

12th Annual
**Roxbury Literary
Annual**

Cries In Dark Silence

Judy Depradine

New Mission High, Grade – 12

He, she, they, cry in dark silence.

He runs into his room, trembling.

Resting his head in his hands

Thinking, why didn't he put the gun down?

Blinded by the game, didn't realize he shot someone.

Mother begs, warns him "Living the corner ain't worth time in jail!"

He ignores her and continues living the game,

Not knowing he would end up on his knees,

crying in dark silence

For forgiveness.

He, she, they, cry in dark silence.

She runs out the house, hoping.

Tears streaming, screaming, louder than her surroundings,

Blaming herself for the crime.

If she hadn't argued with her boyfriend,

he would have stayed home that night.

He was heading to college, now he heads six feet under

And the shooter has no future.

He, she, they, cry in dark silence

A community fed up with violence.

Half angry at the shooting of another teen,

The other half just don't care, no unity.

The community created this negativity.

While mother sits in rocking chair saying,

"Living the corner ain't worth time in jail."

He, she, they, cry in dark silence

He cries in dark silence, while the police knock on his door.

His head rises, eyes widen, hands up in the air, trembling

Cold words fall from his lips, "Why didn't I put that gun down?"

Words that haunt, dragging him into a boulevard of broken dreams.

He, she, they, cry in dark silence

She cries in dark silence at the hospital,

Wondering if she could travel backwards through time,

Begging God not to take him away

Hoping for justice.

He, she, they, cry in dark silence.

He does jail time,

He lives,

She's happy,

Now the community can achieve unity,
Again.

Why Write?

Cassandra Clark
Tech Boston Academy, Grade –

Why write?

When it's cold
Words spread a blanket.

Why write?

When there is no food
Words are a banquet.

Why do I write?

My passion comes from music;
Let ideas move on paper,
Ideas don't need an eraser.

Why write?

When dark
Words be light.

Why write?

When violence,
Everything intense,

Words make sense
"Get home before dark."

Why do I write?

Let my soul out like rain water
My words have value

Why not write?

Feeling sad, crying?
write it down
Can make you feel so much better.

Why write?

Because they write for us...
Boring us with concepts
That weren't made for us

Why sit there and write?
Why bring people down?
Why push them to the side?

Let words protect your soul!

Dreams And Demons

Michelle Benson

Boston Day And Evening Academy, Grade –

Saturday afternoon walks in the park.

Together

Grateful

Filled

with trust, honesty, sweetness

So happy in the daylight.

Behind dark doors, she cooks, cleans, and waits for the battle to approach.

He comes home drunk and jousting with demons

“Liar!”

“Cheat!”

He lances her with weapon-words.

Behind dark doors, everything is different, everything is wrong.

“I hate you,” her words.

Yet, her wounded heart whispers a different song

She wants him, yet she knows she doesn’t deserve his fist.

He hits her,

She falls,

He hits her again

She cries,

Ashamed of herself for wishing he’d be different tonight.

Dreaming of daylight

Wishing the night demons would go away and never return.

For You

Fabienne Casseus

Another Course to College, Grade - 12

I wrote this one for you,
Now everyone will hear what it feels like to live a life unheard.

Every move under a microscope
Every decision warrants critique and ridicule

So, I wrote this one for you.

Sorry if these words do no justice
They are not currency for your blood,
Which soils my soul, twists my insides, and strokes my heart.

I hunger for your thoughts,
Crave your slightly off sanity,
Leak the perfect mistakes of your almost perfect visions.

And I blame myself, for your half opened life
I grabbed you quickly and held on tight
Instead of letting you reach into my arms

Reaching out for my future
I let go without a fight,
You dissolved through my fingers
Like my dreams in your absence

Boy your smile would make me fold over
Now it forces me to my knees pleading for your dreams
Wondering if you're looking down on me while I thirst
For your dreams to prevail, drinking resentment,
Satisfying hunger on meager hopes.

I will not rest until I've watched your dreams breathe
Breathe with those eyes that would always shine
Voice that use to chant, and soul that will always, always dance

Promise I will not rest until I return your majesty to the highest mountains
Until every syllable I utter reconstructs your heart
Until I witness your dreams in every eye's gleam

Witness every soul dance to your chant

Won't rest until I've polished your essence with my tears
Yeah, I wrote this one for you.

'Cause it's my fault, her fault, his fault, everyone's fault that you quenched evolution's thirst for blood.

Now we will never feel your warmth, peace seething in anger.
You were broken ropes of tension, burning concrete, and illegal dreams flourished.
And I watched my king crawl, rise, walk, trip, fall

Watched my king fall,
Broken, beaten into misery's potential.

And, I'm sorry I cried too much,
Yet, for you it was not enough.
I am skinless without you

A blessing with no prayer, without you
A kiss without love, without you

Nothing but sorrow for what I could have,
should have loved...

I would have loved you with the purity of a child
I would have loved you in seven different languages, all at once
My love for you is simply unfathomable
You were a perfect storm of misunderstanding

Yet, you were everything I wish to be
And so, I wrote this one for you.

5.

Daddy's Drunk Again

Senait Adugna

Boston Day And Evening Academy, Grade - 9

Shut the door
Close your eyes
Listen to them shout

Take cover, hold tight
Might not survive tonight.

Daddy slurs
Momma screams
Vomiting unpleasant dreams

Hear the bang across the hall?
He throws her into a wall.

Momma cries
She begs
I cringe into a ball

Far away, his mercy gone
Daddy curses more

Another bang, another cry
"Oh please don't let my momma die"
Another thump, another crash
He hits her, calls her trash.

They won't stop
I grasp my head
"Should I run and tell on dad?"

Suddenly Silence

The door opens
"Honey where are you?"
He sings.

I won't answer
"I will find you," he intones.

Hear his foot fall
Quickly hide!
Don't want to be like his mangled bride.

He enters the room; see a gun in his hand
"Where are you hiding?"
Silence again

"Fine" he says
"...this is goodbye."

I clench my eyes.
Bang!
Daddy hits the floor
I scream
Running back to the place it all began.

Momma on the floor, dead
Squelching, gagging, holding on to the door
I leave wiping tears along my sleeve

Heart is racing, legs ache
I feel sick, my body quakes

There is no funeral
No ceremony
Just loss, left in eternal chaos

To grow up in a home I've never known
Wallowing in sadness, early alone

Momma, miss you very much
Miss your voice, need your touch
Momma why did you have to go?
Why did the end have to be so raw?

I love you so much, never got to say

Wouldn't have guessed you would go this way, so raw

Some things we can't control, can't console,
Just talking to that tombstone, I selfishly wish you were here
As the darkness consumes the light
I still hear your lullaby.

6.

Mi Querida Madre

Karen Alvarado

Fenway High School, Grade -

Mi madre

qué puede ser

más intenso,

más grande

que mi amor

por mi madre.

Quisiera decirte muchas cosas,

pero no puedo expresar

en tan poco espacio,

ni con palabras lo que siento por ti

(MI MADRE).

Mi manantial,

nadé en tu ser para comenzar mi vida,

cuando en tu vientre yo crecía.

Vida que tú me ofreciste

a cambio de tus fatigas.

¡Cuánto me has dado!

Tú, que diste tu tiempo

para hacerme crecer con paciencia y amor.

Tú, mi mejor maestra.

Me has enseñado con tu forma de ser,

con tu vida, con tu actitud.

No sólo me has criado,

¡Cuánto me has dado!

Aunque nunca pueda pagarte por:

tanto amor,

tantos desvelos,

tanta ternura.

Por todo esto y más...

te quiero con locura

MAMÁ.

desde el fondo de mii corazon

ru hija karen .

7.

A Legacy Is Born

Daryl Brown

ABCD University, Grade -

The cool New England air invaded the small hospital room, brushing over Sasia's small frame. She lay in her hospital bed staring out the window as the mourning sun peeked through the blinds, shining on her face. The slight snores of her man and her aunt Mae echoed through the room. Sasia laid still in deep thought. She could vaguely remember the warnings, but something bigger overshadowed those warnings. It may have the excitement of finding her soul mate that made her ignore his flaws, or the urgency she felt for his touch, for his love. Now she had the scars to prove what a success her ignorance had been.

Sasia snapped out of her train of thought as Allen pulled her body closer to his in the small hospital bed. A tear formed in her eye and found its place on her right cheekbone. It was in moments like these, when they held each other, that Sasia prayed that time would be still and allow her and her lover to get lost in a world of their own. She sighed, brought back to reality that Allen's love was divided, for he didn't belong to just her.

A knock caused her to turn her head towards the room's entrance. In walked her aunt Eva and Carla, a close friend of the family.

"Good morning baby". Sasia felt the heat of blood rushing to her face as the attention reminded her that she was still alive and filled with grief. She tried to force a smile on her face as she nearly choked on her words,

"Hey auntie Eva".

"I came to check in on you to see how you were feeling".

Sasia wanted desperately to tell her aunt that she was doing just fine, but her throat started to close, forbidding her to lie. Allen shifted beside Sasia, a sign that he was waking. He yawned and stretched, then sat upright, eyes barley open.

"Who's that"? Allen asked in a barley-awoken voice.

“Hey Auntie Eva! How you doing?” Allen said, as he cheerfully stood to greet her. Aunt Mae bolted upright from the mat on which she slept, and looked wildly around the room to see where all the voices were coming from.

“I’m doing fine baby. How you feeling?” Eva replied to Allen. Fixing herself, Mae stood and went to greet all the new occupants of the room. They silently went back and forth with greetings, embraces, and “I’m doing fines”.

Feeling isolated and overwhelmed because she wasn’t feeling fine, Sasia tried her best to silence her cries while not drawing attention to herself. Eva, Mae, and Carla noticed Sasia’s internal battle and swiftly, yet carefully approached her bedside. With arms held out, they all came together to comfort her. Eva embraced Sasia first. As Sasia felt the security and comfort of Eva’s warm embrace, her body released itself and she collapsed. Her head rested on her aunts’ breast as she let out the cry, which was a long time coming. Eva cooed reverently in her ear,

“Honey everything’s going to be alright. God has a plan for your life, and his will is working itself out even in a situation like this. It’s okay to cry Sasia baby! Let it all out, but just know this isn’t the end baby. You just have to be strong. You have all the people that love you as your support, and we’re going to help you get through this”!

Carla and Mae stood in the background whispering,

“Mm hmm, that you Jesus! It’s true, it’s true”. Allen just looked on silently. Sasia wept softly now as they all whispered words of encouragement in her ears. She tried to cling to each word of faith, comfort, and new life that they offered her. With her arms full of chattered hope and unfulfilled promises, she couldn’t see it...she just couldn’t relate anymore.

A small hint of betrayal ate away at her heart, as she stood from the hospital bed. Walking towards the joint bathroom, she voiced lightly “I’m ready to go”. Allen followed in the bathroom after her to help her bathe because her body was still very weak. In the privacy of the bathroom, Allen stood there as Sasia quietly undressed holding onto his body for support. Naked, Sasia silently walked over and stood at the bathroom sink. Looking at herself in the mirror, she was someone she didn’t recognize. She felt bad for the girl with the unfamiliar face that stared back at her. She wanted desperately to console this girl, to help her heal, but she appeared damaged far beyond repair. Looking down at her trembling hands, she became aware that the face in the mirror was her own. She exhaled hoping to release some of the things that overwhelmed her.

Sasia made her way to the shower, beneath the water dispenser and allowed the water to cascade down her face, and over her body. She zoned out and brought herself to think back to the events of the night before. The images of her pushing and screaming kept cycling through her memory. Then, at the end of a turbulent climax, the lifeless body of her baby boy descended from her womb. The moment she held his limp body stolen. The minutes Allen took to observe what was left of his firstborn vanished. Sasia feared that the memories, which she clawed at desperately, might soon slip away.

She dressed and Sasia and her clan made their way down to the hospital’s entrance. Walking through the revolving doors, the wind rushed in and filled her lungs with a violently. Although still somber, Sasia believed that for a quick moment, she felt a layer peel away with the wind. Disoriented for a moment, she continued as her aunts assisted her into the car where her uncle Mark waited for them all.

Health Careers Academy, Grade - 12

Tired back, arched low
Sleepy eyes, diligently seek yellowing-brown leaves
Nana's weathered fingers snatch at the dying
Tossing them to the ground where so much else has fallen

Delicate sun tickled feet that once danced across sandy Barbados
Now shuffle listlessly across cold Roxbury apartment
Bursting with too much empty grey days

Watering tin in tow, Nana restores life to drooping branches
Droplets of water on grandchildren's picture frame
She halts and cast a love gaze towards the phone, willing it to ring

Memories return to sharp silence
She finishes her chores
There are more plants to be watered
More life to give
But the watering tin
Gradually runs low

9.

Thug Poetry

Demetrius Dunston

Boston Day And Evening Academy, Grade - 10

When the power of love overcomes the love of power, then the world will know peace
'Till then I am from a world where the smoke never clears

Where money is exchanged in different spheres of less fortunate human beings who desire it and achieve it by any means

Where eyes absorb knowledge from the pages of burned out pasts
Where minds are vivid with hollow truths
Where planted seeds are plucked from their roots
never to prosper and become what they were destined to be.

This is where I live.

I must adapt to life in a grassless jungle,
Like a lion taken from his kingdom never to see his pride.
Robbed Africa but brought over one valuable jewel,
A mind filled with eternal wisdom with capacity to rule.

Creation conceived by thought, all hail the human race.
And they say the mind is a terrible thing to waste.
My thoughts are like raindrops falling from the sky
Pure, purposeful, full of love,
Returning only to my ocean of possibility.

I desire affection, keep me close
Avoiding a heart left in the cold
Solitude no hammer could shatter
Adopted by the streets, I had no choice
Poverty in this city, a child watched by cops at age 15

Unify me,
mind,
body
and soul

Mother sheltered me from the lethal sins of mankind
Divine heart, devotional, imperishable.
Father, they say, is a reflection of me
Absent most of my life
We are like a before and after
He thrown in a cell, and I trapped in the streets.

How could this happen to me?
That path is not my destiny,
Because I am the blessing that breathes.
Won't let it get the best of me.

Every child needs a father to survive.
I was solo, with walls surrounding my mind.
A street with open arms welcomed me
Understand how a reckless life can manifest from an innocent childhood

Boston growing candles in the streets
So many lost homies to bullets of deceit
Wonder will I breathe another tomorrow

Rise from silence!
Life in the hood is caste with violence
And peace is just a fairy tale read to children
How many people have to die before you realize this?

A vicious cycle remains
When everybody wants to be "gangsta"
Getting it wrong because that demise creates sorrow
Memories produce pain
Retaliation breed sin
We have to make the killing cease
This is my thug poetry.

10.

Just Saying

Nicholas Ferguson
TechBoston Academy, Grade - 10

True to my philosophy,
I study the stars like astronomy,
As I rhyme. I say my words with harmony,
Cut the vein of creativity,
And let it leak on this pad,
Words take shape like Geometry.
From the flow of thought,
An Epiphany,
Rings like a bell with remedy,
Stuck on my brain,
Which sets it a float.

The heart brings a storm,
Which may muddy thinking,
From the cups and sins of our forefathers,
We are drinking.
As we swallow, we choke,
Poison invading our bloodstream,
We laugh and we choke.
Never apart of this world,
I am a Martian, humans keep invading My space.
My artistic style is natural
In society, I have been misplaced.
You can start,
But can you finish this race?

Recite the law, but can you prove your case?
Criss-crossed tongues like shoelace
You are now in the chamber of wordplay.

11.

Fathers

Anairis Figueroa

Fenway High School, Grade - 9

Fathers are there to care
Father, the one whose time with me he will NEVER share
Fathers are there to catch you when you fall
Father, the one that was not willing to be my safety wall
Fathers are there to put you to bed at night
Father, the one that wasn't there to stop my fright
Fathers are there to help you succeed
Father, the one that NEVER sat with me to read
Fathers are there to dry up your tears
Father, the one that NEVER helped decrease my fears
Fathers are there to be a part of your life
Father, the one that abused his wife
Fathers are there to be by your side
Father, the one who constantly lied
Fathers are there to comb their daughter's hair
Father, the one who chose NOT to be there
Fathers can be protective, sweet and kind
Father, the one that left me behind

12.

Lucky Passage

Maya Getter

Noble and Greenough, Grade - 8

The end of life comes quickly
It enters anywhere, anytime
Wherever it wishes

Loved ones weep
They feel a terrible pain
But death is careless.

Countless winds take your soul
To the many corners of the world,
The sun's warmth invades your spirit,
Cold falls down your back.

Everything smells of fresh death
Your spirit beckons
"Snatch me away from this world that has come to hate me so!"
Dust of the world takes pity on your soul
Twilight bounds into darkness,

They will come for you.
Filled with kindness
They save you in your helpness hour.
And give you lucky passage.

Light breaks on the sill of heaven
You turn to thank them.
But they are not there.
But they know,
Your spirit rose out of the shadows of loneliness
And into the heavens.

13.

A Sunglasses Tattoo

Victor Gonzalez

Health Careers Academy, Grade - 12

Whenever I leave my home, it is of the utmost necessity that I wear my sunglasses. As I walk along the streets, I feel as if I am striding along a red carpet. Everybody looks at me, wondering,

“Where could such a handsome creature come from?”

It is as if I am a Roman God incarnated on earth. Though this may appear narcissistic, my relationship with sunglasses is not an act of vanity. During my adolescence, I gained a lot of weight. So embarrassed by the state of my body, I covered my body with long shirts, saggy pants, and a bunch of other rags. I could not believe I had changed so much, and worse, that my body had morphed into something that deep inside I was not. Inside I was a winner, a herculean man capable of lifting mighty towers. But, outside I was a flabby boy carrying extra pounds.

When I put on my first pair of sunglasses a rush of confidence flooded my being and empowered me. That miraculous object changed the way I saw the world! Moreover, it changed the way the world saw me, at least that is the way I felt. I am convinced that no matter how awful one may look, sunglasses will always make one shine. They highlight our best qualities; remind us that beauty exists within us despite our physical characteristics. And they make us feel cool!

I am reminded of this truth whenever I see myself in the mirror wearing my sunglasses. I pose and primp in front of the mirror thinking, “I may be pudgy and heavy, but I am a handsome lad”. If I see it in the mirror, I feel that I can make it happen in real life. My sunglasses has motivated me to eat healthy and undergo strenuous physical activity, causing me to be more fit and trim.

Imagine if I have sunglasses engraved on my skin. They would stay with me, forever, coaching me through life as I continue bettering my physical health. The tattoo would be a symbol of my triumph over obesity, always reminding me to be happy with myself no matter what the circumstance. Some people may be baffled by it, not being able to comprehend the sunglasses tattooed to my arm. They will think I have an addiction to sunglasses, that I am trying to be cool, or that I just like the design. What they will be missing is that it represents a truth that changed the course of my life.

This tattoo is the ideal example of the perseverance, diligence, temperance I employ when I aim to achieve a goal. It represents a vision of my soul that tells me I need to work hard to achieve any and everything, even physical fitness. When people see my strong arms and my tattoo, an image will be imprinted in their minds, leading them one day, to buy a pair of sunglasses, and discover the empowering magic that I once discovered when I looked at myself in the mirror while wearing my sunglasses.

14.

Alliteration Poem

Angel Hernandez

Fenway High School, Grade –

Buzzing bees
Bounce bitterly
Past my face

Sun shimmers simultaneously, sounds like soothing music.
Suddenly I hear the tap, tap, tap of Jack frost
Notice the fluttering, falling, leaves
Notice the seasons at my door.

15.

My Anthology

Domenique Johnson

TechBoston Academy, Grade - 11

my anthology
not hard to see
explore my philosophy
journey through my world
&
admire my personality
analyze my work
&
see how sprung you'll be

excellence is found in me
my thoughts are like exponents
power to the 10^o
creativity is in my recipe

mix with integrity
&
top off with a dose
of adversity

poetry is the lock
&
I am the wisdom key
success is my destiny
through my dust the rest will see

people say my mind is a figment
of imagery
I just laugh
&
say it's the finest taste of REALITY.

16.

LifeStyles

Michael Leary
TechBoston Academy, Grade - 11

Do you know where I live?
What I go through?
My society is straight sick,
Everyone's got the flu.

Everyday I survive without being shot,
I out live the statistics.
If you're talking gangs and drugs with me,
You are speaking irrelevantly.
I study hard and never dismiss the Mr. or the Ms.
Because, I am a respectable young gentleman

They say I'm dangerous, expecting me to be high on angel dust.
They don't know the only thing I'm flaming up is my school related subjects.
Now that's wassup!
Showing that my mind is built Ford tough.

Though there's a struggle,
I will never give up.
Willing to finish what I begin.
To make my mark on this world,

While staying flyer than a pigeon.

Want to be that star?
You get one chance to prove who you are.
My suggestion, do you,
Spread your wings to make it that far.

17.

Beautiful Beast

Khari Linton
English High School, Grade – 12

He was meant for something
Didn't quite know what that something was
He was tormented, tortured, tattooed...just cuz

Pigment, dimmer, darker than his tormentors,
He would never flee.
He believed this was a natural way of life,
Didn't forward a plea.
Brainwashed, temporarily.
Eventually he could rule them over
They were scared to death of his potential

Lashes, broken skin bleeds with open ease
Crazy, he didn't know what he was worth,
More than a coal or diamond mine.
He was a beautiful beast.

He was
Bare backed
Bare foot
Bare minded
No motivation
Nothing but a light shining

He was to lead a crowd,
a city,
a nation
Without formal education
The source of many people's inspiration
To touch a mind,

touch a body,
touch a soul
His people more precious than the essence of gold
He was meant to hold the peace, mold the youth, and hold the future
But all they gave him was bruises and humiliating torture, no hope

Despite destiny, he was born to bleed, to cry, to loose, to find.
Intelligent, fast, strong, a beast those chains couldn't bind.
Bare backed
Bare foot
And bare minded
Little motivation
A small light shining

He knew he wasn't brought here to hear,
feel and see his family pried from his arms
He had to fight.
A startling realization like a 6:00 a.m. alarm
Wasn't brought here to tame horses and pick cotton
Had to protest, make sure his race would never be forgotten.
Wasn't brought here just to be wrongly accused and hanged from the gallows.
Had to overcome and be the sunshine of tomorrow
Everything he did put his soul at peace
He was more powerful, a beautiful beast

He was
Bare backed
Bare foot
But no longer bare minded
Lots of motivation
Everything there
He was the light shining
He was a beautiful beast... He was a beautiful beast... He was a beautiful beast...
He was...

Khari Linton
English High School, Grade – 12

One thousand, three hundred, and forty-five hours...living with a blessing, or curse?
Tears in my eyes want to burst
into the world not a salty drop from my eyes flows.
Yet, it feels like everybody can hear my weeping head spinning.
I can't believe that I made this.
I made this!

Sorry baby boy, baby girl.
Have to prevent you from coming to this world.

Selfish, I know.....
Can't take the disgusted stares as I walk the halls holding my books.
I can't, I can't!
But, I keep hearing...
Hold...On...To...Me
Give... Me... A... Chance... to breathe

Recurring thoughts interrogate my mind, should I keep this baby?
What if...it grows up in the hood?
What if... it gets shot?
Back to reality.

Tempting thoughts revolving, surrounding me.
Don't have much time to make this decision
Follow common sense or follow intuition?
...don't know,

And I'm scared of what you might grow to be
And I know getting rid of you is murder
And I can't take care of you, though I want to,
And forgive me for what I might do
And I keep hearing...
Hold...On...To...Me
Give... Me... A... Chance... to breathe

Understand, I can't give you this chance!
Dead weight on my mind for two months
Can't get over how much I want to see him grow
Up into the sky I look for a sign.

Reality is he's mine...just can't shake this feeling
Hold... On...To...Me...
Give...Me...A chance to...
Understand...it's been 1,345 hours
Since I've been living with this blessing...

19.

Walk In My Shoes

Sadida Maldoando

West Roxbury High School (PATH), Grade -

She kept it a secret
Never thought about it
Until they brought it up
She hated being at that house
Everything negative she learned from you
She never thought to put her hands on you
The time she slept on the couch
Moaning "ouch"!
You looked at her and proceeded
You walked away after you seeded
Feeling so numb and dumb
Every time acting like nothing happened
She wishing that it hadn't
She'd close her eyes and imagine
Imagine she was somewhere else besides that place
Over the years her memories weren't replaced
He was close to her but felt like a stranger
She was use to this behavior
Question: God did she deserve this?

20.

Confusion

Tatyana McAfee

TechBoston Academy, Grade - 11

Should I be proud to be an American?
Some people migrate to America for a better life.
But, is this what America really does?
Is this the Never Land where people spread love?

Should you be proud to be an American?
War games, but not with toy guns, always shedding blood.
Is it the land of smiles and hugs?
The place that says all are treated equal but still keeps some down?

Should I be proud to be an American?
Happy place full of goodness and treats?
Or, place of painful struggle, like walking on broken glass with bare feet?

Should you be proud to be an American?
No love for trees, just money.
A mystery to me, a land of hope and dreams for many,
And for others a homeland of insecurity.

So, should I, or you be proud to be an American, or should we not?

21.

What If

Denise Felisha Reid

English High School, Grade - 12

What if me and you were meant to be?
Then it would be just you and me.
A love candle eternally burning.
Needing each other and always yearning.
Yearning for each other's bodies, spirits and minds.
Making everything fine,
Just me and you.

What if you and me were supposed to be?
What if we got married and grew old together?
Loving each other, enduring through gloomy weather.
Our love strengthens.
A love from deep within, acknowledge it.

What if we had kids, and our kids had kids, nephews, and nieces?
There's room in our hearts for all these pieces.
Pieces of our love to give to everyone we know
Until we wear out time's warranty and with old age we go.

What if we got married and grew old together?
Loving each other enduring the gloomy weather.

What if, what if's
Could be, could be's
Or even, should be's
What if, you were meant to be with me?

22.

Typical Me

Denise Felisha Reid

English High School, Grade - 12

Walking down the street,
Wearing three different colors and my dark blue jeans
Rockstar belt and matching Nikes
Headphones blasting loudly
Singing, moving to my own song's beat
Individuality it appears to be
Not your typical hood chic
This is typical me

People may glance at me,
thinking they see the typical teen.
But they miss cast me...Me,
A young lady with big dreams!
Deeper than eyes can see.
I would like to be...no..I will be
A college graduate with a degree in psychology,
Possessing the ability to set the world free,
Protecting sane from the growing insanity,
Inspiring youth potential to grow up peacefully...no gangs.
With me there is no game
It's time to make a change
Do you fail to realize,
this young lady got her eyes on the prize?
When you look at me and see typical teen,
But actually....
This is typically me.

Walking down the street,
Wearing three different colors and my dark blue jeans
Rockstar belt and matching Nikes
Headphones blasting loudly
Singing, moving to my own song's beat
Individuality it appears to be
Not your typical hood chic
This is typically me

Saying I'm typical is an understatement,
I was born in the ghetto,
But born to make it.
So I'm extraordinary!
A Black beauty,
an African Queen,
A powerful teen,
Born to lead.

I say I'm typically me.

23.

The 9th Move

Melissa Rocha

Health Careers Academy, Grade - 12

Packing is the easy part. Neatly folding my clothes and placing them into a once collapsed cardboard box has become effortless. In my seventeen years, I have never dreaded filling up boxes, taping the tops, and carrying them out to the U-Haul van. Pulling the colorful sheets and comforter off my bed then meticulously taking the bed apart is second nature. Looking around an empty house that used to be home, while recalling memories has become a ritual. Each move is the start of a new adventure. Of the eight times I have moved, I have never minded the change of address. December 2007, that changed.

Something repelled me from the Mary Ellen McCormack Housing Projects. Born and raised in predominantly black Dorchester, I was not ready for the controversial South Boston Projects. Yet, I didn't

need to see the apartment to expect the worse. Historically, South Boston bears an infamous past of racial unrest, so making a case for why we should not move there was simple. I prepared my defense and approached my mother with conviction. She dismissed everything I argued on the grounds that living in a place where gunshots and murders stained the sidewalks, she was not afraid of Keep Southie White or any gang roaming the project streets.

Therefore, we moved.

Engulfed with rage, I climbed the three flights of rusted stairs and shoved the crimson door open.

“Where the heck is our stuff going to fit?”

The tears escaped my ducts, as my disappointed eyes scrutinized the room. Not only was it the smallest apartment we have ever moved to, pounds of tired paint failed to camouflage the decaying ceilings, windowsills and rutted walls. I thought about how long we would survive in this tiny atrocity, the length of days I could not fathom. How could the Boston Housing Authority allow anyone to live in such deteriorating tenements? Failing to conjure up a justifiable answer, the anger diffused into my veins and circulated throughout my body.

Adapting to a new environment has always been one of my strengths. I could not understand what was preventing me from accepting this one. Drained with fury, a new realization set in. I was surrounded by tranquility when we lived at 12 Barry St, 24 Josephine, 16 Mayfield, 46 Draper, 41 New Chardon, 26 Jerome, 80 Greenwood, and 102 Rosseter St. I was with the people I cared about and I had a safe place to lay my head at night.

Suddenly an appreciation grew when I realized that ten O’Callaghan Way now housed the people I love most and provided a roof over my head. The complaints ceased, and my face softened. I finally hung up my button-up shirts in the closet, folded my denim jeans and organized them onto a shelf, and adorned my bed with my favorite Tommy Hilfiger comforter. Apartment 220 became home. I swept away the dirt, wiped down the walls, and threw away the boxes. Hostility dissipated from my room and compassion seeped in.

Change is the norm in my life and something I have accepted and will always welcome into my arms. Change brings about new challenges and experiences, making life unique.

24.

The Bleeding Of The Sorrow

Jessica Sanon

Elizabeth Seton Academy, Grade - 10

I wear a mask...everyday,
to hide the pain I feel inside.
I've become so depressed,
thus this mask of mine.
I have tears of thunder
that burst in the night of my emotions.
These glistening eyes
symbolize my silent cries.

Scars buried underneath
have not been relieved.
I'm empty inside.
Lost in my pain,
I can't speak,
pain disrupts my sanity.
I fade away,
slowly, slowly.

Striving, always Surviving,
no point to Living life
if in the end we're going to cry.
What's the point of Being Happy,
if we're all going to Die?

If I can't live the life I dream of,
where nothing gets in my way,
where my thoughts are my own,
not clouded or controlled,
I don't expect a happy end.

But in reality.
My heart is breaking.
My mind's shaking.
Everything about me is a lie.
Even droplets of heavy tears that slowly
leaves the corner of my eyes and saturates my cheeks.
When will I see my truth?
A heart torn apart, I die inside with pain.
25.

Drunk With Virginity

Yamira C. Serret

Boston Arts Academy, Grade - 12

Nerves undress, a gathering upon the floor

Saturate the thrill with a frantic kiss
Sip liquor off the tongue, the embrace of drunken sheets
The grinning uncertainties and the pinching stares
Draw the rapier, short rips of splendor filling the spaces between
The spill of love over flesh and beneath the skin
Lie upon a pillow of breast; fall asleep atop a bed of lips
Sing mad songs in that secret place, the flaming remnants of the night

26.

Imagery Poem

Steven Vellante

Fenway High School, Grade –

This place is mines,
No one bugs me.
A place where I can relax,
No one tells me what to do.
Feeling the wind move my hair
Into the sky,
Thinking of what to do
In this place that is mines.
Smelling the aromas of the sea,
Scents found even in Hawaii
Relaxing here is what
I love to do.

27.

The First Time

Laqueena Williams

Tech Boston Academy

I thought about this for a long time...it was jumbling my mind.
Today I felt was the day, finally.
I traveled from school to my closest friend's house; she was just as unsure.
We took the long bus ride, it seemed like forever.
A billion questions marched through my head.

What if it hurts?
What if it doesn't feel right?
What if I regret it?

Insides vibrating, but my frame remains still,
We walk slowly towards the house.
Entering I wanted to run away.
Down the long empty hall, one lonely light bulb as our guide.
I keep walking.
I look at my friend; she knows this look on my face,

She tells me "it will be okay".

"Take a seat in the chair", I was told.

He showed me everything he would use as we talked about the process.

He asked me to take my shirt off; the drafty room made me shiver.

"Relax", he tells me.

A few deep breathes to calm myself down.

Then it went into me, didn't hurt, but it was awkward, different, not what I was used to.

An over bearing noise gives me a headache...but that's the price you pay.

Surprisingly, the first part was quick;

The second part is where the pain came in, when he hit the bone.

Nodding off I start to think, "this is really draining my energy".

The noise stops and my eyes pop open...yes! I'm done.

He wipes and sprays first water, then soap, cleaning and wiping.

Anxiously waiting to see the result,

I run to the mirror

Look!

Its wonderful isn't it.