

# Odyssey Oracle

## BEING DRAMATIC

*Here are a few excerpts from thank you letters to Professor Baron Kelly for guiding the class in vocal exercises and in scenes from Shakespeare, Lorraine Hansberry, and August Wilson.*



By doing those exercises, I was facing a fear, a fear of my feelings, a fear of not feeling right or comfortable. As the night flew by, those feelings were gone. Thanks from the bottom of my heart.  
LoLita Phillips



Dear Baron Kelly, Thanks for teaching me a lot on how to breathe, how to read and express the words **so that they reflect the story's meaning. I have taken and learned a lot from the experience. All I can really say is thanks a lot and I really enjoyed acting—an experience to remember.**  
Akilah Freeman

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Thank you for taking time to come to our class. Your words and actions inspired me. Your humble heart and your dreams you made come true

have inspired me that I can do the same. When you spoke on you traveling the world and where you **came from how many don't make it out, I could** relate and appreciate. God bless, Derrick McCann

Hey, Baron, I just want to thank you for sharing your life with me and my classmates. You are an awesome performer and one that teaches from your heart. I felt you really cared about us. Thanks. Munroe Whitman



Thank you, Mr. Kelly, for taking time to teach us how to project our words and speak firmly and with purpose. I truly enjoyed everything we learned in class.

I admire your accomplishments. Your words pack meaning, and I only hope to stand as strong as you some day. Thanks. Patrice Smith

Thank you for coming tonight and working with us. I understood because you were clear and loud. I hope you come back soon. Angelica Cuahuey

**Thank you for your time. We appreciate it. It's good**

to see someone that came from struggle and made it. It gives others as well as me motivation. You also gave me the courage to try something new and not be afraid of what I already have within. Thanks. Britney Sinclair

Thank you for teaching us some techniques to become a better speaker! This actually inspired me to take up some acting classes, maybe even singing lessons. Thank you! Fantasia House



Thank you so much for taking time to come to visit our class and for your encouragement to all of us. Thank you for helping me to come out of my box and have an open mind about acting. I felt I moved out of my comfort zone to be free and confident. God bless you, Mr. Kelly! Dominique Haskins

Mr. Kelly, I really enjoyed the drama lessons you taught our class. I enjoyed your different techniques you had to evoke emotion. When you picked me up and restricted me, it really changed the way I said my lines. I always have enjoyed plays and playwriting and really enjoyed the drama class. I learned a lot that evening. Thanks. Mary Millon

Mr. Kelly, it was a true blessing to have our Odyssey class with you last week. Your class will forever be remembered by me and the rest of my classmates. **I'm so appreciative of the time you spent with all of us.** The instruction given is priceless. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Love, Sharisse Hancock



# MUSICAL MOSAIC



Music to me means freedom of expression, often in a manner that challenges and soothes the soul. Music is escape, the tumultuous journey of spirit from emotion to **emotion. My music is a "mosaic"** crossing boundaries of race, religion, and politics. At times haunting music

**touches my soul's 'memory' of loves lost, loves desired, and loves yet to be embraced. Whether it's country, classical, jazz, reggae, polka, or soul, music is the balm of every person's soul.** James Morgan



Music means life. Music is how you feel and how you want to feel. Music is politics, education, fun, and anger. You can never go wrong with music. You can be in the worst mood and then hearing music makes you smile again. Music speaks the truth. It allows you to

hear things you never had the guts to say.

Music brings memories. Play one song and it will **bring you back to those good ol' days. It might even bring you back to the bad days.**



My dreams are music. My life is **music. The world is music. You can't** leave music. Music is everywhere you go. Thank God Almighty we have music. Music is in our cars. Music is in our churches. I love music at home. I grew up with music. Music is like A,B, C, easy as 1, 2, 3. Music is us, so go

and enjoy music. I think music. I listen to music. Music is Odyssey. Music is bread and butter. Music is dessert. My music is me, you, and everyone. We have music in our heart, soul, mind. We are music.

Jovenus Price Pierce

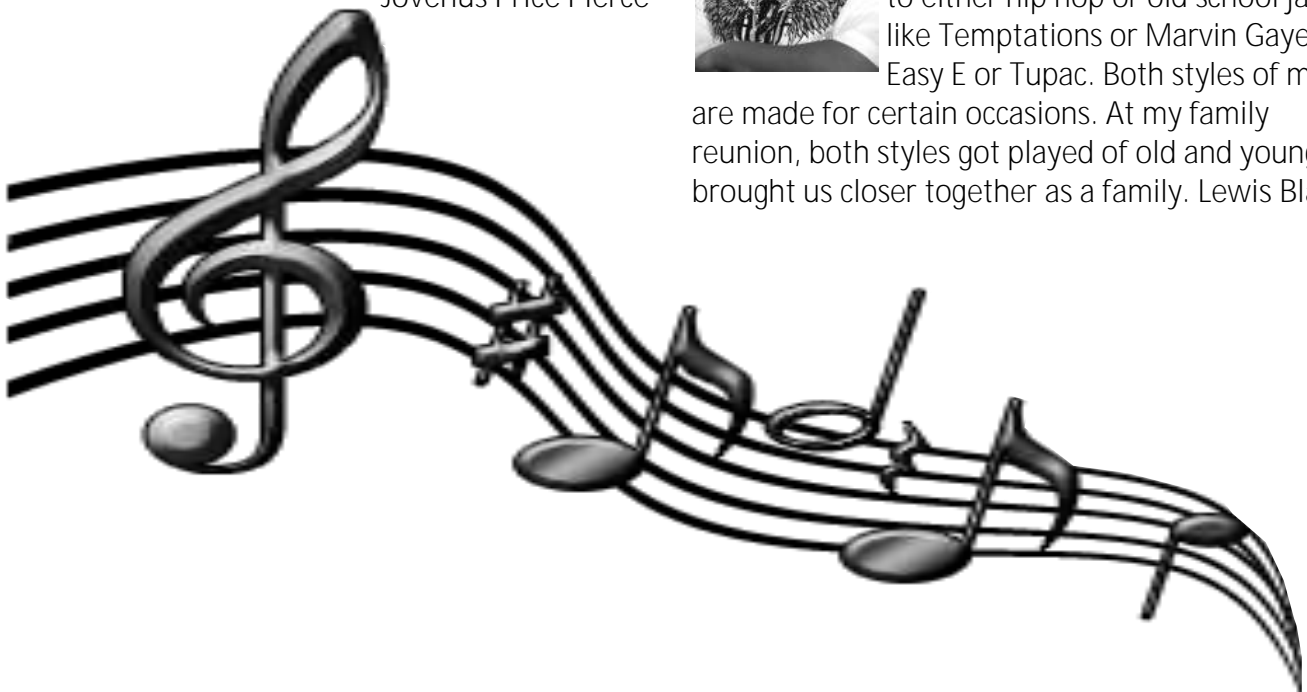
Music is life. You hear it in the wind, when you speak, and when you sleep. You bring music when **you're born and when you die.**

It is music which keeps you alive! Britney Sinclair



Music can be the gateway to happiness or a gateway to release pain in your heart. Some music can **bring up emotions that you can't** build up on your own. I like listening to either hip hop or old school jams like Temptations or Marvin Gaye, Easy E or Tupac. Both styles of music

are made for certain occasions. At my family reunion, both styles got played of old and young. It brought us closer together as a family. Lewis Black





Music is an expression, emotions with a sound board, helping words reach their full meaning, bringing an understanding. Music moves my soul and co-signs with my feelings, sometimes explains what my heart says better than I can. I listen to slow R&B songs, gospel, hip hop,

sometimes a little pop and rock too, depending on **what I'm feeling that day or what I'm looking to feel.**

Music puts me at ease, even helps me to fall asleep. Sometimes just the music alone without lyrics helps to put me in a better mind frame. Patrice Smith

I find my peace in music. I have always loved music from childhood. Gospel and music from the 70s Disco era has always been the kind of music where I



find my healing. It leads my mind to a comforting place, especially gospel. When I hear the blues, it makes me feel sad. It makes me think of the struggles my family and people in general go through. The disco era 70s music is the kind of music that makes me feel good and reminisce about

**the old times. There is no fear in music. It's heartfelt** and warms the soul. I find that music is definitely an escape to be free and wander into different places. Dominique Haskins



Music is an escape; it must **match my mood. When I'm** doing homework and need a **beat that's definitive yet still** enough to allow me to **concentrate on my work, I'll** listen to artists like SiSe or Jamiroquai.

**When it's hot in the summer and my kitchen when I'm cooking, I'll bump some Puerto Rican and Cuban salsa like Bobby Cruz, Ismael Rivera, Los VanVan, Celia Cruz, and Richie Ray.**

When I have a party to go to or am going out with some friends (not as often anymore), I love to blast Tego Calderon (reggae), Flux Pavilion (Dub Step), or Brick (70s musica!) China Moon Crowell



Music is what I live and what we care for. The feel of music is inspired from inside the soul. I **like the blues. It's the things that** are being said that makes it come to life. The particular music Mr. Auerbach is playing has put me in a relaxed mood. My emotions right now are calming and soft, at ease, as if **you would say, "Ahh, this feels great!"**

Tosumba Welch



**Music: it makes me notice I'm alive! It makes me remember I'm not alone, in my lonely self.** I have to stop and listen to music to hear my own voice. It feels bad when it reminds me of the last dance that I danced with my last love. It feels good when I am alone and proud of me, I get up and dance as loud as the music. Turn it up, turn it down, and slow down. Feel my heart beat. It makes my heart beat! I can feel my heart beat! There it is! Where is my heart beat when the **music isn't playing?** Carrie Llerena Sesma



Music is important. It has the ability to completely change your mood. I remember hearing somewhere that if you are feeling sad to put on some sad music to help you let go of those feelings. I remember when my children were small and I had a bad day at work, I would get home and **feel completely beat by the day's events. My kids could sense my mood wasn't good, and my mood would affect their mood.** Instead of continuing the bad day, I would put on some music. We would dance and sing through the house, and slowly all of our moods would change. Somehow we would not be as tired. We would get dinner prepared, homework completed, and prepare for the next day. The music would calm us down and give us enough strength to do what needed to be done. Michelle Reams



I love music. It shapes my mood, my day, and my environment. I come from a musically rich family. My grandma is a church organist/pianist. My father is a percussionist. I have cousins who sing gospel and a cousin that sings opera. My families on both sides are singers, actresses and actors, and dancers. Music runs deep in our souls. I need to move to music. It sets the tone for my entire environment. We eat to music. If the food is good we dance! Life to me should be accompanied in song. Eunice Conley



Music means everything to me. I listen to a lot of rap music because of the lyrics being used. I feel that African American music speaks to us on a personal, spiritual, and intellectual level. I often find that our music has a **beautiful sense of poetry. I think it's** amazing how people can put words together to match the thoughts that were moving around in my head. Lolita Phillips



Music is a big part of my life! Believe it or not, I am a percussionist. I play the full set of drums. Starting off in middle school I was the only girl in my band class that played the drums, although I **couldn't read music notes. I learned by ear** and became so good that I got a scholarship to stay on campus in dorm rooms to attend a music camp! This triggered my mother to go out and buy me a good set that I kept in my room. After time went on, I stopped playing. I played in **high school and didn't take full advantage of what I was capable of becoming.** One of my dreams in life is to play the drums for a church. Once I work up **the courage to do so, I'm sure I will be great.** Fantasia House





Music is an echo of the living room of the house I lived in at a very tender age. My dad played trumpet, and my mother sang. My brother nine years my senior played drums. They loved jazz plus any black artist that was allowed to perform on television. We listened to Nancy Wilson, Louis Armstrong, Nat King Cole, and Wes Montgomery. I took after my brother playing the drums, while my sister played clarinet. I grew from jazz to rhythm and blues to blues to hip hop, and **I've enjoyed and respected them all.**  
Munroe Whitlock



Music means to me a lot. During my childhood I listened to the music. My father had an old radio which he turned on every morning. Listening to the music affected me in many ways. When I feel depressed or sad, music affects me emotionally. When I feel happy, I like to listen to music while doing some housecleaning or cooking. Also **there have been numerous times when I can't sleep at night**, so I listen to soft music until I fall asleep.  
Angelica Cuahuey



Music to me means deep inspiration to the person who composed it. Some music is educational, affects morality, and makes you think about life, human beings, and nature. I like to listen to religious music through which I learn more about God, Jesus, and what marvelous things He has done to us, miracles. I also listen to some blues and pop music and some African traditional music with drums and xylophone.  
Jovite Rayaisse

Music has saved me, truly saved my soul. I find peace in music first, lyrics second. Music can rev me up or slow me down. Music is communication. When I find a song that fits my mood, truthfully I can play that song on repeat until the music and words disappear off the CD.



**The music Emily's dad played made me think of a glass of wine, soft lighting, and friends. It made me think of the lady at Monty's Blue Plate this morning having a piece of peanut butter pie, side of homemade whipped cream, and a cup of coffee. Now in my eyes, that's the life and peace I strive for.** Jasmine Banks



Music sometimes helps me think. It relaxes me. I listen to R&B, gospel, jazz, and some old school rap. I love the oldies and some reggae. Gospel music puts me in a spiritual mood, bringing back memories when I was a kid with my grandmother. The oldies bring memories with me of kids and family gatherings. Old school rap relaxes me, bringing back memories of when I was in high school. I named my oldest daughter after a rapper.  
Tracey Cherry



**Music is expression of the soul's** inner thoughts or of life when good or tragic. There are good times and bad times that are always on my mind. But from the depth of my soul I will press on for my thoughts will not consume me. I have learned to never never never let my thoughts consume me. For I have tried this year, no more wasted tears, for this is my time to shine, for the world to see me sooo happy happy to be me, for I have never, never, no never let my thoughts consume me, and God will be my end destiny.  
Angela Jordan-Jackson



I listen to mostly slow jams and R&B, but in general I listen to all kinds of music. It gives me happiness. Listening to different genres helps me hear and feel power from deep down. All the music that I listen to in my life has a meaning. You can tell from the music I listen to exactly

**how I feel, whether it's happy, sad, or angered.**

Music brings me out. I love to dance, so being able to have music a part of my life is very important. I need music because without it I would be a complete wreck. Actually thinking about music not being in my life makes me feel lost and makes me **want to cry. It's like my best friend and has gotten me through so much, from the worst to the best. Music is my life. If there's one thing I need, music would be it.** Amber Turner



Music means a blessing to me because listening to the words encourages my heart. I like to listen to Christian songs which help me know that there is God, who is able to change someone from nothing to something. Music affects me emotionally, and sometimes I find myself crying. When the singer in class [Gregory Brumfield] sang **"Free at Last,"** it reminded me of how people had a rough time when they were not free. It made me feel so sorry for them for what they went through. Nancy Wambua

I like R&B and some hip hop. I try not to listen to hip



hop around my son because a lot of the hip hop artists nowadays are bad influences. Kids listen to the things they rap about and try to be just like them. I think the music from back in the day such as jazz influenced a lot of people. Jazz to me sounds like you want to have fun and let loose. I would rather listen to the beat of a song than hear its lyrics.

Shalonda Hilliard Jones



I love music, all different types! I listen to gospel, soft rock, 70s rock, pop, R&B, blues. I imagine I listen to almost everything except for jazz and country. I started playing the piano at age six, the clarinet at age 12, and the tenor and alto saxophone at age 14. Some of my all-time favorite songs to play on the piano were Lift Every Voice and Sing (Negro National Anthem), The Entertainer by Scott Joplin, and St. Louis Blues.

The presentation of music in class today has helped me get in touch with some of my own personal one-on-one feelings with music. I stopped playing the piano and the other instruments listed above when my grandparents retired and moved to Las Vegas. My grandfather, Allen A. Hancock, introduced me to piano when I was age 6. He paid for my piano lessons and rehearsed with me every day until my lesson each Monday at 4:30 PM. I started in strings **in fifth grade. I played violin. I didn't enjoy strings at all.** I started playing in the band (clarinet) in sixth grade. In eighth grade I started playing tenor sax. Half way through the year I started alto sax. I held first chair in both through my senior year in high school. I also won many competitions through my music experience. I miss playing these instruments **from time to time. However, I'm still in touch with my music through listening to it.** Listening to my daughter sing will forever keep me involved with music. Long story short: I love music!

Sharisse Hancock





Music means a lot to me. I love music, all kinds. Music makes me smile, cry; it makes me feel strong and makes me feel understanding. I get so many feelings from it. Everybody needs music because if **you're sad it will pick you up. If you're happy it can make you sad.** I

become so many different people while listening to **music. Music is my life, my history. I can't live** without it. El-Rasheedah Wilson



depending on what song. Music speaks to me. It calms me. It lifts me. It inspires me. It makes me cry. Music stirs up many different thoughts, feelings, and memories. I still remember old songs my girlfriends and I can put on today, and it can take us all the way back to

the early 80s when we were young. We had dance routines that even today in our 40s we can conjure up and do the exact same steps.



I like all kind of music: Pop, Reggae, Rock, Jazz, Blues, and Hip-Hop. It makes me dance. I cry every time listen to a sad pop song, like **"Someone like You" by Adele. This** doesn't mean this song made my life miserable, but those were my **tears of joy. I can't live without**

music. Tanatnan Chaipang

Some songs remind me of songs my children liked, memories of songs I used to sing to them at night before bed.

I use music to change my mood, usually to make me happy or to heighten whatever feeling I am in at **that moment. I enjoy music and I'm glad I'm a "music person."** Is there life with no music? I'd hate to find out. Mary Millon

Music changes my mood. I can be having a really bad day. Turn on some good R&B music like Mary J. Blige and instantly my mood has changed,

Music is life in so many ways. It can inspire and touch your mind, body, and soul. I listen to all types of music, mostly hip-hop, R&B, and some rock and







country. One country artist I admire is Taylor Swift. She is a great song writer. Her music is based on real life stories. Hip hop music I admire includes the real-life stories of Jay-Z and Yagotti. I might be having a bad day, and I can listen to their music and it inspires me. Music affects me in so many ways. I went through a terrible break up in the past. I realize that the sad R&B music I was listening to was keeping me depressed and down. When I changed my music, I could move forward. Derrick McCann



What does music mean to me? **Music means everything.** It's the first and last thing I hear every day. From the birds to my four year old singing Sesame Street, without music I **wouldn't be able to begin a** productive day. Without sweet jazz and a song

**playing on acoustic guitar, I wouldn't be able** to end my day feeling relaxed.

Music is my education. It is a way for me to learn and remember. The first thing I learned **to do was remember a song.** My mother's melody taught me to love music and learn. . . . Music is my life and a legacy taught to educate my people and remember what has happened. Akilah Freeman



I listen to rap and R&B. I enjoy those genres of music because the rappers I listen to discuss handling business and making money. R&B, on the other hand, can be sweet or sour. I love the sweet side of R&B **when I'm mostly happy and the sour when I'm sad.** I listen **to both when I'm happy or sad because I like** music; it motivates me. Brandon Williams

Music is to me a whisper to my soul,  
a chance to come in from the cold.

Music is the healing for my broken heart.

**It's that soothing sound that gives me a jumpstart.**

Music is my voice when all else is silent.

**Music is my way of controlling anger, it's time well spent.**

Music is to me what air is to breathing.

**Music is my life of words, only I'm singing.**

**It can be that hand that calms my world when I'm mad,**  
or it can just be that bit of memory that keeps me from being sad.

Music has always been a part of me.

I love music because it sets me free.

Michelle Whitman



# PARAPHRASING THE BILL OF RIGHTS

## 1st Amendment



**The first amendment protects people’s rights to be free. It allows people to practice any religion, have freedom of press, and speak freely without prejudice.** Angelica Cuahuey

Citizens of the U.S. have the freedom to say what they want and write about what they want. Citizens of the U.S. have the right to gather in one place for a common purpose and to address complaints to the government. Munroe Whitlock



## 2nd Amendment



**A highly trained army is needed to assure our State’s freedom, and its rights to have and carry weapons won’t be abused.** Michelle Whitman

## 3rd Amendment

**Soldiers can’t during peacetime live in your home without your permission, although if a war is going on, the law allows them to do so.** Akilah Freeman



## 4th Amendment



**We the people have the right to feel personally safe and secure in our homes. The law cannot just come in and search our homes and violate our personal space.** Tosumba Welch

No one shall be searched or have their things searched without legal documents. Patrice Smith



## 5th Amendment



**You have the right to remain silent and don’t have to answer any question in court or from a law enforcement officer about any crime you are being accused of. You can plead the Fifth Amendment on the grounds it may incriminate yourself.** Derrick McCann

## 6th Amendment

A person accused of committing any crime has the right to a public trial with a jury without personal ties to the accused and in the same district where the crime was committed. Sharisse Hancock



## 8th Amendment



**No huge amount of money or unusual punishment shall be forced on others.** Brandon Williams



When a crime is committed, said punishment shall fit that crime. China Crowell

# BECOMING FREDERICK DOUGLASS

*After reading The Narrative of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself (1845), Odyssey students imagined themselves to be Frederick Douglass responding in eloquent anger to an editorial from 1852 claiming that slaves were happy, basked in the sunshine, could not understand liberty, and were part of God's plan.*



Dear Editor,  
I, Frederick Douglass, am responding to the comments posted in *The Southern Quarterly Review*. How can any man have the mindset to believe that any black person—man, woman, or child—would prefer to be a slave than to be enriched with liberty? How would you like it if the roles were reversed—we in your position, and you in ours, suffering from all forms of abuse from **captors demanding to be called “master”**? (Lewis Black)



**You stated that “the Negro if left to himself does not dream of liberty.”** What human that you know of who walks upon two legs would WANT to be held in bondage, against their will, separated from their loved ones and whipped on a near daily basis? It would behoove you to know that before the slave trade, we Negroes were kings and queens—FREE kings and queens; free to roam, to work, to establish a family, and to welcome others. The white man feels the need—even **more so with his “religion”**—to be viceroy over all in his domain, including his slaves. **Upon Judgment Day, the “righteous” will see just how right they are.** (China Moon Crowell)

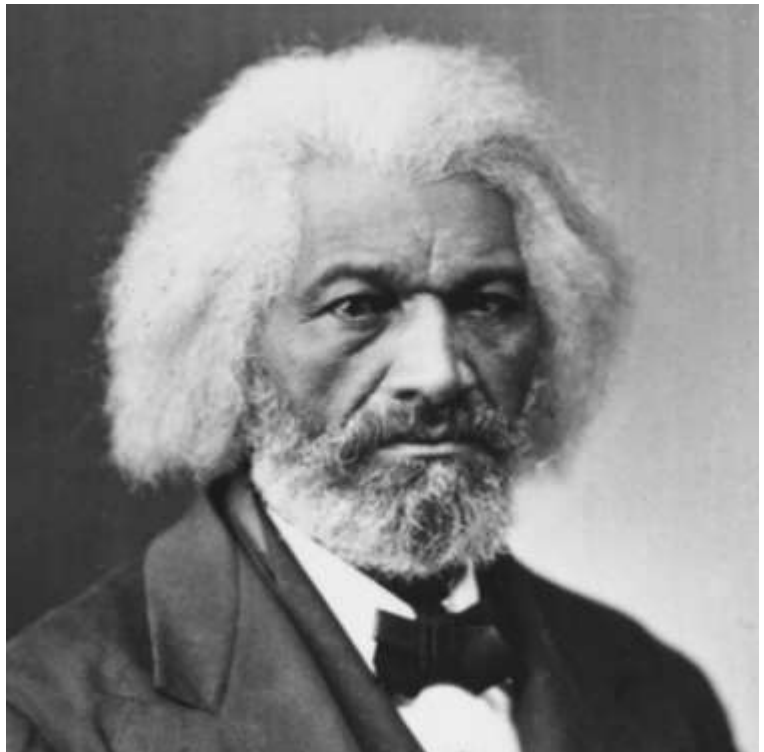


**In your article you wrote, “It is a cruel task to disturb him in the enjoyment of that life—slavery—to which God has destined him.”** First, God did not put me on a ship and sail me to these plantations; **MAN DID!** God did not whip me;

**MAN DID!** You did not have to pick tobacco or work in the fields while the sun fried your back. Imagine your own mother sold to another slave owner while you were left behind. I will pray to a God better than any man that you one day will see that men and women of all colors should be treated well. (Brandon Williams)



If we are to speak of cruelty, we must speak of the harsh and unyielding whippings, lashings, and floggings! The taking and selling of our children! The raping of our women! The starvation that one must endure! I would not under any circumstances believe that a righteous and loving God would find such enjoyment in those horrible and horrific behaviors. (Jasmine Banks)





Escaped slave from Louisiana, 1863.

abundantly.” What God do you slave owners serve? Galatians 5:1 “For Freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm therefore, and don’t submit again to the yoke of slavery.” I have no time for slave owners who think they are Christians. (Derrick McCann)



When slaves attempted to run away, they were punished, chained, and handcuffed so they were unwillingly kept. Throughout my life as a former slave, I was forbidden to grumble or disobey my masters. I remember witnessing numerous brutalities and infringements. Editor, do you acknowledge that slavery is an atrocity? (Angelica Cuahuey)



How can one “bask” in the sunshine and be happy when all one gets is bad punishment and hard work without food, clothes, and shelter, which are the most basic needs? I have seen the rape and murder of my own people. Your “Christian slavery” is the most bad, evil, and sad thing I have ever experienced. Thank God I got my freedom back. (Nancy Wambua)

The ignorance in the line “A slave basks in the sunshine and is happy” is appalling. Is this when the slave is conscious and has worked 15 hours straight awaiting his or her next lashing with the cow skin or in worse conditions when the slave is pistol



whipped in the eye and brutalized, with their eye dangling, with nine hours left of work? Is it possible that slave holders will be held responsible one day by God? I pray for those who have victimized, brutalized, and killed my brothers and sisters. (Sharisse Hancock)



I pledge to condemn slavery. We are a nation under God pledged to abolish slavery in our United States of America. We move forward to no more slavery for our nation under God. (Jovenus Price Pierce)



I have lived life not being able to grow up with my real family, not being able to know my mother, not being able to be a child playing in the backyard, and not being able to get the education that all children deserve to have throughout their lives. Every woman, man, and child has feelings, has a heart, and has a mind; everyone deserves the same as the next person. I am a man, I am a black man, and I am a man that will always stand for liberty. (Amber Turner)



Slavery is one of those monsters of darkness to whom the light of truth is death. John 10:10 “The thief comes only to steal and to destroy. I come so they can have life and have it more



Slavery is defined as a condition in which one human being is legally the property of another and can be bought or sold. A slave is not allowed to escape and must work for the owner without any choice involved. Do you

think a person born in this condition, left to himself, does not dream of liberty? My dream since a young age was how to escape and how to have my liberty. (Jovite Rayaisse)



I as a former slave and other slaves, whom I will call my brothers and sisters, did not give the consent to be taken by force to a pirate ship to come here to be brutalized and lined up like animals to be inspected and sold, to be treated like a beast and have our

humanity taken away. Slavery is dark and feels like the gates of Hell have taken you. Freedom is a bright beacon of light against which the gates of Hell shall not prevail. Slavery is odious! But the Lord our God is love and omnipotent! (Dominique Haskins)



I am a Negro, a black man, a human being. The last lash of the whip that I mentally and physically endured lets me know I bleed of red blood just like you. I could never grasp a conception of the white man in my heart, mind, and or soul to enslave a human, whip a human, hang a human, rape a human, or starve a human. Why? That same heart and soul lets me know I would never allow such monstrous, hateful, and inhuman sickness to seep from my pores. (Tosumba Welch)



Liberty is not just something we dream about; it is what we live for and pray for. It is the very air we breathe. You, the white man who takes his liberties out on us, could never understand. There is no sunshine in being dehumanized, only darkness. I see no happiness in being torn from loved ones,

**only pain and sadness. You say that “Christian slavery free from interference is the brightest sunbeam which Omniscience has destined for his existence.” I say Christian slavery is a hell at the hands of the white man, not God. (Michelle Whitman)**



We are all human beings, and we should all have the same rights regardless of the color of our skin. God did not destine any of us to slavery. No one deserves to be a slave. God created everyone equal. (Shalonda Hilliard-Jones)



Let me see you work every day in heat and in the sun from dawn to dusk. Your body is cracked and hungry and thirsty. Let us see if you will be happy and content. How would you like to be sold and conveyed to different slave masters all the time? How would you feel to be taken from your mother at birth and to see your aunt raped and beaten, with blood coming to the ground? Nowhere in the Bible does God say **he wants anybody to be a slave. That’s why he disapproved of Pharaoh’s army and drowned them in the sea.** May God forgive you for your ignorance. (Tracey Cherry)



I laugh at your editorial. It tickles my soul for you must believe you are God! Look at me—a free Negro who can think on my own, who sings and dances with joy because I no longer belong to you. You and your **ancestors have stolen my ancestors’ freedoms.** You have taken what was NOT rightfully yours. Who, Sir, made you judge and jury? I can only imagine it must be the Devil himself that hides within the blood that runs through your veins. (Mary Millon)

**I am not for your pleasure to use and abuse. God’s will is for ALL men and women to be treated equal**



and to be happily married and to multiply. I find it appalling for you to brag of my existence and say that my people of colored descent are happy in captivity. If the tables were turned, THEN would you truly know what it feels like to be forced into being less than what God created you to be. (Angela Jordan Jackson)



One of the many masters allotted to me told his wife—a woman of most lamblike disposition—that **“learning would spoil the best nigger in the world.”** These words sank deep into my heart and were the beginning of my thirst for knowledge. To keep a man in servitude, you have eradicated the knowledge and have treated him like a beast of burden. (Eunice Conley)



I am a human. Are you? Being happy by beating me up, taking away my liberty, watching my tears come down **my face, knowing that I haven't eaten** for days . . . you are doing things no human should do. (Tanatnan Chaipang)



Does not the white soul, upon reason, grant unto itself the call and claim of liberty? Shall it not then, in its secret hovels, ring in falseness to render the Negro devoid in like manner? God forbid! Bondage of the Negro body, I assure you, Sir, does not render his soul mute. It is in the soul, heart, and mind of the Negro that liberty presides. (James Morgan)



*Frederick Douglass*  
by Jacob Lawrence

# VOCABULARY SOUP

*Here are some of the many new vocabulary words Odyssey students say they have learned:*



Perplexed Abolish Compliance Summoned Imbibe Execrate  
 Obdurate Impudence Immutable Remonstrated Allegory  
 Thraldom Calumniators Stratagems Odiousness Cudgel  
 Extirpated Arduous Prose Append Felicitate Tyranny  
 Inevitable Mulatto Obituary Exultingly Cease  
 Chastise **Valor** Agoraphobia Gratification Evinced  
 Lofty Oppression Prevailing Conveyed Impertinent  
 Famished Ascertaining Asserted Contemplate Wrath  
 Tumultuous Cherub Confer Beguile Recourse Repudiate  
 Abolitionist Eloquence Unanimous Henceforth Succor  
 Sanguine Proselytes **Ennui** Abhorrence Heathen  
 Gale Unalienable Oracle Barbarity Trepidation  
 Gadfly Pernicious **Aggregate** Faction **Obviate**  
 Preeminence Illusion Insurrection Enumerate Propensity  
 Aggregate **Folly** Diminution Auxiliary Obviate  
 Impartial Latent Fallible

# ORACLE OVATIONS



Everyone in our class is amazing and **real to me. After I read everyone's writing in the Oracle, I learned that life is not just about me; it's about all of us together. Everyone's path is as important as your own path because we are not living alone in this world. If we have no one being a rice farmer, we'll never have any rice to eat. I can't live without rice.** (Tanatnan Chaipang)



I like what **Marcia Brown ('11)** wrote in regards to riding the Odyssey train. She described each assignment as if it were a train stop on a **splendid vacation, with people we'd meet along the way, and its final destination being a lifetime gift of knowledge.** (Michelle Whitman)



What **Joe Robinson** said in **"Don't Quit"** was **very encouraging to me.** I had another tough week. With all the extra things circling around me, **it's hard to keep focus. But those two words (Don't Quit) had an effect on me, giving me more reason to keep fighting, keep pushing, keep moving forward, and I will.** (Lewis Black)



**Jovite Rayaisse's article on the trip to the art museum was interesting to me because she was able to relate a painting to her homeland [Burkina Faso] and her family.** (Munroe Whitlock)

Jovite, when you talked about your experience in a cave, was it hard coming from Burkina Faso to the U.S.? Did you come alone or with family? If you had



the choice to move back home, would you? I admire you a lot to change your whole life and start over and come to a new place. Speaking a different language and not knowing the outcome takes a lot of courage! (Shalonda Hilliard-Jones)



**Reading about other people's caves made me feel as if I am not alone with my fears and the things I allowed to hold me back. If everyone can graduate, then SO CAN I.** (Brandon Williams)



**The Plato's cave pieces by Eunice and Dominique reminded me of myself and my own depression and anxiety with an ex-husband. I suffered from abuse and being controlled. God freed me from him and he's in prison now. I guess in life you have to want to get out of a situation.** (Tracey Cherry)



**El-Rasheedah describes in "Finding Plato's Cave Today" how she was in a bad relationship that didn't give her a life of her own. Rasheedah was trapped; she didn't have the strength to get out. Also she couldn't see the light. Rasheedah was trapped in her own body. I learned that love can be blind. I have been in many bad relationships. I have been in that dark place Rasheedah talks about. I really liked that Rasheedah found the strength to get out of her bad relationship. Her strength and love for God brought her out.** (Derrick McCann)





it is the connection we have from the heart, which is color blind. I am happy Shalonda is strong enough to tell her story. (Derrick McCann)



Shalonda wrote about how she felt embarrassed having white grandparents. I can relate to her story because my grandmother was half white. Her father was

white, and whenever I was with her in public, I would get stares because she was so light. People would look at me funny. I felt embarrassed to walk next to her, but as I got older I didn't let that bother me anymore. R.I.P, Granny. I always will love you. (Dominique Haskins)



Shalonda Dashawna Hilliard-Jones related that there "is no real meaning to my name." I would say to this young woman, be the one who gives it the power by how you build your character; make it SPEAK! I've learned that it's "we" who define our names

and titles, not the opposite. (James Morgan)



Shalonda's response to Finding Plato's Cave Today touched me in a great way. If we all came in the world the same way and are going to leave it the same way, why is something so simple as race such a big deal? Society had Shalonda living in a cave of her

own. Shalonda was ashamed to let the world know that her grandparents she loved so deeply were **another color than she was. Shalonda's peers were questioning her and judging her. They made her feel bad and not human. Shalonda's story taught me that in time she matured and became stronger. Now she sees the big picture, embraces her family, and realizes it is the world that has the problem, not her. Shalonda's grandparents were not ashamed of her; they love her deeply. She should not be ashamed of the people she loves. The reason we love another human is not because of skin color;**



I wouldn't be embarrassed like Shalonda to have white grandparents because we all don't know how much Caucasian we have in our blood. I would be proud to have grandparents, no matter what color they were. Some people don't have grandparents. I did, but my grandmother died when I was young and I was not close to my grandfather. (Tracey Cherry)



I was touched and moved by Shalonda's story of her father being adopted by white parents. It was close to home for me, as I was adopted as well. I've dealt with many of the same issues she has gone through as well as the issues of being put up for adoption by my birth mother and father. It is not easy some days to know why at one point someone was unable to care for me, no matter what the reason. (Mary Millon)



Tanatnan was physically and mentally abused by her grandparents every day. She was told she was nothing and that she was only going to be a prostitute and sex slave. Tanatnan was trapped and **couldn't see her way out. She ran away** and found the strength to get away from the abuse **she was trapped in. In Tanatnan's story I liked that she didn't let the abuse keep her down. What doesn't kill you only makes you stronger. Tanatnan today has big dreams and didn't give up. She can see hope of a bright future.** (Derrick McCann)



I truly enjoyed Akilah's words on the **Allegory of the Cave. I've seen and experienced similar darkness growing up in a cold world. But I'm proud of the response she gave because of her encouragement and desire to push on. I've known Akilah since she and I were children and never knew her passions or that she was so deep.** (Patrice Smith)

I love **"The Ocean Blue"** by El-Rasheedah. I was born in Long Beach, California, and as a child I loved the **ocean blue. There's a peace that comes over me** when I start at or even swim in the ocean. I was relieved to find someone felt the same as I did. Most people I know say I make too big of a deal about the ocean. (Patrice Smith)

As I reread the **"Are You a Writer?"** section, I really enjoyed Tracey Cherry's response. I always feel that way—always crossing out, erasing, and changing things. Self-doubt creeps in slowly as I start to write. **It's not always easy to display your personal thoughts** without the fear of judgment. (Patrice Smith)



Tosumba wrote a great poem and I can relate to it. I feel like I try to speak to God and sometimes do not get an answer. When I do get an answer, it is something I do not want to hear. (Britney Sinclair)

In Lolita's answer to **"Are You a Writer?"** I like how



she totally contradicts herself in the first **couple of sentences. She says "I love to write! Am I a writer? No."** The fact that you love to write, Lolita, in my opinion makes you a writer. Also the fact that you were able to communicate in writing your thoughts about the subject of writing shows that you are fast on your way, Lolita! (Jasmine Banks)



**Derrick McCann's story was so vivid. He expressed himself honestly. In the closing he yearns to love and be at peace, happy sharing himself with someone he deserves. . . . Most men won't admit areas in their life that they struggle with.** Thanks, Derrick! (Angela Jordan-Jackson)



I had a similar experience to Carrie and Dominique. For so many years I lived in a horrible cave of domestic abuse where my partner abused me physically and mentally. The abuse of alcohol was the main cause of years of sadness, frustration, and depression. Throughout the years I learned to become independent and face the outcomes of life. (Angelica Cuahuey)



I enjoyed reading China Moon's response to Moments in Nature. I felt as though I was feeling the black sand on my feet and relaxing on the beach in Rincon, Puerto Rico with her. (Sharisse Hancock)



Last week in class James gave me an **elephant he made. I can't say much to James except thank you. I can't describe how I felt at that moment, but I would like to tell James now how much his little gift meant to me.** Elephants have always played an integral part of Thai culture and Thai history. All Thai kings had a stable of white elephants, and the animals once decorated the national flag and currency. Thank you, James! (Tanatnan Chaipang)

# CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS

## WHAT MAKES YOU SO DANGEROUS? THE ANSWER

BY JAMES 'TUWILE' MORGAN



I've given some thought and consideration to your question as to what makes me so dangerous and have come to the follow conclusions. It is the knowledge of my past, present, and future that makes me so **dangerous. It's the continued mental, emotional, and physical abuses of a systematical denial of my existence as a man that makes me so dangerous.**

**It's the stifling of my recognized potential towards positive growth and progress, being corrupted and planting the seeds of potential destruction, that makes me so dangerous. It's not being able to find the mechanisms inside of me to prevent care and compassion from turning to hatred, and what is deemed "Love" from turning to distrust, bitterness, and anger, that makes me so dangerous.** Being one of the

living dead, rejected socially, politically, economically, ethnically—racially, familially, and **all the other 'ly's'**—is what makes me so dangerous. Not being seen nor heard, forsaken, is what makes me so dangerous.

As I'm sure you have heard, "Ignorance is bliss"; however, a **grasp of knowledge, wisdom, and potential makes me so dangerous.** Just being a black man, visually indistinguishable from other "black men," **makes me so dangerous.** Being able to see beyond today the kiss of death, not fearing its arms outstretched, embracing, makes me so dangerous.

So, then, the question is not whether I am "dangerous," but who can or will venture beyond the danger to delve into the abyss that contains my joy? Would you?

In any event, it did not go unnoticed that there was impetus, latent or otherwise, for you to make such an inquiry of me. However, do not be mistaken by my reply to the point that you would believe that I might have a monopoly on being dangerous, not until you look inside and beyond to see what makes you dangerous, too!

# KNOW NO DIFFERENCE

BY MICHELLE WHITMAN

When I hurt I feel Pain,  
Do You?  
When I think I have to use my brain,  
Do you?  
When I am cut I bleed,  
Do you?  
**As an infant my mother's nurturing was one of my needs,**  
Was that not one of yours?  
When I cry tears fall,  
How about you?  
**When I need to hear someone's voice and they're not near, I call,**  
Do you?  
At times I am very cheerful,  
**Aren't you?**  
There are also times that I am very fearful,  
Just like you.  
I also make mistakes,  
Just like you.  
**Don't you think I deserve a chance,**  
Like you?



So long as I learn from it,  
Like you.  
I want respect,  
Just like you,  
And  
I will give it back in return,  
Just like you.  
You see it all makes perfectly good sense  
Why we should all know no diff-er-ence.

## MADISON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA REVIEW

BY LEWIS BLACK



On September 23, 2012, I went to my first orchestra concert in years. It was a beautiful experience. When Professor Emily was offering tickets, I was the first to put my hand up asking to go. When the day arrived, I took my girlfriend. She and I both felt a little out of place. Some people were looking at us strangely because we were wearing street clothes and they were wearing **suits and ties or dresses. But we didn't care. We walked through the Overture Center like we owned the place.** We got there early, went to our seats, and waited. . . . The pianist played some Beethoven and Mozart and some music of his own. The music was so beautiful. I looked over at the person I was with, and she was tearing up. The melody opened up my mind into an area I had never expressed before. It made me write some lyrics about life.

# WHY VOTE?

## FALL 2012 ESSAY COMPETITION

*Odyssey held a contest for the best 250-word essay answering the question “Why vote?” Seven judges scored the anonymous entries. Here are the three winning entries, brief excerpts from the close runner-ups, and photos from the “Why Vote?” community event on November 3.*

### FIRST PLACE: JASMINE BANKS



From Tommy Thompson to my grade school teacher, people came to cast their votes. The one voter who changed my life **was a stranger. When he entered the Clerk’s office, I immediately began to pray that he would not come to my station. Why? He is a middle-aged man who is severely physically and mentally disabled. Unable to communicate verbally, he points to words and phrases typed up on a piece of paper that’s glued to a tray attached to his old and dirty electric wheelchair.**



With what I thought at the time to be an unanswered prayer, the stranger wheeled himself with an awkward grace to my station. When I asked him if he came to vote, he kindly looked into my eyes and with his bright smile nodded yes. With that, I began a journey that will never be forgotten. Through his patient communication, I learned the needed information to fill out his ballot successfully. When the time came for him to sign his absentee envelope, panic again began to fill my body. How would he sign the ballot to make it official? With grace and patience, he guided me to his signature stamp. As I sealed and stamped his absentee envelope, he in turn gave me his bright, beautiful “we did it” smile. I had assisted in making this man’s silent voice heard and his vote count!

The question asked is “why vote?” After this stranger, my question now is “why don’t you vote?”

### SECOND PLACE: TOSUMBA WELCH



**In this very big question “Why Vote?” I’m trying to understand how this even became a question. The subject alone gives me further insight and helps me understand how the extreme importance of voting is not so important to substantial numbers of Americans. Democracy can only exist when citizens of a democratic state are willing and able to take an active role in their government.**



**As an African American male I must say, even though it's sad but true, that our ancestors would have considered the right to vote a miracle-like privilege. The Morehouse Male Initiative statistics show that out of 10.4 million eligible black males, 1.4 million have been disenfranchised due to felony convictions and disqualified because of probation and parole restrictions. With numbers like that, is it true to say that we are still in the caves, chained and shackled, watching shadows as in Socrates' Allegory of the Cave?**

Voting is not just something to do. Voting is a serious responsibility held by us as individuals. **If you ask me, it should be against the law not to vote. If you don't vote, it takes away your right to complain about the things that affect us.** Voting is our way to be heard without being combative. Not only is education related to voting participation, but the more educated a particular voter is, it can be assumed the more informed the individual vote will be. Now with **all this being said, ask yourself, "Why Vote?"**

### THIRD PLACE: DOMINIQUE HASKINS



Voting is a chance for U.S. citizens to get involved and to share viewpoints about who we feel should lead. **If we don't vote, it's like saying we don't care. Most of us have** opinions about the way things should go, and we should use the voting process as a way to express our preferences. Voting is a good source for citizens to support the democratic structure.

Doing nothing has its consequences. Regardless of where one lives and how many electoral votes are contributed to the Presidential election, the privilege and the ability to vote requires our **response as a citizen of the United States. I feel it's our civil duty. If we didn't vote, we would** be missing out on a great national privilege and a significant personal freedom.



**It's an exciting opportunity and a choice. Casting a vote is a chance for an individual to express** a choice on candidates whom we believe would be great government leaders. The fifteenth amendment to the U.S. Constitution prohibits each government in the U.S. from denying a **citizen the right to vote based on that citizen's race, color, or previous condition of servitude** (for example, slavery). It was ratified on Feb. 3, 1870.

Voting is our right to represent freedom of speech. Voting shows that we care about our government and our candidates. We should all take time to vote because it reflects our pride in our nation and government. It is our individual chance to vote and to make a difference.

# EXCERPTS FROM HONORABLE MENTION ENTRIES

## MUNROE WHITLOCK



People have died to gain the right to vote. Elected officials make huge decisions that shape our lives. People in other parts **of the world don't have the right to vote.** Voting allows you to be heard; therefore, you do not have to resort to violence to get your needs met.

## DERRICK MCCANN



One of the greatest Civil Rights leaders, Martin Luther King, lost his life for all people to have a right to vote. One of his famous **quotes was, "I die the day I become silent about things that matter," meaning when it comes to voting you are no longer silent.** You are using your voice to speak out about change, who you feel will help run the country, and also who will make our lives better for our families, friends, and peers.

## MICHELLE WHITMAN



Picture the blind man or woman who had no vision care and lost their eye sight and that elderly couple that froze to death due to not enough Social Security after working all their lives and having the government take it from them. Now look in the mirror and at your loved ones. We are all that much closer today to such a fate. Let us not wait until it happens to us before we realize just how much our one vote really does

count. **Don't say Why Vote? Say When, and if you don't know how, just ask: City Clerk's Office, 608-266-4601.**

## CHINA MOON CROWELL



Why Vote? So many things matter: quality public education, clean air and water, employment, Supreme Court justices. Local and state elections count too! Remember 2010 when **everyone's undies were in a bunch** because the entire country **hadn't made a 180 degree recovery in two years?** Stand up, speak out, and vote!

## ANGELA JORDAN-JACKSON



No one can force a citizen to vote. But many citizens do vote because voting lets them tell the government what **THEY** want IT to do. Many call voting a sacred **right, and it's one of the most important parts of our political system.** You must realize if you **don't vote, your one special voice will not be heard.**

## BRITNEY SINCLAIR



Vote for your neighbors, family, and friends who may not understand. Vote for your child, who will gain from the experience and be one step toward maturity. Vote for your country, for those who fight and work hard every day. Do not surrender your right to vote. Take pride in your nation and vote.

### BRANDON WILLIAMS



If you choose not to vote, your family may lose the benefits they are getting. There may be some negative changes for our country that we may not benefit from. If **you don't vote, there should be no complaining** because you chose not to vote. So remember: every vote counts, and your vote could make a positive change in our country.

### TANATNAN CHAIPANG



Why vote? Do you want to move forward to bring about what you want to happen in your life? In **your children's life? In everyone's life? Don't wait until you have to protest. Please vote. Don't waste your freedom and your independence.** What do you call yourself? American? Go vote!



Jasmine Banks read her first place entry in Odyssey class on October 24.



Munroe Whitlock, Jasmine Banks, and Tosumba Welch at their essays at the "Why Vote?" event at the library on Saturday, November 3.



Lolita Phillips visited with UMOJA Magazine publisher Milele Chikasa Anana at the conclusion of the "Why Vote?" event. Milele spoke to the group about the importance of voting. She said that when she votes she honors her slave ancestors who died paving the way for others to have the rights they were denied.