

ODYSSEY ORACLE

CONQUERING CAMPUS

"I had no idea that I could appreciate art."



*"I felt a sense of belonging
being on that campus."*



"I felt like the whole campus was now open to me."

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*"I really
had a
sense of
pride
when I
got my
student
ID."*





"We were all going somewhere: literally, to the Chazen museum of art, and figuratively, to a brighter future."

"Receiving that UW student ID uplifted me in so many ways."



"Our trip to campus gave me some time to bask in the fact that I have taken the very first step towards my future."



"The bus was filled with excitement, laughter, and chatter."



FINDING PLATO'S CAVE TODAY



Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" is definitely something that you can see around you today. I think there are so many "caves" in today's society because of all the new technology. For example, back in Socrates' time they did not have MySpace,

Facebook, Twitter, and so many other forms of social media and technology. Modern technology has in a way but people in their own individual caves. People used to get together in social situations because that was the only way to interact with one another, but now people would much rather email someone or poke them on Facebook (they won't even bother to pick up a phone and call) or send a text message. . . . Some people work from home and have everything they need delivered there; it is like we are creating a society of shut-ins. (**Nyagoa Hoth**)



Domestic violence and abuse is a hard cave to be in and also to get out of. Sometimes you feel you just can't escape, or there are certain things keeping you from doing that. . . . There are so many reasons why victims stay with their abusers. I know many

people on the outside of the situation looking in may wonder, "Why does she stay with him?" or "She's crazy." Most times there is a deeper story as to why that victim is staying in the environment she's in. Sometimes victims don't realize they deserve better than what they're getting until it's too late. (**Kelli Green**)

I was in a cave for a long time. I started drinking when I was 15 and was stuck in an



impossible place for eight years. It reminds me of what the shadows were. I was staring into a dark place and saw no light. I am just now seeing what my life can become. But just as Socrates spoke of "suffering sharp pains," that is how I see this change. It

has been hard and sometimes feels impossible still to see the light or to find my way out of the hole I dug myself in. (**Simone Lawrence**)



I was trapped in depression; this was one of my cave situations. I have finally got to the point where I can control my depression. My other cave is the cycle of me starting over all the time—starting school and stopping school—, but this time

around I have been pushing and pushing and breaking that cycle. (**Toshiana Northington**)



My whole family is still back in Brazil, and by making the decision to be here I set a distance between us. . . . Therefore, many times I feel that I have put myself in a cave. . . . One day I decided to step out of that cave and applied to

become an Odyssey student. Now my dream begins to be nourished as I pursue the power of knowledge through education.

(**Vanessa Lopes Maia**)

Plato's Allegory of the Cave reminds me about a traditional Chinese allegory—the Frog in a Well. People who lack education or have limited opportunity to experience or explore



the outside world are the prisoners or the frogs. Staying in the cave or the well limits the ability of people to understand reality or the truth. . . .

All the U.S. allies and America are the prisoners who are chained by the U.S. government in a cave. The U.S. government misleads its people that their privacy is protected by the Fourth Amendment. It also misleads its allies that they would not be spied on. The government actually creates an external cave for people all over the world. Edward Snowden is the prisoner who can get out of the cave to see the truth. (**Milli Lau**)



A cave I've experienced is how people judge the life of teen parents. I was written off as a viable person in society . . . because of my becoming a teen mom. I was going to drop out of high school, be on welfare, and become a debt to society. .

. . The sad part is that I've found myself believing these things and working a job I don't want to do just to prove that I'll do anything to help keep my kids from some of the things that come along with poverty—which is a whole other cave! (**Alisha Taylor**)



The first cave that I can recognize in my own life was quite a large, complex cave. It was the neighborhood that I spent my formative years in: Chicago's "Low End." The uniqueness of this community centered around the fact that it contained seven separate housing projects in a five by two mile radius. I learned values in

this cave that were only beneficial in that cave, such as aggression, verbal abuse, and revenge. I also learned about various forms of exploitation and selfishness. The intelligent controlling the ignorant, the strong abusing the weak, and the deceitful fooling the trusting were everyday themes! The last feature of this cave was its segregation: we were isolated economically, educationally, socially, and racially. I have found myself having to purge my life of various negativities learned from this cave, and the purging continues to this day. . . .

The two caves which most interest me today are poverty and racial bias. I see poverty as a physical cave which is promoted by insecure, selfish men. At what age do children begin to realize that they have more or less than others? When this realization starts, if there is not someone there to explain the complexity of class and social position, then one who has less can easily become bitter or non-caring. I prefer to think of racial bias as a mental cave sustained by ignorance of history. I think it would be rather hard to argue of any race's inferiority if one knew of the great empires of Mali, Songhai, or Ghana. (**Robert James**)



For as long as I can recall, I have been in a cave. In my childhood, I experienced poverty, abuse, and abandonment. It is no surprise that I entered into an abusive marriage at the young age of 18. I remained in the cave throughout my young adulthood.

I believed I would never get an education because I did not believe in my own abilities. I gave every ounce of my being to my husband and children. I was married for nine years but

was alone in my heart. My children were learning at a young age to call me “Bitch” and to treat me as their servant. It was a miserable existence.

As I matured and gained access to a community, I began to realize that I deserved more. I deserved the best. I believed in me for the first time in a long time. This was the spark to my revolution. The revolution continues on as I participate in the Odyssey Project 2014. (**Jamie Hanson**)



Those of us in the Odyssey Program may have been labeled that we would either be a “baby mother,” a person in prison all their lives, or something negative, but we heard of this opportunity where we could maybe get an education to pursue our dreams and make a better difference in the world. We took it. We saw the light and we escaped.

Being told I was too old to go back to school as hard on me. I am facing 50, and many around me say that it’s too late for me.

For a while I thought I was only good for being a wife and mother, but since I have been in this program I feel there’s more to me and I can still learn so much more. This program has given me a newfound strength, and I’m loving every moment of it. (**Nafisa Davis**)



To me, my allegory of the cave is the fear of failure or not having enough education, knowledge, or experience to get it done. In shorter terms, it’s not having the FAITH or self-esteem to go through [to success]. (**Derick McCray**)



I feel I’ve been in a cave for a good portion of my life. Living and growing up in impoverished neighborhoods, you learn to grow up really fast, and things become real at a young age. It’s so easy to see someone doing bad and think to yourself I’m glad that’s not me.

The real challenge in life is to try and break the mold and step outside of your cave into someone else’s. I notice that today people are so quick to worry about themselves and not others.

All my life I’ve been the one on the outside looking for help, and one of the ways I got that help was through school. My teachers throughout my entire schooling were always willing and ready to help me to the light both in and outside the classroom, and that is something I’ve always valued. They gave me not only the necessary knowledge but the courage and know-how to strive for nothing but the very best. Now I’m able to step out of my cave and guide someone else out of theirs. (**Shiquille Ward**)



I am different. I have always been different from the mainstream person. I am Muslim and black. . . . Growing up, I always attended Catholic school. It was hard for me because it was a different religion and different ways of thinking about life, God, and everything. . .

. I was trapped in a culture that I wasn’t raised in, a culture that I did not agree with, a culture that I had to endure for my education.

When people ask me, “Well, why were you even in that school?” I say, “Because Catholic schools were some of the best schools in Kenya.” My parents made a decision for the sake of our education. (**Zeynab Ahmed**)



Poverty is a cave, and so are racism and the lack of education. However, there are many people that have overcome these or PUSHED forward in spite of them. They did not let it stop them from aspiring and then reaching their goal. I hope to do the same. I will!

(Starr Miles)



My experience in a cave started at four years old when I was molested. . . As I continued to grow into a young adult I would have many more attempted rapes. . . . My siblings were also being physically abused at home, and I watched my mother being abused as well. . . .

I watched my mother grow from a strong into a weak woman, slowly being broken down every day by my abusive stepfather who was an alcoholic and drug abuser, unbeknownst to me at the time. . . . I have been trapped in this cave since birth if not since the time of conception due to my mother's entrapment in her "cave," which would of course recycle the bondage placed upon me at birth. . . . All my negative experiences as well as my stubbornness to change have been the chains holding me in a position I need to get out of. **(Janet Shelton)**



The kind of cave I was in was lack of faith. Lack of faith was around me since I was a little girl. I was always told I was going to be pregnant by age 14. I was always talked down to. No one had faith in my future but me. The things people used

to do and say to me I used to let roll off my ears and straight behind me.

I was focused and determined to get out of that cave. My senior year was when my father died. I still managed to get through high school and graduate, even though every day was so hard for me. I kept pushing despite what people had to say or were thinking. I didn't get pregnant until I was 20 years old. I was proud of myself for that because where I'm from, girls get pregnant by 13 or 14 years old. I have worked so hard to get ahead of people's expectations. I choose my destiny and road to ride to get here. Nobody did this life but me. I broke the cycle and cave around me. **(Mallory Carter)**

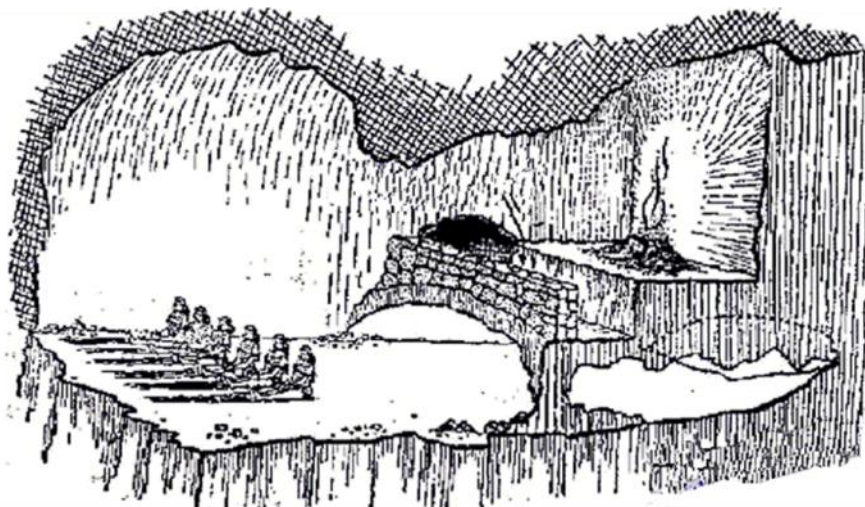


Once one gets hooked on heroin, you will spare no cost to have it—money, home, car, loved ones, etc. If you desire the dragon badly enough, you will give anything to have it. The craziest part of pain medication for me is that our own government funds the companies that produce this garbage, another wicked form of population control. I see light at the end of this cave. **(LaTrease Hibbler)**



My cave is lack of education. I have been trapped in that cave forever. I have been carrying other people's burdens and forgetting my own in this area. I would work hard to ensure others are comfortable and can go to school to better themselves, while telling myself that I can wait and would be insensitive if I put myself first by trying to give myself an education. I have asked myself what my brothers and sisters will

do if I quit the low paying hard work job that left me with no time to pursue any form of education for myself. . . . Then we moved from our native country to pursue my husband's dream, and I had no financial resources to pursue my own college education. . . . Again I had shelved my own dreams.



I notice that if you are raised as an orphan you have so many caves around you, and in some cases your own conscience can be a huge cave as well. You are so used to not having something yourself in order to please others. You feel like you owe people all the time, and when you start wanting to do things for yourself, a guilty feeling holds you back. You cannot freely express yourself lest you be called ungrateful. . . . Thank God for Odyssey and Prof. Emily who are dragging me into the light on the intellectual front. (**Lucia Chikowero**)



I would say that I have been in a cave of my own making. It is easy when you make mistakes or face hard times in life to want an escape from dealing with those problems. I have found myself escaping to a cave where I can immerse myself into other worlds

and other lives that resemble what I feel is a better existence. To mentally escape from my problems I've put myself into the stories in books, television, and video games where things are simpler and there is always a light at the end of the trials and tribulations.

It can be harder to see the light at the end of your own troubles than when you are a third-party observer. You can become emotionally invested in other worlds or situations to achieve a level of

comfort you cannot attain in everyday existence, but it is just an escape that leads nowhere. Real life isn't always as fanciful, simple, just, or easy as a fictional setting, but it's where others reside, and we need that human connection to really live a satisfying existence. (**Tracker Dunn**)



I think about how I grew up in (my cave) Detroit, Michigan. My mother would often tell me (especially because I was the oldest male of her five children) negative stereotypes of black men. She told me these things to inform me of our society's outlook

on young black men in our community. She also would go on to say that because of the stereotypes, our society believes all young black men are destined to fail. My mother would tell me, "Stay in school and acquire all the knowledge you can." "Education, experience, and wisdom is the only path to success," she would tell me with great passion.

The weight of those stereotypes was heavy on me and the community. Being told the average black man would not amount to anything good was difficult to comprehend at such a young age. Others would suggest that most black youths are troublemakers and will most likely turn out to be career criminals. They continued to say that most



that's all I saw on the news channels and in my neighborhood. The criminals and gang members in the news that were feeding those negative statistics were in my age range. I knew some of the criminals personally from school. Some were childhood friends, and some were people I knew from my neighborhood. Those facts and other factors could make it easier to believe

black men from the "ghetto" won't be lucky enough to live past 35 years of age, but if they do, they're a drug dealer, a criminal, or incarcerated. I figured out what I was a being taught over the years. We're supposed to believe that we're going to end up dead or in jail.

I would hear this not as motivation for success, but as an impenetrable barrier. Authority figures like teachers, policemen, and school counselors would often give me this "advice." I was also led to believe since grade school that my occupational resources when I became an adult would come with limitations and restrictions. Dealing with the uncertainty of my future and being told these things by the people I trust was hard for me to understand. I thought, does everybody think I'm going to fail in life? The negative influences being force-fed to me were around long before I was out of my mother's stomach. I started to believe the negative influences that surrounded me.

I began to realize that according to what I was told all my life, I would never succeed at anything and would fail at everything. Early in my life, it was easy to believe a few stereotypes of certain people, mainly because

what people would say to me about my future.

I finally understood the downward spiral my life was taking if I continued on the self-destructive path I was on. I found out that my failures weren't because of my skin color or where I grew up. It was the absence of good information and solid education that held me back from success. I needed a drastic change in my life. The change had to start with me. I started with my surroundings, so I left my cave in Detroit. I've traveled around the country trying to find my place in this world. Looking for self-worth, inspiration and education, I've learned through my travels that with hard work, motivation and dedication, I can accomplish anything I set my mind to achieve. It's not going to be easy by any means. Plus I will appreciate my success more if I have to work hard for it. **(Michael Martin)**

I was in that cave once of Domestic Abuse, and it was dark and gloomy. I felt there was no way out. I would cry because I couldn't believe I was being hurt by the one I loved so deeply.

My understanding about love had become



blurry, my dreams became shattered, and my hope for loving him for the rest of my life was gone.

My family was saying, "You are so promising in life," and, "You must get out." Some were saying, "Well, when she get tired of getting her ass whooped, she'll leave." Oh, those sayings hurt me more than being hit. I was deeply in love, had two small children, and was not well educated. Resources were few, so what should I do? I tried to think, but it wasn't clear, I tried to get a grip on me but I kept slipping, and most of all I became depressed and felt unworthy.

Ten months had come and gone, and I was still in the same situation. He went to work and my sister came and took my children out for ice cream and a trip to the park. I had time alone to do whatever I wanted. The first thought came: take these pills and you won't have to worry about anything anymore (death). I began to cry and ask God to help me and my children. Before you know it, I was outside trying to focus. The sun was so bright. Then I took a deep breath, and a young lady who lived a few houses down said, "It's good to see you. It's been a long time. You should let me do your hair."

I said, "You do hair?" but I didn't tell her that I knew how too. That knowledge was buried inside of me. I was not who I'm supposed to be.

I knew I had six and a half hours before he come home and maybe longer, so I said, "Would you do my hair? I don't have any money to pay you, but I can find a way to repay you." She looked at me and said "Okay," and a candle was lit in my cave.

Crying, I can't type any more. My life changed that day. **(LaPrice Black)**



My cave was being too reliant on other people. I remember having a great job and being able to pay my rent but not doing it because I'd spend the money on shopping or partying. It made me look not only irresponsible but also selfish.

Because of my ignorance, I put my children through unnecessary suffering, something they did not deserve. I was stuck in a mindset of poverty because I wasn't focused on the things that really mattered. I kept getting re-involved with my older kid's father. He would sweet talk me into giving him my money and would promise to pay it back, but he never did. I was in a cave about what I really am, and my worth, full potential and self-esteem suffered because of it.

I also went through a period of homelessness. I became comfortable with the fact that my children and I had no tenure. I went from shelter to shelter and house to house. My breakthrough came when I started to listen to my spiritual self and began going to spiritual services. I started to read the Bible and listen in church. I heard things that I never heard before. How could someone that I never had seen love me so much? How is it that something I cannot see made me feel so full? I read Proverbs 31 and realized who I was destined to be. If I believed in Him, then my main goal was to become who he said I could be.

Yes, I was in a cave, but now I've seen the light. I am so glad that I did because the dark is a scary place. **(Charlienne Cotto)**

CARING ABOUT “THE CIRCUIT”

That day I could hardly wait to tell Papá and Mamá the great news . . . but when I opened the door to our shack, I saw that everything we owned was neatly packed in cardboard boxes.

The ending is very painful to us as readers because we know how important school is to Panchito and how much he wishes that his family could finally settle in one place and not move constantly. I believe the message behind this story is to connect the reader to the real life of an immigrant to this country. Panchito comes from a country full of poverty; therefore, his family decides to migrate to this country in the hopes of a better life and future. This story shows what this country means to so many families that migrate here: a hope to have a better life for them and their children.

Everything about Jiménez’s story is inspiring to me. I feel personally connected to his life story and experiences. As an immigrant just like Jimenez, I faced some of the same difficulties he did. I also left my country, Brazil, in hope of a better future. I also relate quite a bit to Jiménez’s first impressions and emotions with the language barriers. I did not speak any English when I first came to the United States. Going to school every day and not being able to speak the language or communicate and understand the teacher was very frightening and traumatic to me. However, unlike Jiménez I moved here alone, leaving my family behind, back in Brazil. So



many times I felt lonely and wished they could be here. (**Vanessa Lopes Maia**)

At the end of the story, Panchito is really enjoying school, and he has also found a friend in his teacher, Mr. Lema. Mr. Lema introduces Panchito to the trumpet and offers to teach him to play. Panchito goes home excited to tell his family about this, but instead he comes home to find his family’s belongings packed in cardboard boxes; his family is moving again.



Reading the end of the story, I felt as though I was experiencing his pain with him. I thought it was devastating that just as Panchito was finally getting the chance to be a normal kid and have a proper education, it got taken away with no

warning. The thought of him having to leave his friend, Mr. Lema, school, and the opportunity to learn how to play a musical instrument to go back to work in the fields is so sad.

I think the message of the story is that not everyone gets the opportunity of a proper education. In Panchito's case, it was because his family has to go wherever there is work. I

also think a lot of people that read this story may think about how lucky they are to have a proper education and not take it for granted. . . . It inspires me to overcome my boundaries in life and never give up on my education.
(**Nyagoa Hoth**)

As a reader, I can feel Panchito's broken heart.

. . . Panchito's family leaves their home country to come to the United States to look for a better life and get out of poverty. In order to survive, they endure moving constantly and must accept an exhausting job in the hot sun. Although their dreams are breaking repeatedly, they retain their faith and hope without giving up. . . . I had a similar experience [to Jiménez's] when I came here. I could not understand lectures and no teacher could understand my problems. . . . There is no



one that speaks my language with me. . . . Jiménez went from being speechless to becoming a professor teaching English. I cannot imagine if I can do the same thing. (**Milli Lau**)

I find it inspiring that the main message of his story is to say that no matter where or what you may come from, there is power and life changing opportunities in taking education seriously and valuing it. It just really shows that ANYBODY can become ANYTHING!
(**Isis Bernard**)

He came home after a happy day at school and walked into heartache because his house was packed into cardboard boxes. I have painful feelings because I know how it feels to have a home one minute and be evicted and have nowhere to go the next minute.
(**Toshiana Northington**)



NOTICING NATURE

I remember when I first moved to Wisconsin I moved to a small town called Waterloo. It was filled with rows and rows of corn fields, with one house every three miles. It was mid-May, the day after Mother's Day, and very warm. The sun was setting but still very bright. I wondered to myself, where have I moved to? There were no tall buildings, barely any homes or businesses, and only one large school for all kids in the middle of one of the corn fields at the edge of town. I saw, too, a lot of bugs, which I am very afraid of. I thought God, thank you for change, but help me do it!

I really was excited at my first time ever seeing real deer in my life. They were biting at the corn stalks and running through them. I thought how beautiful! My boys wanted us to stop, so we pulled over. We got out to watch the deer run in and out of the field. The boys loved it. **(Nafisa Davis)**

I have never camped out in nature. When I was a child, my mother would let me have sleepovers. She sometimes would let me camp out in our backyard during the summer. Camping in my backyard was not always as easy as you would assume.

In Detroit, the atmosphere at night was chaotic. It was often filled with the roaring sounds of sirens from different emergency vehicles and too often gunshots. The sounds of fire trucks, police cars, and the blaring noise from ambulances were loud enough. We would wake up and run in the house after hearing heart-pounding gunshots from our tents. If the shots that echoed through the night weren't frightening enough, sometimes we would hear the bullets hitting glass as we ran in the house. There are times we would awaken from the burning smell of wood and plastic. It was most likely a house



being burnt down. I really don't have any good experiences with nature as a child (that I can remember). **(Michael Martin)**

I love when it snows because it's as bright as the moon in the night sky. Flakes are as fluffy as the clouds they come from. I love the way it feels when I open my mouth and catch the ice crystals that instantly melt on contact.

Unlike rain, snow has no smell. Even as much as snow does for physiological capacities, it serves as a bully to my body when shoveling. **(Alisha Taylor)**



In the blistering sun, I wiped the big, bold drops of sweat from my brow. My back ached from the rigorous bending. As the sun began to set high in the humid air, I began to grow weary, thinking, will this day end? As I prayed let this day be done, I kept on going. The fields were long, and the fruit was ripe for the picking. As I scooped up one watermelon, then two watermelons, then three, and so on, my hands were sweaty and blistered. As the sun set for the evening, I knew my day was complete. All that was left was to grab a hold of the hard-earned pay. **(Derick McCray)**

When I moved a couple of years ago, it was not very easy. I found that I was forced to incorporate nature into my life. The reason I say this is because unlike my old home, there now were woods nearby in which animals or what I like to call rodents lived, and that made me very uneasy. We couldn't go outside without the bloodsucking mosquitoes meeting us at every step we took. Dragonflies were so big I had no idea what reason they had for being so large. Fat, intruding moths wanted to get in our home to feast on our wardrobe. Even the simple task of taking out the garbage in the night had me looking around for skunks that dared spray me with their pungent stink.

But the one thing that comforted me is that I had moved to an upstairs unit closer to the heavens. I noticed in the first week of living there that I felt something, a power source that compelled me to look to the window. That is when I saw the moon. I must have looked at it for almost an hour because it was so bright. I felt it was calling me to look upon it, and it was letting me know that although I may sit there complaining about every little insect, there are bigger things in the world. I should accept the world for all that it is. I always look for the moon because I feel it is always looking at us. **(Nyagoo Hoth)**

I decided to take a walk in the blazing hot sun. Crickets were chirping, making that annoying but sweet music in my ears for a bored person. Nice and slowly I walked down a path that led into the woods. Before I knew it, my path was now covered by tall trees that joined at the top of my way, making the shape of a canopy. This was a welcome break as I was burning hot from the 95 degree heat. As I kept going, lost in my own world, building castles in the air and making spectacular landings on Mars and Jupiter, I came out of the woods to a beautiful clearing that I never knew existed. From a distance I had heard the sound of

water falling and flowing. Little did I know that right in front of me would be the most beautiful waterfall. It was nothing close to any that I had ever seen. Coming from the woods back into the sun, I felt it was like entering paradise.

A waterfall came down like a flawless wedding veil into a pond that was so still and inviting for a good cool off before the river continued into its world unknown. Preceding the river was green grass that looked like a woolen carpet that had just been clipped. Immediately I felt like a child in a candy store. My face lit up, my gloomy mood changed, and all of a sudden all the thoughts that had led me into the blazing heat vanished. I kicked off my shoes. In the moment I didn't care whether I was ever going to find them again, even though they were my favorite walking shoes. All I wanted was to indulge in this goodness of God's creation.

I felt the cool and fluffy grass in between my toes and the good tickle of it under my feet. I continued towards the pond as if it were calling my name; sure enough, it was. Fully dressed as I was, I jumped into the cool clear pool that took my breath away as I hit the water. I felt like all my burdens had been lifted. I swam towards the waterfall. The impact of the water on my body felt like a well-needed full body massage. I felt so relaxed and never realized that I had walked for close to two and a half miles. **(Lucia Chikowero)**



I remember being in the presence of many beautiful colors. The fluorescent yellow sunflowers overwhelmed all the other plants and flowers. The weather was warm but not sunny. The grey skies were like a warning of what was to come. An oak brown nest lay on the tree directly above where my younger sister and I stood. At almost the exact time that I gazed up at the nest, it fell. My reflexes forced me to grab my sister and cover her. The nest fell inches from my foot, and a swarm of vicious screaming bees covered us like an intense tornado. **(Kunga Chokten)**

When I was younger, I used to go camping with my cousins and uncle. At first I was not up to the sleeping outside part, but as I continued to go I began to like it. There are so many different noises out there: sticks cracking, bugs making clicking sounds, and my uncle snoring. I remember always having huge mosquito bites that itched badly. I would end up with dark spots where I scratched. The worst part about camping was having to use the bathroom. I would be afraid that something would jump on me.

I am glad that I experienced camping. I thank my Uncle J.C. Jones for the experience, and may he continue to rest in peace. **(Amber McCarley)**

When Kyla was ten months old, I took her to the Olbrich Gardens Butterfly Expo. I carried her in a child harness so our hands would be free. Before our arrival we ate watermelons and peaches, hoping we would get the butterflies to land on us. Lo and behold it worked: we were their favorite guests.

When we stepped into the dome, my grandbaby's head and arms went up as her eyes became so bright. The beauty of the trees, plants, flowers, and of course the



soft butterflies took my mind into a magical galaxy state of imagination. The scenery became a glow-in-the-dark adventure with the sweet smells of nectar and exotic sweet smells of flowers. There were so many vibrant colors, shapes, and designs of flowers, trees, and plants. Even the pathways had an exotic look to me. This environment had captured my imagination and seized my creative vision.

The dome was filled with beauty of motion bursting with life. I was as a child in a chocolate factory. There were butterflies flying, gliding, and landing everywhere, blessing us with their presence. I just wanted to make it my home.

The trees stood so tall, like they wanted to protect and serve me. The beautiful flower arrangements offered a warm invitation into their world with a warm magical mist that seemed to be hugging you during your refreshing experience of their world. The funny thing is the dome had a smell of clean dirt. I wanted to make that dome my master bedroom. I just needed the moon. **(LaPrice Black)**

My dad used to always take my brothers, sister, and me fishing. I can remember one particular summer day back when I was a little girl like it happened yesterday.

It was another world inside this world. Down by the lake, all you could hear was the water rising as the fish jumped in and out. It was like a whole other world on the lake. It was so quiet, like when you have put all the kids asleep, all the lights are out, and it's just you up watching your babies sleep. It was that kind of quiet and peacefulness. The grass was like a new lime crayon, nice and low and fun to lie in. We could stay out there for hours. There was no fighting or arguing. It felt like another world in another time. **(Mallory Carter)**

I took a breath after a snowstorm,
Opened a heavy door, fell into the snow.

Cold wind like a knife,
The blade pushed me around.

Empty street, only saw a white ocean,
Cars lost their legs, only showed their hair.

Bald trees were full of white leaves,
A row of grey houses covered with white snow.

Snow like “The Land of Peach Blossoms” —
traditional ideal world,
with no taxation, no corvee, no war,
a land with warmth, comfort, harmony, affection, and peace.
(Milli Lau)



Darkful night
Stars are bright
Forest high earth's delight
Sitting on logs
Fire blackening
Marshmallows roasting
Sweet s'mores.

(Jacquan Fleming)



How long has it been since I've seen the sun?
These frosted windows, brown uniforms, and his gun
remind me that this place is not fun.
My mood changes and I barely notice, then I'm told
for my crime this is what I'm owed.
No sun, no trees,
I have not a chance to feel a summer breeze.
How I miss the sway of trees.

(Robert James)

Riding Thunder

A loud revving that sounds like a lion,
the vibration like an earthquake
Riding Thunder is an
experience like no other.
The closeness of a sunset,
so warm on our skin,
the feeling of the breeze
caressing our face.
The fresh smell of corn
engulfing our nose.
Riding Thunder,
so close to nature are we.

(Charlilienne Cotto)



Lua Cheia/Full Moon

Beautiful night of dark blue skies
 No clouds, so clear, with stars that shine so bright
 I sat down so lonely and full of fear
 I felt the breeze in my face; I felt the whisper in my ear,
 Telling me don't be afraid.
 I saw the moon so full, so far, so near
 So many miles apart . . .
 Yet the same moon brightens my mother's sky.
 I felt the pain that ached so deep . . .
 The sorrow in my heart had no place to go.
(Vanessa Lopes Maia)

**Dunn's Marsh**

Frolicking in the open fields
 we could feel the wet, stinging moss
 below our feet.
 Many a child's little green army man
 lost, suffocated, and then kidnapped
 in this place called Dunn's Marsh.
 I walk and I run
 I slip and I slide
 Praying and hoping
 I make it across alive.
 There's not many of us here,
 only two.
 I look down at the swamp,
 I "dunn" lost a shoe.
(Shiquille Ward)

I'm sitting on the bench
 that overlooks the water
 while names, songs, and music
 race wildly through my mind.
 At the same time in such deep thought
 here comes the rough and vicious wind
 colliding with my face.
 Also tagging along for the ride
 are bugs, insects, and ducks.
 As the ants crawl closer to me,
 the mosquitoes lie on my bare flesh,
 and the ducks almost peck my ankle,
 I begin to get annoyed
 by the nature around.
 Now I'm leaving the scene
 but not forgetting how relaxed, calm, and civil
 everything was in those moments
 out in Mother Nature.
(Kelli Green)

**Night at the Beach**

Lying about on towels and blankets,
 my feet sink into the
 warm moist grainy feeling that is sand,
 the smell of rain and sharp salt in the air.
 Down down down goes the sun,
 and when she rises again a new day has begun.
 The moon goes from a burnt orange to almost pure white.
 Stars glisten and the sounds of water hitting rocks
 and cicadas soothe me.
(Isis Bernard)

THE CALL OF MUSIC

A Madison Symphony Orchestra Review by Nafisa Davis



Sunday, September 29, I had the opportunity to experience the Madison Symphony Orchestra with my eldest son.

When we first arrived, many people stared. I guess they were curious about us being the only people of black descent in the place for the concert. I thought to myself what a privilege. As we found our seats, we looked around and laughed to ourselves at the attention we received.

Several of the musicians began to come from back stage with their music and instruments in hand. Their colors of black and red made it very classy. As they filled the seats, they began tuning up. You could hear so many different notes ringing through Overture Hall, leaving small echoes. Then all of a sudden the lights went dim. A spotlight came up, and a short man came from the back. Everyone stood up. I realized it's John DeMain, the conductor. I've only seen him once before, in an article in the papers about a Christmas concert he had. He bowed. . . .

The conductor raised his pointer and the violins began to play softly. As they played, the horns began to sound as if to announce their presence. I began to see in my mind the sun breaking through the darkness of night, as if to say it's my turn now, wake up; all wake up! Then the flutes began to blow short notes in the mist. I felt that birds were rising in the air, and small animals were showing themselves from where they had laid through the night. The music began to get louder and louder as if making everything come alive.

I watched my son sit up as the music progressed, as if he came alive.

The music then started going faster and faster, as if things in life were growing and moving. The drums beat heavily and the trumpets pushed out long notes that rang through each roll. People were at the edge of their seats. I laughed because the lady sitting next to me slept through the whole thing. . . .

Overall the concert was wonderful and truly a great experience to share with my child. I would like to thank the donor [Carroll Heideman] who gave us the tickets. You gave us a life experience we were able to share with each other that we would have never had. I personally thank you for helping me give my son a chance to see another side of life's music. Enjoy the love you are giving!

Program: Aaron Copland's "Appalachian Spring Suite,"
Richard Wagner's "Prelude and Liebestod" from
Tristan and Isolde, Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov's
"Scheherazade Symphonic Suite"



WANDERING WITH WILLIAM WORDSWORTH



*My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky. . . .*

The poem “My Heart Leaps Up” reminds me of the wonder and awe with which children view the world. If we can maintain this capacity to truly appreciate nature from a child’s perspective, then each day can be spent in wonder and praise. When Mr. Wordsworth writes, “So be it when I grow old or let me die,” I feel he has captured the spirit of any warrior in one sentence. (**Robert James**)

“My Heart Leaps Up” definitely expresses his love for nature (rainbows). His excitement both as a man and as a child is the same. He hopes as an old man he still feels this happiness or “let [him] die.” (**LaTrease Hibbler**)

*. . . And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.*

As I read “I wandered lonely as a cloud,” it gave me a sense of being one with nature, and God was with me while I was doing it. Imagining thousands and thousands of daffodils gave me the feeling of never ending beauty and freedom, a place where I could just be me. (**Nafisa Davis**)

I feel as if I were dancing with the daffodils, in solitude, in nature. I can hear the sounds of the trees. The loneliness I can also feel. I relate well to this poem. This poem is a gift to me, as the image in Wordsworth’s poem of daffodils was a gift to him. (**Jamie Hanson**)



“I wandered lonely as a cloud” really grabbed my attention because I believe Wordsworth is describing the joy and happiness he gets from nature’s purity. He can be sitting at home in a less than delightful mood, and just his memory of a glimpse of those beautiful, simple, dancing daffodils is enough for him to just forget his problems and enjoy something as natural as nature. (**Shiquille Ward**)

I think “I wandered lonely as a cloud” is about someone who thinks he’s lonely. As the first stanza goes on to talk about the crowd of flowers, he then gives them human-like qualities such as dancing, moving their heads. He doesn’t realize how much he takes them for granted until the last stanza when he sits on his couch in deep thought or no thought at all. The flowers enter his mind, and he realizes just how much the sight pleased him. (**Alisha Taylor**)

William Wordsworth is an optimistic and imaginative poet. When he feels lonely, he can be pleased by nature—daffodils. Thousands of moving daffodils give him the feeling of having many people. However, not everyone is like him in having a mood changed by a beautiful scene. . . . When I feel sad, thousands and thousands of daffodils cannot remove my grief. (**Milli Lau**)

CONQUERING CAMPUS

Hopping on the bus, I looked forward to the field trip. One thing was on my mind: the student ID. I was looking forward to feeling like a student. I was so happy to finally lay my hands on one that had my picture and student number on it. All the photos that were taken were like a bonus to me. I felt like the whole campus was now open to me.

Going to the museum, I didn't know what to expect. I had never been fascinated by art museums, but this visit was different. It created a desire to learn more. I was amazed at how much I was gazing at the pictures trying to understand the chronology and events happening then. In some cases I would ask myself what was going through the painter's mind when he was painting. For example, Robert Barnes's "Durham Beauchamp, Reclining Knight" (1963) left me with more questions than answers. **(Lucia Chikowero)**

Let's start with the bus ride over. The bus was filled with excitement, laughter, and chatter. The UW photo IDs all showed proud, smiling



faces. Our group photo and individual portraits have captured forever a moment in this group of 30 students will never forget.

The Chazen Museum visit was wonderful. The variety of works of art and artifacts captured the imagination of talented artists from long ago, and we can still appreciate and be mesmerized by their talents today. There was a special danger that night at the museum, so we were locked down to appreciate art with Emily and Gene. **(Starr Miles)**



I enjoyed the experience of being at UW and seeing the other students, feeling a part of the school and everything that was going on. I really had a sense of pride when I got my student ID.

When we began to see the art in the campus museum, it really began to sink in that I'm learning, something I love so much. I loved the vases and all things Roman; those are my favorites in history. **(Nafisa Davis)**

I think I enjoyed and liked learning more about the upstairs part of the museum. The works of art were more intense, real, and out there for me. I could relate to the painting and art work more up there looking at what I saw. One painting that really stood out was the one where it was a picture of Jesus with the whole bottom half of it scribbled on and messed up [Arnulf Rainer, "Christ-Overpainting," 1982-84, Austrian]. I didn't really understand what the point of doing the painting was if they were just going to do that to it, but when I asked about it, Emily explained to me that it might have been how the artist was feeling at that time. **(Kelli Green)**



never forget the feeling of unity this experience provided me with.

At the Chazen, I was moved by the painting of a beautiful woman with long, curly hair. She was in the nude with one hand raised gracefully and the other armed with a dagger toward herself [Giampietrino, "Lucrezia Romana," ~1500-1540, Italian]. The painting depicted her subsequent suicide as a result of rape. I could feel her pain. **(Jamie Hanson)**

The trip to the Union South was fun. I don't think I've seen it that packed before. The picture taking

by Dick Baker was cool and he was skilled with a camera. Channel 27 TV was also there. I liked our trip to the art museum. There were two pieces of art that stood out. "The Fools' Congress" in the lower lobby when we walked in looked like spirits coming out with different shapes and faces, and it looked like it was made of reddish clay [by Arnold Zimmerman, 1998-99, American]. The second one was "Urban Fantasy," which was a bunch of buildings that looked like it had a Colombian structure but with a Victorian London feel [by Theodore Wolff, 1973, American].

(Jaquan Fleming)

It was a warm evening and the moon was full. People were talking, laughing, sharing, and bonding. "It's a good year to be an Odyssey student," I thought. We were all going somewhere: literally, to the Chazen Museum of Art, and figuratively, to a brighter future. As we gathered

together for a group photo, observers watched. They seemed to wonder, "Who are these people? Why are they important? Why are they so happy?" I have one answer to each: "We are Odyssey Class of 2014." I will



I got out of the trip that there were many different styles and ways of painting back then. Some people had no imagination at all, and others had a little too much imagination. Over all it was a good experience for me. I'm so glad I got the chance to go. I will remember how big all the pictures were and how detailed they were. The most disturbing part of the museum was the two white goats kissing each other [Beth Cavener Stichter, "A Rush of Blood to the Head," 2009, American]. They both had penises. It was very disturbing but interesting at the same time. I wonder what the person was thinking when they made it! **(Mallory Carter)**



coins. They had one with a sea turtle on it [Greek coin from ~500 B.C.]. **(Simone Lawrence)**

The trip to the Chazen Museum was very interesting. I had no idea that I could appreciate art. I will always remember the fact that there is African and Asian art at the Chazen also. Art has always been a little intimidating for me, perhaps because I always knew there was information connected to each piece. I had no idea how to acquire that information that brings art to life. Gene is a precious resource.

A number of pieces spoke to my imagination, but there was one I felt was thought provoking. It was the piece of modern art which appeared to be an enormous bald and fat man with a small head and big belly [Leonard Baskin, "Laureate Standing," 1957, American]. This art piece immediately reminded me of American and African American standards of beauty. I feel that different cultures have different standards of beauty. I've read that the Bantu tribe of South Africa does not have a word to denote beauty. I've wondered what America would be like if we did not have the word beautiful. **(Robert James)**



I got to see more of the UW campus, and people really saw who I was. I learned when to talk and be funny. I will always remember when we got to the building it was on lock down and they were looking for someone. Also I loved the different art work that people have made. **(Christopher Bester)**

I had a great time. Not only was it nice to spend time with my classmates, but it was also wonderful to see the art. . . . I loved seeing the pictures and how real some of them looked. I was taken by the



My trip was very intriguing. Why, I've never had the experience at an art museum of seeing all the different aspects of cultures. Some of the art was kind of vulgar, but at the same time I understood that in those times art didn't have boundaries; there was more freedom of expression. I also loved our trip to Union South. I really felt a part of the UW school. Receiving that UW student ID uplifted me in so many ways. **(Derick McCray)**



I really enjoyed our trip to the Chazen Museum. Usually I find museums very boring, but this time I found it fascinating and exciting. I learned that all art generates from somewhere. Every art piece has



a style from its own time and location. One specific thing I will always remember is the statue of Isis [The Goddess Isis Suckling Her Son Horus, 1985-1795 B.C., Egypt]! That was really cool, especially since I love Egyptian art. I always said no matter what my first child is, girl or boy, I would name them Egypt. I also liked the tomb [Sarcophagus Depicting the Allegory of the Four Seasons," ~209 A.D., Roman]. It had so much detail to it. **(Isis Bernard)**

When I walked into Union South, my wholesome seeds were replenished, re-routed, and reconnected. For every door that closed, I opened one. For everyone who told me that I couldn't, they no longer were a matter of resistance. I felt like the transformation took place the night before our first class as I lay in the grass gazing out at the harvest sky. This freedom sprouted so many visions I hadn't welcomed for so long. . . . **(LaTrease Hibbler)**

This was a wonderful trip. I had never been to the museum here in Madison. I felt very special because we had the museum opened exclusively

to welcome our Odyssey class. There were some wonderful pieces of art work that we saw. I was particularly impressed with all the pieces of art from different time periods. It's so amazing to see the Egyptian artifacts from so many years ago. I was also fascinated by the Greek art and the Romans.



Some of the more contemporary pieces of art were very expressive. I loved a particular picture where there were some black, grey, and white buildings and cathedrals [Theodore Wolff, "Urban Fantasy," 1973, American].

It was a very special trip full of discoveries. **(Vanessa Lopes Maia)**



I had a very good time on our visit to Union South and the Chazen Museum of Art. I think the best part for me was really the camaraderie that I experienced with fellow students and staff. It felt good to go out with everyone and share the new experiences together. I will always remember the first moment of walking up to and into the Union South. It was really a big step and a big shock that really sent home the reality of my current situation.

It was a real treasure to visit the Chazen, especially with Gene and Emily giving us a personal tour with such great insight. I cannot wait for the chance to return and experience even more of the culture and history. It's amazing to think of people hundreds and thousands of years ago spending their time working at these creations that we are able to enjoy to this day. I feel time may be the most powerful force we work against, and it gives me hope and strength thinking I may one day make such a long lasting impact myself.
(Tracker Dunn)



I have always been a history fan. As you can guess, the Chazen Museum was my favorite part of the trip. Don't get me wrong: I loved getting my ID. But nothing beats Art History. As soon as I entered the museum, I noticed myself drifting away from the group.

All the art was fascinating and impressive. However, only one really stood out to me: the Abraham Lincoln statue with the slave [Thomas Ball, "Emancipation Group," 1873, American]. I spent awhile examining it. I found it really hypocritical and honestly quite disturbing.
(Zeynab Ahmed)

My trip to the Chazen Museum of Art was interesting. The atmosphere of the museum was very soothing. The statue of Abraham Lincoln standing over a kneeling black man in unshackled chains bothered me [Thomas Ball, "Emancipation Group," 1873, American]. I found it troubling to see our Commander in Chief standing over a slave. (Michael Martin)

I enjoyed the trip to campus and to the museum a great deal. Not only was I in awe at all the wonderful pieces in the museum, but it was exhilarating being on campus with so many other students. I finally felt a sense of belonging being on that campus.

At the museum the piece that really got to me was the Abraham Lincoln liberty piece [Thomas Ball, "Emancipation Group," 1873, American]. In a way I found it to be very hypocritical while also maintaining its honesty and realism to the circumstances of that time. (Shiquille Ward)



What I got out of the trip to the art museum was that it made me look at art in a different way. It inspired me to see more and not just art. I want to visit other museums as well. There was one picture of a beautiful lady posing with a knife [Giampietrino, "Lucrezia Romana," ~1500-1540]. . . . I looked at her and said, "That's my kind of girl." The painting of Jesus [Arnulf Rainer, "Christ-Overpainting" 1982-84] disturbed me so badly that when I looked at it I immediately turned away. (**LaPrice Black**)

I got so much out of our trip to the museum. For starters, I had never been to the museum, so it was refreshing to see such a beautiful collection of our history. I will always remember the coin collection that was there. I will also remember that there was a criminal on the run the same night. LOL I also really liked the painting of the hallway with the open door [David Klamen, "Untitled," 2002, American]. It was just so beautiful how the artist used so many different shades of grey to cover the presence of a shadow. (**Kunga Chokten**)



When I walked through the Union South doors, I felt proud and like I was on top of the world.

When I entered the Chazen Museum, I felt eager because I was excited to see and learn new things. I will always remember taking my first university ID picture. I also will remember all the beautiful paintings, especially the lady in the yellow dress [Charles Sprague Pearce, "The Shawl," ~1900, American] and the picture of the little girl—her innocence [William-Adolphe Bouguereau, "Little Girl with Basket of Apples," 1897, French]. (**Toshiana Northington**)



I enjoyed the trip simply because I've never been to an art museum before. I found the art work upstairs more exciting and disturbing. I wish the captions next to the art would explain the work and what inspired it. The piece with Jesus on the cross with the bottom all scribbled on [Arnulf Rainer, "Christ-Overpainting," 1982-84, Austrian] at first seemed disrespectful, but maybe I wouldn't feel that way if I knew what it represented. (**Alisha Taylor**)



I enjoyed our trip to campus. It gave me some time to bask in the fact that I have taken the very first step towards my future. I enjoyed spending time with our teachers and classmates. I actually made a video clip so that I would never forget how joyous the occasion was. My favorite piece of art work at the Chazen Museum was the huge painting of Jesus's birth [Giorgio Vasari, "Adoration of the Shepherds," 1570-71, Italian]. I love the fact that the artist used soft colors to make baby Jesus stand out; you could tell who the painting was paying homage to. The most intriguing thing I saw was the two goats embracing and kissing [Beth Cavener Stichter, "A Rush of Blood to the Head," 2009, American]. The erections didn't even seem like an animal's reproductive part but a gentleman's. It actually made me think about what the artist was trying to describe. Was it a celebration of homosexuality, or was it metaphorical? I am still trying to figure it out.

(Charlienne Cotto)

I remember when we were at Union South and the look on everyone's faces after they got their IDs. We all had the expression of children waking up on Christmas morning and seeing a million toys under the tree. The trip was very much an eye opener for me. I have lived in Madison for 13 years, and I have never visited either one of those places. At the Union I wondered if I would

have been like any of those kids if I had gone to college right after high school.

At the museum the one particular piece of art work that stood out to me was the statue called "Indian Hunter Boy" [by Randolph Rogers, 1866-67, American]. It stood out to me because I am of Indian descent. That statue made me mad because it depicted Indians as mean and kind of evil, when I know that this is not true. The statue just did not depict Indians the real way that I experienced as a child and still experience today. **(Jackieta Fairley)**

I was excited about the whole trip. I really enjoyed being with my classmates. The most enjoyable part was the different art pieces. I love vases, so the different vases made my day. People donate so that we can see. I wish I could say thank you. The different coins from around the world were nice. Once we went upstairs with Emily, it seemed crazier up there than downstairs. I really enjoyed myself. **(Latrice White)**





Through the Odyssey program, I'm not just learning that Blake was a poet with abstract art and a way of thinking; he was a man before his time. His work touches you and holds you. It keeps you wanting to know more and even looking into other poets' works to break them down to see that there's more to what they are saying besides words.

My class comes from many walks of life, different cultures, and

Going down to campus was a fun and fulfilling experience. When I got my student ID it felt so good to see the word "student" next to my name again, and to have the University of Wisconsin right there next to it made it just that much better. I felt the energy from everyone, and it felt as if they were feeling something similar to what I was. Everyone celebrated by capturing the moment, and we all laughed and took pictures.

different ages. Some of us have never even stepped into the tall, cold hall of a museum. Some of us are gaining a new perspective of what museums are here for; they are not just places to hold old things of days gone by.

We are a special group of people, different but the same. We are growing in knowledge and purpose, thanks to the Odyssey Project. **(Jeannine Shoemaker)**

At the Chazen Museum, I saw art for the first time in a long time. There was so much to take in that I wish I could have stayed longer. I really can't wait to go back for a private tour. **(Nyagosa Hoth)**

The trip to the Chazen knocked me off my feet literally and figuratively. Not even a fall on the wet, cardboard covered floors near the historic Chazen Museum could break my spirit of that evening. You see, that night to me felt as if it were my first time in a museum, though I have gone to many, from Norfolk, Virginia, to southern Spain. But it wasn't the same this time. Now I'm gaining knowledge and purpose for why the art is there and what it means. It's as though I'm looking through new eyes.



