how  
To break big words down  
And to break down the definitions.  
Jean Feraca, Craig Werner, and Gene  
Phillips  
And don't let me forget my classmates  
Because if I do you might ask  
Odyssey who?  
**(Marilyn Johnson)**



I love to stay in my house  
and have family time by playing  
dominoes, dancing, singing, and  
yes, when I am able, wrestling  
around with my children.

I love when all my family  
comes together for big cookouts  
and we have fun with one another.

I love throwing parties for my  
Grandmommie's birthday so she can have all her  
favorite people under one roof having a jolly good  
time.

**(Nkechi Johnson)**



I love my son Ian  
And the smell of his head  
Especially in the morning  
Fresh out of bed.

I love how he walks,  
Looks, talks, and smiles,  
I love his manly body  
And his eyes of a child

I love how he loves me  
Even though I have to steal a kiss

I love how nice he is  
To animals and little kids.

**(Billie Kelsey)**



I love to swim. It makes me relaxed. When I feel the water, my body is full of energy and I feel very peaceful. . . . When I am in the water, it makes all my body, my muscles, and my nerves very, very relaxed, soft, and light. I can sleep very profoundly after I swim.

**(Beatriz Mairena-Kellman)**



I love anime, a flashy Technicolor maelstrom from the Land of the Rising Sun. Clashing swords, wide-eyed heroes, giant robots standing 50 feet high, and fluttering cherry blossoms enchant the screen as schoolboy samurais pledge eternal devotion to dewy-eyed schoolgirls on high school rooftops. It is a place where zeros become legends, where demons are nobler than humans, and where middle schools serve as training grounds for intergalactic wars. Like my imagination, anime seems endless and doesn't always make sense.

**(Brandon McCarey)**



I love to believe in me, to challenge and unfold the gifts hidden in me. I'm bold and courageous as a lion but free as a dove, you see. I spread my wings and find new messages incorporated in me, to decode and expose what God has embedded in this vessel. I am complete, no chains holding me. Isaiah 10:27 Free. I love to believe in ME!

**(Kenya Moses)**



I love the smell of homemade fried chicken when I walk in the door after a long day. Something about it makes me feel refreshed (and hungry). It makes my mouth water and my eyes roll back into my head. I wash my hands fast so I can get a taste of golden heaven. My mom is the only one that makes it right. If there were a chicken-making contest, she'd win first prize every year. KFC and Popeye's are no competition. They don't even come close. **(Tai'Kiah Phillips)**



I love the LORD because He first loved me, for the Bible tells me so. 1 John 3 says that God is love. How can you love God and hate your brethren? In fact the Bible tells me to love the LORD thy God with all my heart, all my soul, and all my strength, and to love my neighbor as myself. I love the Bible because it tells me in Romans 5 that there's no greater love than to lay down your life for a friend. John 3:16 tells me that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son. **(Eugene Smalls)**



I love the snow! I love the way it coats the ground. I love the snow for the way it has the freedom to fall freely. I love the snow for the way it makes me feel all warm and fuzzy inside. I love the snow because it is fresh, crisp, and uniquely shaped. I love the snow for being able to cleanse my palate, for it has such an icy clean and refreshing taste. **(Arnella Royal)**





I love waking up every morning to the wet nose Eskimo kisses given to me by one of my “fur-babies.” It’s not just one kiss either; it’s one from everyone. All have their place, with room for each and every one. This all starts my day with a big smile. After the kisses come the conversations of needing to go outside, and our day has begun. **(Michele Withers)**



I love my life as I’m starting to see it anew. Simple things like laughter have started to brew. I love my life at this very hour because here in class is starting to become some of my finest hours. Yes, I love my life. I can see how the pain of the past won’t last. I love my life. I’m part of the living, and my new life is filled with a full season that will undoubtedly change for the better. I love my life. My spirit is free. I love my life, and it’s become me. **(Abraham Thomas)**



I love the way my mocha cappuccino drink swirls into my jet black, coffee-house coffee as I pour it in on Friday mornings. I’ve adjusted my schedule to allow a once a week trip to Victor Allen’s before work. Monday through Thursday I choke down the brown

water they call coffee from the vending machine in the break room, but all the while I’m dreaming of the good stuff. Friday is the transition day between the hectic work week and the almost-as-hectic weekend. My Friday morning caffeine buzz is my time for me—just me and my pretty little swirls. **(Katie Pruitt)**

I love sunshine. I never realized how much until I moved to Las Vegas and spent six years with large quantities of it. My mood rarely



sank low, and even when facing depressing situations I remained upbeat. Returning to the Midwest, I was faced with the Winter Blues and realized that what I used to think was depression as a younger person was really a need for sunshine.

Now I have learned to calm myself on overcast days and not let the sad feelings overcome me. Instead I hold out and wait for the days when the sun breaks through the clouds and works its magic on my spirits. I then find any excuse to be outside—walking, driving, sitting. In those moments my outlook improves, and I return to myself, nurtured and upbeat. I love that feeling that sunlight gives me and have found no drug or beverage that has as much power in my life. **(Hedi Rudd)**





## Jihad Affection By Brandon McCarey

Love's impact  
left a smoking wreckage.  
Emotions were hijacked by her kisses,  
as premeditated propaganda stirs in her eyes,  
lies are buried deep within my chest.

like Masonic venom poisoning my fears,  
the seduction became subliminal  
behind her feminine noir.  
catalyzing my lonely anxieties;

psychological attacks behind  
fabricated passions  
scatters my emotional debris.

Her love invades foreign  
mindscapes under murky thoughts and  
Tantric regimes.

As we inhale incense smoke from  
eastern territories  
we are allied under primeval lust.

Secret documents  
are sealed in ecstasy's ink,  
my ways fall under her new world order.

## Oh, that Odyssey Classroom!

By Terry Hart

Oh, that Room!  
What a glorious room it is!  
What a mighty room it is!  
To be able to withstand, withhold,  
and endure the various conversations  
this room has held is simply sacred!

Oh, that room!  
What a glorious room it is!  
What a mighty room it is!

And so with infinite praise  
We say thank you, room,  
for being so great!





# From Behind a Mask By Michele Withers

She hides behind a mask that no one knows.  
 She looks like a girl with a perfect life  
 One like a fairytale  
 But is she really happy  
 Or is she depressed?  
 Will anyone ever find out  
 What's going on with her,  
 How people treat her,  
 How her chest starts to feel  
 Oppressed  
 Burdened  
 Buried  
 With feelings even though  
 She has a smile on her face  
 Trying to hide her real self from everyone?  
 She doesn't want anyone to know  
 That her life is like a damsel in distress.  
 Can her life get any worse



Or will her life be like a fairy tale  
 With a pure-hearted prince?  
 How can she change her life?  
 How can she tell anyone all that's going on  
 When it's really dark and horrible?  
 Of course she has dreams just like  
 Any other girl  
 But she lives in pain and agony  
 Wishing for someone to save her from  
 Her own clutches  
 But does she even believe in fairytales?  
 Is she going to wait for her prince?  
 What's she going to do?  
 What if she gets tired of waiting  
 And lives the rest of her life  
 Like a damsel in distress  
 Forever?  
 What choice is she going to make?  
 What choice does she have?

# Listening to Lincoln

*With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.*

In his Second Inaugural Address, Lincoln asks the North and South to unite under their common beliefs and “bind up the nation’s wounds.” He calls on the country to focus instead on the families of those who perished in battle and to work towards “lasting peace.” His address reminds both sides of their guilt in precipitating the war and that neither side is in a position to judge. **(Hedi Rudd)**

President Lincoln humbly and wisely calls for all Americans to look past the recent events of war and to accept them as a price that all must pay for allowing slavery to exist in America. He wisely calls upon Northern states to reflect on the losses rather than revel in victory as they appear to be the eventual winners. He calls upon similarities that exist among North and South rather than differences. **(Keith Johnson)**

Lincoln states the fact that yes, we had a long and horrible war and both sides lost something, but it’s time to come together as one and heal the nation. Both sides let slavery happen; both sides made money off it. Now it’s time to atone from this evil deed, and they paid for it with great loss. We [North and South] are the same, praying to the same God and basically breathing the same air. No one is better than the next. So the Nation needs to take care of the ones left behind and do better.  
**(Samantha East)**

In his speech Lincoln does not blame North or South for being the

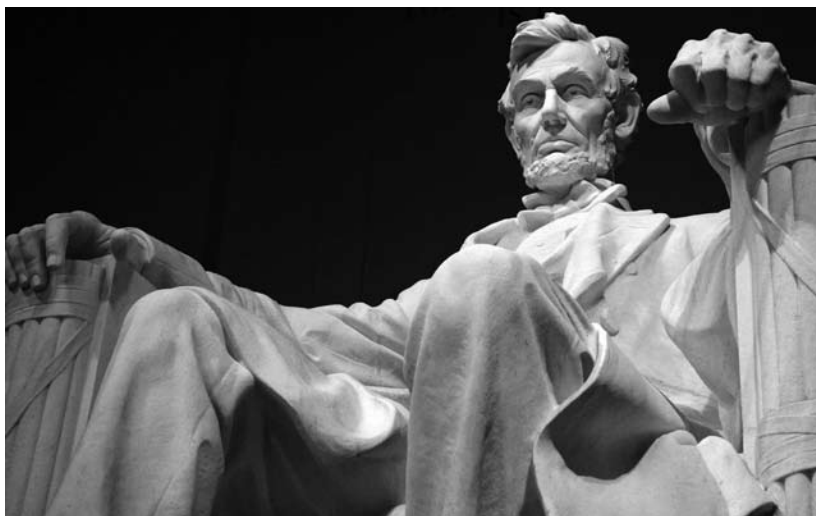
cause of the war, but he reminds them that they are one people with common interests—serving one God, searching for freedom. Therefore, they should reconcile in binding together the broken nation and creating a just and lasting peace. Lincoln . . . gives the responsibility to the Nation as a whole for holding slaves, which then caused the Civil War and claimed many lives. He explains the war as a punishment brought by God because of the evils of slavery. **(Tatenda Bvindi)**

Lincoln avoids blaming only the South for the War in order to restore the people of two areas as citizens of one nation. Leading up to the war, he asserts that “All dreaded it; all sought to avert it.” War and secession, he reassures, were not the goal. While he finds fault with those who called for war, Lincoln puts blame for the fighting on the shoulders of both sides. “Let us judge not, that we be not judged.” **(Michele Withers)**

Abraham Lincoln started off his speech with “Dear countrymen” in order to bring brotherhood about. Lincoln tore down the curtain between North and South with his words. With his words, Lincoln allowed this war to be about the bad thing (slavery)

rather than bad people. Now because this bad thing was done, we can allow God to bless this country all the more. Both sides were left with their dignity intact and could now look forward to peace.

**(Yetta Harris)**



## Alumna Profile: Josephine Lorya-Ozulamoi '08

Josephine Lorya remembers something that her dad used to say: “Struggling is the real meaning of life. Victory and defeat are in the hands of God, so everyone must enjoy in struggling.” This was printed on a plaque that hung on her wall in Nairobi, Kenya, and it remains in her heart as a motto.

Originally from the Sudan, Josephine and her family moved to Kenya following an accident which left her mother severely burned. “She was in a Kenyan hospital for five years. It was hard for me because I was the youngest. My aunties came and helped out. I don’t remember everything, but when I see pictures of my mom in the hospital bed, it just makes me want to make her happy. And the only thing she wants from me is to get an education so I can better myself. She says that’s something that no one can ever take from me.”

Josephine uses the word “different” to describe her life before Odyssey. “In my journey, there were no smooth roads, definitely bumpy ups and downs,” she recalls. “I was not focused on school as

much. I knew I wanted to finish my education, but financially I wasn’t able to. Before, I wasn’t really focused on my grades. I was running track and playing soccer. If I got a C or a D, I’d say, ‘Oh well, I’m passing.’” Ultimately, she put her academic career on hold after her freshman year when she got pregnant with her daughter, Zawadi. “There was too much stress around me. Everyone was pulling me to different sides. I decided to just take a break.”

Working as a hair-braider, Josephine heard about Odyssey through Oroki Rice’s sister, Adrienne Rakina. “Since then, everything has been going on an uphill climb, getting better and better,” Josephine smiles. “My first day at Odyssey, I was really nervous because I didn’t know what I was getting into. I saw all these different people from different backgrounds. I’ve never been in a classroom with a lot of black people. I was nervous because everyone was so opinionated and open-minded. I was so impressed by that. Classes were fun. I was looking forward to classes. Childcare was there, so I had no excuse not to come.” Josephine graduated from the Odyssey Project in 2008.

“No excuses” is the mantra Josephine lives by as she pushes through her Legal Studies major at UW-Madison, where she will graduate in May. “I’m more focused on putting hard work into my grades than before.” Since Odyssey, she describes herself as more confident and determined. “I go for what I want. I’m not hesitant. I used to be scared. Right now, I’m in school, I’m a mom, I’m a wife. It’s hard, but I do it. There’s no excuses.”

According to Josephine, Odyssey played a significant role in her acceptance at UW. “I knew the value of education, but I couldn’t have imagined that I would attend UW.” She credits Emily with being a strong support system in the Project. “She’s just... I don’t know if there’s any words to describe how nice Emily is. She’s always there for me mentally,” Josephine says. “I call her for pep talks before tests and she always says, ‘You’ll be fine.’ She’s always there to offer help.”

Odyssey is “the best thing that’s happened to me,” Josephine says. “It’s a movement. It gets you going. It’s something you have to



**“If I had not been in the Odyssey Project, I would not be where I am today—accepted at UW-Madison and on my way to a bachelor’s degree. I would have been in a dark place, but instead the Odyssey Project shed a light into my life, and I am on the road to success. My daughter tells all her friends, ‘My mommy is in college,’ and I can’t wait for her to tell her friends, ‘My mommy is a lawyer.’ The Odyssey Project is my passport to a higher education, and I will always cherish its blessing.” Josephine Lorya-Ozulamoi**

experience to understand. It’s not just classes; it’s the environment that you’re in. Most people that attend Odyssey have never dreamt of going to college. I never knew who Walt Whitman was or that there were so many Black writers. It’s definitely a great

experience. It’s something that you’re always a part of. Even when you graduate from the class, you’ll always be a part of the Odyssey family.”

Josephine wants those that contribute time and donations to the Project to know that their efforts are not in vain. “You’re not just helping someone get an education, you’re potentially changing someone’s life,” she says. “Anything helps; it’s for a good cause. We appreciate everything that you do. The proof is in the success rate.”

Josephine serves as a role model for all current and future Odyssey students. Though her success seems effortless, she reiterates that it is not; the hard work begins in the Odyssey classroom. There’s no



such thing as an easy ticket to anything. Everything takes hard work. There’s going to be days when you’re down, but just know that there’s a light at the end of the tunnel, like with the Allegory of the Cave. Just surround yourself with positive people.

Sometimes just one negative comment can mess up your whole day. Don’t give up, because it’s so worth it. The least you can do is stay through the entire semester and finish because everything has been given to you. You don’t have to worry about anything financially; you just have to show up, have the urge to learn, and do your homework. That’s the least you can do as a way of saying thanks to Emily and the Odyssey Project.”

Speaking of her own current frustrations, Josephine says, “Financial struggles are always there. Keeping up with classes and home life is hard, especially if my kids are sick. Some professors understand and some don’t. But when I

was pregnant, I did not miss a class. I wasn't going to use my kids or my pregnancy as an excuse unless it's an emergency." Josephine is a recent recipient of the Bernice D. Kuney scholarship, a scholarship offered to returning adult students attending UW-Madison.

Josephine especially credits her husband and her supportive family members for helping her along the way. As a 26-year-old mother of two (ten-month-old Zion, and six-year-old Zawadi), Josephine is aware of the necessity of quality time with her family. She tries to maintain a schedule that allows her to balance school and home. "Tuesday is my crazy day, but Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, I'll come to campus around 9 after I drop Zion off at daycare. Then I'll do work-study for an hour. After that, I'll do my homework in the library until class starts. That way, when I go home, I can review my notecards while carrying Zion on my back, like we do back home. My husband helps out a lot. He's pushing me; he wants me to finish because he wants to finish, also. But it's definitely hard. There are days when I get so exhausted." On the weekends, Josephine turns off her phone and focuses solely on her family. "On Saturdays, I like to chill in my pajamas all day and hang out with my kids, watching cartoons. If they take a nap, then I'm right there with them."

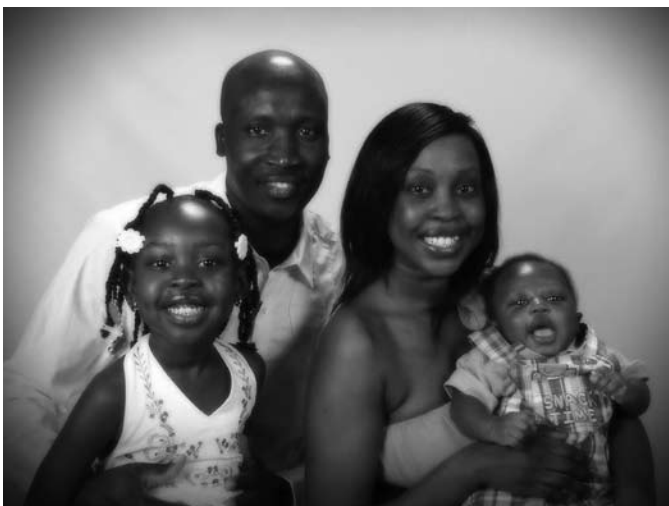
Thinking about her long-term goals, Josephine continues to keep her family at the forefront of her plans. "Hopefully, when I finish school I can get a job and take over the bills so that my husband can finish. If I don't go to law school to study immigration law, I want to get a good job in order to avoid living check-to-check. Hopefully I can

get a job in the immigration field and work with Homeland Security because I want to do something I love. I definitely want to graduate so I can show my kids that it's possible. I wouldn't recommend having kids before finishing, but if it happens, it happens. Just own it and get on with it."

Josephine's father was very influential in many of her decisions in her life. "My dad was the coolest. I still talk about him like he's still here. He was so hands-on. He would take us to parks and buy us ice cream. He always took us to Uhuru Park in Kenya. He was the most awesome person ever.

"My dad passed away in 1993, before we came to America in 1996. My mom said that his last words were, 'Make sure that my kids get an education.' That's all he was saying." Certainly, Josephine's father would be extremely proud of his daughter's accomplishments and the fact that she is keeping his legacy alive. Josephine applies the quote from her dad to her uphill journey toward success: "The struggle continues, day by day. It's the real meaning of life."

*Josephine will be graduating from UW-Madison in May.*





# I am a Metaphor

I am a mouse  
because when people are around  
I usually try to hide.  
I look like I can't say much  
but that isn't true.  
It's just that sometimes  
I can't even say  
what I really want to say.  
But I will get there  
with the help of God,  
Emily, my kids' patience,  
and staff members  
around me. (**Elvira Rodriguez**)

I am a basketball bouncing off the court  
Being handled with no control.  
Is that why my mind wanders from here to there?  
Crossover dribble with a backcourt violation  
Is that why my mind can't hold on to yesterday's  
work?  
Swish, air ball, brick, damn it, hit or miss  
Is that why I'm scared to take a chance,  
Afraid of not having control of myself?  
So please dribble me with care



And don't let my air out  
Because it hurts for me not to be heard  
Bouncing around  
It's like speaking my feelings and not being heard  
So handle me with care  
And lead me to the good bucket  
I'm just in need of a little direction. (**Donta Starr**)

I am the sweet juice  
from the first bite  
of a juicy peach. (**Marcia Brown**)

I am a piece of paper  
that anybody can write upon,  
A piece of paper  
that one can find comfort  
to write upon  
and therefore relieve a stressed soul.  
I am a piece of paper. (**Tatenda Bvindi**)

I am a river  
Slow with the flow  
Quiet like a stream  
Bending with the trails  
Powerful as a wave  
Carving new paths  
Shaping boulders  
Supporting life  
A map to new frontiers  
Slowly opening to vast oceans.  
(**Samantha East**)

I am a light upon a hill that cannot be put out  
Like a fire burning wild, but not harming a soul.  
I am a strong woman that sometimes get weak.  
I am a woman of faith where no doubt lives.  
(**Lorraine Garrett**)





I am a baby bird just learning to fly!  
I have wings attached to my body,  
but I don't know why.  
With these wings, and yes I have two,  
As soon as I learn to fly, I can teach you.  
So with these wings I agree  
To fly high and whistle proudly!  
Let these wings release all my frights  
and take me surely to immeasurable heights!  
(Terry Hart)

I am a catalyst  
that starts all things  
chemically, physically,  
and mentally it seems,  
enjoying the action that moves all about  
often beginning with my nudge or shout.  
It is not all me, the show that you see,  
but I do my part to make reactions appear.  
Add heat or stir, no matter which,

do not blame me as things begin to move . . .  
I am a catalyst, that is what I do. (Keith Johnson)

I am a lion thirsty for success  
I am a cheetah determined to catch my goals  
I am a bird reaching for the stars  
I am a frog jumping over any obstacles in my way  
I am a rhino as tough as they come  
I am a diamond shining bright in the sky  
I am me. (Shaquida Johnson)

I am a squirrel  
climbing a tree  
trying to see the sky  
through the leaves

I am a happy and safe little squirrel  
in this tree  
which houses and nourishes  
a needy one such as me. (Billie Kelsey)

I am a beautiful moon  
bright at night  
I make a precious,  
beautiful  
romantic night. (Beatriz Mairena-Kellman)

I am a samurai  
Noble, trained with sword in hand.  
Deadly logic shimmers upon  
My sharpened blade.  
Death, meaningless . . .  
Life, equally as meaningless  
But I bow before its  
Majesty, and in an odd  
Paradox, I protect it. (Brandon McCarey)

I am my children's strong tower and lighthouse,  
A star shining in this dark world for my babies.  
Some might say to me "Why have you chosen



to be your children's shield and buckle?"  
 Like an eagle spreading its wings  
 So spread I my arms and fly for my children  
 Who hold fast and believe in me.  
**(Kenya Moses)**

I am a clown.  
 People see my face  
 with a painted-on smile  
 and automatically assume  
 that I'm happy.  
 I laugh and giggle  
 and make people laugh,  
 even when I'm feeling my worst.  
 I jump up and down and play,  
 even when I am exhausted and frustrated.  
 I force a smile  
 just to create one. **(Tai'Kiah Phillips)**

I am a piece of glass  
 Strong yet fragile  
 Solid yet pliable  
 You can see right through me  
 Unless the curtains are closed. **(Katie Pruitt)**

I am a map  
 Made of different journeys  
 I hold a destiny  
 No one else can have. **(Michele Withers)**

I used to be a shell hiding in the sea  
 Afraid of speaking my mind,  
 Scared because I found people are not always kind.  
 I wouldn't say a word.  
 Expressing my opinion was a chance I didn't want  
 to take  
 For I feared my arm someone might break.  
 But now I am a bird perched high up in a tree.  
 My mouth and spirit I let run free.  
 I am unafraid of negativity

Because I am a bird that soars high above the sea  
 I am a bird, and my heart, soul, and spirit are free.  
 I am a bird, and I love being free.  
**(Phyllis Anderson)**

I used to be a time bomb,  
 waiting to explode.  
 My ticker was silent  
 for I could not expose  
 that I was there waiting  
 for the perfect time  
 to destroy what I naively thought  
 were my enemies.  
 But now I am a Papa Bear  
 taking on the teachings of my mother  
 and protecting my own cubs.  
**(Juba Moten)**



I used to be a shy and timid boy  
 but now I am a loud and strong man.  
 I am a comedian at heart  
 but I act serious towards life.  
 I am a soaring eagle  
 that used to be afraid of heights.  
 I am a skyscraper standing tall  
 over the horizon's world of change.  
 I am a house with gigantic rooms of space  
 but no one's ever home.  
 I am a prize fighter who can't block the punches  
 but I can dodge the rounds.  
**(Jesse Hamilton)**



I used to be a dandelion  
 forever dying on the vine,  
 hiding from the bitter wind,  
 only to come back mighty in the spring.  
 I would be stepped on and trampled,  
 And then in a week it would repeat.  
 Once a tender stem that some may eat.  
 But now I am a mighty oak  
 with branches that reach the highest sky  
 and roots that go to deepest ends.  
**(Yetta Harris)**

I used to be a 36-24-36  
 You know, a brickhouse  
 if you've heard the song.  
 I was all that with chips  
 And dip with a cherry on top.  
 A diva, you see.  
 But now I'm a child of the King  
 And all that I used to be  
 Don't mean anything, you see.  
 Check this out,  
 I used to get high, you know,  
 With weed and blunts.  
 But now that I'm a  
 Child of the King

I know you haven't had a high  
 If you haven't had a  
 Jesus high.  
**(Marilyn Johnson)**

I used to be a thug  
 Robbing and stealing  
 Breaking into houses  
 And selling crack  
 But now I am a man of love  
 I love God  
 For I try to obey His word  
 I love my neighbor as myself  
 I try to treat mankind  
 The way I want to be treated.  
**(Eugene Smalls)**

I used to be a worm  
 Crawling underground  
 But now I am a bird  
 Gliding through the wind.  
**(Linda Thao)**



## Surviving Prejudice

**prejudice:** *an adverse judgment or opinion formed beforehand or without knowledge or examination of the facts; a preconceived preference or bias; irrational suspicion or hatred of a particular group, race, or religion*

Prejudice is an issue that I have lived with since coming out of the womb. My mother was raised in the Neenah-Menasha area of Wisconsin in a large family. Being the youngest, she was also the black sheep and found herself at odds with her family's belief systems quite often. She would eventually be sent to the Oregon School for Girls as a teenager, which is where she met my father, Jose Mendoza, a Mexican migrant worker. Her family was not happy that she had a child outside of her race, and I am told that when my grandmother saw me she spit in my face.



My mother moved to Madison where she found a safety net of social workers to help her raise me. There was a short period of time where I was in foster care as she had fallen into a bad element and the social workers feared for my safety. Ironically, one of those social workers was Betty Franklin-Hammonds, the late publisher of Madison Times...

My mother had two more children, both by Black men. This would be the final straw with her family, and they effectively severed ties with her. I did have occasion to meet a few aunts and uncles growing up who dared to defy the matriarchal order to not have anything to do with my mother, but it was very clear that we were not welcome in the family.

When I was 16, my grandmother reached out to my mother. I remember the day she called. My mother called my sisters and me and told us that her mother was on the phone. We were all shocked, and my sisters and I gathered around my mom listening to her end of the conversation with anticipation. At one point my mom handed me the phone and said my grandmother wanted to talk to me. At first I was excited and nervous to talk to her, not knowing what to expect and having my own fantasies about how that first conversation might

sound. My grandmother told me that she had issues with my mother. She said I probably wasn't getting the whole story from her and that my mother did things to hurt her that she had a hard time forgiving her for, including coming to her home and stealing from her.

I listened quietly and didn't find this surprising as I had seen my mother do things that I also questioned. My mother had chosen a path that I also found difficult to accept and sometimes found embarrassing. I set those feelings aside and tried to connect to the voice on the other line. I said, "My sisters and I would love to meet you. Would you like to talk to my sisters now?" She responded by saying, "No, I only wanted to talk to you. Your sisters are Black; I'm not really interested in talking to them. I'm sure you understand." I did not understand. I remember being completely hurt in that moment as my fantasy of having her call one day and apologize and open her arms to us and love us had just faded away with her words.

"I'm sorry you feel that way. My sisters are great and you are missing out by not talking to or knowing them. I don't think I want to talk to you again." My mom's jaw dropped as I handed her back the phone and went to my room. I wasn't as hurt for me as I was for my sisters. I knew in that moment that racism was something that they had to live with more so than I did and I felt bad about that. I knew then that I wanted to do something to tell that story and to shed light on racism and its effect. **(Hedi Rudd)**

Unfortunately, when it comes to the topic of prejudice, I have experienced numerous times and situations that were degrading, uncomfortable, and hurtful to me or my family. This is a topic that I do not enjoy; rather I loathe that I must lower myself to





the standards and mindset of ignorant and foolish people. We live in a country, United States of America, where the freedom of speech and expression is granted to all peoples regardless of the intention of such expressions, and as such we must tolerate these mindsets as reflecting a significant part of our society today.

I believe that there are minute forms of prejudice practiced each and every day, which are often overlooked or simply tolerated by our subconscious mind or viewed as "business as usual." Deep within we each know and feel the unsettling racial tension that resides in many people around us today. I will share with you a more blatant and revolting example of prejudice that I have recently experienced in my life, which extends beyond the initial incident to the Sheriff's Department and ultimately to the Wisconsin court system.

Prior to relocating to the Madison area, my family and I have come face-to-face with the ugly head of prejudice just as Perseus had once viewed that of Medusa. This tale is a long one starting nearly seven years ago. At that time when I was just becoming acquainted with my fiancée's family, we had openly and I had thought honestly discussed the topic of race; whether it would have an impact on my relationship and relationship between her and her family. All agreed that race was irrelevant and need not be discussed further. Over the years there've been instances or statements made in my presence by members of the family or their friends that I thought were offensive, to which I immediately addressed, as I do not tolerate such disrespect. However, overall I accepted some acts of ignorance as being directly related to the small and close-minded Northwestern Wisconsin community that it is. As a result we had spent less and less time around such influences in an attempt to both shield our son from such simpleminded distractions, and to keep me from imposing my will upon them physically, which would result in my own incarceration. I am a peaceful and loving individual; however, I know that a person can only take so much bigotry before one pushes or fights back.

... One day upon entering the room and matter-of-factly stating to my fiancée's father how much pain they are causing my fiancée by not including

her in family things, I was immediately attacked and physically pushed back against the front door. I was screamed at, called "Nigger" or "you're just a f\*\*\*ing Nigger" all right in front of my son, who was so overwhelmed and confused as he watched his grandfather yelling and trying to hit his father.

It took considerable strength for me not to eliminate each and every threat until they posed me or my son no harm. I possess the skills to do so, but I knew that this was not the time to deal with such matters, as my son's soaked eyes gazed upon the situation in horror. Instead, I stood with my hands above my head in a non-threatening position and asked for us to be allowed to leave. . . . I was forced to explain to my son some of the horrible facts of human behavior much earlier than I had planned. Prejudice exists. It is often hidden just below the skin like a boil that festers until its putrid pus pours forth.

I decided not to call the police to report the assault I had just endured, as I did not want to make matters worse, for we had decided that they were no longer going to be a part of our lives in any way, shape, or form. Hindsight has taught me to protect myself in situations such as these, as . . . my fiancée's father called the police on me. To make a long and painful story somewhat shorter, an officer arrived at my house with his hand on his weapon demanding my presence at the door. Upon my arrival at the door, it was clear that the officer had predetermined the outcome of visiting my house; arrest the black guy. I assertively gave the officer my account of the events, which he countered with allegations that I punched two people at her father's house. Four Caucasians said that I came in to the house screaming and provoking a fight. I have a criminal record. I am an African American male. I went to jail. I was not allowed by the county to press charges on the people that actually did the attacking.

Subsequently, the judge stated that this is a family matter that should have never entered his courtroom. Nevertheless, I was forced to accept a plea agreement and move away from the area due to consistent harassment and property damage. It is an unsettling fact that prejudice runs deep throughout America. It has corrupted the very ideals that this country was founded on: Freedom and the pursuit

of happiness. I long for the day that I will not have to teach my son the principles and skills of Martial Arts in order for him to defend himself against a few “Good ol’ boys” with nothing better to do than to try to hinder the success and freedoms of members of other races. Here are a few facts to digest before we try to conclude that prejudice is something that was entertained and practiced only in our past:

States with the highest black-to-white ratio in prison are disproportionately located in the Northeast and Midwest, including the leading states of Iowa, Vermont, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Wisconsin. (1)

Data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics document that one in six black men had been incarcerated as of 2001. If current trends continue, one in three black males born today can expect to spend time in prison during his lifetime. (2)

(1) Uneven Justice: State Rates of Incarceration by Race and Ethnicity, written by Marc Mauer and Ryan S. King

(2) Thomas P. Bonczar, *Prevalence of Imprisonment in the U.S. Population, 1974-2001*, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2003, p. 8.  
**(Keith Johnson)**

It was a real rainy day on the Fourth of July in 1991. My mom ordered a pizza, but Pizza Hut wouldn’t deliver pizza to our hood because of the pizza man being robbed. So my brother gave me a ride to Pizza Hut, and I also had a coupon for a free pan-sized pizza. When I walked in the store, it seemed as if no one was in there but me. As I waited at the front counter, I heard and saw someone in the dining area: a white bus boy picking up dishes while stealing tips. I remind you that I did not enter the dining room. When help finally came to the front counter to let me pay for my pizzas, he looked right through me as if I was not there just to help a white family that had just walked in. He then returned to the back of the store for at least six or seven minutes. When I saw him again, I said to him, “Hey, Sir, I’m here to pick up two pizzas for



Donta: a large pepperoni with extra cheese, and a pan-sized one, too.” He replied, “Do you have any money?” I let that crazy remark slide, said “Yes,” and put on the counter \$23.85. He looked past me, went to the dining area, and came back and said that I was stealing tips. He picked my money up off the counter and told me to leave.

Oh, I left mad as hell, steaming. My brother asked me, “What’s wrong?” I told him, “This jackass just took my money and said that I was stealing tips.” My brother went in, straight up snapped and asked to see the camera, so they called the police and said that we were causing a disturbance. The cops asked me what happened and the manager what happened. The manager started to tell me that it was all okay, that he would pay for the pizza, and the next time to come with my mother or bring my brother in with me.

There are mean and dirty people in this world. Some are called racist. I will experience this at times throughout my life. It’s just how you deal with it. That was a lesson I learned because I thought we left the racist people down South, white and black. As a kid I found out that it was everywhere in the world on all different levels and scales. It will be how we deal with it.

**(Donta Starr)**

Nearly two summers ago, I was walking home from a PDQ around 10:30 in the evening. While heading back home, I noticed a car about half a mile in front of me speeding and swerving. Not really paying attention, I kept walking, believing I was merely looking at a drunk driver or an emotional person behind the wheel. The car . . . pulled up beside me. The windows were quickly rolled down, and that is when I saw three white guys, maybe college age, occupying the vehicle.

“What are you doing out this late, you crazy nigger?” the driver shouted. The two other passengers with their arrogant smirks quickly joined in with taunting, laughing, and jeering. As quickly as they appeared, they drove off just as fast. I



quickly began to get angry as I tried to make sense of the situation. Suddenly a sense of pity came over me, not for myself but for the three young white guys in the car. I must have been the highlight of their night. They had nothing else better or more constructive to do to occupy their time. Calling me a nigger and then speeding off must have been the racist white boys' equivalent of a prank call.

. . . There was no honor about their methods. Any group of cowards can hurl racial slurs from safety and comfort of a car. If you really want to shake me, then step out of the car and say that s\*\*t to my face. . . . I have heard plenty of stories where situations like this one ended up in tragedy, so I am somewhat lucky it was only words.

**(Brandon McCarey)**

Prejudice on the home front: should there even be such a thing? . . . I found myself attracted to a white male several years ago. I was nervous, nervous of rejection, but mostly of the scrutiny of my friends and family. . . . I phoned my mother with this news. I said, "I've met someone!" She said, "Who? Do I know him? When do I get to meet him?" I went on dodging this question in order to ease her into knowledge of his race. I said, "I met him at my children's daycare. His son is friends with Eddie, and, oh yeah, he's white." She replied in such a way that I felt as if I was no longer speaking to my own mother any more. . . . "You will not be bringing no Cracker Ass White Ass Man into my HOUSE! All the God Damn men in this town, and you had to choose a white one? What's gotten into you? Have you had sex with him? You took him around my grandbabies? He probably has rabies or something! How dare you say that you want to be with a white man!"

. . . If only I'd known a little more about my own mother, talked a little bit more about this subject, I would have found out that she is definitely a prejudiced person. I no longer date this person but not because of my mom, just from life moving forward. I continue to talk to my mom. I want her



views to change and, more importantly, I don't want her attitude to influence my children.

**(Arnella Royal)**

When I was in grade school, I was fortunate to attend many White Sox baseball games. One day while attending a game, I experienced my first encounter with prejudice. On the way back from using the restroom, my friend and I came upon five white boys and girls. They began to surround us, blocking our path. They started shouting racial comments and pushing us. I pushed them back, then began to run. The boys and girls surrounded me and blocked my path. They called us Nigger and black monkeys. I did not know what to do. I began to cry and yell, "Somebody help us!" A man and woman stopped and said, "What are you guys doing?" The five girls and boys dropped their fists and scattered. The man and woman escorted us back to our seats and apologized for the actions of the boys and girls who attacked us. After this incident, whenever someone had to go to the restroom, an adult would escort him or her.



White Sox Park is located in the Bridgeport Neighborhood in Chicago, Illinois. There is an invisible line separating the Black from the White people. I later learned that Blacks are not to cross Wentworth Street, where White Sox Park was located, and 41<sup>st</sup> Street, the length of the Stadium. If you do, you could be jumped on and beaten to a pulp by White people. As of today, Blacks make up only 1.4% of the population in Bridgeport. Mayor Daley resides in Bridgeport.

The incident at White Sox Park opened my eyes to how violent people can be to others of different ethnicity and skin color. **(Marcia Brown)**

When our class came back from winter break, we decided to throw a banquet for Emily and the rest of the Odyssey staff. I decided to bring something easy: some Doritos chips and nacho dip. . . . When we pulled up to the store, I wasn't sure if I had enough money to get the chips. . . . I decided to just go for it and pray that I had enough.

When I got into the store, to my amazement the chips were the perfect price. I had JUST enough money. I gathered the bags of chips and proceeded to the counter by the photo section, where they rang up other items. Before I could get to the counter, the clerk announced loud and clear, “If you are paying for your items with EBT (food stamps), you have to go to the front counter.” I was so embarrassed. He could have waited until he found out if I was using EBT or not and then said it to me, not the entire store. I just grabbed my things and headed to the front counter.



meant, but he felt hurt and strange. He ran after his mom and explained what had happened. His mom kissed him and said, “In this world there are people so ignorant, and we probably won’t be able to change them, but we will ignore them and act like they are not there. Let’s play and have fun.” . . .  
(**Elvira Rodriguez**)

Not all African Americans purchase food with EBT. He didn’t even give me a chance to whip out my wallet before he decided to make his comment. I felt like he just glanced at my skin color and ASSUMED that because I am African American I get food stamps. That definitely is an invalid syllogism:

All African Americans receive food stamps.

Tai’Kiah is an African American.

Therefore, Tai’Kiah must receive food stamps.

People really need to process what they are about to say before they say it. Assuming makes a donkey’s butt out of you and me. (**Tai’Kiah Phillips**)

Osito was eight years old and experienced racism at his play time at the park. Osito’s mom used to take him to his favorite park twice a week for a couple of hours. One day another family showed up at the same time and ruined his fun time. When Osito was playing, they would play far away from him. When they had to play where he played, they would clean the area where he had just played and say racist comments such as, “We must clean because that illegal was playing here. Our parents told us to not mix our lives with wetbacks.”



Back in 1991 when I first arrived at Waupun Correctional Institution, I didn’t know what to expect. I was a little nervous. Little did I suspect that I would encounter racism. There was a second shift sergeant of the South Cell Hall who was very belligerent and disrespectful to the inmates. He was always yelling, cussing, and threatening us for no reason. Even the other officers would complain of how he treated the inmates, yet they would do nothing to help. He continued to treat us less than human, calling us out of our names, pushing us into our cell, slamming the bars closed, writing unfair conduct reports, and even lying about us.



I was eventually transferred to Green Bay Correctional, so I don’t know the outcome. But one thing I do know is you know when someone dislikes or hates you. It manifests itself through the way they talk to you, what they say to you, and the way they look at you, which is where the phrase “If looks could kill” comes from.

It doesn’t matter whether you are in prison or an indentured slave or from a different country and speak a different language: no one has the right to treat you as a second or third class citizen. (**Eugene Smalls**)

My mom, who is 57 years old, is of Irish and African American descent. When my mom first started school, she was made to go to a different school from her other siblings. Over half of her sisters and brothers are just African American; only three out of seven were mixed with an Irish



background. I guess the separation started early.

The family has never been close. It has always been Unger vs. Moses (Moses is my grandmother's second married name). All of my aunts and uncles have ever taken a family photo together. The prejudice I am explaining happened inside the home. I pray one day our whole family will come together in unity. (**Kenya Moses**)

I was in Steel, Missouri, visiting family around the middle of the summer. I was 15 and with my cousin, who was two years older. We were on our way back to the house from the gas station when a car full of white males threw bottles at us while calling us "niggers." My cousin was used to this and knew what to do. He took me by the hands and told me to run. As we started running behind buildings and ducking behind trees, the car was following us and so was the name calling. I was so scared because I had never witnessed anything like this in person. I mean, I'd seen it on TV. I knew it existed, but to be going through it in person made the hair on my body stand on end. After about an hour hiding in a junkyard, my cousin reassured me that it was okay for us to come out of hiding. As we made it home and told our parents what happened, they freaked out. We stayed low that night. What I mean by that was no one was allowed to sit on the couch or turn any lights on, just in case we were followed without knowing it. (**Shaquida Johnson**)



Living in the city of Chicago practically all my life, I wanted to try living in a rural area when I was old enough to see a different side of the world. When I started high school, I moved to Texas to live with my Aunt Marjorie. I enrolled in Mansfield High School. It seemed like a totally different world. I saw guys wearing ten-gallon hats, belt buckles the size of their waist, and tight



Wrangler jeans. I wanted to move back home to Chicago the first day I saw the people, but I still gave it a chance.

When I reached my classroom, I realized I was the only black person in the whole class. I think the whole school was about six percent African American. The first year I experienced having to go to school on Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. I went because this was my first year of high school and I did not know whether missing would affect my grade or not. The second year I did not go to school on that day because I was a little older and people had told me not to go to school, no matter if it would affect grades or not.

During my junior year of high school, I wanted to take my driving test to achieve a driver's license. I was told by the driving instructor not to go to certain neighborhoods due to KKK rallies. He also showed me places where they had signs on large-gated properties saying, "Trespassers will be shot. We rally 7-11 PM." This scared the you-know-what out of me. . . . (**Jesse Hamilton**)

As I write these sentences about a prejudice I've experienced, I had no idea how vulnerable it feels to recount this experience that occurred 25 years ago. In some ways, it shaped my thinking of whites over the years.



I saw a newspaper ad for a receptionist in an office in downtown Chicago, and I called. I spoke with the office manager for about 30 minutes on the phone. We spoke like old friends, and she and I were both excited to meet each other. She asked me so many questions and expressed how much she loved my voice. She said that as long as I passed the spelling test, the job was mine.

When I got to the office building, I was super-excited about where I would be working. This was a dream for an 18 year old. I opened the door to the office. A woman looked at me with her reading glasses on her nose and asked, "May I help you?" I recognized her voice and with the biggest grin I owned said, "Yes, Ellen, it's Yetta." She looked at me with pure disgust. She quickly looked down and



said, “OK, follow me and I’ll give you the spelling and handwriting test. Once it’s over you can leave and I’ll call you to tell you if you passed.” In my 18-year-old head, I’m thinking wait, what about this being my job and how we’re friends. Remember, we were looking forward to finishing our conversation? I never heard back from her, and my heart sank so terribly that day. The look on her face—surprise and disgust mixed together—caused me to look for this in every white person I’d met first through a phone call. When I would get that look, I would giggle to myself many times and think, Gotcha—yeah, yeah, I’m black. (**Yetta Harris**)

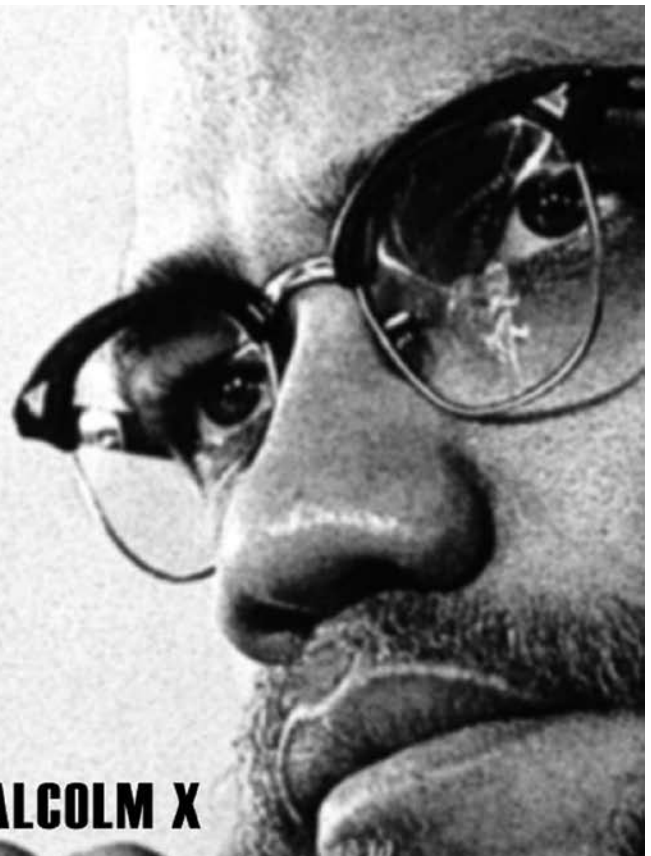
. . . Prejudice is why we view Muslims as terrorists, gays as lesser beings, white people as devils, Hispanics as the only immigrants, and so on. It is not only embarrassing but it divides our family, our nation, our world, our children. One day I hope to rid myself of every prejudice for my family and friends so we all can live a little better. It has to start with me. (**Run Barlow**)



**Brandon McCarey arranged for Rene Robinson '08 to perform Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I a Woman?" as part of the kick off for MATC's Black History Month celebration.**

***"I believe that there will ultimately be a clash between the oppressed and those who do the oppressing. I believe that there will be a clash between those who want freedom, justice and equality for everyone and those who want to continue the system of exploitation. I believe that there will be that kind of clash, but I don't think it will be based on the color of the skin..."***

**MALCOLM X**







## We are the Odyssey Class of 2012.

We have lived in Madison, Wisconsin; Memphis, Tennessee; Seattle, Washington; San Francisco, California; Greensburg, Louisiana; Las Vegas, Nevada; Arlington, Texas; Puebla, Mexico; Lusape, Zimbabwe; Kafue, Zambia; Lima, Peru; and the Robert Taylor Homes in Chicago, Illinois.

Our relatives came from Whynot, Mississippi; Rockford, Illinois; Macon, Georgia; Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Montgomery, Alabama; Blytheville, Arkansas; Rochester, New York; Detroit, Michigan; Italy, Spain, Canada, Australia, Scotland, West Indies, Peru, Haiti, Thailand, Laos, and China,

Speaking Spanish, French, German, Shona, Zulu, Ndebele, Tonga, Creole, Pig Latin, Ebonics, Hmong, Thai, Chinese, and Korean,

Calling themselves Baptist, Muslim, Catholic, Masonic, Buddhist, Jehovah's Witness, 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventist, Church of God in Christ, Rastafarian, Voodooist, AME African Methodist, Assembly of God, Pentecostal, Jewish, Evangelist, Lutheran, Mormon, Shaman, and Non-denominational.

We have worked as a bagel baker, camp counselor, waitress, cashier, deli clerk, caterer, customer service representative, prison laborer, grocery bagger, post office clerk, herbalist, dressmaker, dispatcher, fence builder, cement maker, hair stylist, coach, pool installer, plastics specialist, housekeeper, nanny, bartender, janitor, cook, driver, praise dancer, referee, bookkeeper, busgirl, corporate trainer, and steel bender.

We call ourselves sensitive, energetic, fortunate, busy, focused, determined, driven, outgoing, friendly, humorous, lucky, blessed, loud, calm, disciplined, comical, short, quiet, agreeable, likable, funny, compassionate, lonely, loving, giving, caring, trustworthy, respectful, faithful, unsure, smart, honest, joyful, active, loquacious, crazy, goofy, thoughtful, polite, sexy, adventurous, strong, fierce, encouraging, observant, dependable, well-read, outdoorsy, lovely, sentimental, creative, imaginative, small, snappy, helpful, open-minded, laid-back, different, perfectionistic, analytical, sensual, hard-headed, motivated, tired, shy, happy, big boned, and long winded.

We are the Odyssey Class of 2012.

