

# Odyssey Oracle

Year 9 #5 October 26, 2011

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## I Love Music

I listen to all kinds of music: soul, classical, country, sub-soul, hip-hop, and gospel. It depends on the day that I'm going to have. I listen to R&B if I want to feel sexy, soul if I want to feel my roots, or hip-hop if I want to see what the next group is feeling.

Ragtime music makes me remember when I used to sit in the old wooden red swing at my great-grandparents' shotgun house, feeling a little breeze in the hot humid air, swinging back and forth, snapping beans, watching flowers fall from what my great-grandmother called a China Ball tree.

I remember her telling me stories about her parents, about the master visiting her mother, telling her to get back into the house because she was with child.

I loved watching a hummingbird visit her giant flower bushes, watching her white hands snap beans, watching her grey eyes twinkle when she hummed old church songs, her long, curly hair in two long braids.

**(Samantha East)**



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I personally love funk music, although any kind of rhythm & blues will do. Music helps deal with the day-to-day challenges. Every day when I get up, I open up my Facebook page and find a song that fits what I am feeling at that moment. I used to call it "Song of the Day," but at the start of 2011, I changed it to "Message of the Day." It is like my online diary and a way of encouraging myself. I post a video and my message.

I have a lot of friends who look forward to seeing what's on my mind each day, and some share my messages with their friends. Music, however, is at the heart of the exercise for me, as it is my daily kick start—my way of unwinding—and allows me to express things I might not if there was no music.

Funk music is my personal favorite, as I love complex beats and sounds. Lyrics in funk music tend to be deep and insightful and fun. They are also political and deal with real life issues and experiences in a fun and interesting way. **(Hedi Rudd)**



I always connect music with my upbringing. I did not have a specific kind of music that I listened to. A cappella gospel music is what we used to sing most of the time. Each time I would sing, it was to try to revive my soul, to make myself happy, or to make myself forget whatever I

was thinking. I would also sing when taking care of children.

I feel more comforted when I listen to a cappella music. Classical, hymns, and soft music take me to places that I have never dreamed of and leave me with a longing to know more. It feels like medicine that heals a broken soul, which comforts and revives. Some of it makes me feel tired, sad, and sleepy. Jazz, reggae, and hip-hop make me feel wild, overly excited, angry, and depressed. It makes my blood race all over my body.

**(Tatenda Bvindi)**



What does music mean to me? In a way it makes me the person I am today. It opens me up to a whole other world. It lets me be me and not feel embarrassed about anything. I go into an outer zone.

I love to listen to all types of music: hip-hop,

country, jazz, R&B. I believe listening to different types of music lets you be you; it doesn't matter who cares or what they think. I listen to music day and night; going to bed, waking up, cleaning up, and working out, whenever I am down or stressed, I go to my music. I would be lost without it. Nothing opens my mind like music. **(Bradley Barner)**



I listen to many different types of music, but my favorite is R&B. Many of my friends and family say that I have an "old soul" because I'd rather listen to Aretha Franklin and Chaka Khan instead of Beyoncé. That's just the type of music that keeps me sane and content.

I also love listening to love songs. I'm a hopeless romantic, so these songs always get to me. When a man or woman is pouring their heart out to the one they love, it sparks an emotion in me that is unexplainable. **(Tai'Kiah Phillips)**



I loved music as a little kid. I thought I was MC Hammer. I learned the dances. It made my whole family happy. We would dance, laugh, and cry together while listening to music.

I listen to everything and anything if it sounds good. Music is music when it

soothes the soul. **(Donta Starr)**



I only listen to gospel... When I hear gospel music It tells me that my Father in heaven's purpose And plan for me is what I'm striving for. When music is slow, God's music, I may cry. When music is fast, I praise

And worship my Lord and Savior.  
 Gospel music tells me I can  
 Fly like an eagle, no worries  
 At all. I'm free, free, free...  
 The music I heard in the classroom is elegant,  
 But no music is like God's music.

**(Marilyn Johnson)**



As I listened to the music played in the classroom, it made me feel like I was in a bar where there is jazz music playing. It made me feel somewhat happy and at ease.

I can listen to the piano and fall asleep and still hear it playing in my dream.

Listening to music like that makes me feel and remember myself walking alone peacefully under huge trees while leaves are falling down. I can feel the breeze hitting my hair. **(Linda Thao)**



Music means peace, love, and rest for the soul to me. I love gospel and jazz; oh yeah, I love relaxation music. The beautiful melodies just take my breath away. Music takes me out of my current feelings and into a place where I am free from all known stress.

The piano playing reminded me of when I was a little girl in Chicago! I could hear my sisters in my ear as we ran through our mom's small, two-bedroom apartment.

Sunday mornings are also brought to mind by hearing music. It takes me into my pastor's sermon. **(Kenya Moses)**

Music means the world to me. It's always been a part of my life. Ever since I can remember, music was playing in and around me. I can remember my mother would tell me to "be quiet" and "let the music speak."



I like all types of music. Each note dances in my mind and works its way to my heart. Music gives me a sense of patience and relaxation. It picks me up when I'm down and it also motivates me. Whenever I hear an upbeat song, it picks up my spirits. My mind reflects on all the

positive things I've applied myself to. Without music, I'm not sure who I would be.

I've been playing percussion instruments for 12 years. I really love the drums, snare, and bass. **(Terry Hart)**



Music is my world. Gospel and some contemporary Jazz music sends me to a place where I've been trying to go forever, where the music never stops playing: heaven. Being a choir director gives me the chance to take it to the next level.

**(Yolanda Cunningham)**



Music is life. Life is struggle and compromise intermingled with emotion and spirit. Music brings out the best of the human experience. Each day, music influences and alters how we think and interact with each other.

Music has the awesome ability to transport us to times past. A chord or phrase, a note or chorus, has the power to change our moods and affect our lives in profound ways. Music is life.

**(Keith Johnson)**

Music is a very massive part of my world. I cannot live without it. Gospel is number one for



inspiration, hopefulness, and fulfilling love for me. There are no greater lyrics than in old school R&B. And, of course, I always did love to dance to the variety of up-tempo beats from hip-hop, dance, 70's P-Funk, and lots of 80's music.

Music is like medicine.

I can always diagnose how I feel and prescribe myself the right kind of melody that won't let me down.

**(Juba Moten)**



I love Christian music. It takes me to a place of peace. I enjoy the way music breaks down thoughts and memories quickly. The spoken word takes longer to digest. If I listen to praise and worship music, it encourages a state of gratefulness and thanksgiving. I sometimes

cry like a baby. Other times, I listen to Christian music and I can understand a problem I've been facing; I am totally at ease.

**(Yetta Harris)**



I'm not really sure what music means to me. All I know is that I like the way music sounds. I can't say that I'm sentimental or even partial to any certain sound, although gospel really moves my spirit and soul. It almost makes me want to dance, if I knew how. One time at church, I almost

broke out into a run, but my foot was hurting, so I decided not to. **(Eugene Smalls)**

Music to me is another way that you can express your emotions, your anger, your feelings, your

love, and your happiness. How the music affects my emotions depends on the sounds that I hear. The music I heard in the classroom made me very relaxed, and it made me think of my family in Peru. **(Beatriz Mairena-Kellerman)**



Music to me is a soulful sound, the kind of sound that comes from within the soul. You can tell from the lyrics of this music that at some point in this person's life, they've experienced a strong, sound, and pure love that is only described from the core of all things ever made possible in their lives.

Rhythm & blues music fills my household every Sunday as I prepare my Sunday meal. I take in the history of the lyrics. They sing to my heart, and through it, the food that's being cooked will sing out to my family that there was experience of an unconditional heartfelt love pouring out on their plates. **(Arnella Royal)**



Music means a lot to me because it relaxes me. It takes me away from my issues. When I'm cleaning my house, I have to listen to music. It moves me faster because I'm dancing or trying to sing, and before I know it, I'm done cleaning.

I listen to R&B, soul, or gospel music. I like R&B musical artists Teddy Pendergrass, Barry White, and Luther Vandross. R&B music just makes me feel loving and Gospel calms my soul when I'm depressed, lonely, sad, or mad to the point that I see red all over. **(Nkechi Johnson)**





Sometimes I sit all alone  
Feeling that there's no  
hope, but  
Then I remember of His  
love  
That I have found and it  
tells me  
I am strong. His name is the  
Sweetest name I know. It is  
The name of Jesus, Jesus,  
yes

That's all I need to say.  
For it's in His name that covers  
And protects me.  
(Lorraine Garrett)



I use music to make me  
happy, and I've used it to  
help me cry. I enjoy the  
build up to a nice set of  
goose bumps, and I love it  
when it makes me dance.  
When I was a child, there  
were classical passages  
I could play in my head  
to give me goose bumps.  
(Billie Kelsey)



I like listening to R&B  
music because I can relate  
to some of the things they  
say. When I'm cleaning up  
my house, I love listening  
to music that makes my  
hips move and gets me  
deeper and deeper into what  
I'm doing. I sometimes act  
silly, like I am that person  
singing. I even get my son

involved.

I also like that soft, romantic music that gets  
you to thinking about your life and where you want  
to be. It makes you ask yourself, "If you could do  
things over, how would it be?"

Meeting different people has also gotten me into  
different music, like country and even rock and  
roll. To me, music is a mind-opener and can take

you wherever you go. You've just got to listen and  
believe.

(Shaquida Johnson)

I love music. I listen to  
smooth jazz while cleaning,  
reading, and doing my  
homework. I also enjoy  
hip-hop. Most times it  
is used to help me work  
out. Because it is upbeat,  
I'm able to keep moving.  
Gospel music usually  
brings me to tears. I get so  
caught up in the message  
behind the songs. The songs renew my faith.

(Phyllis Anderson)

When I was growing up  
in the Robert Taylor Homes  
in Chicago, I remember  
jazz music playing on  
Friday and Saturday nights.  
When my father would  
barbeque on the front  
porch, he would play his  
record player. I remember  
him tapping his foot to  
Duke Ellington, Wes

Montgomery, and Lonny Liston Smith. Sometimes  
my mother would dance with my father to the  
sounds of Ella Fitzgerald and Etta James.

Now that I am grown, I listen to R&B. I like  
Maze and Frankie Beverly, The Emotions, Harold  
Melvin and the Blue Notes, The Temptations, and  
Marvin Gaye. I love music tremendously. Music  
makes me feel good. I am upbeat and happy when I  
listen to music. (Marcia Hampton)

Music is my life. My  
father and mother kept a  
variety of music around me  
as I was growing up. My  
father surprisingly loves rap  
music too, which is rare for  
someone his age.

Music affects my mood  
in every way. If I hear a





song that I really like, the beat and sound gives me strength. I really could not function some days without music to lift my spirits. I would love to become a music video director one day. I used to dream about making videos every time I saw a new video that caught my eye. Music keeps me sane...  
**(Jesse Hamilton)**



Some people, when they are little, have invisible friends. Kids have play time or take them to school. That's what music is to me. It can be there, very loud or quiet, it makes no difference to me... I don't care what it is that's playing; it's just nice to have.

At work, I play music to help get through the day. When I do my homework, it's a quieter, slower sound to keep me focused.

**(Run Barlow)**



My family is full of musicians. I have uncles, aunts, and cousins in various bands across the U.S. I have a cousin who has been on "Austin City Limits" and now has his own label.

This all began at family gatherings where we had the "Burns Band."

This consisted of various relatives and various instruments, everything from the piano to the washboard. Did we sound good? Well, not always, but it sure has kept us a close-knit family.

The other part of my family is involved in Native American music. I find this exciting and comforting. It's so interesting that for most Native songs, you can't just go find the lyrics on Google or anything. They are handed down from generation to generation. This again strengthens families.

**(Michele Withers)**

For me, music is life. The very idea that music can be composed, heard, seen, and played is evidence that life exists. With the exception of country and heavy metal, I listen to a lot of different genres.



**Blue Star**

Dispelling the laws of gravity

The blue star drifts into eternity  
 On trails of glittering continuity  
 Warmed by solar winds  
 In a secret galaxy  
 It shines brighter amongst friends.

**(Brandon McCarey)**

The majority of music I like to listen to is underground hip-hop. I love the way the lyrics make me smile, make me think, at times confuse me, shock me, and impress me. They don't only rhyme predictable words that fill the space between choruses like you may find in other types of music. Some examples are, "Turn tail like a seahorse," "I'd rather have a bottle in front of me than a frontal lobotomy," and "Nosy neighbors died of suspense."



Don't get me wrong, all music has its purpose, but when I want to escape, it's an ill beat combined with awe-inspiring lyrics that I seek. I can't stand music that I can sing along with, having never heard it before (ahem, Doors).

I mostly listen to music on my bus rides, so I really need something that can take me away from my surroundings and leave me in a better place. **(Katie Pruitt)**

I love music based on what is happening. Relaxing by myself, I'll listen to some R&B music. Most of the tunes are about love. When I'm



thoughtful, I must have old school message music, rap like Brand Nubians, Eric B. and Rakim, and 2Pac. When I'm being romantic, I love to listen to classical jazz.  
(Abraham Thomas)



Music means a lot to me because I love to dance to it and listen to it. Music is a part of my life because it means I can have fun, relax, and feel the emotions of love. I just love music of every style.  
(Elvira Rodriguez)

## More What's in a Name



After a five-year experience with the Peace Corps, my dad returned to Chicago and bore a son and named him Juba Ojakwa Moten. He taught me that Juba was the name of a river in southern Somalia where boats were as long as city buses. In some of my own research, I

found out that Juba is the capital of the Republic of South Sudan and also has origins in the Jubal tribe.

My dad also used to tell me that my middle name was the name of an African warrior, but after researching I could not confirm this. It does have roots in Roman history, however.

There is another spelling for my last name: Moton. The story behind it is that my ancestors originated in the west as far as California. What a wild bunch they were! They migrated east, south, and north running from the law. The two spellings of my last name were a result of this migration.  
(Juba Ojakwa Moten)

My name is Eugene Howard Smalls, and I am named after my mom and my dad. My mom's name was Jean. I never got to meet her because she died giving birth to me. My grandmother named me after my mom to honor her. I share my dad's middle name. My dad's name was Samuel Howard Smalls.

I have no clue to the meanings of these names. All I know is that they are sentimental to me because I loved my parents.

(Eugene Howard Smalls)



# Madison Symphony Review

By Jesse Hamilton

The guest conductor of the Madison Symphony Orchestra, Ward Stare, was outstanding. His sharp and young energy was electric. He was not only controlling his musicians but also the crowd.

He was complemented by Lynn Harrell playing the cello without looking at his notes. That really amazed me.

I really enjoyed the musicians who were playing violins. They had lots of parts that were controlling the rest of the orchestra.

This performance was one for the ages. I never experienced a live orchestra before. Now that I

have been to one, I would love to listen and see more. I

really enjoyed the experience. It was like no other. I wish I could play as well as this group of performers. I wish

I could have met the musicians or had a closer seat. This was one of the most exciting groups of musicians I have ever heard, and it was different from what I am used to hearing.

The Program:

ROSSINI, Overture to *The Barber of Seville*

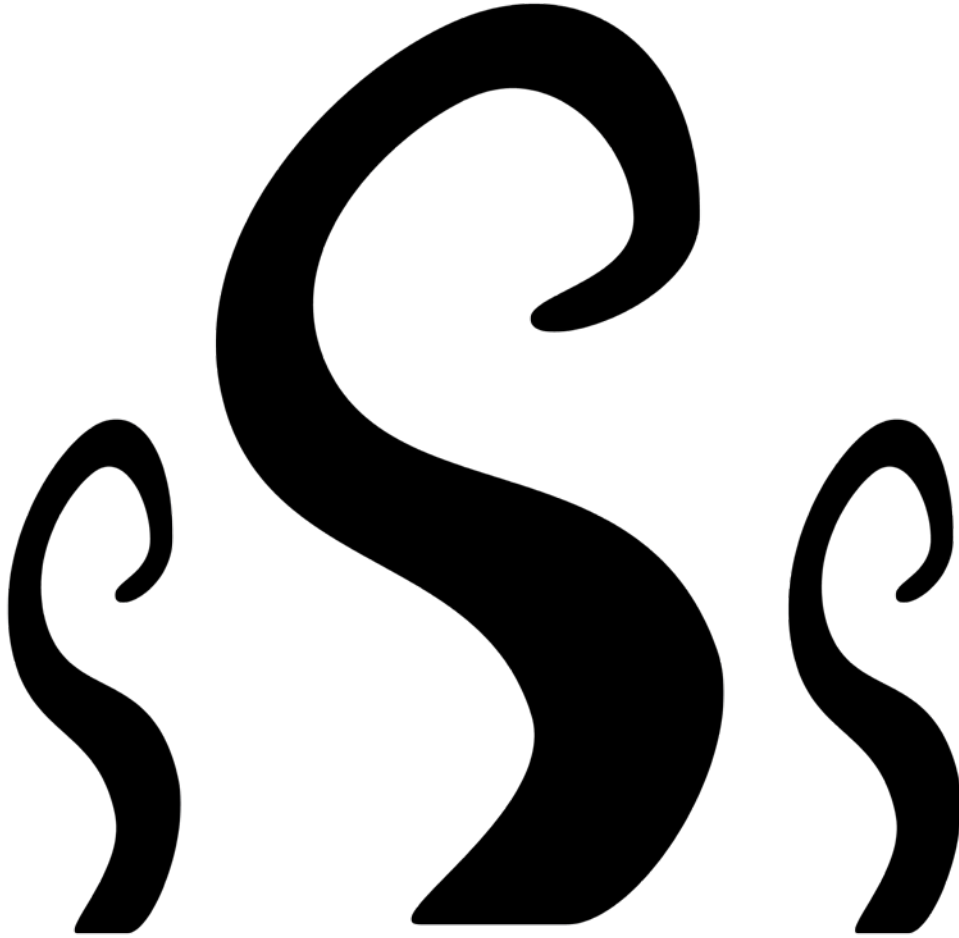
LALO, Cello Concerto in D minor

SIBELIUS, Symphony No. 2





# Vocabulary Soup



indignation, innate, jalopy, analogous, intimation, anomalous,  
tyranny, primitivism, caesura, prevailing, contemplate,  
petitions, remonstrances, usurpations, thralldom, stratagems,  
ineffable, supplicate, despotism, sundered, execrate, immolate,  
annihilation, extenuate, harmonious, felicitate, symmetry,  
augmented, prostrated, disabused, manacled, pathos, chattel,  
whilst, aft, abhorrence, plethora, foray, prose, emulate,  
insidious, agoraphobia, ell, execrable, calumniate, interposition,  
sanguine, pensive, negrophobia, tawdry, deprecate,  
woe, acquiesce, conjecture, obdurate, formidable,  
imbibe, cudgel, summons, betides, ascent, odiousness,  
deference, barren, allegory, parenthetical, endow,  
consummate, barbarity, joist, medley,  
oxymoron, rapturous, impertinent, ignite,  
gig, sloop, orator, flagellation, allusion,  
hyperbole, eloquence

# Odyssey: [Od-uh-see] a Long and Eventful Journey

by Annette Bland, 2006

Article published in Capital City Hues, April, 2007

What if someone you hardly knew told you that a humanities class could change your life? Would you believe that person? Several years ago I ran into a former co-worker. I knew she had children and was from Chicago, but I didn't know much else about her. During our conversation she eagerly told me she was a student in the University of Wisconsin Odyssey Project.

She was learning about Walt Whitman, Socrates, William Blake, Langston Hughes, Shakespeare and others. Little did she know that I recognized only one name and that was Shakespeare, and I really didn't know much about him. The more she talked about the Odyssey Project, the more excited she became. I started to tell her that I loved to read and write, but before I could finish she said, "Then you'd love this class!" Before she left, she gave me a funny look and said, "I'm telling you if you get involved, it will change your life."

Not my life, I thought. Sure, she was exaggerating. I thought to myself the class may be good, but it couldn't possibly change a life. I decided to check things out for myself. I'm just like that. I went to the South Madison Public Library to look for more information. There it was: a brochure saying UW Odyssey Project, and printed on the front it said "a free start to college" and "a course in the humanities for adults facing economic barriers." An adult with economic barriers: that was me, all right.

I completed the application and later received a phone call from the director, Professor Emily Auerbach, to schedule an interview which would be followed with a letter to let me know if I was accepted or not.

It seemed like forever for that letter to

arrive, but finally it did. I was scared to open it for fear rejection was waiting for me on the inside.

CONGRATULATIONS! towered over all of the other words in the letter. I was in another world. I called my family and friends to tell them the good news.

Odyssey's setting is an unbelievably warm, friendly, and loving atmosphere. I learned about art history, literature, African American and American history, philosophy, creative writing and much more. The students were from all over the world. You want to see a colorful class? Come to Odyssey.

The class has a vibe of its own. Unlike no other, Odyssey dances to the beat of its own drum. Each student's presence is vital to the class as a whole. We came separately, but we intertwined naturally. Like a rainbow, the rain is separate from the sun, but together they create beautiful harmony and colors.

The graduation was the best time ever. I didn't have anything to compare it to since I hadn't graduated from high school. I dropped out and later went back and earned my GED. However, I'm sure that if I had graduated from high school it wouldn't have been better than the Odyssey graduation. Some of the guests assured me that they'd been to many graduations but nothing compared to Odyssey's.



My son was there, and my children's grandmother, an uncle, a cousin, many friends and their children came too. Family members from my church came, and my father was there also. The support and love from all present was so thick you could've cut it with a knife.

It left a genuine print of happiness on my heart. Life isn't easy, I know that, but it is better and more exciting for me. I get to discover things that I never knew about myself. The Odyssey class isn't magic. We all faced many obstacles as students—some of them extremely painful, and the difference was that we pulled together and supported each other. Odyssey feels more like family than just a class.

My heart's desire is to make a positive change within my family. Education wasn't a high priority in my family. Many of my family members have learned skills, but no one had pursued a college education. My mother was my role model. Everyone called her Sugga Momma instead of Lois Simmons because she was too sweet. She died in her youth. She was a strong believer in education, and she made sure my brother

Russell and I understood that. This is for my Momma, too.

Odyssey is also about finding your voice. My voice is actually finding me, and that's all good. Education is a profound, priceless, obtainable contribution I can personally make in my family and in the community. It can be passed on from generation to generation, and ultimately that's my goal. My son Dwayne was a student in the UW Odyssey Project and I know it has changed his life for the better, too. Don't let anything or anyone stop you from pursuing an education. I believe education adds to the quality of life and relationships. It's a light that shines in dark places.

Where else are you going to find such a golden opportunity? A free start to college, the UW Odyssey Project includes free tuition, books, childcare, dinner, and transportation. Classes meet every Wednesday from September through May from 6:00-9:00 PM at the South Madison Public Library. It isn't easy, but it's so worth it. Come to Odyssey and see for yourself.



# Frederick Douglass Responds

Editorial from Southern Quarterly Review, 1852:

*The negro, left to himself, does not dream of liberty. He cannot indeed grasp a conception which belongs so naturally to the white man. It is a cruel task to disturb him in the enjoyment of that life—slavery—to which God has destined him. He basks in the sunshine, and is happy. Christian slavery, free from interference, is the brightest sunbeam which Omniscience has destined for his existence.*

Dear Editor,

The American Negro is but a victim of those who impose circumstances upon him. He can be beaten so that he thinks of nothing but freedom from the lash of the whip. He can be starved so that he thinks of nothing but freedom from the emptiness in his stomach. But the dream of true Freedom is the ship at the edge of the horizon whose sails reach toward the heavens above ALL men. True freedom can be seen in the wings of the gulls that hover o'er yon ship. True freedom is indeed in the soul of all Negroes, who long not just to be *on* the ship but to *be* the ship. Have you no heart beating in your breast to think that your Negro brothers and sisters on this earth do not dream of families and homes wherein they can feel love and kinship? Does Christian slavery dull the eyes and cotton the ears of its white participants so that they may not see the blood or hear the screams?

**(Billie Kelsey)**

I dream of freedom; I even taste freedom on the tip of my tongue. How can you say God destined us for slavery? Have you forgotten the golden rule of "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you"? Would you enjoy being ripped from your mother at such a young age, placed in someone else's arms just so your mother could be in the field from dawn to dusk; being whipped for no reason but just because they can? I would sometimes say to white boys, "I wish I could be

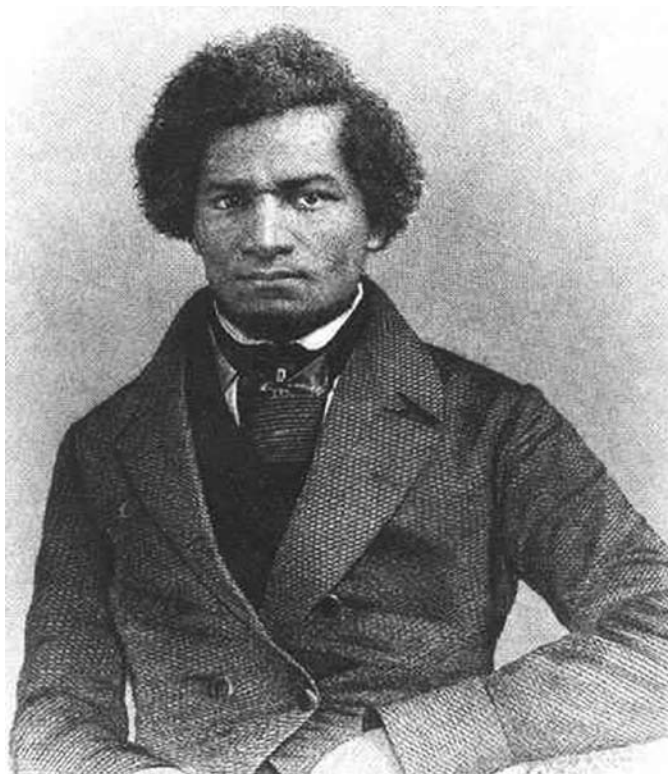
as free as you will be when you get to be men, but I am a slave for life!" The thought of being a slave for life weighs heavily upon my heart like a stone sinking me deeper into the sea of sadness. May God forgive you or have mercy on your soul. I say with Patrick Henry, give us liberty or give us death. **(Shaquida Johnson)**

Your gross and dangerous ignorance is like the very salt that I've witnessed being rubbed into the open lashes of the slaves. If you see a smiling slave, he is smiling not at his joyous life on the plantation, but as protection against ones like you. **(Brandon McCarey)**

Birds rise and fly without chains. Look into the birds' eyes and you will see the joy and peace they have from having liberty. Dear Editor, I hope to purge your mind, to convince you to deviate from the devilish thoughts that provoke your mind. To take an individual and make him a slave is just a blunder. If you listen to the voice of God, you

would hear his thunder. My white brother, drop the whip of shame, and grab hold of God's name. Let the Negro people be free, and you would see how much better the United States could be! **(Kenya Moses)**

I'm outraged that you can print such an unthinkable, penurious work of journalism about a happy slave. How can you mention that we bask in the sunshine? We are worked from sun-up till dead of night, in all types of weather,





dancing a deadly dance with excruciating heat beating down on our backs, with never ending rows in the fields before us. What a pious brute he is that can practice “Christian slavery” and ordain the most heinous acts on human life. **(Samantha East)**

Are you God? God said, “but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the LORD” (Leviticus 19:18) and “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:36). God is love. He loves everybody. God has nothing to do with slavery. You write, “Christian slavery, free from interference, is the brightest sunbeam which Omniscience has destined for his existence.” I, Frederick Douglass, say not only do you want to be God, but now you want to be the Judge, which is still God. When Satan tried to think he could take God’s place, he was kicked from heaven like lightning. Now that I’m a free man, I can thank my God. For it is because of Him I’m free—free at last. **(Marilyn Johnson)**

Mr. Editor, your greed and selfishness speak volumes. Your entire existence is truly tainted. It’s time to love, not kill; time to trust, not turn our backs on each other. I’m laughing to keep from crying and crying to keep from laughing. I pray that men—black or white—can find common ground, can find equality and justice. This is everyone’s earth, so let us live in peace and harmony. **(Terry Hart)**

You, Sir, have betrayed God and our founding forefathers. How much joy would it be for you if I snatched you away from your mother as an infant and did not allow you to have any bonding with or affection from your parents? What if I then beat you and your whole race into submission to bow down to me as your god and even held the power of life and death over you and your loved ones? How happy would you be if I, as your master, chose not to clothe you or feed you and could work you like an animal by force? Would you then be happy, basking in the sunshine? **(Eugene Smalls)**

Oh, how my blood immolates for the sake of my people at the mere display of your self-righteousness, especially when you and your counterparts commit the greatest crime of all: the usage of the church house as a front for the evil to meet in secret council and devise the plans of the wicked, your earthly father, the Devil. I assume at

this point it is my responsibility to pray, “Forgive them, Father, for they do not know what they do.” Or is it? **(Juba Moten)**

Your ridiculous speech brings laughter to my soul and encouragement to this black, bloody, scarred, bruised yet strong, intelligent man who is still standing simply because I grasp the conception of how to survive as a slave purchased by a white man who cannot face me man to man, but instead as a slave owner hiding behind his whips and chains. **(Lorraine Garrett)**

All men and women who have experienced a cessation of their divine rights to freedom and life both long for and will actively strive to regain that of which they have been deprived due to the actions cruelly inflicted upon them by callous others. God has given all things life; no man shall needlessly inflict harm upon another. **(Keith Johnson)**

“Wrath is cruel and anger is outrageous” (Proverbs 27:4). My hand may tremble yet my pen still writes. The dream of the brightest light in life is the hope of divine eternity. **(Yolanda Cunningham)**

You may talk to slaves and believe that we are happy with what we have, but that is not true. It is just that if we try to defend our rights as humans, we will get killed. **(Elvira Rodriguez)**

Insurrection would not be a wise course of action for a slave, for their lives have no value in a system where swift justice often leads to death. For you to equate the term Christian with slavery strengthens my resolve for freedom for the slave, not just from the chains that restrict his physical movement, but from the “eloquent” poison of your words. I, Frederick Douglass, certify this truth and my personal belief that all men are created equal in the eye of the true and living GOD of the Bible. **(Abraham Thomas)**

You state, “The negro, left to himself, does not dream of liberty.” At what hour were you ever privy to my dreams, after being the orchestrator of my nightmares? Have you not endeavored to harness my soul only to find that there is no chain sturdy enough to bind it? “Thou shalt not steal,” yet you plundered the birthplace of my ancestors, carrying them away to serve you, certainly denying them and future generations the freedom bestowed upon them by God. **(Hedi Rudd)**

God is full of mercy, compassion, goodness, and love, yet you are full of brutality, cruelty, crudeness, and heartlessness. Why do you call yourselves Christians? As a slave, my body, my soul, and my spirit groaned in anguish from your ruthless, merciless, pitiless lashes till I was almost swept away by the flooding streams of my blood! I thirsted and starved in the hot sun from dawn till dusk, till the buzzing bees buzzed in my ears no more. That which I toiled for, you snatched and grabbed from me, like a vulture finding a carcass; you enjoyed the labor of my hands and the sweat of my brow; you buzzed at me like a swarm of flies feasting on a rotten corpse; you joyfully reaped what you had not sown. Though I am a free man now, I feel for my brethren still in this horrid condition. (**Tatenda Bvindi**)

What you most desire—slavery—, I most dread. Liberty is the strongest want of all men, slaves or free. I was beaten raw, too many times to count. I was beaten for wanting to read and write, for wanting to be free. Was all this the sunshine and happiness you mentioned? I think not! (**Michele Withers**)

I like how you think we as a people should embrace slavery. I love chains and whips as you think I should. I thrive on the thought of not being able to read and not knowing when I was born. This is the life people dream about. (**Jesse Hamilton**)

You say it is a cruel task to disturb slaves in their work. Oh yes, it's unbelievable. We bask in the sunshine and are extremely happy, but the fun does not stop there. We all enjoy excellent, luxurious, and carefully maintained accommodations, with excellent gourmet food. Who would not be jealous of this carefree and abundant life? And of course the joy of our master's excellent whip is never far from our minds—a whip that feels like being stung by millions of bees or eaten by piranhas. Please, dear Editor, help us keep our secret. If the joys of slavery became too widely known, all will want to be slaves. (**Beatriz Mairena-Kellman**)

May the "God" of Christian Slavery never visit you, for he takes away your freedom and that of your children. He is a thief of your happiness. He takes captive your dreams, takes away your children for his own devious pleasure, and uses your wife as his property. He leads you into the deepest, darkest,

hottest, most painful, tightest hole, all the while biting and cutting your flesh every inch of the way down. (**Yetta Harris**)

My brethren do not bask in the sunshine; they are treated as brutes. Their bodies are beaten and bloodied; they are stumped and starved by an oppressor. Slaves are not happy watching the suffering of their children. Slaves are not happy without food to fill their empty stomachs or watching their children run around half naked or without shoes. I censure your fallacious statement of the happy slave. (**Phyllis Anderson**)

Do we negroes not have as good a right to be free as whites have? I know of no rights of race superior to the right of humanity. I want to start a school in which to instruct, improve, and develop all that is noblest and best in the souls of a deeply wronged and long neglected people, a place where children of once-enslaved people may realize the blessing of liberty. (**Linda Thao**)

I wished for freedom ever since I learned to read. I did grasp the conception which you say belongs to the white man. I was not happy being a slave, nor were the other slaves. You are free and your children are free; why not my family, friends, and me? How could I be happy as a slave—hungry, whipped, overly worked? (**Donta Starr**)

Is it natural to labor outside from dawn to dusk, in the hottest heat of Summer and the coldest chill of Winter, with inadequate clothing and little to no food, with the only pay received being lashings, threats, and mental abuse? It is a cruel task to keep freedom from any man. The closest form of freedom slaves are granted are the days between Christmas and New Year's Day. During that time, slaves are encouraged to participate in wrestling, dancing, and drinking whiskey by their mind-controlling Masters. By the end of this period of unrestrained, reckless behavior, slaves would prefer to return to the chains of slavery. Of course the slave would not comprehend the allure of freedom if it is portrayed to him in a light as unattractive and false as that. I will not release myself from my cause of abolition until all of God's children are free to become masters of themselves. (**Katie Pruitt**)

America is "The Land of the Free," a land that was liberated less than a century ago, a land so famous for the words "all men are created equal."

I find here a Christian man devoted to the church who gives to charity to ensure his place in the great beyond; all the while, that Christian man beats, starves, and deprives his slave of the thirst for knowledge, although the Christian and the slave are both equal men. A Christian slave owner is an oxymoron. If you are a believer in the Declaration of Independence and the Bible and you hold the deed to a slave, you are a contradiction. Slavery is not a natural occurrence but a cultural intolerance. The land you know as the "Land of the Free" the Negro equates with "the Land of Hypocrisy." (**Run Barlow**)

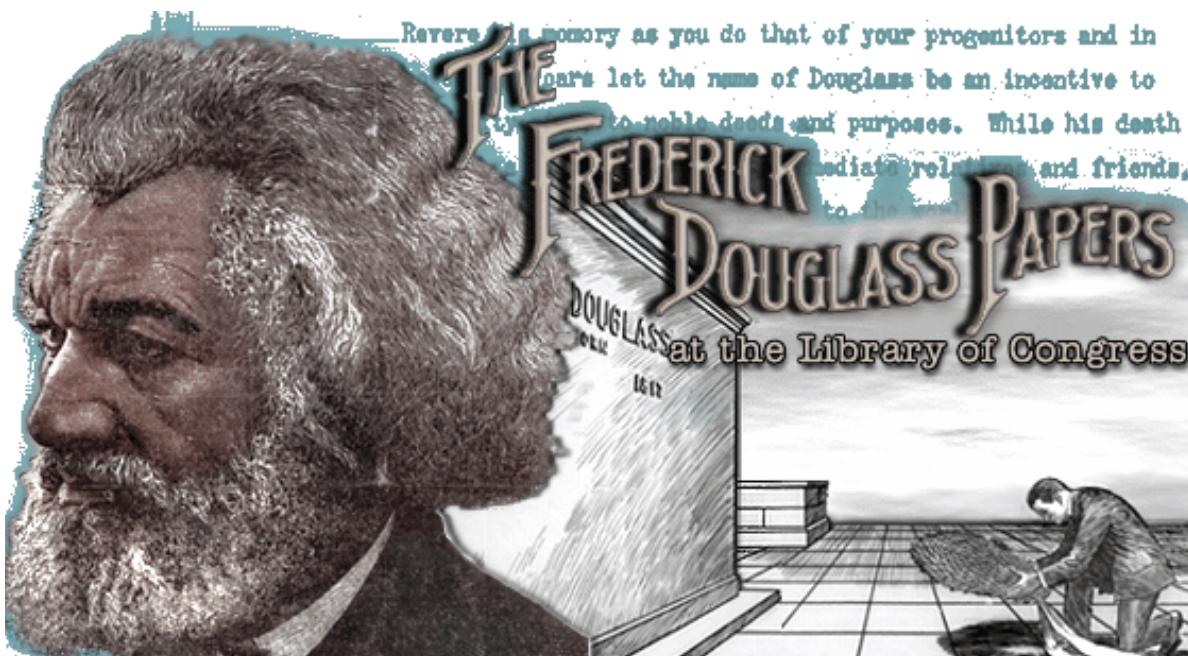
Your animosity toward the Negro slave has taken over the soul of your heart, taken over the flesh of your existence, taken over your God-given compassion! Helping another, serving another, loving another should come naturally to the human heart. No one should be made to perform inhumane duties; no human shall be the property of another human being. Being owned by another human is not the true destiny of anyone's true existence. Under the true laws of the Lord, every man should be free, every man carries free will, and every man should be as equal as the next man! (**Arnella Royal**)

Do you not know that you are also in bondage with the way you were raised and in your mind for keeping us chained like animals when we are human beings and children of God? Why are you white men scared for us to be free? Is it because you are insecure as men and lost in your own

moral darkness? I am a man, a human being, a child of God before I am a slave. I am faithfully relying upon the power of truth, love, and justice for success in my humble efforts, and solemnly pledging myself anew to the sacred cause of freedom. (**Nkechi Johnson**)

How can a slave not dream of liberty, when all he knows from sun up to sun down is work--working all day in the harshest conditions? I have been a slave of a wide range of masters. Some fed us plenty with little time to eat, and some fed us barely enough to keep us alive. We have worked in the hot summer sun and the cold winter air, with no shoes, and with clothing covering little or nothing. With those conditions in mind, what man would NOT dream of liberty? (**Tai'Kiah Phillips**)

Slavery is a deep, dark dungeon of captivity, and freedom is a bright, beautiful breath of light. I would rather die fighting for freedom than live as a slave wishing for death. You inferred that Negroes are happy being slaves. The spiritual songs the slaves sing while working in the fields are actually entreaties to God. The slaves are asking God to deliver them from the hands of the obdurate slaveowners. Yes, God is omniscient, and He is imbibing the white slaveowners' pernicious treatment of slaves. What is done in the dark will eventually come into the light. You can get by, but you will not get away. You will reap what you sow on Judgment Day. God is love! Slavery is odious! (**Marcia Hampton**)



# SOULMATES

*Odyssey students read "Like wedding cake 50 years ago, couple's love seems a gift to savor," a Wisconsin State Journal article from 2000 about Robert and Wanda Auerbach.*

I believe this article needs to be republished as a witness to society today on how a marriage is built and can overcome all barriers that may arise. Their marriage keeps going and growing stronger in their love and dedication towards one another. **(Lorraine Garrett)**

The article is beautiful, along with their marriage. They really truly respect each other and take their marriage vows to heart. **(Nkechi Johnson)**

This article was written with love, honor, and respect. It tells an inspirational, encouraging story. **(Phyllis Anderson)**

I commend the Auerbachs on their long-lasting union and ability to beat the odds against them.

**(Tai'Kiah Phillips)**

The article was such a beam of light for true love. The part where it says "The next 50 years would bring my parents their share of job and sorrow" reminds us that love does not free us from trials. I also love the pictures of the young Auerbachs so full of love and hope and the older Auerbachs so full of love and hope—lovely. **(Yetta Harris)**

Love is priceless, and nothing materialistic can ever measure up to it. **(Juba Moten)**

I'm going to try harder in my own marriage.

**(Eugene Smalls)**

In a time of high divorce rates, it's great to see two people really dedicated to each other. **(Brandon McCarey)**

Wanda and Robert Auerbach are a profound example for the new generation. **(Beatriz Mairena-Kellman)**

This article is informative; it gives us a picture of where Robert and Wanda came from, their determination, discouragements, losses, and love experiences. They used the little resources they had to accomplish their lifelong dreams. I find that inspiring. I am moved by the solidarity of their love relationship. **(Tatenda Bvindi)**

It's nice to see that people can love each other for over 60 years. I wish them many more with much love. **(Donta Starr)**

To say this is a beautiful story would not illustrate this story to its fullest. It sounds like a love story or

movie my girlfriend would have dragged me to, but the result was very good. **(Run Barlow)**

This article tells the world that money is not the key to happiness. Never give up on life and love. Become involved with a person not for money but for happiness. This is priceless. **(Jesse Hamilton)**

This article shows that there is still true love out there and money isn't the root of all things.

**(Shaquida Johnson)**

This article was truly inspiring to me. Two individuals from different places meet and become one. Robert and Wanda Auerbach are the true American dream. They motivate and lift my spirits. I will always love and appreciate their lives.

**(Terry Hart)**

I wish I would meet someone and have a history of love like they do. **(Elvira Rodriguez)**

It is not how much you have or where you come from. The simplest thing, such as an old love letter, is worth more than gold. **(Samantha East)**

It blesses my soul when I see married couples together 20, 30, 40, 50 years. We're talking 61 years here with the Auerbachs. Hallelujah to Jesus!

**(Marilyn Johnson)**

