

A learning tool for students of the UW-Madison Odyssey Project

Odyssey ORACLE

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Editors/Contributing Writers:
Kegan Carter
Marshall Cook
Emily Auerbach

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A Lesson from Panama By Ivonne Ramos

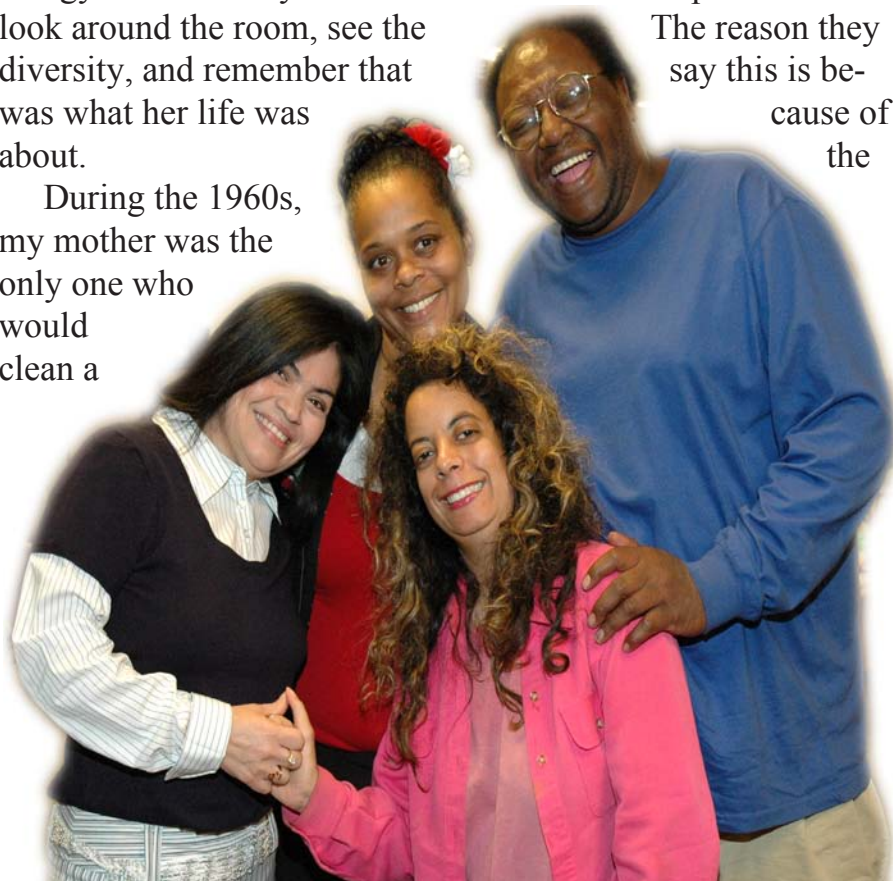
Odyssey class discussions on race made me long for my mother. At her funeral she had blacks, whites, Hispanics, Amish, ranging from children to the elderly—people that just missed her. During her eulogy I asked everyone to look around the room, see the diversity, and remember that was what her life was about.

During the 1960s, my mother was the only one who would clean a

woman at the hospital that others wouldn't touch because she was black. My mother didn't even work at the hospital.

My mother came from Panama, which the locals call the birthplace of God.

The reason they say this is because of the



motley races. Panama was a refugee country for both China and Israel, maybe more. Physically Panamanian people have the most unique features. Imagine Spanish-Chinese people or a Panamanian-Jewish neighborhood.

My grandfather was a Spanish white man with blue eyes who came from an extremely wealthy family. He was an architect and an internationally competitive chess player who was fluent in more than eight languages. My grandmother was a black Panamanian Indian from an extremely poor family. She was my grandfather's servant, literally. My grandfather was a well educated man who had a pre-arranged marriage, but he left his family to love my

servant grandmother. He was shunned.

Real love comes with rebellion. According to Kabala, a real soul mate connection can be recognized by two people from different backgrounds, whether different religions, ages, or classes.

To believe in diversity we must learn to live in diversity. We must climb out of the box of our life and venture to people and places discouraged by mainstream society.



One Chazen Choice: Christusübermalung (The Overpainting of Christ) By Arnulf Rainer



The art work that intrigued me most was Arnulf Rainer's "The Overpainting of Christ." At first glance, I saw a black and white photo of Christ with a lot of different colors strewn together and covering his body. I thought at that point that the colors represented all the different cultures of the world and that he looked down on them with love.

However, after stepping away and coming back, I saw something completely different. The meaning of the colors changed. It appeared messy as if to reflect that we have made a mess of Christ's legacy.

By René Robinson

Oracle Call and Response

In African cultures, a call and response involves a singer or storyteller sending out a melody or tale that leads others to respond. Last week students were called on to respond to Oracle entries from October 24.

Candy's Tale of Surviving Foster Homes

"Candy Accepts Humanity" was hard for me to accept. I know others were sad to see Candy upset, too. My sister was abandoned and left at a boarding school at a very young age. To this day she continues to confide in me the horrible experiences of living with manipulative strangers in a strange place, of dealing with the loneliness and resentment towards our parents. She is still traumatized and confused, and she feels abandonment every now and then. She asks me, "How could mom just leave me?" I say nothing as I look at my niece and nephew, her two beautiful kids. She always answers her own question with another, "I could never leave them. How can a parent just toss their kids away?" I feel we are beyond "Odyssey students"; we are an "Odyssey Family" now. I wanted to give Candy a hug the other night too; if I could, I would give all the lonely little children hugs. (Severn Anderson)



Candy's words touched me most out of everything last class. I know some of those situations firsthand. I also have witnessed the outcome in adults faced with the same obstacles who didn't

move past them in as healthy a manner as Candy. I am proud to see her shining example! (Tara Wilhelmi)

Rockameem's Night of Finding Love

Rockameem's discussion of love chilled my bones and heated my flesh. He took me to a mysterious, wordless, rhythmic place where I almost found myself safely lost. His words took me right back to the moment the drums did beat and the piano did pulsate. (Sherri Bester)



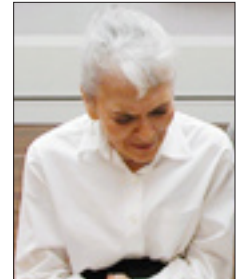
It is only through a true emotional moment that our guard is let down and the flowers in the attic are seen. Those flowers are often in the form of anger. So during that naked, uninhibited time during class, true love, anger, nobodiness, and sorrow really came out. Now the odyssey can truly begin! (Valerie Williams)

Wow, what passion in the words. This piece rocked my soul. He gave us a part of himself, through his words. Love to me is the most powerful gift a person can have. This love is something that grows and matures like a garden. (RJ Knight)

I think Rockameem is full of it. He wouldn't know love if it slapped him upside his head! (Maurice Eugene Bell a.k.a. Rockameem)

Wanda Auerbach's Letter about Oneness

Tagore talks about unity and love and how basically it shouldn't matter what nationality or religion you are. Much respect to Mr. and Mrs. Auerbach. Thank you for your continued support to the mission of the Odyssey class and students. I also thank you for coming to our class and sharing your love with us. Your love shines through Emily. (Candy Gonzalez)



It is very important to remember there are many more divides than black and white, Catholics and Protestants, Christians, Muslims, and Jews, light skinned and dark skinned, castes and sects—an ocean of division in humanity. Through divisions we fail to remember the connectedness of the human condition! I am thankful that Robert and Wanda Auerbach realize this and understand the importance of the "oneness of all human beings." (Jessica Bhan)

I really enjoyed both your letter and the words of Tagore. Tagore wrote of man's "extension of sympathy across all barriers of creed, cult, color, and culture." For me, the word "sympathy" connotes intent: to extend sympathy would then be a cognitive choice. I aspire to be in that place. It will have to be enough for me now to have a sense of empathy for all. I believe empathy speaks to being in the same stew pot.

(Kevin Schoen)

**Tom
Gardner's
Economic
Exposé**

This is a very interesting perspective of how the haves and the have-nots differ from an economic standpoint. Individuals who control the wealth of society control how the money is spent. Millions of dollars will be spent on the Iraq war, but not enough will be spent to combat homelessness in America.

(Jack Crawford)

Your statements are so real and factual. I think they should be published in the newspaper so people can start getting more educated.

(Naomi Kharrazihassani)

After reading this piece I'm certain that Tom Gardner is on some kind of government blacklist. If not, he is on his way. He is the fire and lighter fluid at the barbecue.

(Ivonne Ramos)



I agree with Tom. America is the land of the free and the home of the brave, but that means nothing if you don't have money.
(Brenda Tompkins)

**Debby Never
Gives Up**

Debby's discussion of her battle with spina bifida helped me to see her in a whole different light. She is more than her physical being. She is a courageous young woman who doesn't let her condition make or break her. I openly commend Debby on her motto "Never Give Up." There have been more than a few occasions where I wanted to call it quits! I look up to Debby and her strength with the many different challenges that she faces. She hasn't let it keep her down, and in my eyes that is extremely heroic.

(Ronnie Jones)

Debby is a perfect example to all those who are ready to quit in this program. If Debby, an extraordinary individual with spina bifida, can make it to class every week, so can we.

(Josephine Lorya)

She is amazing! Amazing! She is a living example of why no one should quit loving life. Debby is inspiration, hope, and power. She is not the adjective, but as a pioneer she is the verb. If you ever hear me say, "I'm doing a Debby," move out of my way because I'm doing what needs to get done by all means necessary.
(Ivonne Ramos)



It takes a very courageous person to come out and let everyone know about a disease that has caused them a lot of pain throughout life. I could not imagine going through anything like this and still having such a sweet and innocent spirit. What I respect the most about you is that you don't seem bitter. You've taken a situation that most people would look at as the end of the world, and you have turned it into a way of educating others on how we can make a difference in someone else's life by not judging them. This story has made a lasting impact on me.
(Sheriah Quartey)

The piece in the Oracle that hit me hardest was the story of Debbie Loftsgordon. It took a lot of courage for her to write that piece. I can't imagine what her life must be like, to struggle against something like that all the time. My sister was in a car accident as a child, and she is now a triplegic. My sister is one the kindest, most honest, most beautiful people in the world, and her spirit is phenomenal, but I know her life to be full of many trials and tribulations. My sister and Debbie are so much stronger than I am. I know it because I can't accept certain things that happen to me. I would call it a day.

(Justin Wilson)

I can understand why Debby's symbol is a rose: she continues to bloom, and her petals stay strong no matter what the weather is.
YOU GO GIRL!
(Valerie Williams)

Ozanne's Salad

I agree with Ozanne that it takes all kinds to make the best meal. Our class reminds me of a sea of different types of fish: tropical, goldfish, starfish, and a few piranhas. The point I'm trying to make is all of us are like fish in a school. We flutter here and there, back and forth, but we learn so much each week from our newfound family in the large school of fish.

(RJ Knight)

Ozanne's metaphor was delightfully wonderful. We are all ingredients, and each ingredient, if savored, would have many different effects on our taste buds: some sweet, some sour; some hot, some cold; some spicy, some mild; some robust, some bland. Such are personalities; we were made that way. We need them all to survive.

(René Robinson)

When I first set foot in class, I had no idea that each person, including myself, was special. We all do have the potential to change the world around us. A salad does have many ingredients that taste wonderful together. I do agree with Ozanne, but realistically some people like just lettuce in a salad. Some people hate tomatoes, or onions, or other ingredients, just as some people are racist toward other cultures.

(Albert Watson)

**Josephine's Odyssey Moment**

Josephine said she had an Odyssey moment on the 11th of September when they were talking about Blake on CNN News. I just want to say that it's good to know that what we are learning from history still can affect our lives today, and that's why we should be encouraged to learn more about stories and people of the past. I used to hate History. I used to say to myself, "Why do I need to know about all these people I've never met who died a long time ago? Why do I care about whatever they did?" But now I know that there are some great lessons I can get from them that can be useful today.

(Nosihle Lukhele)

I too encounter many Odyssey moments in my daily life. By taking the class I've become much more aware of my surroundings.

(John Shields)

Sheriah's Shyness

I would like to hear some of your opinions and ideas regarding the work assignments.

I sit in class every Wednesday, hoping to hear a voice I have yet to hear. Although you probably can't tell, I too have a shyness



that sometimes holds me back, causing me to silence myself. I hope that you do not deprive me or yourself the privilege of letting your voice be heard. If you have read about Socrates and Frederick Douglass, you should know that you owe it to yourself and to the world to speak up and let your voice be heard.

(Jeffery McCarroll)

Star-Studded Student Style

I just wanted to say great job to all my fellow classmates that participated in this extra credit: Ozanne, Josephine, Kevin, Sherri, Jessica, Albert, Thomas, and John. This was so refreshing to me. I thought that all of the sentences were excellent, and it really made me want to step my game up. I wanted to complete this extra credit, but I thought I would not be able to write these kinds of sentences without making a mistake. When I read the sentences that you all came up with, it gave me the motivation to face my fears and try different ways of writing.

(Sheriah Quartey)

Music

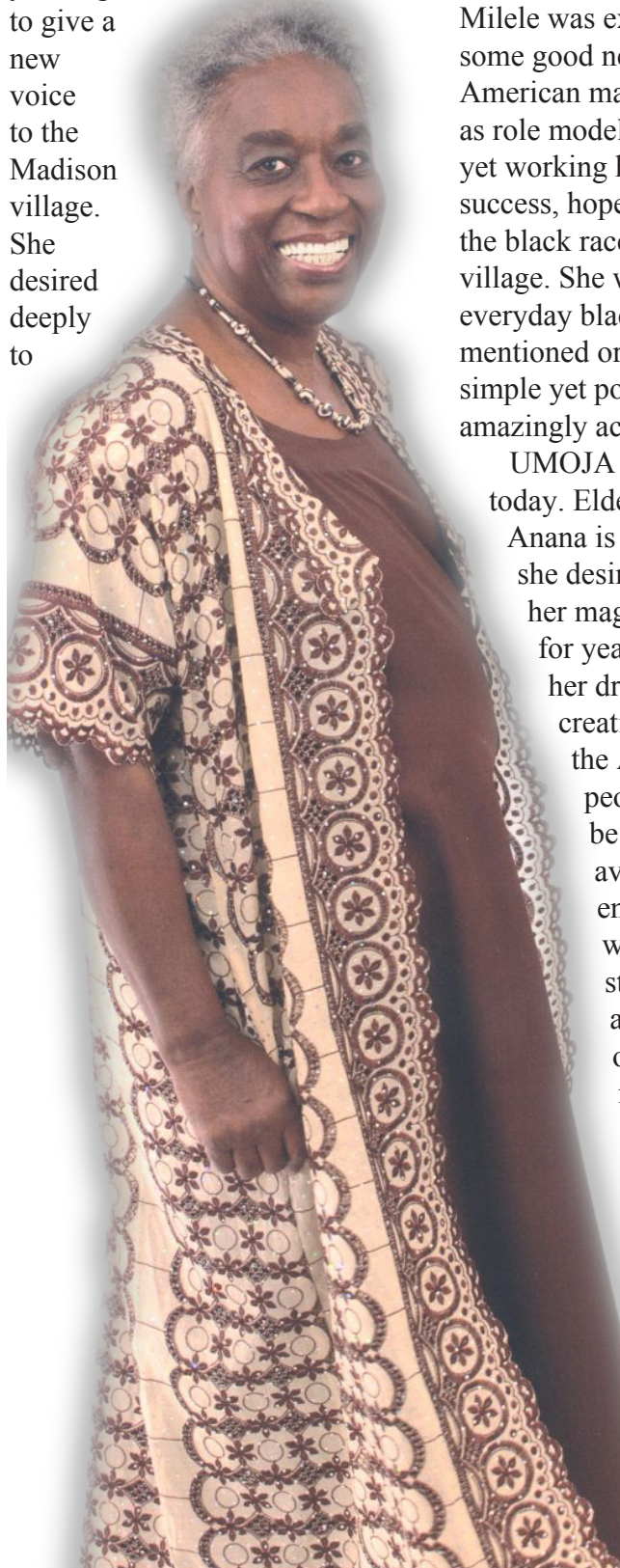
When I read everyone's comments on music, it was as if we all had created a song where the chorus is telling us that music is in us, no matter what. We all can agree, "We need music!" Just like Mr. and Mrs. Auerbach were united even though they come from different places, so here we are coming from many different cultures, religions, and beliefs, yet we are united as one class!

(Candy Gonzalez)



Milele Chikasa Anana By Sherri Bester

Elder Milele Chikasa Anana started UMOJA Magazine 17 years ago to give a new voice to the Madison village. She desired deeply to



spread stories showing black men's journeys other than to prison and athletic fields. Ms. Milele was excited to spread some good news about African-American males that she viewed as role models lost in the crowd yet working hard to represent success, hope, and victory to the black race within Madison's village. She wanted to feature everyday black men seldom mentioned or recognized for their simple yet powerful achievements amazingly accomplished.

UMOJA is still going strong today. Elder Milele Chikasa Anana is 73 years old and she desires the legacy of her magazine to continue for years to come. It is her dream to see the creative art forms of the African-American people of Madison to be expressed in other avenues as well. She enjoys displaying within the magazine stories about black art forms created out of hope and faith, including poetry and dance. On the covers of UMOJA she displays great black art from both the past and present.

The sweetest story she told was from her childhood. She described a memory like a precious song and

dance she returns to visit within her soul's special ballroom even today. Elder Milele spoke of a lovely sound she heard as a child late one night. She awakened to look out her bedroom window to hear and see five black men on the corner singing happy heavenly harmony. When she described this memory, her face generously glowed and glistened gloriously.

We must all contribute positive energy towards change deep within our own healing journey and then unify together healed and changed. We must do this as a human race. We all bring value to the table and each of us makes the potluck complete with variety and taste and celebration! We each hold the puzzle piece needed to finish the picture and make straight the pathway of the twisted maze.



Courtesy of **Brava Magazine**



Why Might Milele Speak Specifically to Black Men?

By René Robinson

I have known Milele for six years and know she is passionate about HER people. In my reasoning (Socrates), to

acquire understanding of what one might say or to understand how one is thinking, I first need to know their age. I can only imagine what Milele has had to overcome and endure throughout her 73 years.

I CAN imagine why Milele wanted to address the Black men within our class, even though she was there to be the interviewee and not the interviewer, and even though the world does not solely revolve around Black and White people. Perhaps she recently saw what I saw—a *Meet the Press* program in which Tim Russert interviewed Bill Cosby and Alvin Poissant (Harvard Professor) about their book *Come on People – On the Path from Victim to Victors*. Within this interview the following statistics were revealed:

***70% of the children born Black have single parents**

***Of the 2.2 million who are incarcerated in this country, 910,000 are Black men**

***Women out number black men 2-1 in college**

***Over half of high school dropouts are Black males**

***A third of homeless**

people are Black Men
***Half of the new cases for HIV/AIDS are Black people**
***The United States has the highest incarceration record in the world.**

possible that, at that particular moment, a great Providence (Frederick Douglass) compelled her to speak to our Black men. Who really knows? Maybe, just maybe, it was meant to happen.

It is possible this study was at the forefront of Milele's mind.

It is also



Angel Red Cloud Krohn

Note from Emily: Angel attended Odyssey class on September 7 only and is struggling with addiction and legal issues. During the second week of the semester, she dropped off homework to my office, including poetry about her battles and hopes. Although she has been dropped from the class, she has not been dropped from our hearts, and we hope she will get back in touch once she's out of the system and through recovery.

Here are two of her poems:

Odyssey

Odyssey of the mind
An adventure for all to see
A reflection of light
A reflection of me
Where will it take me?
How far will I go?
What depths shall I seek?
My adventure
My maze of life
My Odyssey

Me, I went the wrong way
Despair, drugs, heartache, loss
I can't find my way back
Which way do I turn?
Every which way
I fall
Dark deep hole
Right back where I started
How-why-where
Who am I?
Life-death
Killer-saint
Lover-friend
Addict-drug free
Where do I go?
Who am I?

Who am I?

Life is like a maze
Full of twists and turns
Which way do you go?



I don't know anymore
Can't tell pain from love
Love from pain
When will I be free?
Will I ever find my way through?
Or am I destined to just be me?

Shekhinah, Angel
By Rockameem

Shekhinah— the presence of God

Angel, I woke up this morning
and said Angel in flight,
Please let her make it through the
night.
Aw, what odyssey will she have
now?
Me too.
You see, we said we all are one,
that deal we made when we
opened the door,
sat down,
and said, come, let class begin.
Angel,
Make it through the night
So we can see you in class
Wednesday night.
Angel in flight
So I'm not free tonight.
What happens to her
Happens to me
Shekhinah!

*Dedicated to
Angel Red Cloud Krohn*



Fallen Angel By Isaura Simon

What Lies Beneath the Surface By Anne Meyer (Odyssey 06-07)

"Who are you?" This is a question that I am rarely, if ever, asked. "What are you?" is a question that I have been asked on a regular basis since childhood. I am the product of Norwegian and African extraction.

As I child, kids would ask me, "What are you?" At the time, I thought it was novel. I reveled in their inability to pinpoint my exact parentage. As an adult, I am asked

the same question by other adults. Now that the novelty has long since worn off, I detest the question.

I realized early on that "Black" cancels out everything else about your being in the minds of others unless it fits their stereotypes. I often wonder if they ask because they are bothered by not being able to attach a label to me. I find it a convenient way for them to learn something about me, without having the interest or taking the time to get to know me as a person.

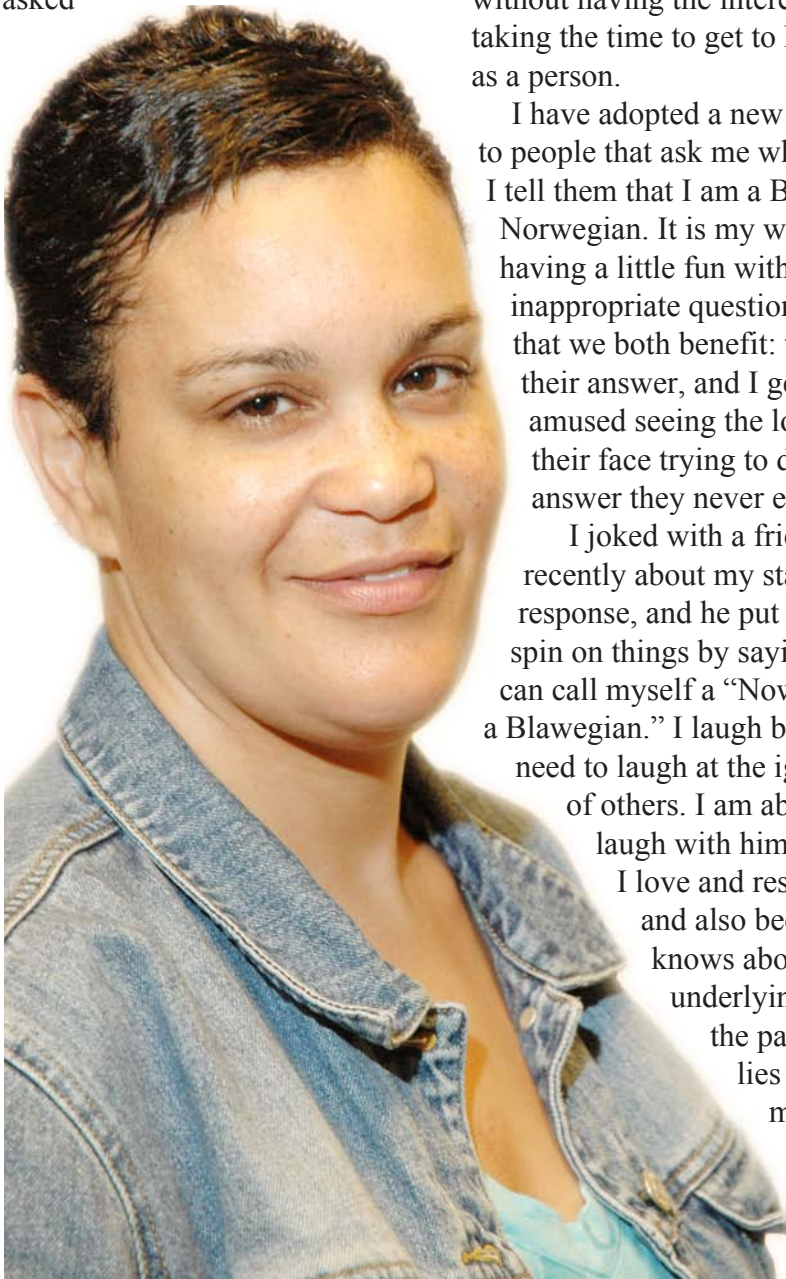
I have adopted a new response to people that ask me what I am. I tell them that I am a Black Norwegian. It is my way of having a little fun with the inappropriate question. I figure that we both benefit: they get their answer, and I get to be amused seeing the look on their face trying to digest the answer they never expected.

I joked with a friend recently about my standard response, and he put a new spin on things by saying that I can call myself a "Nowack or a Blawegian." I laugh because I need to laugh at the ignorance of others. I am able to laugh with him because I love and respect him, and also because he knows about my underlying pain—the pain that lies deep at my core; the pain that seeps from

my pores in the form of anger every time someone asks me "what are you?" or when people make blatant assumptions about me based on the color of my skin. I despise the ignorance of people that break into their best black accent when they are around me; those that assume that I like basketball, listen to rap music, can't live without fried chicken, or that I am a really good dancer. These same people that consider themselves to be intelligent lose complete reasoning when it comes to race. Somehow they can't figure out that most, if not all, of humankind is not born with know how. The way that we are is a result, for the most part, of how our personalities intermingle with what we are exposed to and taught.

You might infer, based on this essay, that I am above what I accuse others of. I am not. I am very capable of prejudging others. I think the difference for me, because I have been hurt by the ignorance of others, is that I try really hard to not get stuck in my prejudices. I make an attempt to look beyond the surface to discover what lies beneath.

If offered the chance to live as one of the privileged class, I would most definitely decline. For better or worse these experiences are what have shaped me. Though they provide the hard rock that I use to build the chip on my shoulder, they have also taught me to be more compassionate, understanding, and tolerant than I might have otherwise been.



Frederick Douglass Speaks

Students were asked to become Frederick Douglass in 1852, seven years after publication of Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave. Opening up the Southern Quarterly Review, Douglass would have encountered an editorial arguing that slaves could not grasp the concept of liberty, basked in their enslavement, and belonged in their condition because it was God's plan.

Dear Editor,

I find your editorial to be ignorant, unwarrantable, fallacious, and extremely callous. The same God created you and me, and yet you claim your liberty is of value while my liberty is worthless. What hypocrisy! **(Albert Watson)** I abhor and detest your tongue, yet

it is your first amendment right to speak, as it is fully mine. When I read your words, they remind me of a frightened, venomous snake ready to strike at any rattle, so ignorant it doesn't recognize it's striking its own. **(Ivonne Ramos)**

You write, "Christian slavery is the brightest sunbeam which Omniscience has destined for his existence."

Is it? You then contend that adultery and rape are part of this "sunbeam"? You then contend that murder and torture are part of this "sunbeam"? You then contend that virtue and vice are alike and heaven and hell have no difference? Has the Omniscient One destined wolves to shepherd the sheep, left monsters to cradle the baby, and in His wonderful kindness ordained

devils to master angels? What a beautiful sight when I behold your overflowing storage and my gnawing hunger! Oh, what a sight, what entertainment, when a desolate, destitute, desiccated, desecrated mother dances to the split, separation, and sundering of her from her children! **(Haroun Omar)**

In your article you say "the negro left to himself does not dream of liberty." Sir, I ask since the unprovoked invasion of the African continent, the domination of its people, the transmigration of millions of its citizens to the colonial states where they, no we, were forced to eke out an existence while surviving on scraps and being subjugated to forced labor on behalf of our white masters, since when has the negro been left to himself? **(Justin Wilson)** Left to himself, the negro, within his home of Africa, was naturally conceived in freedom. I have spent the larger part of my life dreaming of freedom alongside my manacled brothers. **(Jessica Bhan)**

Although I was shackled and chained, my mind was never imprisoned. In my mind, I was always a free man, free to think, free to feel. No longer am I held captive through force, fear, and fraud. **(John Shields)** The more I thought about everything I was learning, the more I realized how wicked the enslavers were! The thought of Freedom came over



*From the Frederick Douglass series
by Jacob Lawrence*

me. I could feel it, see it, hear it.
(**Candy Gonzalez**)

I must tell you of the disheartening sorrow and anger I felt upon reading your article. I feel sorrow towards you because it is your belief that a man could be content working in the field until there's no feeling left in his hands. (**Valerie Williams**) You have portrayed yourself as a hurtful and heartless man. (**R.J. Knight**) Liberty belongs to whoever is seeking it, Mr. Editor. I was not put on earth to pick your cotton or tend your fields. (**Charrod Miller**) We dream of being separated from the odious treatment imposed upon us by slave masters, grasping not the barbaric conception which belongs so naturally to the white man. (**René Robinson**)

Liberty is a concept owned by all of humanity, not solely by the white man who so brutally withholds it from his human brothers! Christian slavery is an oxymoron, a cover up of sinister unholy acts, a betrayal of the same principles the author of that editorial and others like him use to oblige and justify their lustful, gluttonous, brutal, and ungodly ways. (**Tara Wilhelmi**) What would be the reason for the master to sleep with the slave women and bring forth a new class of people? These children were slaves also. Can you please explain how one can enslave one's own children? How could they sell them like cattle? (**Brenda Tompkins**)

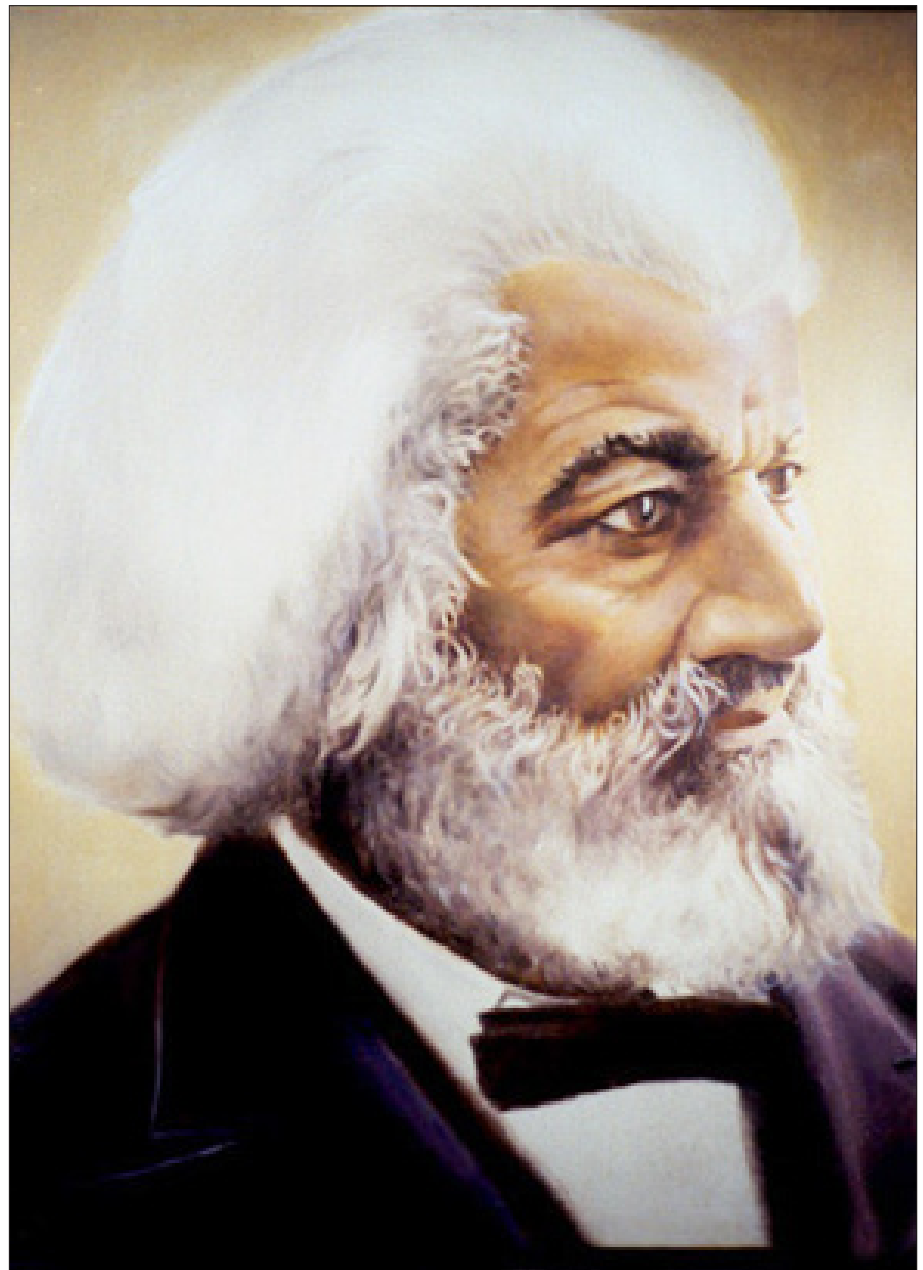
When we were taken away from our fathers, God was still our father. When we were given tremendous burdens to carry, God made our burdens light. When we were so weak that all we could do

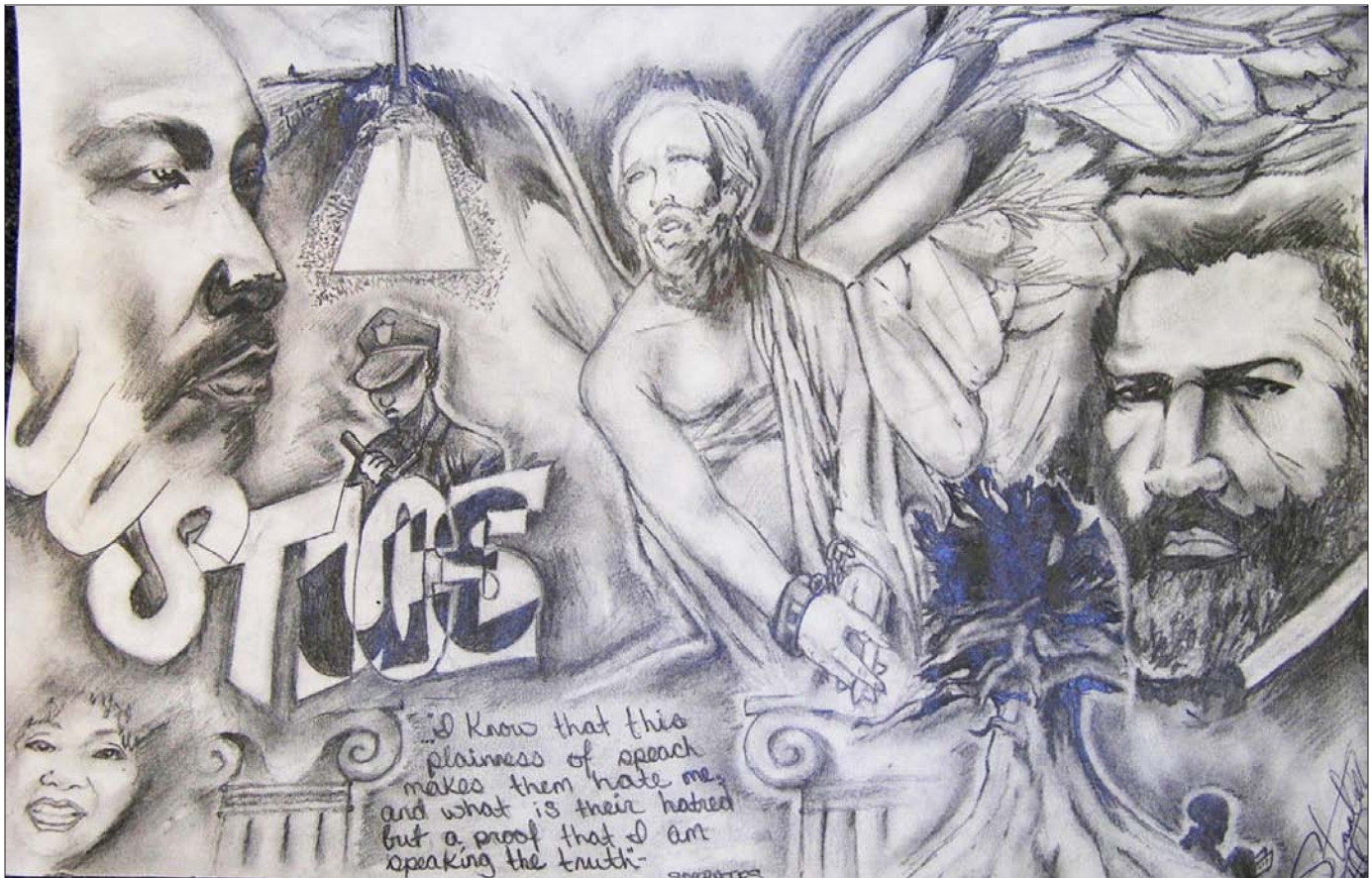
was moan, God understood our cries. When we were separated from the ones we loved, we kept God in our hearts. When we sometimes had no escape from our torment but death, we knew God would be there to meet us at the end of our journey. (**Loretta Smith**)

You profane the words of your own proclaimed faith—Christianity. Christ has come that we might have life, and He has also come to set the captives free. In saying this, my dear Sir,

he was speaking of me and my brethren who have been captive far too long at the hands of barbaric masters like yourselves. I hold these truths to be self-evident: you sir, a white man, can no longer hold the Negro in chains and should consider me and others like myself to be a threat to your temples of lies, idolatry, hypocrisy, torture, greed, self-indulgence, cruelty, and injustice. (**Ozanne Anderson**)

If you go and look in the Bible in Romans 8:2, Galatians





By Stanley Sallay, Odyssey class of 2007

5:1, and John 8:36, "God set us free." (**Naomi Kharrazihassani**) Do you think that a righteous God would have destined white men to sinning by having children with their slave women, and to separate children from their own mothers? (**Nosihle Lukhele**) How can you use the words Christianity and slavery in the same sentence? You are what I call a slave of your own ignorance! (**Maria Torres**)

The Bible says to do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Am I not a man that bleeds the same red blood as you? Do I not feel pain from the cowhide as any man would? If slavery is such a wonderful and privileged experience, why aren't any white men and women partaking in this illustrious profession? (**Jeffery McCarroll**)

You cannot presume to know what slaves are thinking and feeling. A song does not always express happiness. A song can be an expression of pain. What would a slave gain by telling someone he was unhappy? Would his master release him? Would his master try to make his life better? (**Mandisa Hayes**)

What gives you the right to assume what is best for the negro race? You have no clue as to the extent of the pain and suffering we endured at the hands of a slaveholder. We were whipped repeatedly for no reason at all, black women were raped and some impregnated, and when the elderly became too old to work, you would put them in places to die, alone, by themselves. All we ever wanted was to be treated with dignity, to live our lives in



peace. You'll get what's coming to you in the end when you meet your maker. (**Jack Crawford**)

As a former slave and published writer, I take this opportunity to inform you just how wrong you are. You use two words that should never be used to describe the life of a slave: "happy" and "enjoyment." Don't take a smile on the face of slaves or their singing as evidence of their contentment. (**Dwayne Blue**) My conception of freedom

is hidden from overseers, slaveholders, and legalized kidnappers who persevere at destroying any inclination I may have of devising ways of obtaining freedom by torturing me in ways only witnessed by survivors of the Spanish Inquisition. **(Tom Gardner)**

It was people like you—who praise God on Sunday and kill the children of God on the weekday—who wanted us not to dream of liberty by keeping us uneducated. Education seems to be a privilege for people like you but interference for people like myself. Are you intimidated that when educated we will be equal or greater than you? Slaveholders' Christianity is not the evidence of their innate goodness, but merely a hypocritical show that serves to reinforce their self-righteous brutality. I make this point clear in the Appendix of my book. After reading my book, you will realize that the Negro whom you said does not dream of liberty just educated you. **(Josephine Lorya)**

I will try to “be angry and sin not” while I try to help open your eyes and empty my heart. After education came knowledge of a ladder, but a ladder to climb where, when, and how? The bread of knowledge left my stomach growling from an even deeper hunger and my mouth dry from an even deeper thirst. It was the faint dream of freedom that kept my mentality seeking sanity as I watched every daily bloody beating, every daily brutal rape, and every daily bold lynching. I craved, over fear of being beaten for reading, what freedom looked, smelled, sounded, tasted, and felt like. The price of dwelling into

deeper darkness and despair I was willing to pay because of my desired delight for deliverance. The fact is “it is a cruel task to disturb” my ancestors in the life of freedom that they first lived before theft, captivity, and slavery. **(Sherri Bester)**

Dear Sir, how sad you must be. You eat but stay hungry, never full; you feel but you never touch. Dear Sir, believeth in me, have life forever, or must I read Mark 16:16 just for you! **(Rockameem)** A more deliberate or skillfully aimed blow was never given against Christianity than is found in the Fugitive Slave Act. Christianity commands, if we would inherit eternal life, to “feed the hungry,” clothe the naked, and take in the stranger. **(Severn Anderson)**

A wise man named William Shakespeare once wrote in *The Merchant of Venice*, “If you prick us, do we not bleed?” I bleed the color red, blood oozing, pouring, dripping out from my “master’s” whippings. **(Debby Loftsgordon)** Why is it that you can so easily think that slavery was God’s plan for us? Was it not God who put us all on this earth to share its miraculous worth as equals? **(Ronnie Jones)**

How can you have men-stealers for ministers, women-whippers for missionaries, cradle-plunderers for church members, and call this Christian Slavery! The cruelest task is for you to write this editorial about slavery that gives it such a beautiful ray of light, when for me and my fellow slaves it is a life covered with a sun shining dark upon our souls. **(Sheriah Quartey)**

Slavery is the cup of the devil, from which you have drunk so fully. Turn away from it lest you find eternal lodging at the inn of unquenchable fire. Break free of the manacles that bind you to your hatred. I say you are the biggest slave of all: Never able to stop calculating your ill-gotten gain, never able to stop the flow of love away from you, never knowing whether your newest justifications will appease an angry God, never able to stop watching when your slaves might disappear, hoping against all odds that they only ran away, that God has not called them home and left you with nothing but Judas’ coins. **(Kevin Schoen)**

Yours truthfully, respectfully,
sincerely, angrily, and always for
freedom and humanity,

Frederick Douglass



Rockameem, or 2:50 a m

Mary had a baby
 But this one's name was not
 Jesus
 Mary had a baby at 15
 She got kicked out
 Was whoring at 16
 Mary had a baby
 A pretty little baby
 What happened to that
 baby?
 His name was Rockameem
 His crib was a shopping bag
 Hung on a light
 She left him there
 With the light on all night
 The voice told him
 Don't look at the light
 Or you'll go crazy tonight
 Rockameem was a baby then
 The voice would take care

of him
 After that every night
 What happened to that
 baby?
 All those nights in a
 shopping bag
 Can we start over again?
 Hold me, Mary,
 Just one of those nights.
 Is that why you don't like to
 be touched?
 The shopping bag couldn't
 give you that much
 Mary had a baby
 Pretty little baby
 Named Rockameem
 What happened to that
 baby,
 Rockameem?



Abandoned Baby By Tsuya Pratt

The Gift

By Sherreallyum Allen
 (Odyssey Class of 2005)

One fall day I woke to a surprise
 A little boy staring
 With innocent eyes

I looked and I wondered
 How could this be?
 Why was this little boy
 Entrusted to me?

I was very young
 Naïve and filled with dreams
 But when I woke that morning
 I really wanted to scream
 I was filled with doubt
 But ready to face the world
 To tell the truth
 I really wanted a girl

I said to myself wake up, you see,
 Because this little boy
 Was entrusted to me

When I looked in his face
 He was beautiful and fine
 Then I thought to myself
 That he was all mine

Just in a flash, there were
 A bunch of white coats
 They looked at me and said
 "Miss, just give up hope."

With fright on my face
 I asked, "What's wrong?"
 They said, "Miss, we don't know,
 Please go home."

"Go home!" I say
 "This must be a joke
 Aren't you a doctor?
 Didn't you take an oath?"

He looked at me and smiled.
“You’re young and naïve.

You still have time to fulfill
Your dreams.
Just leave him here and no one
Will know
Turn around and walk out
There’s the door!”

Now I was mad
Insulted, you see,
Because this little boy
Was entrusted to me

I may have been young
But no dummy by far
Because I picked up my son
And headed straight for the car.

I went from doctor to doctor
All around town
They would look at me and say
With that sarcastic frown
“Miss, give up hope
he’s not going to do much
not walk, not talk,
nor see, nor hear

He won’t even be able
To feed himself lunch,
My dear

People do it everyday
It’s not that hard
It’s a locked facility
But they don’t have any guards
See look! Children
Playing in the yard.”

Enraged by now
I turned and walked away
Because they won’t get
My son Oh no! not today

More determined than ever
To prove them all wrong
I awoke every day
Just to teach him songs

People would look at me
And stare
How dare she bring
him
Out to play

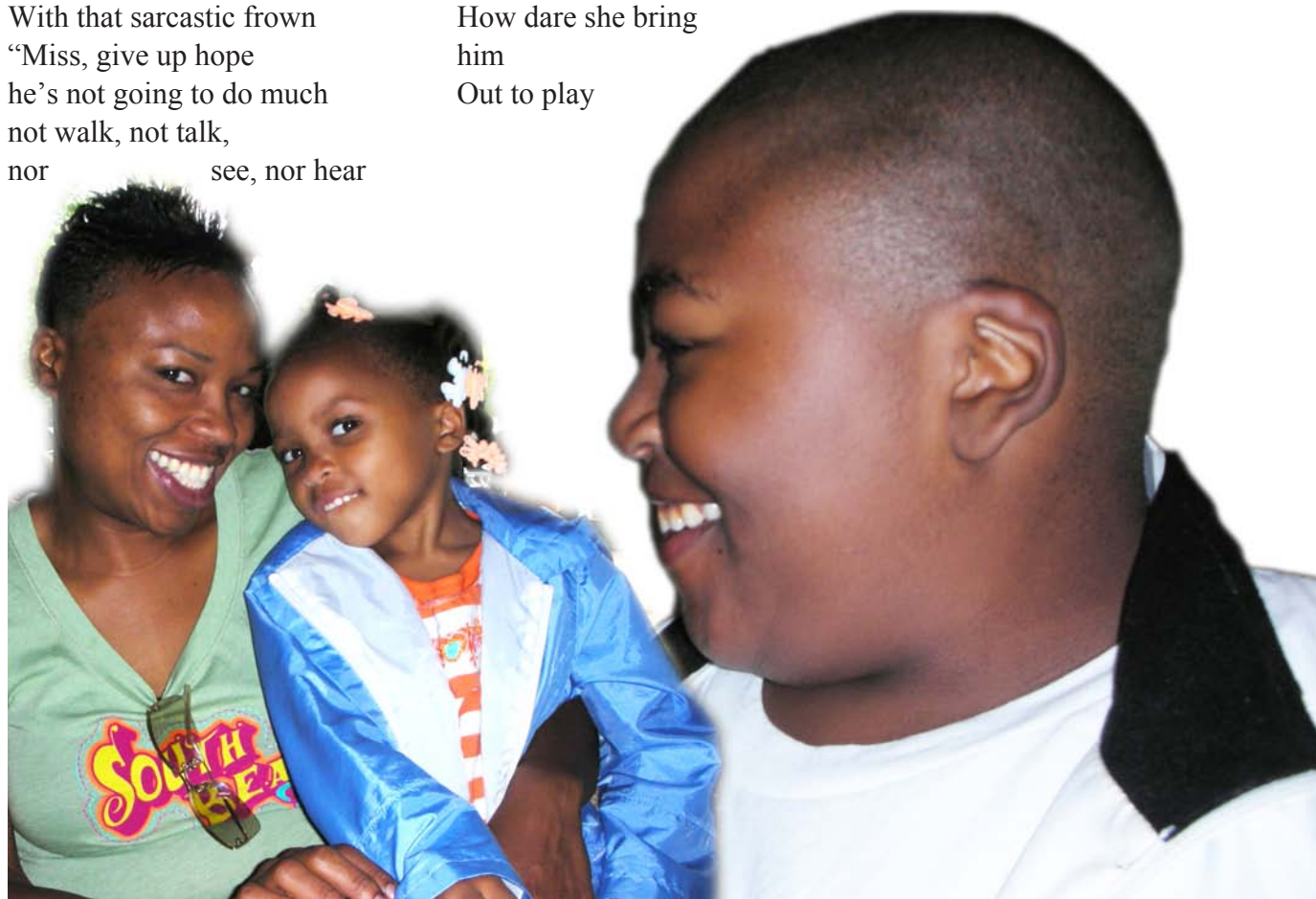
He looks funny
You should take him away!

I would shout it from the
Rooftops every time
Isn’t he beautiful?
Yes! He is mine.

With my family’s support we
made
It a long way
I took him outside
Everyday to play

Many people would
Be ashamed
But Oh! No
Not me!

Because this little boy
Is a gift from God
Entrusted directly to me.



Walk on By By E. Orokí Rice, Class of 2007

If you see me walking down the street,
And I start to cry each time we meet,
Walk on by.



It's hard to ignore them.
They ride buses from one end of town to another all day long. You'll find them in public libraries prompting an ordinance posted that bans bad odors, carrying too many bags, sleeping and excessive staring. Something tells me this ordinance was created to shelter and comfort regular people.

I live at Porchlight, a transitional housing facility for people like me who are homeless. Homelessness has forced me to look deeper into the eyes of my homeless brothers and sisters. I have to believe that not one of them said to themselves in childhood, "When I grow up I'm gonna be a homeless person".

I know I didn't. Most of us had dreams of a different life than the scorching fire we were asked to walk through. Some of us came out more reduced to ashes than others.

So the next time you encounter one of us, look us in the eye. Look past the stench. Look past the six giant garbage bags that we board the bus with. Look past the blank stares pasted on our faces as we rock from side to side in the bus shelter. Look past the smile we offer freely as we dance to our own beat on State Street with hope that you can spare a little change.

If you can't look us in the eye please,
Walk on by.

Meet the Donor: Alan Attie

Alan Attie is a Professor of Biochemistry at the UW-Madison who specializes in laboratory studies of diabetes and obesity. He is married to Jean Feraca. Alan Attie is the first person ever to arrange for an automatic monthly deduction from his paycheck to support the Odyssey Project. He is a friend and admirer of Earl Shorris, founder of the Clemente Course in the Humanities in New York, and has attended several UW Odyssey classes and graduation

ceremonies here in Madison.

Alan Attie says he donates to the Odyssey Project because he is excited by its potential to change lives through education. "I'm impressed by the students' intelligence, enthusiasm, and motivation. A major part of why I feel like sending money is that I've seen up close the way Emily is running this project, and I'm very impressed by the way she is having such an impact on the students and their whole families. Many say their children are



watching less TV because they see their parents in the Odyssey class reading and studying. They're setting new examples, and that's very exciting to see."

Meet “The Mystery Woman”

One Odyssey student said to Diane Dennis, “You’re the mystery woman.

We’re not really sure what you do.” Here is Diane’s answer.

Dear Odyssey Class of 2007-2008,

I’ve been working as an administrative assistant in the Division of Continuing Studies at the University for many years, during which time I also have raised two



children, who are now 18 and 20.

Odyssey is only a part of our department. We provide Independent Learning courses in English, Math, Music, Foreign Languages, and other subjects to people who live all over the world. We offer continuing education classes to students of all ages in our community. For example, Emily teaches a book discussion group at the downtown library on Tuesday mornings, and she coordinates a free lecture series by retired faculty. I help with the paperwork to make these and other classes successful.

Being the Odyssey Project coordinator is the most rewarding, challenging, and fulfilling part of my job.

I tremendously enjoy meeting so many new people and take pleasure in watching your hunger for learning.

Last year Emily coaxed me into taking the class for credit myself

and doing all the homework. I can now relate to the complexity of this course, the hard work, and the strong determination it takes to keep going. I’m here to echo Joe Robinson: Don’t give up! I’m currently taking an Intro to Sociology class at M.A.T.C. and hope to earn a degree. Learning is a lifelong process.

I am here to provide support for you if needed and can assist you with grammar, proofreading, and basic computer skills. I can help you set up your wisc.edu account for email. There is a lot of behind the scenes work for the Odyssey Project, such as registering students, chartering buses, ordering textbooks, administering grants, locating community resources, stocking supplies for dinner, and duplicating handouts. I’m here to help you in whatever way I can or just to listen, so feel free to email me at ddennis@dcs.wisc.edu or call me at 262-3885.

Thank you for letting me be part of your Wednesday evenings.

Congratulations to Kegan Carter (Odyssey 2004) and Jeffery McCarroll (Odyssey 2008) on their engagement! This photo shows them at the Odyssey graduation in May 2007. All the best to Kegan and Jeffery for a life of love and mutual support as they go forward toward their dreams.



Roberto Clemente: a great ballplayer and a great humanitarian By Sherri Bester

Coach Marshall came to class again displaying a mysterious baseball jersey—but also a hidden story of history for us to discover.

I searched on Google for Santurce Crabbers 1952 Baseball Player # 21 with my new computer and discovered right away that the mystery man's name was Robert Walker Clemente. He was born in Carolina, Puerto Rico on August 18, 1934, the youngest child of Melchor and Luisa Clemente. The Clementes valued education and wanted their son to be an engineer. Clemente was a good student who aimed high for excellence in all his endeavors.

I discovered that Clemente was described as “the Puerto Rico Jackie Robinson” in *Sports Illustrated* magazine. Puerto Rican broadcaster and

journalist Luis Mayoral quoted that statement in pride and praise when he said that, “Clemente had about him a touch of royalty.”

Baseball Commissioner Bowie Kuhn described Clemente as a marvelous right fielder, making unique running catches, diving after the ball, and throwing out base runners with his deadly arm. Clemente was one of Major League Baseball's greatest players, and he was also known and remembered as one of the world's best humanitarians.

Clemente's accomplishments on the baseball field enabled him to dedicate his life to those less fortunate. His acts of charity were legendary. Citizens asked him to run for Mayor of San Juan. In

Pittsburgh, where he played for his entire career, he was a well-known mentor to young Hispanic ball players.

Throughout his lifetime Clemente reached out with a pure heart of charity towards others, ending in a death seeking to spread love. Clemente left this earth a lasting profound memory of love, humanity and victory.

In 1972 an earthquake ravaged Managua, Nicaragua. Tragedy

overtaken the lives of many. Clemente was an honorary chair of the Nicaraguan Relief Committee. He decided to go himself on a small plane to help. Loaded up with food, clothing and medical supplies, the plane carrying Clemente took off. Moments after takeoff from San Juan, Puerto Rico, the aircraft crashed and sank into the Atlantic Ocean. Everyone aboard was killed.

On August 6, 1973, Clemente became the first Latin American baseball player to be voted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame. His baseball jersey number 21 that same year was retired by the Pittsburgh Pirates. In 1975 Clemente was inducted into the Black Athletes Hall of Fame. After Jackie Robinson, he became the second baseball player on a U.S. postage stamp.

Because of the life he lived, he helped others' eyes open to the fact that what matters most above is love. He realized that his favorite sport and his great talents were given to him to turn into love.

Added Note from Emily:

The Odyssey Project is in part modeled after the Clemente Course in the Humanities, a program Earl Shorris started in New York in 1995 to empower low-income adults through exposure to great works of philosophy, history, literature, and art. Earl Shorris called his program the Clemente Course because the first classes were held at the Roberto Clemente Guidance Center.

