



ODYSSEY ORACLE

ODYSSEY REFLECTIONS



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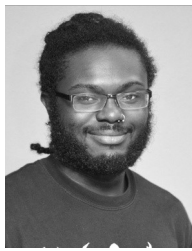
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I LOVE



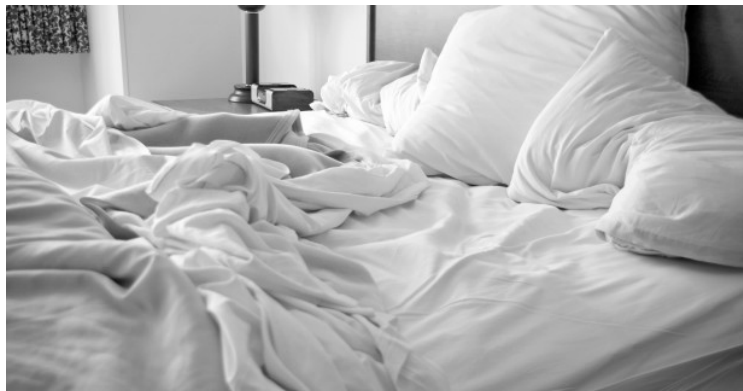
I love how you can get me from point A to point B, no matter how many times I might forget to

turn off your headlights or make sure to close your doors. You keep me warm on these unforgiving frigid nights. At first I was displeased by your crimson exterior, but I have grown to love how bright the red gleams. I could not have asked for a better first car.

Your black leather seats have yet to scorch me in the summer heat. You may not be picture perfect, the type of car big name moneymakers brag about, but I'm still grateful to have you. You allow me to play and sing along to my favorite songs on my way to work. I used to lament having to wait for rides, just wanting to ride out on my own. Thank you, my red Cyclone. **(James Horton Jr.)**



I love sleep. Anticipating the gorgeous golden sunset makes me warm inside. My pride ascends away with a natural sway of chamomile. It heals the day's added stresses. Climbing into my



covers, covered in heavy clouds of comfort, soft as a baby's skin, I love feeling comfortable. In my pajamas, fuzzy, silky, ironed into a neat, crisp crease, I am prepared to meet my truest love: 1, 2, 3, SLEEP. **(Ebony Anderson-Carter)**



I love my Facebook. Facebook brings much entertainment to me. I love reading the



stupid stuff people post on there to get likes or shares. I get on Facebook when I am bored, to get a laugh if I am having a terrible day, to check in on family members, update family members on new things in my life, and to just browse. I wouldn't say it's nice, but it's sometimes much of a relief to read about what other people are experiencing in life and know I am not the only one that reaches a bad time in life. I'm not one to post about my personal business, but the memes that people create and statuses that people post really hit me sometimes, as if someone is out here living the same life that I am. Facebook is like a way to get away from your own life and read about others. **(Diamond Clay)**



day. I also love music because just with a couple of songs, music can make me feel happy, sad, or motivated. In general, it can make me feel all the feelings that my brain knows.

(Juan Carlos Abrajan)



I love to make love early in the morning. I love to start off by playing slow music, lighting candles, burning incense, and massaging with oil. The smell of lavender scents fills the air, and then the passion begins. I love

the feeling and connection as our lips touch and our bodies connect. . . . I love and enjoy making love. **(Carmon Caire)**



I love eating, sampling new cuisines from around the world. I love tasting zesty, appetizing dishes with sharp flavors. With each bite, you get a different excitement, whether it's spicy, hot, creamy, sweet, or rich

flavors. Anticipating getting different tastes, my taste buds crave more excitement with each bite. **(La'cee Webster)**



I love music. There is nothing like the melodic harmonies of Rhythm and Blues. It's almost like I float with the music as my emotions and my body become one. Music says everything that my sometimes-shy persona

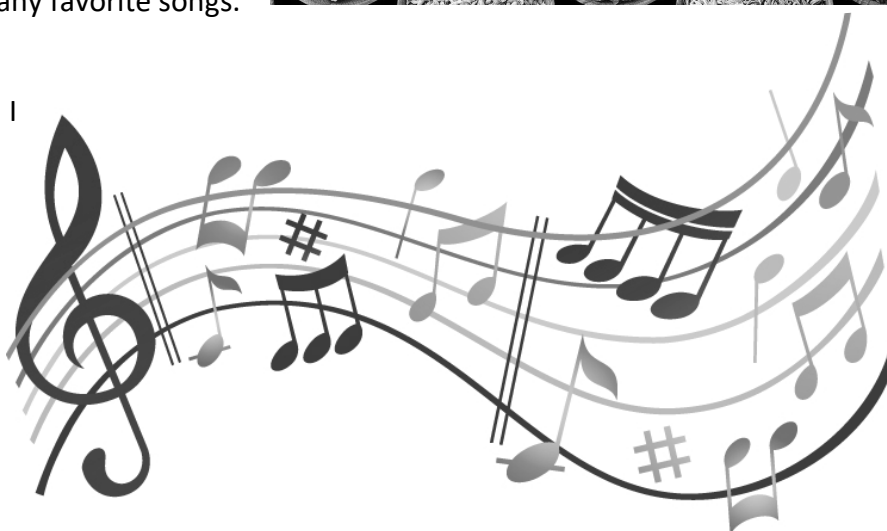
cannot. Music becomes the comfort I can't find in family and friends. I love music because it's me with no limitations. Music sees me at my best: in my home, feeling open-minded, and singing aloud to my many favorite songs.

(Kayasia Blake)



I love music. I love music because it is like a friend to me. I love it because

when I have a difficult day, I put on something catchy, and it makes my difficult day into a better





I love my smile,
even though it's
horrible to accept
that it is not a smile
I love to show off. I
love to smile, but
not in public.

(Ricardo Marroquin Santos)



I love my phone.
It takes the cutest
pictures,
capturing the best
moments at any
given time. It's my
way of talking to

my family members who are

miles away. I use it for its GPS to get me to
places when I don't know the way. I can use
the internet on the move. I can talk to my kids
no matter where I am. I love my phone
because it keeps me connected to people. I
get a lot of my business taken care of because
of my phone. My pocket computer keeps me
going. **(Candace Howard)**



I love watching Tibetan dance
and movies produced by
Tibetans. By watching movies, I
am connected to their way of
thinking and living, and that
brings me closer to them.

Songs, dances, and movies are

now a bridge between Tibetans like me who
have never seen Tibet and Tibetans living in
Tibet. It also helps me re-imagine being in
Tibet one day and visiting H.H. the Dalai
Lama's palace and the birthplace of my cousin
and my parents. It keeps my hope alive of
revisiting all Tibetans in the near future.

(Yangchen Lhamo)



I love that no matter what, I
remain the same, through the
good and the bad. I am 100%
me all the time. I do what
makes me happy. I never agree
just to fit in or make someone
else happy. I fight for what I
believe in. I believe in doing
what's right. So many times in
the past, others have made me
feel ashamed of myself. I will
never let that be me again.

(Queeneice Creamer)





I love my mother. Ever since I lost my mother, I have felt that I lost that motherly love and everything in life.

My mother was my heroine who never got tired or bored supporting me. She was my guiding angel, inspiration, and role model that I always looked up to for my success. My mother's love for me is irreplaceable. Once lost, it creates a huge vacuum in my life. My love for her is immeasurable and unconditional, and it continues to grow. Continue to rest in peace until we meet again. **(Abdourahman Sallah)**



I love being alone. For me, there is nothing more calming than being in solitude, giving myself time to process the day, reflect on things that I need to, and move on. I think it is very strange when I encounter people who hate to be alone, even

if only for a short while. Some people need constant human interaction; I don't. It's not that I am anti-social or never enjoy the company of others. In fact, it's quite the opposite. However, a lot of people, at least the ones I've come across, are mentally draining, which is why I am selective about whom I choose to be social with. Quite



frankly, I just don't have time for other people's b.s.! This is the mindset I have adapted to throughout my adult life. I'm not saying that good people don't exist. However, if I even get a sense of nonsense with someone, I'm done. I no longer have the energy to give certain people or things my attention, especially when they don't mean me well. **(Zataiya Gober)**



I love how I choose to test my limits day in and day out, taking second to no one. As I hear others say "No, you can't, it's not for you, it can't be done," those words ignite me like firecrackers on the Fourth of July.

From a young age I would get home from school, take off my dress, and change into pants and a T-shirt to play with the boys, from sports to warfare to some mechanics in the garage. Today I manage a full-time job, a part-time job, nine college credits, a busy band student, and let's not forget being the mom of a wrestler. I strive by testing what I can do or what others say I cannot.

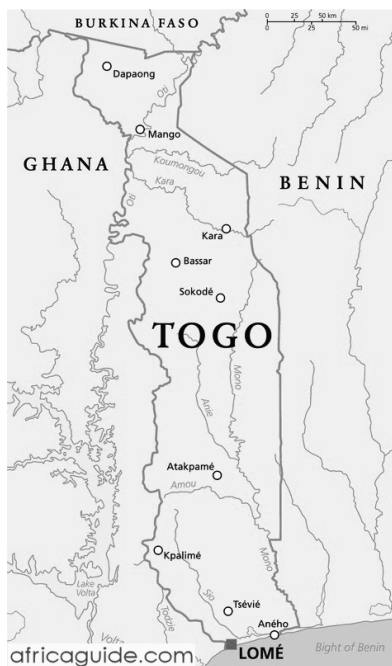


Could I test my limits as a single mom any further? Absolutely, just bring it on, as this "Wonder Woman" could definitely find the time in her schedule. **(Sandra Zintzun)**



I love my country, Togo. Togo is a sunny, small country located in West Africa. It is bordered on the north by the republic of

Burkina Faso, on the south by the Atlantic Ocean, on the east by the republic of Benin, and on the west by Ghana. In 2012, its population was estimated at seven million people. These people are amazing and welcoming. This is the reason why I love my country. Besides, many people who have traveled to my country always say that they like to go back to visit again because the Togolese were so nice and welcoming to them. To add to that, my country has beautiful beaches where you can relax and have picnics. In sum, my love for my country will be an endless love due to the fact that its citizens are so generous and welcoming. **(Hezouwe Walada)**



in. We were the only two people in the store. The manager told us that since we were his first customers, he would give Sarah a discount on any recliner I chose. The manager said that I chose the best recliner at first glance. The recliner has a remote that moves it up and down, lifts my feet up, and has buttons to press for heat and intensity. The motor moves fast and massages my back and hips. It's a

very soothing, relaxing feeling. I feel like I'm in seventh heaven. I fall asleep sometimes while doing my homework for Odyssey.

(Joyce Johnson)



I love the way you love me. I love my desire to be happy. I love the way I love myself. I love my kids, I love my mother, I love my grandmother, and I love my family. I love how I talk, and I love how I walk. I love how



I love my recliner that I sit in. It's in the living room of my apartment. It was a housewarming gift from my social worker from the UW Hospital. It means a lot to me, and every time I sit in it, I think about

Sarah. I met her in February 2017, two years ago. Sarah and I have become friends. I

remember when she took me to A-1 Furniture Store on the east side of Madison. We arrived at the store at 9 AM, as soon as the store opened. The manager unlocked the door and welcomed us



when I enter a room, all eyes are on me (Tupac). I love "when the men all pause when I walk into the room." I love that song: "Men All Pause." I love music, any kind of music. I love dancing, prancing, and romancing. I love comedy, comedies, and laughter. I love gossiping, acting a fool with chatter. I love, I love, I love.

(Erica Cocoa Gentry)





I love my family. My family is me. It's what I am. My family represents all my wealth. More than a diamond, my family is my treasure. I would not change anything about my family, and I would not want to lose anyone in my family. I observe everyone in my family, especially their faces and their bodies, and I recognize myself. It is beautiful to love and be loved. A family love is the most truthful and precious. I feel love, sweet and pure, from my family. (**Tchallassi Edoh**)



I love the taste and smell of my morning coffee. My coffee is filled with hazelnut creamer and a little sugar. My morning coffee picks me up and wakes my soul up in the morning. I used to not drink coffee, and I know it's not a good beverage to drink, but without my morning coffee, I can't function all the way. Oh, that morning coffee! (**Erannia Potter**)

Smoking weed has always been a very controversial way of medicating because of the negative connotations and associations. The negative connotations stemmed from the federal government's inability to tax this natural, easy-growing weed.



My doctor didn't make the suggestion, but she also didn't disagree. She wanted to know why and if I had noticed benefits. I also started keeping a journal to share with her and my therapist.

Now my coffee and my blunt are part of my daily morning routine. Some of my best days start with my coffee and my blunt. (**Monica Mims**)



I love my coffee and blunt in the morning. I suffer from PTSD. I often had night terrors and have anxiety 24/7. Most of my mental illnesses stem from my childhood due to the torture, abuse, and daily nightmares that I lived

through.

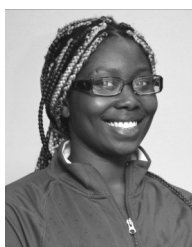




I love my town of Veracruz, Mexico. I love the diversity of its culinary art, full of different colors—yellow, blue, black, green, purple, and even white!—and different odors—spices that make those colors

bloom with aromas from minty to sweet, from spicy to toasty. Veracruz's culinary art is like its people: colorful, happy, and spicy. The character of people from Veracruz has been shaped over the years by different cultures, such as the Spanish, French, English, and Portuguese conquistadores. This is why I love Veracruz: its culinary art is one with its people from different backgrounds.

(J. Luis Pérez-Olgún)



I love life. I love being able to wake up knowing I have another chance to be a better me. A lot of people don't have the pleasure of seeing a new day or breathing in today's air. People take life for granted. For me, each new day is a new opportunity

to learn, grow, and engage. I am grateful for life and fascinated about how your life can change and evolve over time. I love the complexity of life as well as the struggles, the achievements, the hurts, pain, and happiness of it all. Whether it's all good or all bad, I love the life God gave me.

(Breonna Hawkins)



I love food! I love that exciting feeling I get when I mix the chicken with seasonings and flour just before I toss it into the boiling hot oil. As I watch it become golden brown and crispy, my mouth starts to water. The smell of heaven lingers in my nostrils before I

can even consume it. After that first bite it's almost like an explosion of flavor in my mouth. The warm taste of lemon pepper makes me want to do my happy dance! As I anxiously move to those bites of tenderized green beans my sister made, I can taste the saltiness with dill weed flavors slowly moving down my throat. After toasty brown buttered biscuits, my dessert awaits me. My eyes get as big as my stomach when I see the sweet and savory cheesecake slice on the counter. That smooth, creamy, and bright red strawberry cheesecake is my absolute favorite! My taste buds always seem to want more and more after that last rich bite has left my plate. I love food as much as food loves me!

(Cheyenne Pete)





I love Jesus. I love Jesus because He first loved me. His unconditional love has changed my whole perspective on life. Through the

hope of His glory, I am free from the inside out: free, free, free, indeed. A glorious bride I shall be. Free, free, free: the master shall be everything to me. I love not having to conform to anything or anybody, not even religion, but freely entertaining an intimate, personal relationship with my creator, who instinctively communicates things to me about my divine destiny. **(Martina Mitchell)**



and then I respond, "No, Grasshopper, the opposite of Love is not Hate; the opposite of Love is Being Ignored." I don't know where I heard or read that concept, but I believe it. Why? How? Take a newborn: its whole existence and survival is based on someone, most often the mother, giving it attention, or being the center of attention, what Dr. M. L. King called, "the drum major instinct" (see excerpt in this Oracle). That's one of the pitfalls of technology; sadly, so much of today's attention getting and receiving is digital, artificial, virtual, not human, and non-tactile.



I love learning about things I don't know, but I am most fond of learning about things I'm interested in or have some useful purpose, e. g. Music, Film, Books, Religion, 9/11 conspiracy theories, etc. I love helping others

to learn things that will enrich or improve their lives, e. g. what I do in my employment at the library or people I have come into contact with personally or through others.

I love knowledge, the sacred as well as secular, for a number of reasons, known and unknown to me, but mostly because it's incumbent upon a Muslim, and I'm nosy and a little bit curious. . . . "Acquire knowledge. It enables its possessor to distinguish right from wrong; it lights the way to Heaven; it is our friend in the desert, our society in solitude, our companion when friendless; it guides us to happiness; it sustains us in misery." (Often attributed to Prophet Muhammad or his cousin and son-in-law Ali ibn Abu Talib, no authentic attribution known) **(Muhammad Abdullah)**

I am fond of asking people the philosophical, rhetorical question, "What is the opposite of Love?" Most often, in fact 100% of the time, I get "Hate." I allow time for a pause or silence,



I love having phone conversations with my children. It makes me so happy! I especially love talking on the phone to my son because he has an open mind and the ability to help other

people with their pain, heartache, and misunderstanding. I love the simple yet great sound of my children.

(NatuRa Warford)





I love all types of music, from gospel music, rap/hip-hop, very old music, to music of the 80s.

When I say I love very old music, I mean music my elders, parents, and siblings grew upon and that I listened to going to church every Sunday. Yes, I know I wasn't born wayyyy back then. I'm a 70s baby. But I've gotten to know the history and dances from that era, all types of bands and singers that were out, how they got started, and what songs were popular back then, as well as the dances they did and names they had for them. Wow! It was totally crazy, so the later generations took and made them better. I Believe it or not, I actually love most music of the 60s and 70s! Two of my favorite bands are the Beatles (I also loved and looked at all their cartoons, never missing a single episode), and the Monkees (never missing an episode of this either, and I also looked at their reruns).

There's a lot I can say about music of the 80s, but that would mean you'd be reading about it all day. To me, music from a totally different era up until the 80s is music I fell in love with. That's what I call "Real Music," music that had meaning (including rap/hip-hop and R&B). It meant something. The only thing today's music, all of it, is good for is to clean/work to and ride to. It has no meaning, no value. **(Quishanta Cary)**



I love San Antonio, Texas. San Antonio is my home town. Even though I didn't grow up there, it definitely feels like home. Going back to San Antonio and being in that warm sunny climate just feels so right. I feel like I actually fit in there right next to all the palm trees and cactus



that fill the downtown area. There is just something so comforting about the overwhelming smell of tacos and loud country music blaring through the streets. Just even hanging outside you can hear all the exotic birds singing and

flying around. It's almost like being in the jungle at times. I love Texas and how very passionate and true they stay to the Mexican culture and authentic ways. **(Alice Ramirez)**



I love my daughter's smile, exposing only four teeth as the bottom tooth slowly appears, a smile so big her cheeks make her eyes look like she's a China doll. Sometimes she makes half of a smile,

causing her to look mischievous. She gives me a fierce look when she holds her lips together, often sucking her cheeks in. I'm in love with my daughter's smile, always making me feel loved!

(Galeca McCain)



WOMEN OF COURAGE ORACLE REVIEWS

The Women of Courage Oracle is my favorite one thus far! Reading everyone's stories, I found myself feeling very inspired. It was, in a way, sort of therapeutic to hear all these encouraging women's stories about their lives. Almost everyone chose either their mother or grandmother as their woman of courage, which I found very interesting. Another thing I noticed is that each woman experienced some sort of tribulations throughout their lives. These hard times could have easily broken any of them, but instead they all persevered through it. There is a common theme throughout the Women of Courage Oracle: no matter how tough life gets, don't give up! I found this to be inspiring—a message that no matter how terrible today may seem, tomorrow is in fact a new day. **(Zataiya Gober)**

The Odyssey Oracle featuring Women of Courage (December 12, 2018) "*es uno de mis favoritos*," or "is one of my favorites." Our Oracle is filled with courage from start to finish. I would like to thank the virtuous staff of the Odyssey Project and tutors for helping us work on our Woman of Courage assignment. I am also very thankful for receiving this assignment because I was able to travel back in time and relive moments of deep inspiration. Therefore, I would like to thank you, my dear classmates, for giving my eyes a place where I can find great use of courage, sense of humor, and character.

I liked how many of you guys added your own definition of courage in your own words. . . . I think courage is hard to explain because it lies in between cowardliness and recklessness. Our



stories share something in common beyond courage: the fact that most of us moved to Wisconsin from different parts of the world.

The Oracle reminded me that super heroes also have a great sense of humor. One quote by Gail Robinson is packed with a sense of humor, creativity, and character: her signature line

of asking for "a tall, dark, and handsome." Rana's mother used to call her children's names back to back in order. These vivid moments made it as if we were there. Just as a sense of humor is important, so is character. Character isn't made from one day to another; it needs time to build up. **(Ricardo Marroquin Santos)**

Reading about all these extraordinary women in the Women of Courage Oracle, I found it hard to just choose one story to respond to. Reading the stories of my classmates gave me a better understanding of their history and what they have each experienced and endured so far in their lives. I can't help but tear up knowing that just "one woman" has impacted our lives in such a way that it has inspired us and had such a incredible impact on the people we've become today.

A lot of these stories are those of our mothers and grandmothers. It just goes to show how sensational and brave women truly are. In most of the stories, the women have been down and left without a voice, but somehow they managed to rise and carry the world on their shoulders. It's just so inspirational reading about everyone's journey and realizing that we're all fighting our own battles and overcoming obstacles every day. **(Alice Ramirez)**

MEN OF COURAGE



It Gets Greater Later By Candace Howard

At 20 weeks pregnant, my mother gave birth to a two-pound baby boy. My brother was smaller than a 12 ounce box of cereal, my dad recalled while holding my brother in his hands, with him fitting perfectly in his palm. Doctors told my parents he wouldn't live because being born so early put him at risk.

Most people know Vernell Jr. by Dot, Fdot, or Dot Marley. Growing up, we called him Little Man as our family nickname. Being raised in the slums of Chicago, as he calls it—the Robert Taylor Projects—, Dot witnessed a lot of gun violence, drug activities, fighting, and killings. Dot ended up being a product of his environment, getting involved in gangs, drugs, and guns. He never wanted to live that lifestyle but that was survival. He loved animals and making music. Dot found himself having to make a gang with his friends to protect himself, his brother, and his friends. They got into fights or had to run to and from school almost every day to protect themselves from the rival gang. He had rocks and bricks thrown at him and was even jumped on by as many as ten boys if he didn't run fast enough.

It was never easy in the projects. At age 14, Dot wrote an anthem for the buildings that went viral. Everybody loved his song. He was asked to perform it at their early block party, which was a great performance. No matter how much Dot hated the negativity in Chicago, he couldn't avoid the dangers. He was shot in the shoulder at age 17, sitting at his brother's house

making music. That situation humbled Dot. He made up his mind to put more time into his music and to stay out of the streets. His dream was to get himself and his loved ones out of the ghetto. He formed a rap group called Buck 20 Brick Boyz. They became the hottest upcoming group coming out of Chicago, going viral with many videos on YouTube. Def Jam Records reached out to my brother's manager with a record deal to offer—not to the group but only for Dot because he's that amazing. In the midst of him negotiating a deal with DJR, he was arrested after being caught with a firearm, which he only carried for protection. He was sent away for a little over a year and lost the deal offer.

Dot came home and got back into his music. After giving birth to his baby girl a year later, he left Chicago. Wanting to raise her in a better environment, Dot moved to Madison, Wisconsin. While staying here, Dot picked up another craft. Being the multi-talented guy he is, he became a photographer. After three years of living in Madison, he is known as one of the best photographers here and is well loved by the community.

On July 2018 after trying to protect his oldest sister from her boyfriend, he was shot four times by the

man as he walked into his apartment building. To make matters worse, his sister defended her boyfriend, and now they are no longer speaking.

From a premature baby who wasn't supposed to live to a victim of gun violence twice, Mr. Howard is living, Mr. Howard is healed, and Mr. Howard is pushing on. He has his own photography business (a 20twenty vision) and is doing what he does best: music.





The Three Most Courageous, Brilliant Black Kings By Quishanta Cary

I want to tell you a little bit about my handsome daddy, Mr. Leonard William Cary, Jr. (God rest his soul). My daddy was the funniest and most straightforward and loving human being ever!! I have to admit that everyone who was everyone knew and loved my daddy. My daddy always loved making us laugh and smile! He always joked with us. He was into a lot of sports and won trophies.

His best sport he played until he couldn't play any more due to his illness was bowling. I remember I loved going bowling with him in Chicago. He had to be there by 8 AM, so he and I would get up at 6 AM. I had fun because I would get spoiled, even more than usual. That's where I met the lady who my daddy would cheat on my mommy with until his passing.

My daddy was very laid back with us. After he and I would leave the bowling alley at 3, we'd go to one of his favorite bars. He'd buy me a drink after he convinced them I was old enough. I showed ID, or one of his well-known friends would get me something to eat while he played

the slots (his other gambling game to do was the lottery).

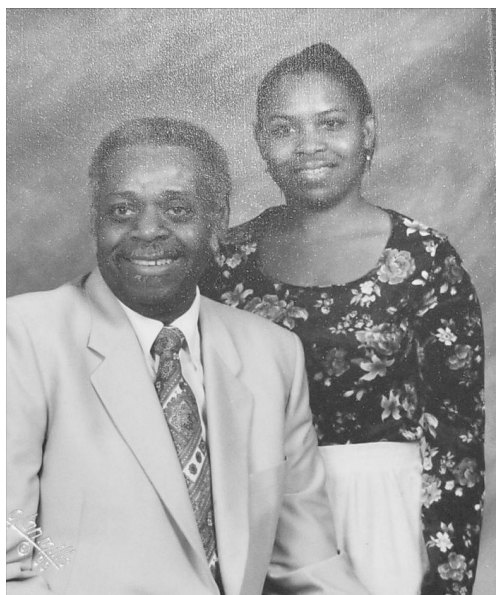
My daddy taught me a lot about life, how it was for him growing up, and everything about our

family's home, Chicago. His wisdom was priceless. I remember when he taught me about the birds and the bees. There was something else my daddy told me that still sticks with me until this day: that I can do whatever a man can do, maybe even better. Both my parents told us, "Never be afraid to tell and/or ask us anything, and never be afraid of us." I instill this in my daughter. Also they taught me never to depend on any man or woman, especially if we can do it ourselves.

The second king in my family is my handsome big brother and best friend, Byron Wilson Cary. Ever since we were kids, my oldest brother would always make up games that the three of us would play indoors and out, even walking to and from school. He'd even make up card games and teach us.

I remember two times when we were playing and I got in trouble for it. One game was jumping off the dresser playing Superheroes, and another time was when he kept putting his finger (he called the game Number One) on me. I tried to hit him with a pen, but the wall broke, so our mommy hit me instead.

My oldest brother is a whiz at any type of math, no matter what. You can tell him a problem over the phone, and he will be able to help. He made games up out of anything. If I needed help, he'd hold his fist up and sing, "I'll help you with this!" He's so smart. My oldest brother always kept my youngest brother and me in check, especially going to school. He'd yell at us and would keep me from cussing or throwing up my middle finger. One day I remember while he was taking me to see my best friend because she had the "pox," I had a gift for her. He said, "Q-Dog, you have to stop always going out of your way for your friends because ever since you've been friends, they've never once done that for you." He did have a point.





The last handsome king in my family is my little brother and best friend, Cameron Patrick Cary. Cameron and I are the babies, the youngest in our family. Cameron is a big kid at heart. Unlike me, but more like Byron, Cameron was good and damn good in math, too. When it comes to his family, he doesn't play or take any b.s. I think growing up, I was kind of jealous because he got to go places with my cousin more and I didn't.

Cameron was always into sports in high school, mainly football and wrestling. But one day he had to go to the hospital and was told he had to give up one of them because he had too much fat around his heart. He stuck with football and was damn good at it. There were times we'd ride each other on our shoulders from the basement all through the house and up in the attic. People always used to think because he was the tallest in my family, even taller than our dad, that he was older than I was. Now he moved here to Madison, and he is happily married with a stepdaughter.

So now you know about the three most courageous black, handsome, educated, and important kings in my family. The main king is my best friend, my daddy, and I miss him SOOO dearly! God rest his soul.



My Courageous Brother By Carmon Caire

Kaleem Caire is smart and loyal, a dedicated father to five children, and a wonderful, loving brother.

Kaleem was born Michael Steven Caire. He grew up with my mom and me. My mother took custody of him when he was two years old. She was pregnant with me. We grew up in a single parent house with my loving mother, Gretchen Caire.

Kaleem graduated from West High School in 1989 and right away joined the Navy. He enlisted for four years. Then he met his wife and started a family at the age of 20.

I feel he is a man of courage because he wasn't afraid to leave at 17 to enlist in the Navy and help make sure our country was as safe as possible. He continued his education and always pushed the importance of staying in school. He led the Urban League. He eventually opened up One City Early Learning Center across from Mt. Zion Church. He has become very successful and is now running for School Board.

Kaleem is courageous because he never lets challenges get in his way. He always has a lot of ambition to become successful. **(Carmon Caire)**



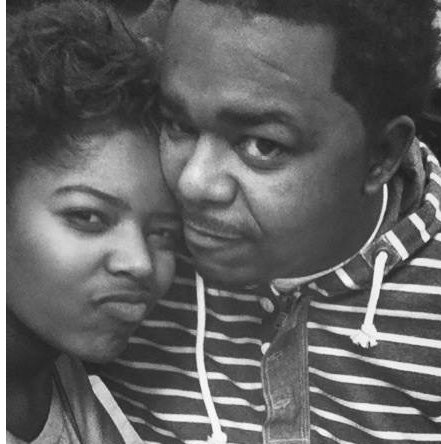


All Girls Need Their Fathers **By Galeca McCain**

Growing up on the south side of Chicago where gang rivalry violence and drugs were at an all-time high, my

father could have easily been persuaded to become a victim. Instead, he decided to spend most of his time break dancing and chasing my mother around. At the age of 17 he transformed from a boy to a man, taking on the responsibility of becoming a new father. His spare time of break dancing was replaced by getting a job to support his first-born child, which happened to be me. From that day forward he never turned back, always making sure he had a stable job to support his family. Years later, my father agreed to move from his comfort zone in Chicago, leaving behind his mother and younger brother only so he could provide a better life for his now four children and wife. Considering how close my father is to my grandmother and uncle, he struggled with leaving them; however, he also knew the family he created deserved more. As we transitioned from Chicago to Madison with no familiar face in sight, we continued trying our best to settle into a new city and state. My father not only became homesick but also struggled to find work. He began feeling less of a man because my mother was now the support for our family. After several attempts at searching for a job, my dad was finally given the chance to work as a bus driver.

As time went on, our family continued to expand. Due to the financial burden, my father thought it would be best if he picked up a secondary job. That's when he decided to work at the local Super Walmart. Because my dad was always working so much, my siblings and I barely had the chance to spend time with him. It seemed as if he would be gone all day, only coming home when we were on our way to bed. As much as we hated his schedule, and he did as well, we knew as a family of six we were depending on him. Despite the long hours, he



never missed any important events of our lives. He made sure he scheduled to be there for every prom, graduation, or basketball game.

I can honestly say I have been blessed to have my father in my life. It's common for fathers to be absent, leaving

mothers to become single parents, but not my dad. He has always been there, every step of the way. My father is who I turn to for advice. He is my go-to person when I need financial help, and he makes sure he supports me in any decision I make. I've always known him to be hard-working, dedicated, and a god-fearing man. My father has always been someone everyone enjoys being around. With his huge beer belly and perfectly shaven mustache, he is guaranteed to make you smile. He is known for cracking jokes as if he were the new-age Richard Prior. My dad has always been and will always be a man of courage, a man of power, and a hard working, dedicated, and god-fearing man.

He continues to lead our household in the direction of greatness, always the provider and protector, never the disciplinarian, but always the voice of reason. I've chosen my father, Ganel McCain, as a man of courage. I believe all girls need their fathers. A father is supposed to be the first man you ever love. Fathers are supposed to set the course for their daughter's life, teaching them how to be treated like a lady, making them feel secure, telling them yes when Mommy said no.

My father is now a truck driver who enjoys his new schedule because he is home at a reasonable time. He enjoys spending time with his grandchildren. He is even able to sneak in some alone time with my mother. Despite how he can be a little impatient and cheap, I wouldn't change anything about him.

CONNECTING WITH DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Students read King's "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" (1963) and wrote King a letter as if he were still alive in 2019. Here are brief excerpts from longer student letters.

Dear Dr. King,

Fifty-six years after your eloquent "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," a letter you wrote to several clergymen to address social injustices

against the black community in Birmingham, racial segregation still exists in our daily lives today. I am really disappointed that black people are still experiencing what you and your peers went through five decades ago. Every day in our society, African Americans are subjected to racial profiling, police brutality, and killings. For example, The Washington Post reports that from 2015 to 2018, police fatally shot 4,000 people. The fact that people are being murdered because of the color of the skin sickens me. . . . It doesn't matter what race you are; we are all human beings. . . . According to NPR News, 92 per cent of African Americans say they face discrimination today. . . . Your letter is a start to address racial injustices, and we will continue this fight until the equality of all races. **(Hezouwe Walada)**

One of the first quotes that caught my attention was "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." I feel that you meant that American communities are connected. Injustice in one community will affect



communities everywhere. In my opinion, diversity is important everywhere because it provides every society and culture with distinctive characteristics and inspirational and positive perspectives. . . . It is sad that people are constantly judged by the color of their skin. . . . Reading your letter made me feel as though I have the power to make a difference. Injustice towards innocent human beings will continue if no changes are made. **(Yangchen Lhamo)**

We need to follow the laws God gave us, not manmade laws. We all claim to love the Lord and claim to be people of God, but we break his laws with no remorse. . . . Your dream was for integration, but according to the Scriptures, the only way out of captivity is to follow the Most High laws. We have decades and decades of fighting for equality, yet it's 2019 and not much has changed. I wonder if people actually started following the laws of the Most High, would it lead to a different outcome? **(Candace Howard)**

My whole being, the very soul of my core as I read about church bombings in Birmingham, cried out deep down in the inner part of my spirit. I really do think that Trump needed to hear you say that “Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider anywhere within its boundaries.” I feel that is exactly what Trump was doing by separating families from their children. . . . We are not going to keep sitting idly by and let all this injustice take place. We are no longer going to watch our children get mistreated and unjustly accused. If we can’t be heard with our voices, then we will be heard with our peaceful demonstrations. . . . Dr. King, I agree with you that this next generation coming up will be the one to bring our nation back to those “great wells of democracy which were dug by the founding fathers in their formulation of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.” . . . I hope and pray with you as well that “the dark clouds of racial prejudice will very soon pass and deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear-drenched communities, and in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their scintillating beauty.” (**Quishanta Cary**)

The “dark clouds of racial prejudice” have not passed away yet, the profound brume of misunderstanding still wanders around

people’s hearts, and our communities are still soaked in fear. Racial injustice still submerges our communities nowadays. Just as you mention how policemen inflict “inhumane treatment of Negroes in the city jail,” so the Latino community in Madison has experienced panic because of the presence of ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement). Around the nation, families have been separated, and children have been incarcerated. As you mention in your letter, “We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.” As many Latinos have been deported back to their country, many Wisconsin farmers are struggling to run their farms due to the lack of workers (95% of their work force were or are illegal immigrants). . . . I have heard, “Mexicans are stealing our jobs, Mexicans are rapists, Mexicans are dirty, or Mexicans are good just for cleaning bathrooms or mopping floors.” However, many more of us are like myself, always looking for opportunities to further our education and become better persons. As you, Dr. King, mentioned, “Perhaps it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say ‘wait.’” I have lived in this country for over 20 years, but I am still waiting for comprehensive immigration reform. . . . (**J. Luis Pérez-Olgún**)





My personal take-away from “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” is the power and strength of love. . . . You said, “In deep disappointment I have wept over the laxity of the church. But be assured that my tears have been tears of love.” This type of love

It is extremely frustrating to realize that the state of social injustice in the U.S. has not made much progress in terms of obtaining equality for the black community and all minorities since you wrote this letter. Hatred and violence are

still alive and well in this nation. Police are still using their power to target and attack blacks. . . . Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice, Eric Garner, Sandra Bland, and Phillando Castille, to name a few, were all killed by police officers with the exception



of Trayvon, whose killer was a neighborhood watchman on the phone with police dispatch as he stalked and ultimately murdered Martin for “looking suspicious.” In your letter you mentioned

that “we know from painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor, it must be demanded by the oppressed.” I couldn’t agree more with that statement. In order to see change, the black community must come together. . . . We need to hit white supremacists where it hurts: in their wallet. (**Zataiya Gober**)

towards your faith was such a superior power. Other churchmen stood on the sidelines because they thought that was the law. Other ministers said about segregation, “Those are social issues, with which the gospel has no real concern.” I can see why you felt disappointment, but your love defeated any aspect of the terrors surrounding you. You said, “we realized that we were the victims of a broken promise.” As a Deferred Action of Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipient, I also feel part of a broken promise. The musical chairs that were once available without sign of the music stopping can be taken away at any time. . . . There is a connection between the situation of African Americans in Birmingham and undocumented immigrants that illustrates the segregation in my community, too.

(**Ricardo Marroquin Santos**)

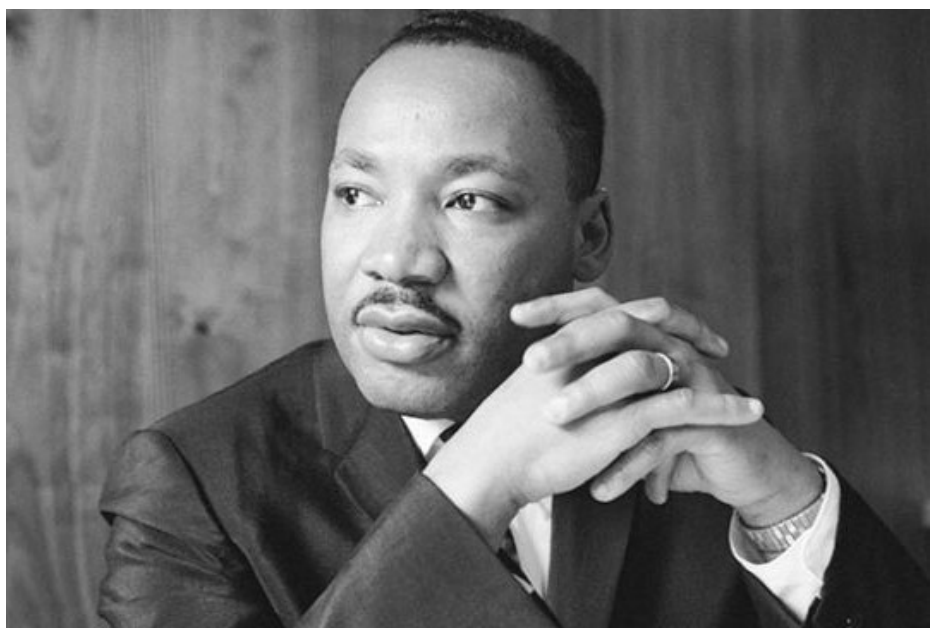


Your "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" is eloquently written. You used the black experience of segregation to try to get empathy from the clergymen. . . . You used the example of a six-year-old child watching a commercial for an amusement park and the pain her parents must go through to tell her they cannot go because it's for whites only. You say, "Ominous clouds of inferiority begin to form in her little mental sky . . . beginning to distort her personality." This shows that segregation can cause children to feel "less than." Anyone with a heart would not want the future generation growing up with tainted hearts and minds thinking because of the color of their skin they are less human than someone with lighter skin. . . . Dr. King, you wrote, "an unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law." . . . You use the Holocaust as an example of a law that was terribly unjust but still legal. . . . In America today, a few unjust laws still stand, like laws that allow children to be ripped away from their parents and put into facilities. We still have quite a way to go, but I appreciate the groundwork you have laid for us. (**James Horton Jr.**)

Your letter that you wrote while in a Birmingham jail in 1963 had very good logic and reasoning establishing a person's morals. You are truly a blessed man of God. I am so happy to know that on your recent birthday, January 15, 2019, you would have been 90 years old. . . . I pray every day that I live to be your age or even past 100 years old. . . . There is still some racism, bigotry, and

discrimination in parts of the U.S. and the world, but there is no more sitting on the back of buses unless we as a black people want to. There are no more water fountains with signs saying "for colored only" and "for whites only." . . . Because of you standing up for our African American race and all of mankind, we've come a long way. Yet because of our present president, Donald Trump, and politics, we have a long way to go. (**Joyce Johnson**)

Your disappointment in the church is interesting. . . . Not too long ago, religion was used as a way to control folks of color, making it seem as though it was God's intention for folks to be enslaved, to service white people for their entire lives. In my opinion, religion has separated us for many reasons, skin color included. . . . Despite being different in many aspects (color, religion, gender, economic status), I believe we should be able to co-exist. . . . You speak a lot about the law as well. . . . How do black folks not defy or break laws that are wrong? I believe that laws do not always have human rights in mind; therefore, folks should be allowed to defy these rules in order for them to be changed. (**Kayasia Blake**)



What made this letter so powerful is how you . . . referenced things to reach different audiences, getting the attention of thinkers from different faiths by using the Old and New Testament. You question how one differentiates between “just” and “unjust” laws. You say “a just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law or law of God” and “an unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal law and natural law.” All segregation laws are unjust. . . . There are still injustices we face being a minority that remain in 2019, but you would be proud of how far we have come and all the organizations and campaigns that have been formed to target injustices for African Americans. . . . To be aware is to be alive, which brings me back to your famous quote: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” . . . Black Lives Matter. (La’cee Webster)

Your letter was persuasive and enlightening not only for oppressors but also for the so-called Christian religious leaders who used religious congregations to promote and support unjust laws that favored them at the time. I am moved by your writing style, which used similes,

parallelism, allusion, and metaphors in analyzing, comparing, reasoning, and assessing the situations in your time without being judgmental. An example of an allusion you made is when you referred to the “eloquent and prophetic writing” of “Ralph McGill, Lillian Smith, Harry Golden, James McBride Dabbs, Ann Braden, and Sarah Patton Boyle” [white journalists who spoke out in favor of civil rights]. . . . You wrote about how some whites “have left their secure congregations and walked the streets of Albany, Georgia with us.” White people with all the advantages they had at the time chose to stand for what is right, even if it meant going against their own kind or facing torture in filthy jails in Alabama or Georgia. . . . As a true supporter of freedom and equality for all, I stand in solidarity with you in your efforts to dislodge the chains of segregation and inequalities among citizens of this country. We are still fighting this battle today in 2019 because white supremacy still exists in our society. We could use your voice to enlighten our black brothers, sisters, and all right-minded people to enlist in the crusade to end white supremacy in our country. (Abdourahman Sallah)



As I read your response to the inconsiderate clergymen's letter, it made me smile. It almost seems like they were hoping to get a negative response back from you, but you gave them the opposite. You've shown how educated any person should be when it comes to dealing with injustice and inequality. You decided to step up to be heard for those who can't, don't, or won't. . . . I remember when I was about 12 or 13, on our way home from brunch with my family, we were riding, listening to music, and having a good time. My mom pointed out there was somebody riding close behind her seeming anxious to go faster. Finally, the older gentleman got over in the next lane as we pulled up to a red light. My mom was highly upset. All of her kids were in the car, and anything could have happened as they exchanged words. The gentleman pulled off with the green light, flipped us off while saying, "f%#\$ you n@*\$%#s." I remember it clear as day and could remember thinking that he was really mean. I never could have imagined experiencing that firsthand, but racism is still a big issue in the world. My favorite saying I've heard is "we have to be the change in the world we want to see" [Gandhi]. I hope one day we can come together somehow, put aside our differences, and all be treated equally. There's so much love in the world, and it sucks that some people would rather choose hate. **(Cheyenne Pete)**

You were a god-driven man with good intentions and an extraordinary way of enlightening others. . . . I don't know if I would have had the courage to endure blows without retaliation and even falsely being taken to jail. It takes a lot of courageous people to do

what you did, and for that you will always be recognized as a great leader. Your quote "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere" is still heard often around the U.S. today due to a broken justice system that still affects us because of the color of our skin. We have justified murderers dressed in blue uniforms that carry the blood of our young black men, and we continuously have justice denied. It would seem very simple for many who have never had to deal with being treated inhumanely to turn a blind eye. You are absolutely right about bringing to the surface the hidden tension and injustice, letting that be a beginning to working on these issues. **(Alice Ramirez)**

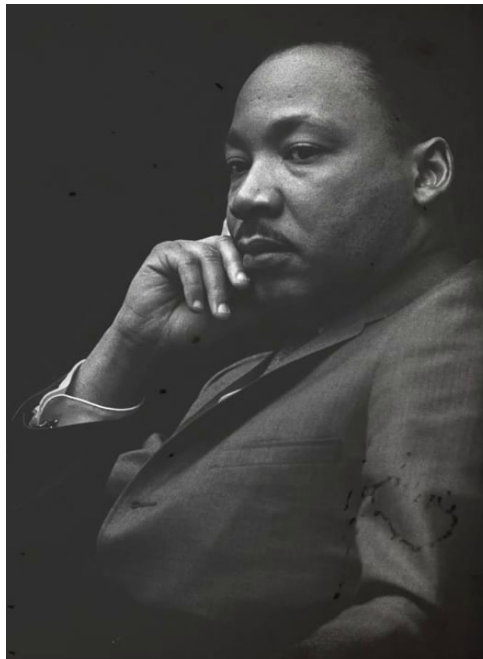


. . . What do you think about people who quote you and Malik Shabazz [Malcolm X] as though you would be saying the same things now and in the same ways as you did from 1952-1968? I don't believe Malik Shabazz would be standing in a window with a rifle, talking about 'by any means necessary.' He was an evolving Muslim and intellectual. . . . Ironically, it was the son and successor of Elijah Muhammad, Wallace D. Muhammad, who not only admired your oratory and intellect but also your courageous stand against racism and white supremacy. He also, apart from his father, praised you to the entire community and pointed out the wisdom and fearlessness of your Gandhi-style, non-violent, love-infused civil protest and disobedience, seeing it as something to admire, not to negatively criticize and demean. . . . He praised your speeches and put them on the level of the prophets of the Old and New Testament, as well as the speeches of Frederick Douglass and David Walker. He particularly pointed towards a favorite of mine, your speech "The Drum Major Instinct."* I love the way you used the wisdom and logic of the great philosophers, verses of scripture, metaphor, reverse psychology, simile, parallelisms, allusions, and self-reflection in your writings and discourse. . . . Well, I've already gone past my page limit and probably said too much, so before I get into trouble with Professor Auerbach, let me bring this missive to a close. . . . Peace and Blessing to you and all of the Prophets, Messengers, Martyrs, and Saints.
(Muhammad Abdullah)

***An Excerpt from Martin Luther King Jr.'s
"The Drum Major Instinct" (1968)**

. . . There is, deep down within all of us, an instinct. It's a kind of drum major instinct—a desire to be out front, a desire to lead the parade, a desire to be first. . . . We all want to be important, to surpass others, to achieve distinction, to lead the parade. . . . Do you know that a lot of the race problem grows out of the drum major instinct? A need that some people have to feel superior. A need that some people have to feel that they are first, and to feel that their white skin ordained them to be first. . . .

In fact, not too long ago, a man down in Mississippi said that God was a charter member of the White Citizens Council. This perverted use of the drum major instinct has led to the most tragic prejudice, the most tragic expressions of man's inhumanity to man. . . . Jesus said, "I want you to be first in love. I want you to be first in excellence. I want you to be first in generosity." And he transformed the situation by giving a new definition of greatness. . . .



If you want to say [at my funeral] that I was a drum major, say that I was a drum major for justice; say that I was a drum major for peace; I was a drum major for righteousness. . . . If I can help somebody as I pass along, if I can cheer somebody with a word or song, if I can show somebody he's traveling wrong, then my living will not be in vain.

PAYING IT FORWARD



Volunteering to Build Houses after the Wildfire in My Village **By Hezouwe Walada**

In the Togo village I grew up in called Koumea, we have a group of young folks who have dedicated their time to volunteering in the community. Hence, they have helped a lot of people in the village. Watching them do such good deeds inspired me to join their crew. This is how I ended up volunteering to build a few houses for the people of our village when they lost their homes in the wildfire.

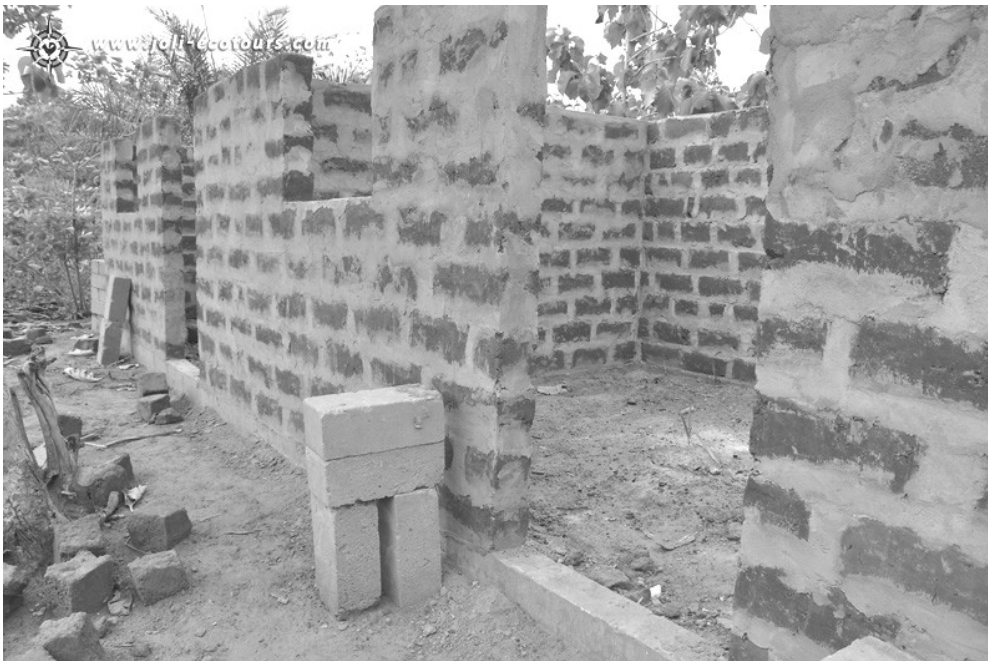
As they say, “It takes more than a village to build a house.” It means when a neighbor is in need in the village, everyone wants to help. This is the reason why when three of our community’s houses caught on fire, our volunteering crew was there to help. We built the new houses for them. To go about accomplishing our task, it took us two long days. The first day, the first thing we did was

to make rectangular-shaped mud bricks. Then, we let them dry under the hot sun. While some of my crewmates and I were taking care of the bricks, others went in the forest to get some lumber and clay for building the roof. Later, we went to the nearest river to get some water to store in the barrels for the construction the next day.

The second day was actually the building day. We used the bricks to make a rectangular shaped house, and then we made the roof. That day everyone was tired. However, we were so happy to see how it turned out. All the houses were completed. Moreover, the recipients of these new homes were so happy and appreciative because they were now able to have a home again.

I was really happy to be involved in something great that made someone happy. Those people and their family have a place they can call home, and all of them can say thanks to the volunteering team. I always count on our

volunteering crew because I know they are ready to help whenever they are needed in our village. That was such a wonderful experience. To be able to volunteer make me feel useful in our community, and I can’t wait to do it again.





Giving Back to the YWCA By Monica Mims

I've been an avid volunteer at the YWCA since I moved out in 2003. I became a resident of the

Third Street Program with my one-year-old baby after escaping an abusive relationship, and I stayed there until she was three years old. At the Y, I was given many opportunities and resources to re-jumpstart my life. I started a new (MY OWN) bank account, bought my first car, and got on the road to my first college degree. I'm grateful for the organization and some of the longtime staff.

That is why I give my time at the YWCA whenever possible. I stand behind the organization because I'm living proof of the benefits and opportunities they offer. My daughter and I help organize their Annual Summer Picnic and the Third Street Annual Christmas Party, and we stuff envelopes for mass mailings when needed.



Mentee Becomes Mentor at the TRIO Program By Yangchen Lhamo

When I graduated with a GED in spring 2016 from Omega School, I registered for summer classes at

Madison College. I was overwhelmed by the registration process, by meeting so many advisors for every single question, such as filling out the FAFSA form, picking classes, etc. In addition, I am an English learner who has found it extra hard to navigate and break the barriers that I come across. The TRiO program showed me the possibilities. It helped me transition into Madison College smoothly and paved my path to reaching my career goal through workshops and building relationships, tutoring, mentoring, and



scholarships. As a way of showing how appreciative I am for all the help I received that made my dream possible, I decided to pay it back to TRIO by volunteering as a mentor to new students who are taking prerequisites to become a nurse. . .

Sometimes we need somebody to talk to,

so I always try to show my mentee that I am there to listen. The conversation always ends up so therapeutic for both of us. Besides that, I take my mentee on a health building tour (nursing suite, respiratory suite, surgical tech, medical technologist, medical assistant, massage therapist) to show the different programs in the health building. From my experience, I had students who struggled to fulfill the nursing prerequisites, which made them feel that the road is ending. By visiting all the programs, they get an idea in the back of their heads that there are so many great programs out there. One mentee said, "Exploring the health building in person instead of hearing or reading about it was eye opening." Once I build a mentor mentee relationship, I share my story with them, not for sympathy but to show them that I thrived due to my perseverance and resilience.

TRIO's mentoring program is one of many that helped me immensely when I first started classes at Madison College. After I was accepted into the nursing program, I felt the responsibility of mentoring future nurses, and I volunteered to mentor at Trio. I pay it forward through volunteering as a mentor at the TRiO program.

POETRY CORNER

Untitled

By Cheyenne Pete

People often feel discouraged,
some blinded by their sorrows,
like a loss of hope and dreams,
with pessimism to follow.
We won't talk about it,
yet everyone's experienced it,
like a never-ending battle,
but when did we get so caught in appearance?
This life is not a rat race,
no grand prize for first place.
We should try to stand together,
we must try to overcome.
Like those fighting for our country,
we must try and become one.
Others often feel trapped,
like a mouse in a cage running track.
And our minds are so consuming,
that's no excuse to keep going back.
We all seek out love,
though that's where we may lack.
You can give or you can take,
like dogs when they're anxious to play.
So close your eyes swiftly,
take time to explore your mind.
Can you picture happiness?
All those things you love,
what would that look like?
Maybe sitting on a beach,
feet in the toasty sand,
not worried about a thing.
Maybe you in a dream house,
living lavishly adoring all that bling.
And on bad days you can't endure,
close your eyes and dream again.
Despite everything you've been feeling,
it can all still be done!



My Odyssey Journey, Class of 2018-2019 **By Carmon Caire**

My journey is taking part in this wonderful program,
The Odyssey Project,
life transforming, positive,
a total new life direction.
As I grow older, I am taking a huge leap of faith,
I enter a new place and stage at 45
to return back to school.
I couldn't make this journey
without the support of my family and late grandparents,
Mary B. Caire, July 20, 2008, 92 years old,
And Edgar P. Caire, Feb. 24, 1984, 69 years old.
They are my angels above, looking down on me,
cheering me on daily with plenty of smiles,
very proud of their princess granddaughter.
As the journey continues,
I will finish my next degree
and continue to walk with my head up high
as I succeed in my educational journey.
Peace and love,
Success is me,
Carmon Latrice Caire



Untitled **By NatuRa Warford**

My energy's been so low and my thoughts so dim.
Feeling like no family, a loved one, or a single friend,
my heart has been pained and full of stress!
So ask me how, how do I know that I am blessed?
Could it be the fact that I woke up this morning?
Writing these words, trying to be encouraged?
Or the messages I receive when I sleep
from the spirit I have way deep in me.
Sometimes I wanna fade, right on away,
but the warrior princess in me just can't see me fold to pieces.
My ability to rise even impresses me.
I say that with complete humility.
I'm here, each time, and I know for the good.
So please look for more from Ms. Understood.
The journey, my journey, is an ongoing battle.
I thought through Naturity I'd secured not rattled.
Since life is ongoing, so is the truth,
I'll continue my fight as though I'm in a rap battle booth
coming with the strongest and most fearless bars,
simply because I'm one of the brightest stars!
There I go again, patting my back.
But I can think of worse things to do, other than that.
As long as I am blessed with life, I'll take on the quest,
the one that helps me grow and suits me best.

BECOMING A METAPHOR

I am a light
Made to shine in this world
Made to shine in dark places
I have a purpose
Helping others find their way
It is my duty (**Hezouwe Walada**)

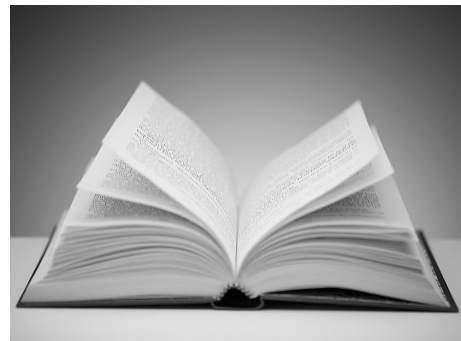
I am a flower
When the breeze blows
I move forward and backward
When I dance—so many colors
Just like my thirteen wigs . . . (**Joyce Johnson**)

I am a *Mazorca*
My roots are hard to find around the world
Although I am everywhere!
Originalmente from *la tierra de Mexico*
Because I was born and raised
And my roots belong there
Even if I appear to be growing a *cuitlacoche*
All over me that contaminates my body
That may be the best part of me
That you don't know about me
Every part of me serves a purpose
Even if I am no longer useful
I still serve a purpose and I can source it
With the meaning of the circle of life
Well you may think you know me
And serve a certain purpose in life
I'll give you a hint
Unwrap a tamale.
(**Ricardo Marroquin Santos**)

Key:
mazorca—corn ear;
cuitlacoche—corn smut (*afungus*
that grows on corn from
moisture abuse);
originalmente—originally;
la tierra—the land;
de—of

I am a garden full of roses
People walk through taking
Parts of me not knowing they're
Leaving me empty
Then there's God,
replanting His seeds. (**Candace Howard**)

I am a book made of many pages.
I can tell a lot of stories.
Don't judge me from my cover.
My story can teach you a lot
or make you uninterested.
Until someone understands me,
I'll be put up on a shelf. (**Savannah Rose Perry**)



I am a book
That contains many chapters
I have done so much and have
Experienced so many things through
People I have met that I could
Write a book about it. (**Queeneice Creamer**)



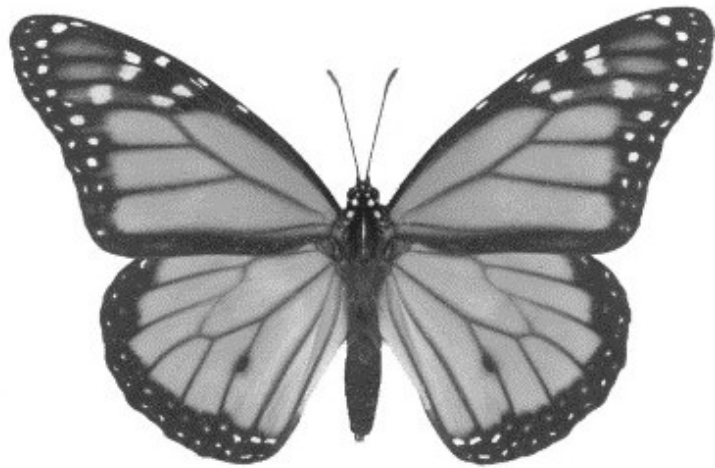
I am a mama bear
The sweetest title life has given me
My cubs are my heart and soul.
Seeing them happy is my greatest
joy.
Protecting them from any and
everything is my job.
I will protect them with my life.
Nothing beats being a mama bear.
(**Alice Ramirez**)

I am a butterfly
 I'm ready to spread my wings.
 Beautiful but delicate
 I've made it out of the darkness.
 Once a caterpillar, who thought
 Its life was over. (**Zataiya Gober**)

I am a jack-of-all-trades.
 I can do anything and
 Everything. What you can't do,
 I can do. (**Erannia Potter**)

I am a queen
 A queen in the clothes I wear
 A queen in my own ranking
 Walking a path of my own righteousness
 Dripping gold from my stylish mindset
 My own person
 My own thoughts
 Living life self-taught
 Whispers from my ancestors
 A queen in this life
 Be happy I graced you twice
 (**Ebony Anderson-Carter**)

I am a riddle
 The Rubik's cube almost impossible to solve
 Standing out in the midst of it all
 A light-hearted type of poetry
 (**La'cee Webster**)



I am a butterfly
 Freshly sprouted from my cocoon
 I fly gracefully, ready to enjoy
 This new way of life (**Breonna Hawkins**)

I am a pen.
 My words flow like the water
 That runs out of the faucet.
 I dance across the tablet
 Freely expressing myself
 Feelings, thoughts, and deep emotions
 About life, love, and new beginnings.
 (**Carmon Caire**)



I am a rainbow after the storm
I give hope that with every problem
There is a solution (**Galeca McCain**)

I am a dance. . . .
Dance without thinking
Dance with your soul.
You won't even notice your body
Become a synchronized whole. . . .
(**J. Luis Pérez-Olgúin**)

I am a mirror
Looking at me, you see you.
I am positive
I am negative
I am wrong
I am right
I passed
I failed
I am me.
(**Erica Cocoa Gentry**)

I am a revolving door
Always available to the weight of others
Leaving myself vulnerable but prepared to be
used again
They come wanting something
And leave satisfied
Never knowing or caring that I'm unfulfilled.
(**Kayasia Blake**)



I am a shadow
Creeping in the background
Silent as night
Forever attached to the heels of the ones I love
(**James Horton Jr.**)

I am a piano
The white and black keys are my ups and downs.
The notes convey my different moods.
The shiny black prestige of the outside shows my
happiness,
And the messiness of the inside shows my
complications. (**Juan Carlos Abrajan**)



I am a desert
Thirsty and dry,
Waiting to be filled
By the Most High,
My hills are high,
And my valleys low,
But it is He who
will bring me out
This I know!! (**Martina Mitchell**)

I am the sea
People like to test the waters
They try to come in my personal circle
And see how I feel
Sometimes they can be so mean and pollute
Me with all their garbage
I am the sea
When I get mad and fed up
I will drown them with all my anger
A typhoon
And kill them all. (**Quishanta Cary**)

WINTER BREAK REVIEWS



Nappily Ever After **Reviewed by Kayasia Blake**

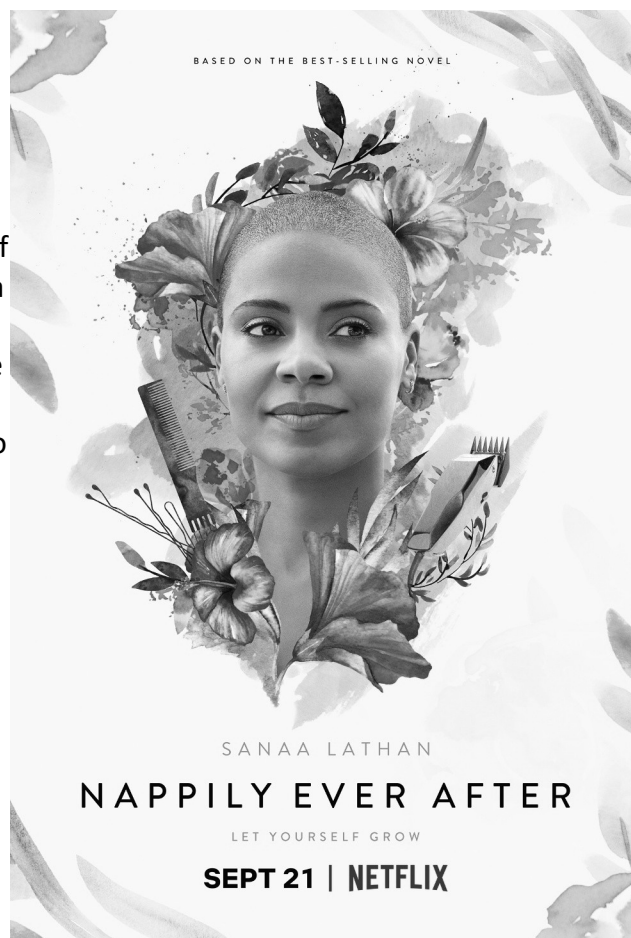
Over the break, I got the chance to watch a movie called *Nappily Ever After* starring Sanaa Lathan. I had been anticipating watching the movie for so long because I learned that Sanaa cut her actual hair for the role! I've been a fan of Sanaa Lathan since I saw her in *Love and Basketball*.

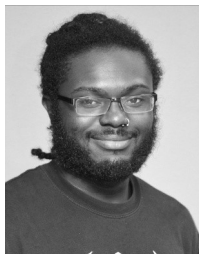
The movie is centered around a woman who's expecting her boyfriend to propose to her on her birthday. To her surprise, she was given a dog instead. When she looks for an explanation, her boyfriend reveals that he couldn't marry someone he barely knows. He explains that during their relationship, she only shared parts of herself that she wanted him to see. Heartbroken, Sanaa breaks up with her boyfriend and ends up having a breakdown on a night out with her friends.

In a drunken stupor at home, she cuts off all of her hair. This leads to the character going on a journey of self-discovery and self-acceptance. The movie touches on beauty standards in the black community including weaves, perms, and ways that black women are "supposed" to carry themselves. During her journey, she meets a man who owns a salon, and his daughter changes her way of thinking by challenging the way she sees herself. The more she spends time with them, the more Sanaa starts to loosen up. She finds that not everything has to be planned and that life doesn't revolve around what other people think of her.

What I enjoyed the most was that Sanaa got to step out of her comfort zone. It helped her

become a better person in the end. It gave her a new outlook on her life, her job, and her love life. I also enjoyed the fact that the movie highlighted her struggle with her hair, showing how it affected her professional life and the way she looked at herself. In the black community, hair is so important and looked on as a prize. We are deemed better than others if we have longer or straighter hair. It's sad because I believe that we are created to be different. Even in the natural hair community, a woman is measured by the curl of her hair or how she styles it. This movie was refreshing because it gave a different perspective while still celebrating the beauty of black women.





Sorry to Bother You

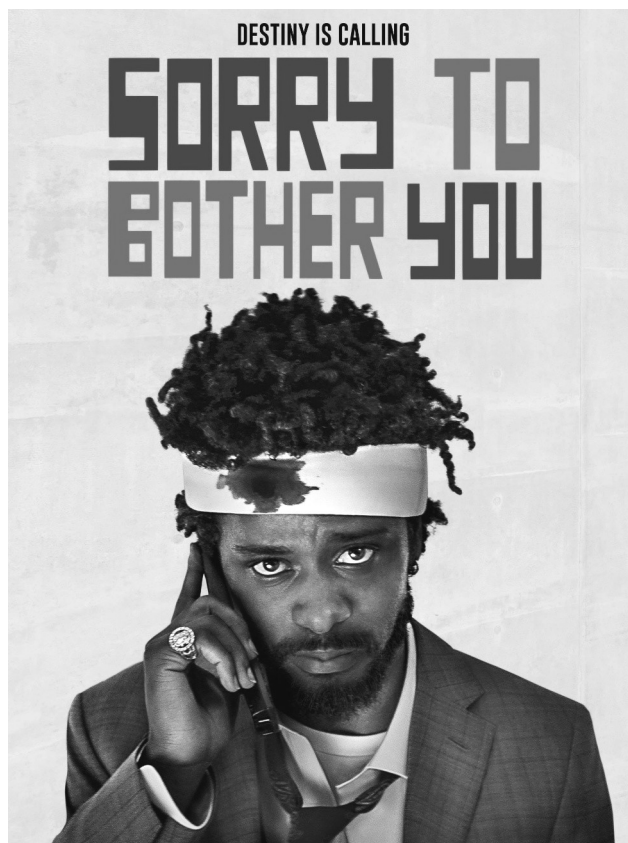
Reviewed by James Horton, Jr.

"Sorry to Bother You is like Get Out on LSD." I was working my shift at the South Madison Goodman Library when I heard

one of the patrons say this. I have heard numerous great and intriguing things about the recently released movie *Sorry to Bother You*. It also starred the actor Lakeith Stanfield. I enjoyed his character, Darius, in the TV show *Atlanta*. He even had a role, albeit a small one, in *Get Out*.

Sorry to Bother You, directed by Boots Riley, takes place in present-day Oakland. It follows the rise and fall of a young African American male known as Cassius "Cash" Green. Cassius doesn't have much. He lives in his uncle's garage with his girlfriend, Detroit. Cassius needs a way to make easy money, as he is behind on rent, and his uncle's house and everything else his uncle owns is in danger of being taken away. Cassius gets an interview for a telemarketing service called Regalview; he gets the job. He struggles with his new job at first, not landing any sales, but then an older, wiser African American male who works beside Cassius takes notice. He tells Cassius that he is going about the conversations all wrong and that he needs to use his "white voice." Cassius thinks his colleague is crazy at first, but eventually concedes and starts taking calls in his white voice. The sales come rolling in.

I really enjoyed the way this movie was shot. I think it was directed beautifully. My personal favorite scenes are where Cassius is actively doing his sales. When the caller picks up the phone, the movie transports Cassius into their living space. It makes the telemarketing calls more personal. There are also some pretty outrageous scenes. In one in particular, Cassius



gets invited to a party hosted by the biggest name in Oakland, the owner of Worryfree (basically Walmart), Steve Lift. Steve Lift is entertained by Cassius and insists that he raps for the people attending the party. Cassius refuses, stating that he cannot rap, but Steve insists. Cassius reluctantly agrees, and we are treated to a scene that I feel represents popular hip-hop in a nutshell.

In conclusion, I really enjoyed the movie. Mr. Stanfield had a great role as Cassius, and Boots Riley directed the movie spectacularly. If there was anything that I would say could have been done better, I think the pacing of the movie was a bit rushed. It moves from scene to scene. I didn't feel like characters other than Cassius had enough screen time for me to actually have any interest in what they were doing. I doubt that there will be a sequel; however, anything else that Boots Riley directs I will be seeing on the big screen.

**Bird Box****Reviewed by La'cee Webster**

Sandra Bullock brings yet another thriller that keeps viewers on edge. There are many other great actors who were a part of this mysterious, drama-filled journey, but I've always loved Sandra Bullock!

The society is coming to an end as they know it. The struggle to survive places demands on those who survive. An unknown enemy is spreading around the world. News of this outbreak first started in Russia and quickly spread to the U.S. The cause is unknown and the enemy invisible; however, when you come in contact with this enemy, it can take any form and makes you commit suicide. It does so by showing you your deepest sorrow or deepest fear, which then drives you to commit suicide. Those who have seen this "invisible enemy" try to trick you into "seeing," as if it's a good thing to see, but it isn't. Having seen this unknown thing, they become crazy. In order to protect yourself, you must remain blindfolded, being quiet and aware of your surroundings.

There are many important points in this movie that I thought were relevant in everyday life. One thing I live by is "to be aware is to be alive." In every situation, from the people you choose to be around, walking across the street, or even driving a car, things can happen in the blink of an eye. When I was growing up, my dad would always tell me to be aware of my surroundings and to never have my head held down. It is a big world we live in, and everything and everyone you come in contact with isn't always good for you. There was a point in the movie where this enemy was destroying everything around Sandra. With trying to beat the odds, she is forced to make important decisions to keep them alive. When one day someone

comes on the radio telling Sandra about a safe haven she and the children can come to, she is happy that she had kept the old walkie talkie as hope someone would hear her cry for help one day. She is told that there is somewhere safe where they can find opportunity and build a whole new reality, which Sandra had always wanted for her kids. However, she has to keep in mind the dangers of trying to get to this safe location when many people have lost their lives on this journey. Is it too good to be true?

Taking a huge chance, she packs the only few things, blankets, and food they have, and they are off down the river blindfolded. With the children being toddlers, they don't understand what is going on but know the importance of listening to what their mother has to say. Nothing is sugar-coated because she wants the children to understand how important it is not to take their blindfolds off and to be quiet and listen to everything she says.

The movie shows the importance of hope. Sometimes in life we may feel like we are stuck between a rock and a hard place, but it isn't forever. Most importantly, you must have faith and make life or death decisions in order to stay alive. . . . I thought this was a great movie with a lot of action to keep you interested. It reminded me a little bit of a movie I saw called *The Quiet Place*. If you like action movies with a great ending or even just love Sandra Bullock as an actor, I recommend this movie.





Farmer's Guide

Reviewed by Abdourahman Sallah

The book *Farmer's Guide* was first published in 1995, authored by Alhagie Nije, a young graduate from a school of agriculture in

Accra, Ghana. Mr. Nije hailed from a farming community of Wassu village in Niani District Central River Region North, about 209 km from the capital city of Banjul, The Gambia.

The 101-page book has nine chapters excluding the biography of the author and a preface. It was a very popular book and was used widely in almost all government junior secondary schools (public schools) across the country at the time. The book outlined steps to be followed, with detailed explanations on how groundnut (peanut) was cultivated using available local tools and techniques with less labor applied, thus improving crop production and productivity.

"There are possibilities to improve groundnut production and productivity and economic opportunities for local farmers, if they (farmers) follow and implement the teachings in the book, thus contribute to the attainment of household food security," said Mr. Nije.

Some of the chapters mentioned in the book

include farm identification, farm preparations, seed selection, time of planting, weeding, post-harvest loss, timely harvest, and storage. The chapters were accompanied by sketches illustrating the first step and ones that follow next for easy understanding.

According to the author, the purpose of the book was to enlighten subsistence farmers to be able to use the locally available tools and resources (e.g. donkey, horses, bullocks, oxen used for draught work) for farming, instead of depending on government tractors, power tillers, and other machinery, which always came late as usual.

As a young farmer from a very poor farming community, I found this book (translated version) very important to me for many reasons, among them reduced work drudgery on the farm, cheap labor, cost effectiveness and enhanced productivity for food and economic opportunities for farmers.

The Farmer's Guide was translated into four major local languages (Fulla, Mandinka, Wollof, and Sarehulleh) for the benefits of non-English speaking farmers to better understand and effectively utilize the book for farmers. Thanks to Tostan, a non-formal education institution, and Action Aid the Gambia for providing the funds for the translation of the book into local languages.



At the time, the Gambian population was less than one million, yet poverty and food insecurity was the order of the day. . . . The Gambia as a country depends on farming to feed her people, and most of these crops are rain-fed crops with no more than four months of rainfall from June to September annually. . . . With implementation of the new farming techniques from the book (*Farmer's Guide*), the farming paradigm began to shift from subsistence farming to commercial farming.



***Food Matters, a Documentary* Reviewed by J. Luis Pérez-Olguín**

There is a reason why our gut is considered our “second brain”; however, I believe our gut is part of our body that needs more

attention. Our gut plays a major role in the health and well-being of the entire body. “A healthier digestive system means a healthier you.” We need to be more conscientious about what we put into our bodies. For example, in plants and fruits such as spirulina and cacao beans, we can find what our body needs for our health and well-being. In addition to a healthy diet, it is important to exercise our body and give it the proper rest.

How can we have or develop a healthy gut? Our gut is known by many as our “second brain,” and there is a reason why. The lining of our gut includes the esophagus and stomach, small and large intestine, gallbladder, liver, and pancreas. By engaging in healthy eating, we can prevent and control many health problems nowadays. Healthy eating begins with learning new ways to eat, such as eating more vegetables, fruits, nuts, and seeds, and avoiding fast food restaurants and foods with a lot of sugar, fat, and processed foods. In addition, superfoods can give exceptional properties to our health and well-being.

Hippocrates once said, “Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food” and “Walking is Man’s best medicine.” Our body is such an amazing machine. If we feed it a healthy diet, exercise, and do stress reduction, our whole body will be in good shape mentally

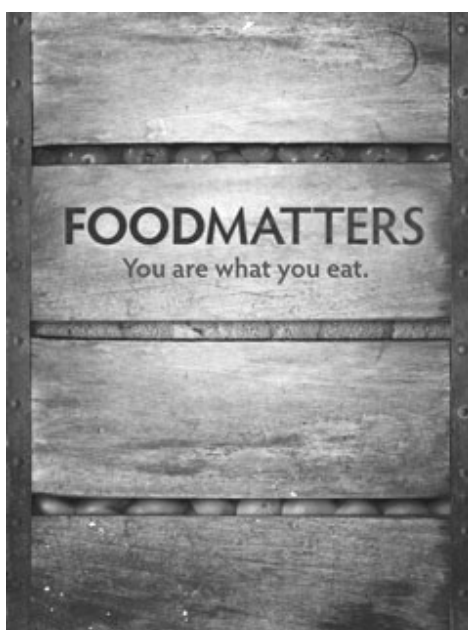
and physically. For example, Dr. Andrew W. Saul compares a steak, which takes the body a massive amount of energy to digest compared to the amount of protein the body gets from it, to spirulina, which has the highest protein content in the world and is easy for the body to absorb since it comes as a powder that can be mixed with water or added to drinks or food.

Also, cacao beans are a great source of magnesium, iron, zinc, manganese, and copper, all the factors needed for a healthy metabolism. Cocoa beans are also high in vitamin C and have antioxidants, which protect us from cancer, DNA damage, viral damage, and skin damage. Dr. Dean Ornish M.D talks about cardiovascular diseases being reversible. For example, he has done interesting work with some patients who have severe cardiovascular disease. He has put these people on a strict vegetarian, plant-based diet, and his patients have been able to arrest or reverse cardiovascular disease in a year or two.

In conclusion, engaging in healthy eating habits can help us fight many illnesses and discomforts as we get older. By eating good amounts of vegetables, fruits, and nuts, we can put ourselves on the great path of good health for the rest of our lives, while avoiding processed

food, fast food restaurants, lots of sugar, and fat. Also, we can get in the habit of taking enough vitamins and consuming plants, seeds, or nuts that are rich in antioxidants. Just as the great physician Hippocrates said, “Healing is a matter of time, but it is sometimes also a matter of opportunity.” It is time for us to take the opportunity to eat well and healthy.

My body, My Temple.





Michelle Obama's *Becoming* Reviewed by Joyce Johnson

I chose to read *Becoming* by Michelle Obama, published in November, 2018. As I began reading the book, I became very impressed with Michelle Obama's style of writing this book about her life with former President Barack Obama and her two daughters, Malia and Sasha. She writes with such grace, good humor, and candor. She provides her readers with a vivid, behind-the-scenes account of her family's history and the global limelight she had inside the White House for eight years. They lived there during Barack Obama's presidency from 2009-2013 and from 2013-2017. Barack Obama was our first African American president elected in the U.S., and he served two terms.

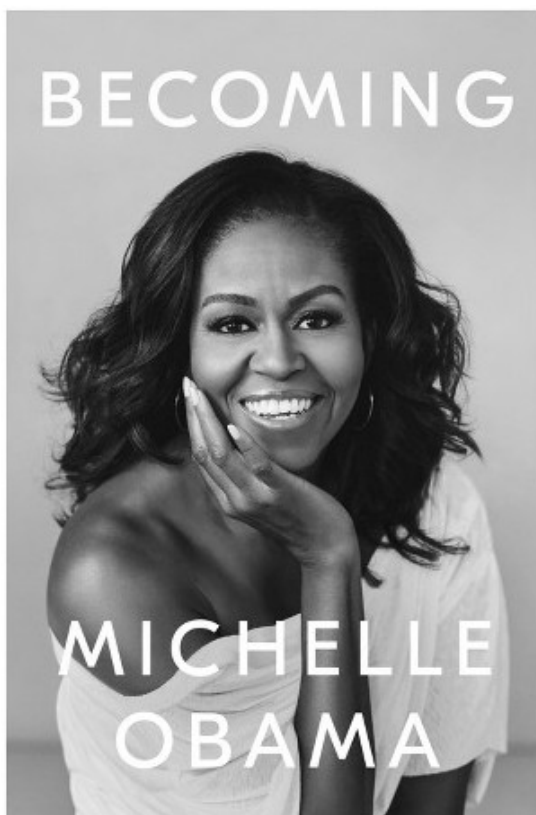
Michelle Obama met Barack when she was an attorney in a Chicago law firm. She was a corporate lawyer and also worked in the Chicago mayor's office, the University of Chicago, and the University of Chicago Medical Center. Michelle Obama founded the Chicago Chapter of Public Affairs, which is an organization that prepares young people for careers in public service.

Michelle Obama writes about things very personal in her life about her two daughters and goes into detail. She also writes about her memories as a child in Chicago. She writes about her parents, Fraser and Marian Robinson, and her brother, Craig. She first

went to college in Princeton and then to Harvard Law School. She managed to balance working, married life, and parenting. She traveled all over the world and the U.S. as the world got to know her. She writes that when she first met Barack Obama, he promised her an interesting journey in their life together. As you read her book, you'll find out he did just that. She writes that Barack Obama is her partner in all things and her best friend.

While in the White House, Michelle Obama launched a program called "Let's Move." As our former First Lady, she got her hands dirty in the soil, planting vegetables and fruits in the White House garden. She invited children of all ages and races and taught them how to eat healthy and learn about nutrition. She even would jump Double Dutch with them.

After reading *Becoming* by Michelle Obama, I learned we have a few things in common dealing with her personal life and mine. We both were born and raised on the south side of Chicago. I also believe in the power of using my voice whenever possible to help others, no matter what race, religion, or background. I also, like her, believe in doing volunteer work to render my time and service to give back to my community and church to help people who may be unfortunate. Like Michelle Obama, when I was a little girl growing up in the 1950s and 1960s, my dad owned a Buick Electra 225 (called a Deuce and a Quarter), just like her father did.



ALL THAT JAZZ: RACE AND RACISM IN JAZZ HISTORY

BY MUHAMMAD ABDULLAH



I wonder what my fellow Odyssey classmates of other ethnicities, lands, and cultures (African, Asian, Spanish, Caucasian, Latino, etc.) think about the fact that so much of our curriculum focuses on one particular group, a relatively new group historically speaking, the indigenous Americans of African descent. Comparatively speaking, we are quite young. We are the “new kids on the block,” the “new edition”; not just some “back street boys” and girls, though. Some of us aren’t wealthy, but we are rich, like the soil and struggles that produced us. Because we had to borrow our language from our captors and enslavers, we created a language for ourselves from our souls in the form of song and dance, faith and gospel, classical and improvisational. Because we were made here, so too is our art and our language, which was adopted by others, regardless of race or ethnicity. What is the admixture, the nomenclature that birthed the music that would become America’s only original art form? Jazz music!

Like it or hate it, we birthed this language, sound, harmony, nomenclature, like a rich soup, like a multi-flavored mixture of roux, meat, and vegetables, e.g. gumbo. While some espouse that there were other art forms that also originated here and deserve equal billing and credit (gospel, blues, ragtime, stride, the boogie-woogie, bebop, scatting, tap, rhythm and blues, soul, funk, hip-hop, scratching, rapping, break-

dancing, jitterbugging), all are part of the anatomy and physiology of a people and our ways, copied and admired all over the world.

The indigenous Americans of African descent were drawn to New Orleans at the dawn of the 20th century mostly for their labor, but our mistreatment, oppression, and pain would find expression in our music. . . . Jazz is the mother and father of them all. Like the people and the soil it came from, it is rich and fertile beyond measure.

Jazz music has long been recognized around the world as America’s only original art form because it was created and formed right here. . . . Jazz music, with its elements of freedom, spontaneity, creativity, syncopation, improvisation, and imagination, is frequently associated with America and the American spirit. The 20th Century is often referred to as The American Century and also the Jazz Age. Jazz was once the “pop” and dance music of America. It unfortunately was also associated

with and fueled by drugs and alcohol, which cut a destructive path throughout America in general and for African Americans in particular. . . .

One of the iconic geniuses of jazz was Kansas City-born Charles “Charlie” Parker, who burst on the scene with this new way of playing music, with a new and distinct language, which he played on his alto saxophone. In a short while, everyone on all





have anything to do with it.” When historian and filmmaker Ken Burns asked Marsalis for a response to La Rocca’s words, Marsalis (Pulitzer Prize winner, jazz trumpeter, composer, teacher, and artistic director of jazz at Lincoln Center) strains to express himself, pauses, closes his eyes, contains his emotions, and then says this:

instruments tried to emulate this new way of playing the music. It was reminiscent of the effect Louis Armstrong had when he came out of New Orleans to Chicago, from Chicago to New York, and around the world. Duke Ellington was reported to have said about his band, “I want Louis Armstrong on every instrument.” . . .

My great-great-grandparents, Moses Jeff Bailey and Millie Pearson-Bailey, were no doubt born into slavery. A number of times last semester I said to myself, “We deal a lot with race and racism in this Odyssey Project. This is not a complaint, but being reminded of this trauma is stressing me out!” The way I managed the pain of reading and discussing race and racism in my Odyssey Project is by recalling the words by Wynton Marsalis. Marsalis gave one of the most eloquent and profound utterances regarding race and racism in this country that I have ever heard uttered. I would like to share it with my classmates as part of African American History Month. . . .

Marsalis’s comments came in response to the words of white musician and bandleader Nick La Rocca. Asked about the origin of jazz music, La Rocca ignorantly and facetiously stated, “Jazz music was a white invention and blacks didn’t

“Well, race is, in this country, the thing in the story, the thing in the mythology that you have to do for the kingdom to be well. It’s always something that you don’t want to do; it’s always that thing which is about you confronting yourself. It’s tailor-made for you to fail in dealing with it. The question of your heroism and of your courage and of your success in dealing with this trial is can you confront it with honesty? Do you confront it? Do you have the energy to sustain an attack on it? And since jazz music is at the center of the American mythology, it necessarily deals with race. The more we run from it, the more we run into it. It’s an age-old story. If it’s not race, it’s something else. But in this particular instance and in this nation, it is race.”

