

Odyssey Oracle

Year 9 #6 November 16, 2011

Thank you notes to Dr. Baron Kelly



Thank you so much for taking time out of your busy schedule to work with us. We appreciate it! Those breathing techniques you taught us were funny, but helpful. I found myself even doing them at home. Thanks again for making us laugh and have a good time.

Sincerely, **Tai’Kiah Phillips**



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Thank you for taking your time, energy, talent, and skills to show us the proper way to act out a scene. I love the warm-ups and how you showed us how to have fun with them. I love that you are still a down to earth person and show interest in the people. I greatly valued the time you took out of your day to visit our class of Madison WI.

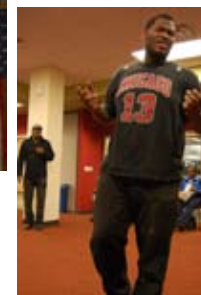
Thank you, **Samantha East**

Thank you for taking the time to visit and work with us. After the day I had, it was great to get a chance to escape into your world. This is something I rarely get a chance to do. Or at least so I thought. You being here has opened my eyes to ways to escape tension through the breathing exercises you taught us. Again thank you for an exciting night!

Sincerely, **Michele Withers**



I appreciate your strength and talent. I know it wasn't easy for me. You took charge and grabbed us by the hand, led us to our lines and released us to be the part; to live in the moment and not speak





with fear. Bold and free you command us to be! Thanks for being a leader (one who has the ability to reach down and pull out gifts and talents without being afraid of what another will take away). I truly thank God for creating you.

Kenya Moses

Wow! I feel like I've known you forever! In such a short time you increased my confidence, helped me overcome my fears and helped me see myself in a way that I can be proud of. Who does that? Honestly, it isn't everyday that we meet such people and when we do it is truly a blessing.

I hope you are still funk'ing out to Upheaval and keeping on with the keep on ☺ as my dad would say. I survived my worst fear and walked away singing a song! Thank you for taking the time to talk to me and share your wisdom. End of day—I will never forget how you brought out the best in My Odyssey classmates allowing everyone to shine like stars! Lastly thank you for your friendship; it is priceless and appreciated.

Warmest, **Hedi Rudd**



Greetings, First I would like to begin by offering to you my deepest gratitude for your remarkable work. It is and will continue to be a lifetime memory for myself that I will share with friends, family and anyone that mentions your name. God bless you and continue your generous

work as there is much to be done.

Thank you. **Juba Moten**

Thanks for coaching Saturday afternoon with Emily. I began using what I've learned that afternoon and applied it in my daily social life. Learning to speak clearer and louder has



brought me a level of confidence I never knew I could obtain. I will keep my eyes open for you on TV and silver screen. Till we cross paths again. Thanks! **Brandon McCarey**



It was a pleasure to watch you work with our class. Your professionalism and sense of play enabled most of us to open us and work on how we express ourselves. I have always avoided anything that resembles acting, preferring to stay with reality, but your coaching made some things

seem a little more possible.

Sincerely and Best Wishes, **Billie O. Kelsey**

How are you doing? Just a few words to say thank you for your time. I really enjoyed it. Although I couldn't get that personal time you allotted, I know if so it would have been useful to me in my future goals. Anyway, glad to have met with you. In my mind you are a solid example of what a black man is. Again, thank you.

Abraham Thomas



I enjoyed my time with you on last Wed. I think that you are a strong, intelligent, and giving individual. I truly appreciated the time you spent with my class on perfecting their acting skills. I feel blessed that you took the time out of your personal life to come here to Madison and help

us students to accomplish something that you excel in. You are a great example of giving back to the community! Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Respectfully, **Marcia D. Hampton**

Wow, I never even thought that through simple practice I am able to tell a story in so many different ways. Thank you for making the sacrifice of your time in order to be a blessing to us. I pray God will

continue to bless you as explore your journey in life.

Sincerely,

Lorraine C. Garrett



Thank you for that outstanding class. I realize how much

strength



I have now thanks to your demonstration. That was one of the most exciting classes I've been to in a long time. You really seem to have the gift to lift people's spirits up. I hope I can be as successful as you one day. I also hope I can understand how to find myself and be as open as

you are. This was a great experience for me and the class. You have the skills I am looking for. I know you can see me doing what you are doing. So feel free to call me or I will call you for help in the near future. **Jesse Hamilton**

Oh wow where do I start?@

As I start writing this letter my eyes began to fill with tears of joy for having met you, I'm so grateful that I was able to open another door in my life. With your help I'm ready to expand as a person and shine. FYI, I plan on taking some theater classes next semester. I just want to



say you're a great person and you don't know how many people's lives you touch, even if it's for a couple hours. Just know I will never forget you and how you helped me come out of my shell, and I will be telling "our story" to many more.

Thanks, **Shaquida Johnson**

I want to thank you for your time. I can tell that you were very prepared of the material that you presented to us. You helped us to bond as one unit. I must admit you brought out the child in me, but mostly you made me feel like I was really on the set of a reality show or being prepared to go on stage to act! This experience will forever be with me. I



never felt embarrassed. You gave all of us courage. You've set us up with the tools and the techniques that the big shots use to go on stage. Wow, who would've thought this was going to happen as an Odyssey student. I now feel the true meaning of going on an odyssey. It is a ride

of a lifetime.

Thank you so much. **Arnella Royal**

I want to thank you for your presence in our class. It was the first time I got up and read in front of people. I wanted to read it when we had partners but it didn't happen, so that's why I came to Emily's office to meet with you and others to go over and read the lines. I have always been too shy to do plays, screenplays, and so forth. I really enjoyed it, though. Thanks again, and hope to see you again real soon.



Sincerely, **Nkechi Johnson** (played part of Rose)



Thank you to you, sir. I had so much fun while learning. What you said will not be in vain. I will throw every word across the room with my internal balloon. I promise to check that book you told me about-- "Black History in the White House" (I wrote it down). I'm going to continue

to step out of the box everyday life puts us in and be like a child and believe in my character when I write, read and act. Baron, you were wonderful. We would love to see you again this year/next year. You are a beautiful person.

Run Barlow

I would like to say thanks! You've awakened my theatrical intricacies and I feel I'm ready to lead. I've always loved acting and being artistic. You are a



wonderful person. Your pride and passion ring clear. Please come back and see us.
P.S. See you in Hollywood!

Terry Hart



Did I ever think I would stand in front of people and open my mouth to speak or find the confidence to look at the audience? I will take time at this moment to THANK YOU for the time you spent in coaching me. The breathing exercises were fun but now I know how useful it is

when reading. Again thank you.

Tatenda Bvindi

I truly enjoyed meeting you, a true actor indeed. But acting is not one of my fortes. May you continue to do your job successfully. I will keep you in my prayers. May God bless you and keep you.

Marilyn Johnson



I thank you so very much. I thought you would help a little but you brought out something I had no idea was there—a rhythm, sound, a grand voice. Thank you.

Yetta Harris



I appreciate you coming halfway around the world to help me with my Odyssey Project. I found you to be very funny and down to earth. You don't seem like a Hollywood type. You were open and personable and I appreciate that. You seem kind of cool to hang out with. Whenever you have some free time, please come back for a visit. Grace and Peace to you. Love, **Eugene Smalls**



Thank you for taking the time to teach our entire class a little bit about how the delivery of what you are saying can mean as much as the content of what you are saying. For you to further offer your services to those that were interested showed your commitment.

Katie Pruitt

Hey Baron, you have made me feel like I can do something more than playing ball or video games.

I can act now or for the moment.

I felt like it gave me joy for the time you were here. If I didn't

have to work [during your extra coaching sessions] you would have gotten to see more of me

being Troy. I hope to see you again because I would like to learn more from you.

Thanks. **Donta Starr** A.K.A. Troy



The time spent with you in our Odyssey Project class last week was informational, exciting, and uplifting for me personally. This opportunity has been a blessing and much sought after experience at this point in my life.

Unfortunately, it appears as if the forces of nature or the "powers that be" have lined up against me, and continually cause strife and difficulties on class nights.

However, upon entering class and yielding to your instruction, I was able to overcome the frustration and general conflict I seem to be experiencing of late. The exercises were stress relieving and opened my voice to the world. Thank you for taking the time to share what you know and have learned over the years in your acting career. I hope to see you again, as I know that there is much I could learn from you.

Respectfully, **Keith W. Johnson**

Call and Response



I cannot express in entirety the gratitude I have for Kegan's work with the Oracle. It is a magnet to my heart. I always look forward to the next edition as much as I look forward to seeing my kids smile. . . . Please keep up the magnificent work. From cover to cover every article is grasping, touching, informational, exciting, and encouraging. Its contents make me think deep and see other people in a different light and appreciate and respect them more. . . . I will be absolutely sure that I continue to read the Oracle for the rest of either its or my existence. . . . I cannot wait to read my classmates' books of poems and life stories and literature one day in the future. (**Juba Moten**)



"I'm on My Way"

by **Terry Hart**

I believe that Terry put in perspective the exact affection and emotion that a lot of us in class feel in our hearts. Since being chosen by the Odyssey program to be a part of a unique family, going back to where we were before is not an option. God has given us a key to unlock new paths on our journey. (**Lorraine Garrett**)



"A Thing Called Hope"

by **Lorraine Garrett**

I enjoyed Lorraine's writing style and could really feel her sincerity. I thought it was nice of Lorraine to give Eugene some credit for the things he has done and let those of us who weren't present that night in on the kind of man he is. (**Katie Pruitt**)



Finding Plato's Cave

The Oracle of October 12 talked about my classmates' life history of being in a cave. All of their stories touched me. Reading their stories made me just want to help them, even if I couldn't help myself. (**Linda Thao**)



Beatriz Mairena-Kellman on Finding Plato's Cave

Beatriz, you are strong, and you speak of your background in such a way that makes you so unique. You have such a beautiful soul. When you enter the room, you sparkle, all this because you are meant to shine! (**Michelle Withers**)



What Beatriz wrote about was the very thing we were reading in *Enrique's Journey* and in Francisco Jimenez's "The Circuit." It truly amazes me to know that America is the greatest country in the world yet still one of the most racist. I have a love/hate relationship with America. (**Eugene Smalls**)



Run Barlow on Finding Plato's Cave

One of the stories that touched my heart was from Run Barlow. His theory of keeping up with the trends is one thing that I too can relate to. Growing up in the Robert Taylor Homes, there was a lot of this going on. My grammar school was the worst. I was constantly told I was the "Bum of 3919." My family was poor. There was no way to get even a new hat, let alone a new pair of gymmees! Coming to Madison, I feel a sense of relief from keeping up with those trends. **(Arnella Royal)**



Juba Moten on Finding Plato's Cave

We all make mistakes young but we can learn from our mistakes if we are wise. The lifestyle that you encountered [gangs, crime, addictions] is one that we see far too often across the nation. This lifestyle has claimed the lives of so many of our young people. . . . You have strength within yourself, Juba. To survive these horrible situations is admirable, and to find a new direction after knowing only one path for so long is remarkable. I hope you continue to be a great philosopher as you move forward through your journey for wisdom. **(Run Barlow)**



Lorraine Garrett on Music

The way Lorraine talks about Jesus is the way I felt about my mother. She protected me all my life while she was still here, and I still feel her present at times. It's like I'm safe with her, and I can do no wrong. It's a free feeling. **(Donta Starr)**



Katie Pruitt on Music

In the October 26 Oracle Katie Pruitt responded to the type of music she loves. I found it interesting that her favorite music was hip-hop. It relaxes me also. She explains how she feels when she listens. Also she uses the music to escape and to relax her mind. That was just awesome. Good job, Katie! **(Terry Hart)**



A Long and Eventful Journey by Annette Bland '05

I agree with Annette on her comment that the Odyssey Project will change your life. I received a rejection letter on my first attempt on getting into this program. I was so determined to get a jumpstart on getting a college education that I applied again and was accepted into this class. I am grateful to be an Odyssey student and am determined to do an outstanding job on my assignments. I want to use everything I learn in this class to help me finish college and earn a degree. I will use my knowledge to help others and will encourage them to apply to the Odyssey Project so they, too, can change their lives. **(Marcia Hampton)**



Brandon McCarey on Finding Plato's Cave

I thought I was going to be the only one in class, Brandon, to go through depression. I understand everything you said and are going through. I have faced most of my demons except the biggest one: loving myself. **(Nkechi Johnson)**



Encountering an Emily Dickinson Poem

*Some keep the Sabbath going to Church --
I keep it, staying at Home --
With a Bobolink for a Chorister --
And an Orchard, for a Dome --*

*Some keep the Sabbath in Surplice --
I just wear my Wings --
And instead of tolling the Bell, for Church,
Our little Sexton -- sings.*

*God preaches, a noted Clergyman --
And the sermon is never long,
So instead of getting to Heaven, at last --
I'm going, all along.*

Instead of following the Holy path blindly and going through the motions with the goal of reaching Heaven's gates after death, the speaker finds God in her own way and enjoys the beauty in every minute of life.

I totally agree with the speaker. I've never believed in a one-size-fits-all idea of religion, but I do see goodness and beauty almost daily. Just like the speaker, I am able to taste the finest fruits if I know where to look for them. I also see how one could disagree. Many people find fulfillment in the rituals of church. **(Katie Pruitt)**

It's not about the building or even the man in the robe or gown or suit. It's about God and making it to heaven where God is.

Personally I don't agree with the poet. I believe it does matter. I believe Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. . . . **(Eugene Smalls)**

The poem contrasts the "devoted" church-goer and the everyday citizen. I call "Devoted Church-goers" such because they are the ones that I see put on airs to be seen going to church, while in private they sin as all do. The "Everyday Citizens," as I call them, are more concerned with the

"Doing" of the Word of God rather than parading around as saints. I believe that the overall message of the poem is that it is better to be doing what God says than trying to make everyone around you see that you are doing according to his will.

I agree with the overall tone and sentiment of the poem. I have experienced the hypocrisy of elders in church berate others when in their own lives they are being adulterers and such. God sees all. . . . **(Keith Johnson)**

I believe the poet is saying that you don't need to be physically in a church to be able to have worship, enjoy the Sabbath, and get the word of God. God still understands your worship if it's not in a church.

I agree with the poet. Lots of people still praise the Lord and believe in Him without physically being at church. That doesn't make them bad people. You can get the word of God anywhere, and God hears all requests regardless of where you are. **(Tai'Kiah Phillips)**

This poem talks about how to perceive what it means to rest and worship not just in the church but in the home also. It talks about the joy of a songbird singing with no cares in the world. This is her view of what a church service is like.

I don't agree with her because I believe coming together with others causes you to be strengthened. When facing things on your own, you see things only your way. **(Lorraine Garrett)**

I believe the poet is saying that a church or a religion can never truly define a person's spiritual walk with God. We may use rituals, customs to express our idea about God. But does it mean you

are any less spiritual because you don't show your faith in this way?

I liked the poem a lot. It expressed ideas about faith that many people can't or won't explore because of fear of questioning theological norms and culture.

(Brandon McCarey)



Game Day by Terry Hart

The sky was amazingly still and blue,
 There were three little clouds rolling through.
 Out comes the sun, glowing in every way.
 With a day this beautiful, it must be Badger Saturday.
 Once Bradley arrived, I shut the door and locked the
 handle.

The odyssey continued even through “The Great Camp
 Randall.”

Once we parked and exited the car,
 We were engulfed by a sea of red and white near and far.
 Bradley can attest I was happy as can be
 En route to the stadium I screamed, “Go Bucky!”
 The people were nice and ready to cheer,
 We were in a hurry because kickoff was near.
 When we got to our seats it was time to have fun,
 For there was Abraham, and next to him Run.
 Once the football was kicked from the tee,
 We were all family on this particular odyssey.
 What a lifelong experience I shall say,



I would tell everyone to come to Madison on
 Game Day.

When it was all said and done, we had for points
 52.

The goal was accomplished, we beat Purdue.



*Terry Hart, Bradley Barner, Abraham Thomas, and Run
 Barlow attended the Wisconsin-Purdue football game on
 November 5 with tickets donated by Continuing Studies
 Dean Jeffrey Russell.*

Letters to Sonia Nazario, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of the UW's 2011-2012 Go Big Read selection, *Enrique's Journey*



I am very moved by what I have read about Enrique's journey. I had no knowledge of the world of immigrants. I am floored by the thought that so many children set out on a journey with hope, only to end up with death. Compassion,

sadness, and prayer entered into my heart as I read this story. I admire your courage. Through you as a journalist and all the risks you took to get firsthand information, I learned to be brave. I learned that love goes a long way. I learned to live in this world you must have a dream. Striving to obtain anything in life is a gamble. I'm speechless after analyzing your book. (**Yolanda Cunningham**)



I would like to say thanks! Because of your courage and your kind heart, you gave us a journey of a young man's life to strive through adversity and unwelcome odds to see his mother. Your words inspire, enlighten, and encourage us all. It's because of women like you that everyone has a voice and

the truth is brought to light. I would like to thank you again for opening my eyes to an unknown world, for letting me see firsthand the struggles of my brethren south of the border. (**Terry Hart**)



Thank you for the eye-opening experience of the time you've taken to bring us into the lives of these courageous youngsters. I have to say courageous because they're so young. I can totally sense the atmosphere through your eyes and through theirs, not only battling the trains but their lives in Honduras. From day one when their mother made

in Honduras. From day one when their mother made

her choice to leave her children, I felt their pain. I have children, and I too want what's best for them, but could I have made such a fearless choice? No! Living in poverty is what I know too well. The lives that were brought out on those pages will forever touch my heart; they will forever remain in my soul. I see you as a woman of purpose who lets no story go untold. You took it to the extreme and chose to be there in the midst of it all. You journeyed right along with them, ate what they ate, smelled what they smelled, and endured all that came with the goal of succeeding at what they set their minds and hearts on doing. Finally I want to say thanks again and ask you if you would do it again. (**Arnella Royal**)



I find your interest and dedication to take us out of our comfort zone to pursue truth and the plight and struggles of others both inspiring and intriguing. I can relate to certain aspects of the discrimination a person not of Caucasian descent faces in this world, but as you found, we as

American citizens will never truly understand the hardships and struggles many experience just to live. I find your journey one of courage and hope. (**Keith Johnson**)



I just want to compliment you on *Enrique's Journey*. This book is breathtaking. Once I started reading your book, I have to admit I couldn't put it down. I would stop to cook, eat, and clean my house just to find myself picking up *Enrique's Journey* and reading some more. I like how you

listened to your housekeeper and just ran with the story. To take a journey with child migrants is

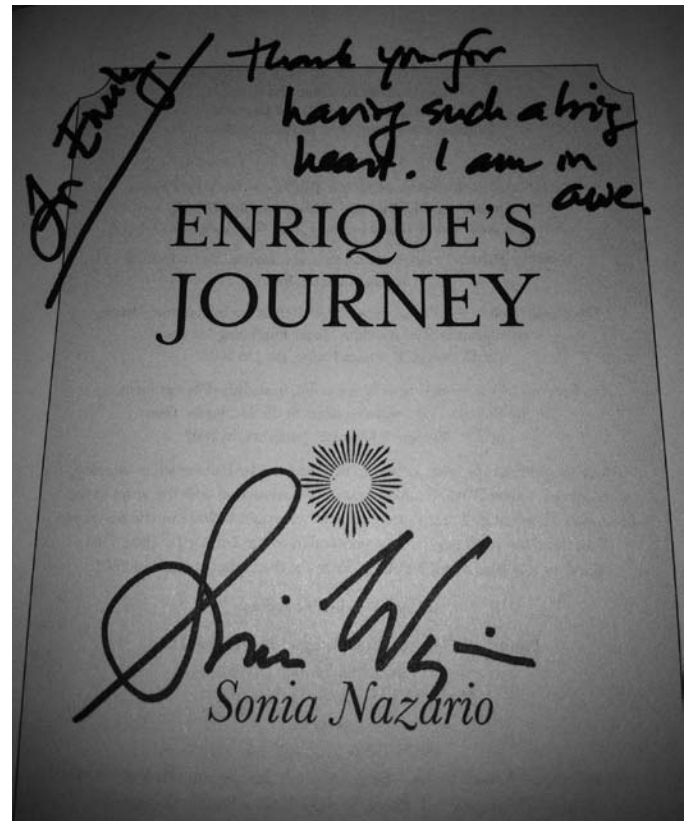
boldness right there. Putting myself in your shoes, so to speak, I still don't know if I could have done that. We're in a class called The Odyssey Project. I'm truly on a journey that I never thought would come to pass. I'm in the action, waiting and watching it unfold, and it's taking us inside worlds we thought we might never otherwise see. . . . You use powerful words in your powerful book. **(Marilyn Johnson)**



In this book, mothers make an amazingly dangerous journey from their homeland to a completely foreign land (United States), leaving behind what they treasure most (their children). They try to work as much as possible and live, yet send as much money as possible back home, all

in hopes of keeping their kids in school so they have some possibility, maybe their only hope, of getting out of the poverty they live in. The tragedy of all this is that the mothers almost never can afford to bring their kids to the United States or to go back home, and they usually lose the kids they left behind in the process. Those kids feel so abandoned, unloved, and emotionally scarred by the experiences they encounter without their moms. They get addicted to drugs or get pregnant young; some have perished in trying to reach their mothers on such dangerous routes.

While reading the book, I felt the same terror that Enrique felt when he was beaten, having the fear he lived in, the exhaustion, the hunger, drinking muddy water; what he went through every step along the way. I also placed myself in the situation of those girls who were raped and hopeless, those with broken legs or arms, and those mutilated by rains. I am overwhelmed by this reality. Thank you for writing this story in such an informative way, giving me a clear picture and making me feel the same way as these migrating kids. *Enrique's Journey* has opened my eyes and has ignited my heart to help and support those in need. I have learned that love cannot be replaced by materials; it is a valuable treasure not to be taken lightly. **(Tatenda Bvindi)**



Thank you so much for writing *Enrique's Journey*. I was unable to put it down once I picked it up as I wanted, no needed, to know that he had found his mother. While the journey itself was brutal, I found myself hurrying to read in hopes of finding a happy ending to all the pain he had endured as a result of his mother leaving for America. **(Hedi Rudd)**



Your book challenged me. I wanted to approve of all the decisions each person in your book made. I wanted to like each person in your book because of the sacrifices they made in the beginning of their individual journeys. But I found myself disappointed in the choices they all made. I realized that as humans we do the very best we can, and when we know more we are even better.

I had to see these people not as they should be for a perfect outcome but who they are for a human outcome.

(**Yetta Harris**)



Thank you for writing Enrique's odyssey book. This is an excellent way to let the reader know how migrants risk their lives to come to the United States. You showed courage by facing the danger of your research. As a journalist you wanted to have your own experiences so that you

could write a real and emotional story that you experienced yourself. Until your journey with migrant children, you had no true understanding of what people are willing to do to get here. (**Beatriz Mairena-Kellman**)



I take my hat off to you. You are an amazing woman to be able to leave your life structure to go and put your feet into someone else's shoes. Since reading your book, I have had a new learning experience about other cultures. At first when I was reading this book I was confused as a mother about

how a mother could leave her kids for a certain period of time, but as I got deeper into the book I started to respect and understand why mothers did what they did. My heart wanted to reach out to them and wanted to help those who probably are still going through this. I stopped, looked at my life, and realized that my problems are tiny compared to theirs. So I just want to say thanks for bringing other people's problems to the surface and helping us realize that something can be done. (**Shaquida Johnson**)

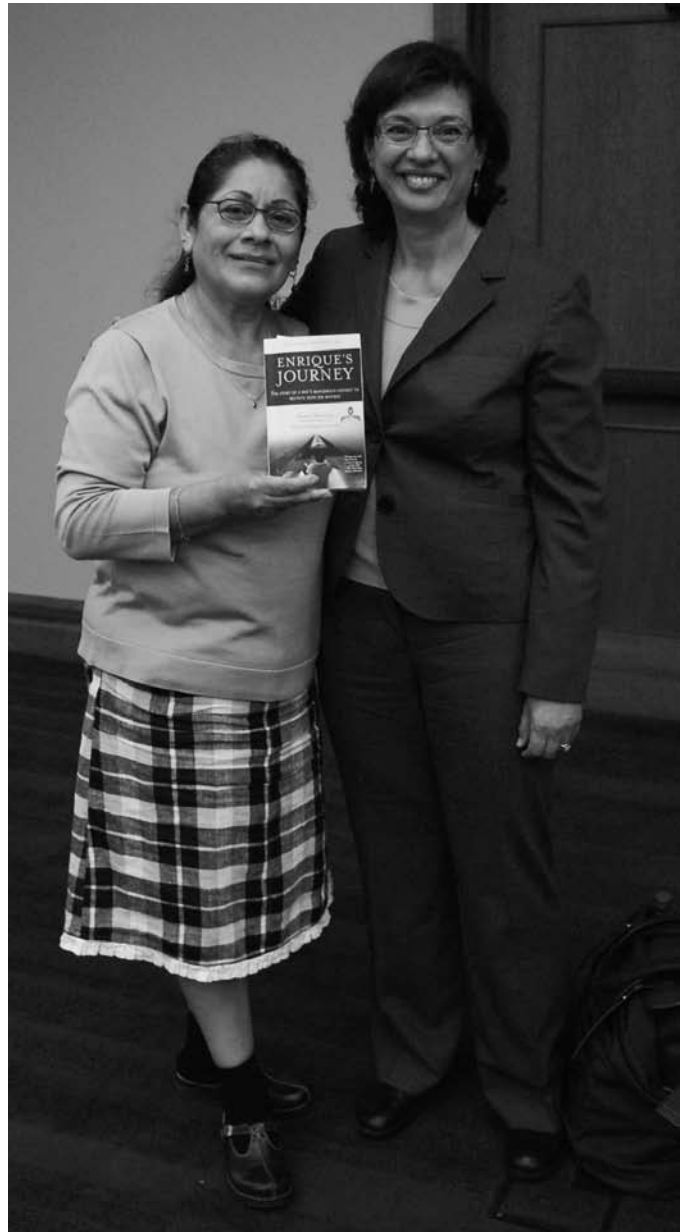
I just finished reading *Enrique's Journey* and enjoyed the story very much. I appreciated your clearly written and thought-provoking story. I am a single mother and admired the way you dealt with the issues faced in raising a family. Mothers



do want what they feel is best for their children and make whatever sacrifices they need to, just as you have pointed out in your book. It's never an easy adjustment for a family. The children, as you pointed out, have a lot of resentment yet miss their mother dearly. It's as if their mother is the missing

piece to completing themselves. I am very grateful that you have such a strong voice and are someone who does not hesitate to speak her mind on the importance of family.

(**Michele Withers**)





I would first like to thank you for your bravery. I can't begin to understand a journey such as the ones described in your book. It is amazing to me to read of the strength and courage Enrique had facing off of these adversities, being beaten and starved. These immigrants are strong indeed to

persevere through all the trials. I personally grabbed on to the hope Enrique's mom had for her children to be reunited with her. The book taught me how to hang on even when life feels like nails. (**Kenya Moses**)



I like your book because it shows Enrique's gritty life. It's real, like how he started sniffing glue and feeling like no one loves him because his mother has not come back for him and his sister. He falls in love with Maria Isabel because their lives are alike. They listen to each other, and that makes

him feel wanted. His drug addiction is almost like a coping mechanism for his sadness about missing his mother, but it also pushes him away from the rest of his family at times. It really hurt him when his Uncle Marco got killed. Marco made Enrique feel like he was son, and he treated him well. Also you wrote about how when Enrique was robbed on the top of the train and they busted his head, broke his teeth, and took money from him, he had to jump from the train so they wouldn't kill him. That had to hurt, and he was knocked out for hours. Your book is great. I hope you write another one. Thanks for the ride. (**Donta Starr**)



I really enjoyed the book. Your personal, up-close journey showed remarkable courage, strength, and dedication to your profession. It's amazing how a short conversation with your maid could open you up to a world unbeknownst to you.

You then shared your work with the world and shed light on a situation that most people would never have known about. (**Brandon McCarey**)



It was beautiful to me how you decided to write this book. You write about the cruelty of some of the people Lourdes works for—how they couldn't care less about her presence. How did you feel when you heard your housekeeper (Maria Carmen) had such a huge secret? To not

look at her differently would have been hard for me. I would have said to leave your family so far away was wrong, but to see so many people faced with that decision who chose the option of leaving their family for a better life made me at least look at this in a different light. I could never relate, but the picture you draw is so clear. The longing the children have for their mothers, the problems they face without them, the corruption of the government, the emotional rollercoaster the families face—this is a real eye-opener for me. Thank you. (**Run Barlow**)



Reading your book about Enrique's life and his search for his mother was very touching yet painful. When reading *Enrique's Journey*, it was like I was on the train with him. It was like I was there with him when he felt lonely, when he would cry, when he would feel scared of being

captured, and when he was beaten to death. Reading



this book made me think of how many children would suffer just to find their mother. I would never have expected how many died just to find out if their mother still loves them. Thank you, Sonia Nazario, for writing this wonderful book. If you hadn't, no one would have known of such things. No one would have known how much kids could do for their mothers.

(Linda Thao)



Thank you sooo much for writing *Enrique's Journey*. You write clearly of the motivation and feelings of all the characters involved and show readers how the issue of immigration is so complicated. I too wanted for my mother as a youth and can relate to Enrique's confusion as to

why she left and didn't come back for him. I found it very interesting to read about the strength and determination he found within himself. I applaud your skill at writing such an accessible account of one young man's odyssey. **(Billie O. Kelsey)**

This book moved me. Never in my life have I read about how long mothers are away from their children. It saddens my heart how poor their families are, the children that run away from home



to go all that way to get to the U.S., and the horrors they face from riding the trains, being robbed, raped, or thrown from the trains if they had no money. I really did not know how poor it was in Central America. I wish I could go down there, help, and tell more people what's happening. You will

always be in my heart. **(Samantha East)**



I started to read this book like any other book. Page one of the Prologue, I just got started, a few short paragraphs, nice and easy. Then I turned the page—THWAP! Emotion hit me like a slap across the face. With a tightening of my chest I read on about Carmen's "secret" children and the decision she had to make all those years

ago. No mother wants to be away from her children, but she had to choose between surviving separately or perishing together. It takes great courage and strength to do such a thing, but it breaks my heart and disgusts me that she and many others are forced into that. I cannot imagine what it's like to leave your children behind and then have to take a job



caring for other people's children. For me, it's hard enough to be at work during the day and even *see* other children. It makes me miss mine *so* much, but I get to see them at the end of every day. To have the span of time and distance between mother and child that these women have seems unbearable. **(Katie Pruitt)**

The first thought I can express to you is that we so needed your book to inform others what immigrants suffer to get a better life. You have done a wonderful job. I wish that more people who read what you have written. By reading this information, they will understand at least a little bit why many immigrants are here and why teens easily become gang members. My last comment is that I would love to see a movie of this, a real strong movie with real kids that could give lots of courage to every state in the U.S.A. Thank you for reading my letter and thank you for all you have done. **(Elvira Rodriguez)**



I thank you for going the distance into a dangerous atmosphere to learn how Enrique, Lourdes, and others you have met had to endure so much pain and loss in their lives. You came back safely and told their stories, so others in the world can see what is going on in their world. I can't imagine having to leave my kids to make a better life for them. I would prolong it for a long time because my kids are everything to me. I don't understand how society wants to save animals when there are more humans out here in this world who are dying every second, and when this world is powerful enough for all humans to live decently. But there are a lot of very selfish, hateful, and confused human beings out in the world. Society finds a way to keep people locked up in poverty. People will have to fight and pay for freedom, even though Jesus died for us to be free. When are people

going to wake up and see if things do not change we are going to be in the pit of Hell? **(Nkechi Johnson)**

After reading *Enrique's Journey*, I was surprised to learn that children as young as seven years old were risking their lives by riding on top of trains to get to the U.S. to find their mothers. I admire your courage and perseverance on undertaking this dangerous journey to complete your book. **(Marcia Hampton)**



Immigration in my opinion must be addressed by this country fairly and aggressively. What is it that motivates you to tell Enrique's story with such compassion? I say this because my history of America is constantly evolving, and I believe that my story as a "beneficiary" of slavery must be told in order to heal our community. Inside of me is a deep passion similar to what I believe you possessed when you wrote about Enrique's journey. In my opinion you are a champion for migrant workers everywhere. You are the voice of the masses crying out for fairness. **(Abraham Thomas)**



I never knew how brutal and unfair life is for migrants headed to the United States. Why should life start in hell for these children? I wish I could have the courage and will to do what you have done to get this issue out to the public. Thanks to your sacrifice, I will treat life with a sense of emergency. Since I read your book I have seen a movie called "Sin Nombre" that has the same exact story line. This movie tells the tale of a Honduran traveling on freight trains seeking to make it to the United States. The film was directed by Amy Kaufman in 2009. I was amazed how I



was drawn to this movie minutes after reading your book. You are helping the world stop this trend of horror.

(Jesse Hamilton)



Bless you in the name of Jesus! Your book (*Enrique's Journey*) was so awesome. It was one of the first books I've read in a long time, and it was a pleasure. You really made Enrique real and alive for me. I felt his pain through drug abuse. I've been there. I spent 16 years in prison, and I longed

for a visit or even a letter from family. So I truly related. I thank you for the chance to get to know the characters of *Enrique's Journey*.

(Eugene Smalls)



Congratulations for having the heart, strength, and courage to endure the many obstacles you faced during your journey. I am proud and will be forever grateful. You have enlightened me. I have always heard of the many hardships migrants are faced with daily. However, I did not realize the true struggle

until reading your book. The bravery you showed while on this journey amazes me. I don't think I could have gathered the courage to ride on top of a moving train. I'm sure I couldn't have done it while the train is moving in a storm, with lightning. You, however, showed strength after being hit in the face with a tree branch and almost knocked from the train. God bless you. Traveling through Chiapas, where gangsters rob people at knifepoint, or riding between two hoppers, or just walking along the river that flows by the town of Ixtepec, Oaxaca—this took true courage. You are both physically and mentally brave. Your book is a very informative and touching story. It is wonderful to know there are people who care. Thank you for the courage to endure the constant fear of being raped, beaten, or robbed to complete your journey and give us,

your readers, this wonderful book. I will encourage many to read *Enrique's Journey*.

(Phyllis Anderson)



I loved how you put yourself in the story and not only wrote about it but lived it to be able to write it. I think that's brave of you in many ways. You taught me and many others to enjoy life and take advantage of what you have while you have it because not everybody is lucky to have whatever it may

be—food, a home, a family to talk to and be around. I look forward to reading more of your books.

(Bradley Barner)



There are a lot of men I know including myself (at one point in my life) who view themselves and portray a false image of being tough and fearless who would never have had the dauntlessness to do what you did. I loved your strategies to succeed in this journey. I have adopted

the concept of safety nets. If you ever decide to do something like this again, can I tag along? No way, just kidding, for you are more of a hero than I. May God bless you, your family, and all of your future endeavors.

(Juba Moten)

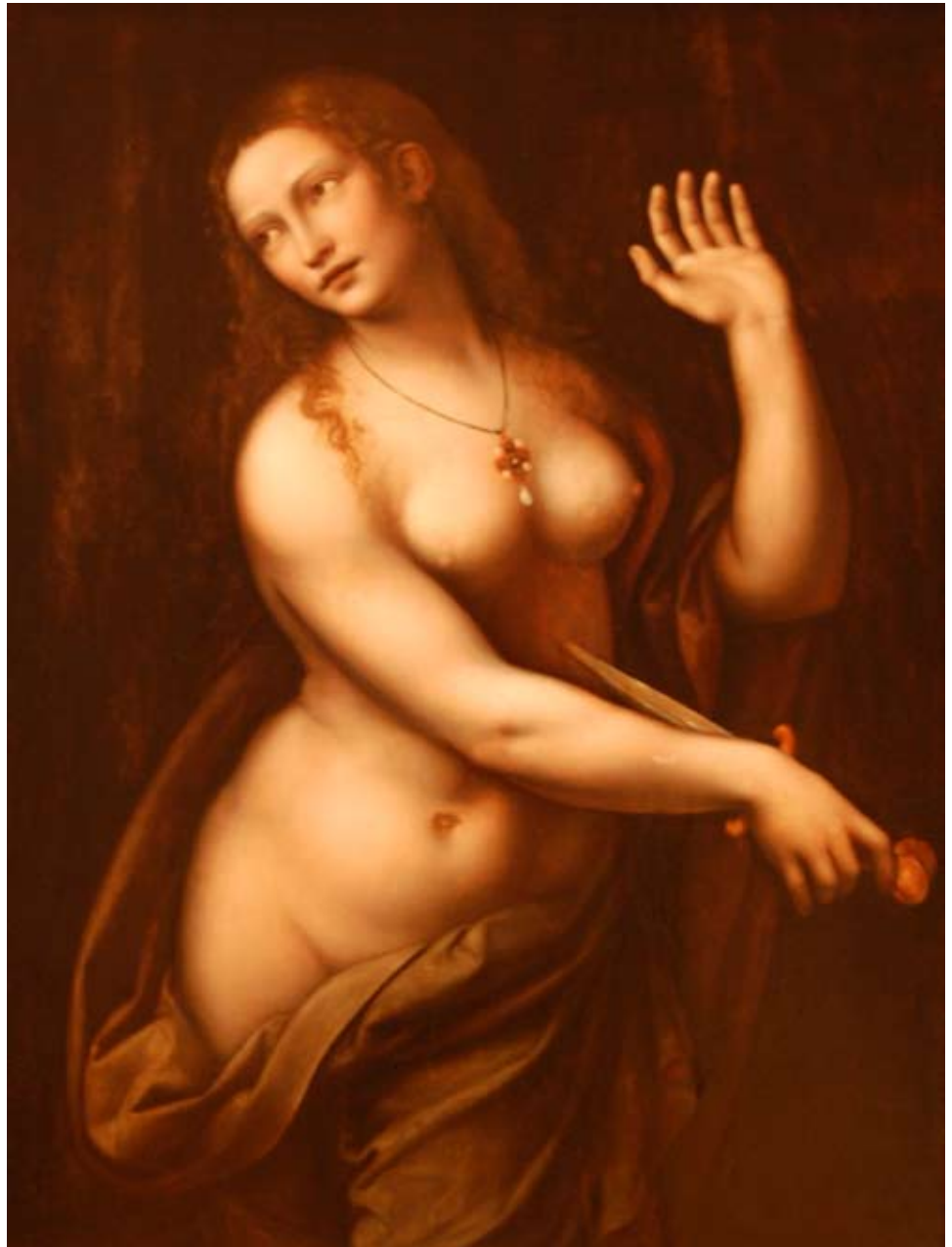


Art Responses from the Chazen

Giampietrino, *Lucretia Romana*, c. 1500-40

Ode to Lucretia Romana

My virtue is my weapon
Even though pillaged
I hold it up for all to see
From hamlet, seaport and village
As strong as a rose's thorn
A treasure to behold
I treasure it as one would
A ruby encased in gold
It sparkles and mystifies
Causes wars and strife
Yet I am the one who dies
By own might and knife
As I take my last breath
I touch my cross and pray
In life I lived in virtue
In forgiveness I now lay
(Hedi LaMarr Rudd)



Sylvia Fein, *Lady in a Cage*, 1943**Lady in a Cage**

Drowned in thoughts
I'm broken all days,
Locked in a circle of
Wire ribbed cage,
This is my fate, I cried
Oh! Why am I the lady in this cage?



Day in day out staring at this fence
Eyes reddened with rage,
I strike at the cage
Gazing in astonishment,
It strikes viciously to me
Casting me where I seem to belong,
A wire ribbed cage.

Wisdom I've learned from
The beasts of the world,
Birds in flight,
Dancing trees in the breeze,
Flowing streams and all
Ushering abundant blessings
To the earth,

They all stared at the cage
Daring to help they fell,
I grew weary and pale,
Tormented in this isolation,
I'm vulnerable and at bay
Can't come out of this cage,
Will I ever sing freedom?
Or stay in this grave of dreams
Being the lady in a cage
(Tatenda Bvindi)



Circle of Paolo de'Matteis, *Apollo Pursuing Daphne, with Cupid and the River God Peneus, Daphne's Father*, c. 1700

Apollo pursues Daphne

Apollo made fun of Cupid
Winged god of love
He said my bow is bigger
Yours couldn't hit a dove

Cupid got mad
And couldn't let this pass
He took a golden arrow
Shot Apollo in the ass

Apollo quickly fell in love
With the first one he glimpsed
Daphne was her name
she didn't want a prince

See Cupid in his anger had
Shot two arrows from above
The one that hit Daphne
Was the antithesis of Love

Daphne ran from love
While Apollo in Love he
chased
Daphne was very strong
Yet Apollo she couldn't
outpace

Daphne yelled help
When to her father she drew near
Cause daddy was a river god
who held his daughter dear

Daddy used his powers
To turn his daughter into a tree
Apollo could not have her
Yet neither was she free

Let this tale be a lesson
To those so sure and smug
Don't get into a pissing match
With the winged god of love.
(Billie O. Kelsey)



John Linnell, *Lady Torrens and Her Family*, 1820**Imaginations**

Time for a story, it must be a story for them all.

Imaginations of innocence. A time to escape the world, and its walls.

I'll tell them the story of life, and how good it is to be free.

Choose ye my children, this day, whatever it is you want to be.

Capture the moment with gleam, spread your wings ARISE.

Let your souls rejoice in conquering, Believe in that dream; keep your spirits alive,

Arriving the day, you all will have come in to your desire, so jubilant your hearts will sing.

Your labor and harvest, bountiful blessing, ye shall dance as all the bells ring.

Forget not to ponder back, as story hour had us captive, birthing no limitations.

Remember the light that kept us warm, escaping the walls becoming IMAGINATIONS.

(Yolanda Cunningham)



Auguste-Xavier Leprince, *The Artist's Studio*, 1826

As Seen from the Rafters Above

Mysterious as the moon
More wild than the Lion
of the Jungle
This cat seems to have
artists baffled by far it
seems.

We are soft
passionate, loving
and very beautiful
creations
of which our creator did make
for all the Adams of the world

We are Eve
We tempt you with forbidden
fruit, but somehow this seems to suit
you to a tee

Mysterious as the night
that makes you so uptight

but follow our lead
and soon you will see
we're very compassionate
to your needs if you paint
us with some dreams
to share together

So uncover your ears and eyes
see what is before you
don't try to avoid it,
the cat that stands here
wanting you to be
a part of her heart

of this please my dear
come join me
to enjoy all the pleasures
we can possibly surrender to.
(Michele Withers)





Robert Motherwell, *Elegy to the Spanish Republic #125*, 1972

This piece expresses how people felt after the Spanish Civil War. They had a powerful but terrible dictator for many years until his death. The black bars feel like living in communist life; the people want their freedom. In the top of the ceiling there appears to be a window; it is closed too, but they

can see a little light come through. You can imagine how they were living in this cave.

(Beatriz Mairena-Kellman)



Reynier Coveyn, *Conversation Piece*, n.d.



In this magnificent painting, Dad tells his wife that he's going on an odyssey sailing westward. The wife expresses her love and concern for him. He tells her that he must explore his opportunities in this vast world. A feast is being prepared in his honor... This portrait reminds me that at this point in my life, I am on an odyssey. This feels great!

(Terry Hart)



Anton Refregier, *San Francisco '34 Waterfront Strike, 1949*

It reminds me of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream, where one day black and white children will play together, even though they're adults. They're standing side by side, as if saying, "We're winning this war together. There's no black or white; just men running this race. We're running this race together."

(Marilyn Johnson)



Ed Paschke, *Spoken Word*, 1992

Spoken Word is a collection of works that evolved from the Paschke family home on Sunday afternoons in the city of Chicago. During these times, Ed's father would entertain the family by using clay to create animal figures and heads with exaggerated personalities to inspire Ed and his brother, Richard. I'm not gifted in the arts, but Ed's story helps the artistic person in me understand where an artist's motivation and spirit to create come from... In my personal ignorance, I always believed that most artists' creativity fell upon them like the fresh rain water of spring and sprouted like the timely seasonal flowers bloom. As a result, the artist's vision, hope, and purpose sprout and we are left to imagine our own ideas of the artist's message. **(Abraham Thomas)**

