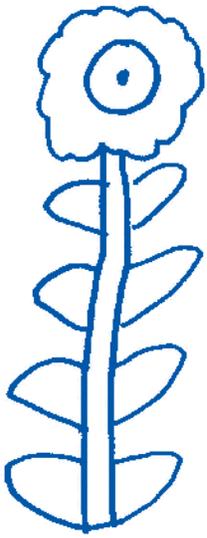


creative
writing



Program

COVER IMAGE: Emily H., 10,
Rainbow Stripes, Mimms Club



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.84

BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS

OF METRO ATLANTA LEADERSHIP

& CLUB LISTINGS 87

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INTRODUCTION:

Thanks for your support of Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Atlanta and all of the kids we serve. For more than 75 years, we have been working to provide the kids and teens that need us most with the support to reach their full potential. Because of you, young artists like those featured in this book are finding their passion and harnessing their creativity...they are on their way toward a great future.

Did you know that nearly 65% of Georgia's fourth graders are off track in their reading proficiency? Or that 1 out of 5 Georgia kids fail to graduate from high school on time? These troubling findings encourage Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Atlanta to make learning interesting and fun for the youth we serve. Our efforts are critical to getting students back on track.

The Marel Brown Creative Writing program is part of a larger initiative by Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Atlanta to focus on academics and help kids succeed in school. In this program kids and teens are not only learning to express themselves, they are also building critical skills such as reading, writing and public speaking.

On the following pages, you'll see the outstanding work of our kids. We've selected the "best of the best" poems and creative writing pieces to share with you. You'll hear about experiences both joyful and tragic. You'll get a glimpse into what these kids come across day to day and experiences that have forever changed their lives. Through the power of words, these young people are learning how to grapple with the issues they confront and to build their own voice. Creative writing helps release the tensions they are feeling, inspires self-confidence and personal identity, and offers a connection to the larger community where they are sharing their story.

Thank you for being part of this community and for believing in us and our kids!

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT & CEO MISSY DUGAN

We are deeply thankful for your support of Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Atlanta.

Each day, we open our doors to more than 3,300 children at our 25+ Clubs in and around Atlanta. We provide opportunity to the kids who need us most, helping them to live healthy, succeed in school, and lead in their communities.

Our Clubs have a proven and effective approach: provide disadvantaged youth with a positive, accessible place to go; surround them with trained and supportive staff; and offer results-oriented programs that are educational, recreational, and age-appropriate.

Through this approach, we are seeing great success. Because of your support:

Our kids feel supported! More than 90% report there is an adult at the Club who helps them when they have a problem and nearly 90% feel good about their futures.

Our kids stand up for what is right! Nearly 85% report speaking up for what they believe.

Our teens know the importance of giving back! More than 75 percent of our teens volunteer on at least a monthly basis - a rate three times higher than the national average.

Our members are reaching high with their education! 100% of our College Bound seniors graduated high school, 89% went on to higher education, and Club teens were awarded a total of \$1.7 million in college scholarships.

Our kids are getting active! More than 800 kids participated in Soccer for Success - an expanded partnership with the U.S. Soccer Foundation serving nearly 20 Boys & Girls Clubs across the city.

Our members are making smart choices! High school members are more than four times less likely to have ever smoked a cigarette, two times less likely to have ever used marijuana, and four times less likely to ever have a drink of alcohol than their Georgia and national peers.

We still have a long road ahead, but we're making real progress. And we wouldn't be where we are today without the unwavering support of our friends and partners.

Many of you are already part of our story. For those who are new to our cause, we invite you to find a Club in your area and come out for a tour this year. To truly understand the mission of our organization, you have to meet the wonderful kids and staff that make our organization great.

Thanks again for your commitment to shaping young lives and building GREAT FUTURES.



MAREL BROWN

Long before the members of BGCMA were born, Mrs. Margaret Snow Brown, affectionately known as Marel Brown, planted the seeds of reading and writing into their lives. Acclaimed writer of inspirational poetry, short stories and articles, Mrs. Brown recognized the need for arts education in the community.

In 1984, she established the annual poetry and short story program known today as the Marel Brown Creative Writing program. To date, this program has impacted thousands of Boys & Girls Club members and graced the eyes, ears, minds and hearts of tens of thousands of readers.

The Marel Brown Creating Writing program is an important part of BGCMA's broader academic success strategy. We recognize writing is an outlet for creative expression and talent, as well as a fun way to learn more about language including grammar and spelling. This program encourages and supports self-expression through writing, performance, and friendly competition.

WAYS TO GIVE

Financial contributions allow BGCMA to keep its doors open to our local youth. BGCMA asks our parents to pay membership fees of only \$50 per child per school year, though it costs our organization nearly \$5,700. No child is excluded due to inability to pay.

Contributions by generous companies, organizations, foundations and individuals like you are an essential lifeline for the youth and artists we serve.

You can open doors to youth in and around Atlanta through:

Financial Contributions - Donate online at www.bgcma.org, mail a check or even set up monthly payments through your debit or credit card.

Planned Giving – Give through bequests and wills, gifts of stock or real estate, gift annuities, etc.

In-kind Donations – Donate gently used computers, books, sports items, and more.

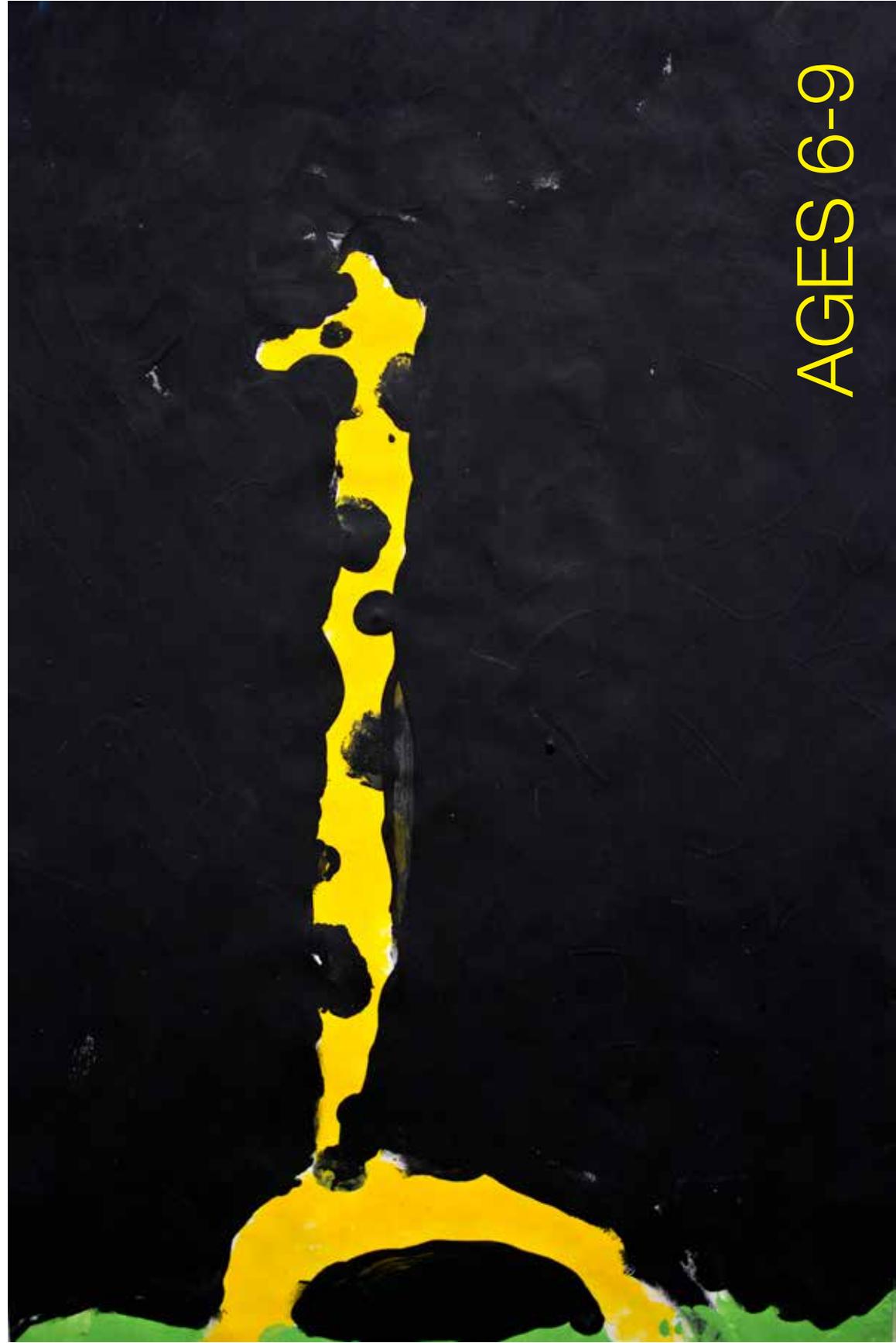
Volunteering - Help with homework, coach a sporting team or join young professional's social networking group- Club Blue.

Partnering with BGCMA – Contact our resource development department to find out how you can partner with our organization.

**For more information, please contact:
Resource Development Department
1275 Peachtree Street NE, Suite 500
Atlanta, GA 30309
Phone: (404) 527-7100
Email: news@bgcma.org**

*Funding for this program is provided by the Fulton County Board of Commissioners. This program is supported in part by the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs.

AGES 6-9



WHEN I GROW UP

Busayo O., 7

Samuel L. Jones Boys & Girls Club

When I grow up, I want to be a police officer and
a firefighter
I want to protect people from criminals and save them
from the flames of fire
When I am 40, I will play football and soccer
I will take the Seahawks to the Super Bowl
as their running back
I will run faster than the Flash!!! Dodging tackles,
avoiding the clash!!!
As a soccer player, I will be the goalie
I will block the shots and the fans will cheer for me
I will travel to Nigeria to see my dad and cousins
And fly to New York to see the Statue of Liberty
I can't wait to grow up, there is so much in store for me

ZALEN WISHES

Zalen L., age 8

Anderson Boys & Girls Club

I wish I had three day weekends and no school.
I wish I had everyday naps at noon.
I wish I had more time to play in the park.
I wish I had greener grass in my yard.
I wish I had whiter teeth after eating Hot Fries.
I wish I had summer year round with a pool and blue skies.
I wish I could sing and win the VOICE competition.
I wish I had a magic wand for 8 more wishes.

SOUNDS LIKE WINTER

Chayse G., age 9

Anderson Boys & Girls Club

Plip Plop I slid down the slide
Drip Drop cold fell from the sky
Tick Tock it's time to go
Skip Hop all the way home

OLD FOLKS

Maqayla H., 8

Paulding County Boys & Girls Club

Old folks have nasty feet
They always have soft foods to eat
They wear clothes that smell funny
And my grandma lost my big, fluffy bunny
Old folks have grey hair
And it takes them a while to get up off their chair
They move really slow and sometimes forget where it
was they were supposed to go
Old Folks always have a piece of candy or a yummy
treat for me to eat
They are always happy to see me and that's pretty
neat
They hug and kiss and squeeze ever so tight
They squeeze my chubby cheeks with all of there might
Old Folks are the best and they don't think I am a pest
I love old Folks better than all the rest

HAMBURGERS

Paris B., 7

Paulding County Boys & Girls Club

I like to eat my hamburger with cheese
Pass the ketchup please!
Can I have some more?
Don't let it fall on the floor!
Fresh off the grill
Or cooked in a pan
I like to eat my hamburger
Listening to my favorite band
It's so hot it burns my hand!
Salty or sweet, a hamburger
is good to eat.

*Josephine W., 9 & 10
Stacked Burger
Paulding County Club*



MY DOG CASH

Surayah D., 7
Carroll County Boys & Girls Club

I have a dog and his name is Cash
He likes to eat potatoes when they are mashed
His hair is fluffy like a marshmallow
He wiggles and jiggles all around just like Jell-O
He's sweet and he likes to cuddle
When it rains he likes to play in the puddles
He loves to jump and do tricks everyday
I love him like a chill, summer day

LIFE IS LIFE

Sydney B., 9
George Washington Carver Boys & Girls Club

Life is life
Life will never be perfect
But the perfect moments make it all worthwhile
Life is life
Life can sometimes be covered with happiness
Like a bright, sunny day
But it can also be covered in madness
Like a dark, rainy day
Life is life
So let your life fly
Life

WISHES

Chayse G., age 9
Anderson Boys & Girls Club

I wish I could be a real artist and always paint with the color light blue.
I wish I had wings and could fly wherever I wanted to.
I wish I was big and could stay up all night.
I wish I had a million wishes for a million more nights.



Genesis & Andrea M., 9 & 10, Natural Butterfly, Carroll County Club

I LOVE SCIENCE

Zaria R., 9
George Washington Carver Boys & Girls Club

I love science
There's no denying it
So I'll tell you where I find it
Science is in the plants and the leaves
Science is in the clouds and the trees
Science is all around in everything that you see
From the bugs to the animals
Even in you and me
Science tells me about my body
And all the different systems
Like the respiratory, nervous, digestive
and muscular systems
Now you've earned your wisdom



Mical J., 8, Red Hat, Brookhaven Club

BIRD SONGS

Taylor H., age 8
Anderson Boys & Girls Club

Chirp Chirp Chirp
Tweet Tweet Tweet
If you listen closely
A bird's song is so sweet.



Jessina S., 7, Playground, Brookhaven Club

KARATE CLASS

Blakey C., 6
Paulding County Boys & Girls Club

I love going to karate class
It's tons of fun
I like jumping and flipping
I hate when we are all done

I feel strong and powerful when I am leaping in the air
I don't have a care
I like to jump, flip and kick
I really like to learn new tricks

I punch, I throw, there is so much to know!
I practice karate every day
I practice and practice until I get it right
I even practice all through the night
Gold, Red and Yellow belts I have earned
There's still so much I'd like to learn

I will try my best
And get lots of rest
And work really hard to pass my skills test
Yell and cheer the big day is here
I jump and spin I know I will win
The time has come
And I show what I know
I put on a really great show

SELF-LOVE

Miracle B., 8
Newnan/Coweta County Boys & Girls Club

I'm in love and you are too
See you later soul mate
You are beautiful to me

MY FAVORITE THINGS

Jeryn W., 8
Newnan/Coweta County Boys & Girls Club

Video games are so fun
I like to play them all day
I never want to leave my room
My video games make me stay

Basketball is my favorite sport
It is a great game to play
I like to watch the players run
I play it every day

MY FRIEND

Ariel L., 9

A.R. "Gus" Barksdale Boys & Girls Club

Violets are red, violets are blue
If you are my friend, I'm your friend too
Sometimes we fight, sometimes we don't
That does not mean I don't love you
Don't you know
Sometimes we hug, sometimes we don't
That doesn't mean I don't love you
Don't you know
Sometimes I am mad, that is sad
Although I am glad you are my friend
You know that, right
I am happy but I am sad
Can you cheer me up my friend, my lad?
Thank you for being my friend
Violets are red, violets are blue
If you're my friend, I'm yours too

MOVIE NIGHT

Maqayla H., 8

Paulding County Boys & Girls Club

Friday night is my most favorite night
It is a night when the world feels right
Friday night is movie night in my home
My mom and dad even turn off their phones
We watch lots of movies, some scary, some funny
It doesn't cost them too much money

I like to snuggle on the couch with slippers on my feet
We enjoy eating yummy treats
Sometimes the popcorn gets stuck in my teeth

I look forward to movie night all week
Thinking about it makes my knees weak
I love spending time with my family and my cats
I watch a movie lying on a comfy mat
Movie night is a lot of fun
I am really sad when the night is done

WINTER

Rahk A., 9

Warren Boys & Girls Club

Snow starts falling near
People start wrapping
This happens once a year
And animals start napping

People start meeting
Decorate the tree at night
And some start seeing
Others color their houses with lights

Winter is the season
When you get to have fun
Cause I know the reason
Winter is number one!



Kelsi G., 10, Shark, Barksdale Club



Haylei H., 9, Face, Mathew Club

MY FAVORITE LETTER

London B., 7

Lawrenceville Boys & Girls Club

I love you letter "L"!
You do let me tell
Of lollipops, licks, and letters too.

Little lollipops that are red and green
Lick them every day, 'cause they taste so sweet
Like the strawberries and apples that I love to eat.

Letter "L" is for London - a place in the world
Plus it's the start of my name too!
Oh, dear Letter "L" - I love you!

THE SKY

Trinity T., 7

East DeKalb Boys & Girls Club

The sky is blue
With the fresh air
And the lovely breeze
The clouds are white
And very beautiful
I love the sky

FOOD ADVENTURE

Joelle B., 7

Douglas County Boys & Girls Club

Once upon a time there lived a girl named Jelony. Her favorite things to do were to sleep and eat. One day Jelony's mom was cooking late, so she had to wait quite a while for dinner to be done. While waiting, Jelony tried doing various activities for two hours to pass the time. She was exhausted from doing those activities, so she began watching television. While she was watching television she fell asleep and began dreaming. She dreamed about a food adventure. She dreamed of rainbows and cotton candy. Next, she dreamed about macaroni, hamburgers, salads, and more foods. She was in Sweets Land and the ice cream and cotton candy people were so nice and delicious. They wanted her to have a party. Jelony said, "Okay I'll stay for one more hour." Finally she went to Fry Land after she left Sweets Land. The people in Fry Land were not as friendly. They began to chase her. The fry people chased Jelony all the way to the end of the fry mountain. At the edge of the mountain was a lake full of hot grease. Jelony had nowhere to go. She looked over the mountain and jumped. "Time for dinner," Jelony's mom said. Jelony woke up and she was relieved that it was all a dream.



CHATTER BOOK

Jazlyn L., 9

Lawrenceville Boys & Girls Club

I am Jazlyn and I have something that no one else has... a talking book! "Get up! Get up!" My book Chloe said. My book is a Chatter box and I can't stand her. I got up and brushed my teeth and washed up. I got my clothes on and my book said, "Why do you always wear that outfit? Isn't it dirty?" I sighed and said "No it isn't dirty, now shush!" I got in the car and my mom said, "She still hasn't stopped talking?"

I said "No she-"....

Chloe interrupted me and said, "No I haven't stopped talking! Have you?" My mom just started to drive.

When I got to school I went straight to my locker to put Chloe in. Of course, she begged me not to, but I didn't listen to her dirty tricks. So I just put her up. I was in the classroom at my desk, when I heard her. "You weren't going to keep me in that nasty locker! I made it into your book bag!"

"How?" I sighed.

"Because - I am a Mischievous Princess!", she answered. I shut her up quickly. Now I'd missed everything my teacher said. I had no choice but to ask what we're doing. When

I did, I ended up in detention after school!

Once in detention, I whispered loudly, "Chloe, this is all your fault!"

Chloe shouted back, "At least I don't have cheese in my hair from that silly food fight!"

When my mom came, I took Chloe home.

"I'm so sorry Jazlyn," Chloe said.

I answered, "I'm sorry too.", and we stayed friends forever.

IF I WAS A TREE

Reanna N., 7,

Lawrenceville Boys & Girls Club

If I was a tree,
What would I see?
Birds! – Flying, all around me.
Squirrels! – Jumping from tree to tree.
People! – Picking apples,
bright and red;
Hungry for pie, then off to bed!

SANTA'S LITTLE HELPER

Samuel L. Jones Club

Danielle G., 6

Dear Santa,
If you like to deliver presents, I will love to help you like your elves. I want to put all the ribbons on the presents and be by your side in the sled. I want to help feed the reindeer so they are ready to run as fast as they can. We must deliver these presents to children all over the world! This is what I want for Christmas.

THE APPLE

Sydney B., 9

George Washington
Carver
Boys & Girls Club

Up in the apple tree
High off the ground
I see an apple
So big and round
I climb up the tree
And hold on tight
I pick it up and bite
Oohh it is going to be
a great night

Isabelle B., 7, In The Garden, Mathews Club





A PATH TO GREATNESS
 Jakentae J., 12
 George Washington Carver Boys & Girls Club

A path to greatness
 That leads to life
 I was raised in the hood
 Always had to think twice

People white as rice
 Always judge me by my color
 Mom told me don't worry
 Just protect your little brother

People get killed like nothing happened
 I will make things happen
 I will not be a bystander and stand on the side
 I will stand tall with pride
 This is the path that people need to find

A DANCE MADE ME CRY
 Christian M., 10
 Paulding County Boys & Girls Club

The dance made me imagine
 what I could not remember feeling
 Goofy without a problem
 Things that were not funny, are now hilarious
 What's wrong with me?
 Do I have a problem that others cannot yet see?
 It was the dance, the beautiful dance that has hit me
 emotionally
 The graceful movement
 The rhythm
 The beat
 The way the dancers point and stretch their feet
 The dance is just a dance to others
 But to me
 The dance is my reality

I AM WOMAN!

Alana G., 12

George Washington Carver Boys & Girls Club

I am a woman!

I stand up tall and speak on what's right

Women have always been treated

wrong from the start

The world underestimates us

They throw us under the bus

Throw me to the wolves

and I will return leading the pack

What I believe in, I will never turn my back

We don't need to plea

We stand strong on our own two feet

Michelle Obama once said,

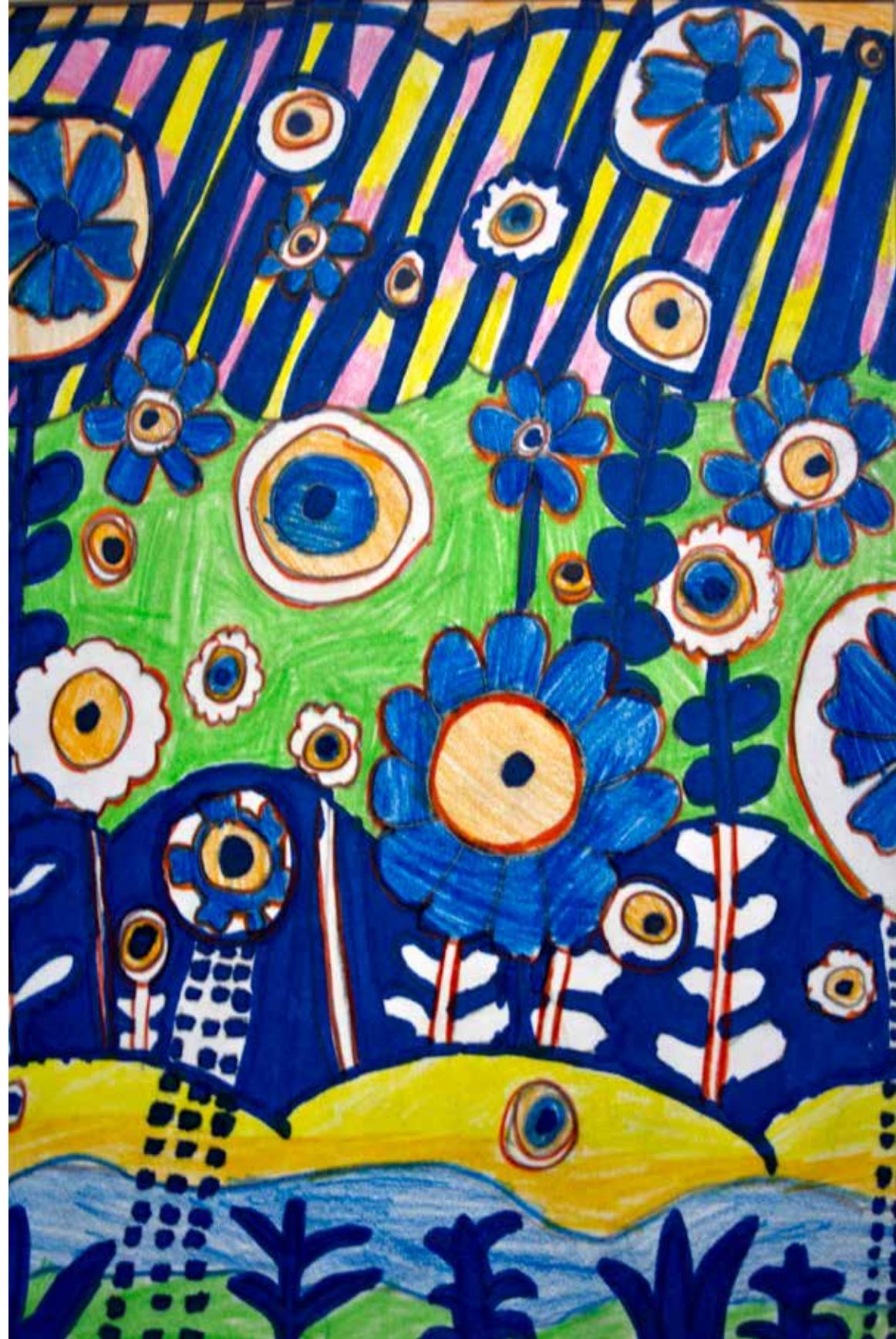
"As women, we must stand up for ourselves,

As women, we must stand up for each other,

As women, we must stand up for justice for all."

I am a woman!

Maria W., 12, Customs, Anderson Club



ART IS MY NAME

Kayla M., 12

Michael A. Grant Boys & Girls Club

What is a dream?
Is it something you can see?
Or maybe it isn't everything that it seems?
Everyone has a dream, a future, a life
Either, you can see your future blurry or with keen sight.

I have a dream
A dream to change the world
Yes, it sounds as cliché as it seems
But I'll make my fantasy to reality
I will change the world with art.

Yes. My art!

It sounds weird and confusing
But to me, it sounds really amusing!
I want to achieve my dream so much
That I will not give up
I am not a failure!
Not a wailer!
I do not care if I'm a seventh grader my whole life
I'll make my future pure for your sight!

Remember me. Remember my name!

My name is Kayla Mosley, and I'll make peace reign!

CHILI PEPPER

Collin B., 11

A.W. Tony Matthews Boys & Girls Club

I ate a chili pepper
I lost a lunch-time dare
Sydney told me I would burn my mouth, but I didn't care
I ate that chili pepper without a seed to waste
Since I ate that chili pepper
I lost my sense of taste

Alex H., 11, Junkanoo Fest, Matthews Club



BE YOURSELF

Josephine W., 11

Paulding County Boys & Girls Club

It's ok if you're different from everyone else
It just means you're your own special gem
Never change who you are so you will be like them
Be yourself and the right people will love the real you
God made you the way you're supposed to be
So you'll look like you and not like me
Always believe in yourself
And you'll make it through life being who you're
meant to be
Being yourself is one of the best things you can do
It shows who you truly are
And that you're not afraid to show it
Be Yourself!

COWGIRL

Skyla B., 11

Paulding County Boys & Girls Club

I'm a girl with a cowboy hat riding a horse in the field
I'm not a girl that is breaking the rules
I'm not a girl that doesn't go to school
I'm a sweetheart
I'm a cowgirl at heart

At school, the teachers say that the boys are supposed
to be stronger

You can't do what a boy can do

Well, I say...

I'm gonna live my life

I'm gonna be a rule breaker

I'm gonna be a dream maker

When I ride my horse in a wide open field

Wind in my hair

Ground beneath my feet

I'm a strong girl

I'm a tough girl

I'm a girl with a plan

I'm a cowgirl at heart

HOLIDAY HAIKU

Jalen B., 10

Thomasville Boys & Girls Club

Thankful for my dad

Children are playing outside

Mom said time to eat



Alexandria T., 11, Creepy Spring Trap, Radloff Club



Vanessa L., 11, America The Beautiful, Brookhaven Club

I DON'T WANT TO GROW UP

Mireya S., 10

Paulding County

Boys & Girls Club

Life is full of responsibilities

I am looking forward

to a bright future

But I am also concerned about
the responsibilities I will have

Am I ready?

Is anyone ever really ready to grow up?

We have no choice but to grow up
and take on responsibility

Life is all about taking risks and making mistakes

What if I make the wrong ones?

What if I risk it all and end up with nothing?

Don't worry baby, my mama tells me

If you get knocked down

I'll help lift you up

Growing up must be done

Making the right choices and knowing right from wrong

Are things I am learning along the way

Of being a grown up one day



Ganesb T., 11, The Woman with the Golden Hair, Anderson Club

LEFT BEHIND

Arianna K., 11

James T. Anderson Boys & Girls Club

Left behind...

Depressing, under appreciated

Sad, left out, upset

Something I don't want to experience

Don't get left behind

WHAT DOES DEPRESSION FEEL LIKE?

Kayla M., 12

Michael A. Grant Boys & Girls Club

As I walk upon the Earth, I don't think about me,
I think about the Earth
Wondering about the problems that can't be solved,
I wonder how the universe evolves.
I walk around blaming myself for what I've done
Thinking about what I'll become
Maybe these voices I hear
Make my life less clear

How can I think with these voices taking control?
As others insults tend to break my soul
I've made so many mistakes
That it makes my mind break
My mind gets disassembled everyday
Causing me to cry from my disarray

Why do I think to care?
When nobody stares
Sorry for being so indirect
But the insults in my heart need to dissect
Please forgive me, I beg
I'm sorry, I cry
But I realized all that's around me, may be a lie

Is this what depression feels like?



Jamie D., 10, Fauvism Study, Barksdale Club

MY LIFE IS SO COMPLICATED

Lauryn H., 11

Samuel L. Jones Boys & Girls Club

I've been going through so much in my life
So many things I want to tell people
I want to escape
Please help me deal with this
Oh, please help me
I've been on my knees
Praying for you to help me
I been crying all day and night so I beg of you to
Help me through my tears
I don't think this is right
Please stop it now so I can be in peace
So I can be free
All I ask is for you to help me
Please

LOOK FROM WITHIN

Nya R., 12

Samuel L. Jones Boys & Girls Club

I am not my color
I am my personality
But we still have to learn
How to love each other
We must stand strong and be proud of who we are
Because everyone is different
Near and far

MY FLAWS

Janai B. 12

Douglas County Boys & Girls Club

I am proud of my color
I am proud of my race
Proud to be dark skin with my curves and my waist
And my nice curly hair
which really doesn't cover my face
I am not the best and I am not the worst
but I'm proud of being me
My attitude can be salty but don't be scared
because I'm really sweet
No, I'm not famous and no, I'm not a star
But I accept myself, Flaws and All

IT MUST BE CHRISTMAS DAY

Jania C., 10

Carroll County Boys & Girls Club

Christmas Day
Buying Ornaments
Trimming Trees
Checking stockings for goodies
Listening to Christmas rap
When I see these things
I have to say
It must be Christmas Day
I run downstairs and
Look under the tree
Checking for any gifts for me
I see one, two, three, four
I know there has to be some more
Looks like Santa really came
If I'm good next year he'll do the same
He came down the chimney without a peep
Making sure I was fast asleep



Ariann A., 12, Landscape with Rhythm , Lawrenceville Club

LIFE

Kiara G., 12

Louise Radloff Middle School Boys & Girls Club

What is your inspiration in life?

For me, life is a fairytale that has happy endings
and not so happy endings.

Life is a given from our Father who created earth.

Life is good because were all different,
and we have to accept it for who we are.

You never know when it's over or if it's just starting.

Live life like a present waiting to be opened.

Live life with love,

Live it without fears,

Because you never know when the last day you will live it.

Love. Dream. Wish.

JUDGE ME

Kiara G., 12

Louise Radloff Middle School Boys & Girls Club

I'm fat, I'm ugly, I'm dumb

Yes, judge me

I'm rich, I'm pretty, I'm nice

Yes, judge me

I'm perfect, I'm tall, I'm skinny

Yes, that's me

I'm not perfect, I'm not rich, I'm not pretty

But I'm me

Yes, judge me.

CHIPTOLE

Thomas W., 11

Louise Radloff Middle School Boys & Girls Club

Oh chipotle, oh chipotle,

I always seem to crave you,

When I need a savory bite, or two.

I do not know what it is,

But the taste of your food is like an angel's kiss.

When I order my usual "burrito bowl",

Your food always created by hand,

When I take a bite,

I'm instantly in LA-LA land.

But you burritos are rich, oh my,

They are so fulfilling,

That I am never quite able to finish mine.

A DANCER'S LIFE

Shaniece R., 10

W.W. Woolfolk Boys & Girls Club

Dance to me is to have a lot of fun!
I love to dance in the sun.
Sometimes it helps me to stop from doing wrong,
When I go home I dance to my favorite song.
Sometimes it is so funny to me,
how other people don't see what dance means to me.
Dance makes me so happy and free
Dance is the only way to be.



Amaya M., 12, Soul Step , Anderson Club



Amani H., 12, Zombie Cheerleader , Paulding County Club

WHERE ARE WE NOW

Samiyah C., 11

A.R. "Gus" Barksdale Boys & Girls Club

People are going upstairs 1 by 1
Families losing the ones they love
We stand and say that we are Free
Lies that fall from our tongue
We need to be treated the way
God intended us to be
Caucasian, Black, Mixed, Whatever
We should be working together
To build up this Nation in triumph instead
We are slowly falling down
Unfair Presidents to 2nd class citizens
We Need Help Now
So tell me "Where Are We Now?"
Are we victorious in the place I call "HOME?"
Are we unhappy in a place right Now?
Day after Day, month after month
Where Are We Now?

FLASH

Jason H., 10

CNG at the Tuskegee Airmen Global Academy BGC

I run so fast you can barely see me run past
That's how you know I'm the Flash

When you see my lightning bolt
The wind might make you choke
When I run past
That's how you know I'm the Flash

Call me on the set, I'll be there in a sec
Running in the street you'll never see me
You'll just feel the breeze by the one named...
Me!

I run so fast that's how you know I'm the Flash





FOR YOU AMERICA
Jemiah F., 15
Samuel L. Jones Boys & Girls Club

This is to America
The America that said my voice is going to be heard
The America that takes my words
and shoots them back at me
With the gun sitting at their waist
America is your friend with a sharp political knife
Hidden behind their caring tones and bright smiles
Unseen by a weak mind
But America makes weak minds think their votes
count
That their voice matters
That your skin isn't always the problem
That it's your intellect
We are stabbed for every lie told
America's hands stained so red that it covers the
white and the blue
No longer the land of the free and home of the
brave
No longer red, white and blue
Just red, red for every bloody lie told

AGES 13-15



MY HIJAB
Sierra J., 15
Douglas County Boys & Girls Club

My hijab covers me from head to toe
While people stare in woe
Questions, questions, questions, they ask
"How can you wear that, may I ask?"
Sometimes it takes time to fit in
Or only being remembered as the girl who wears that
thing
Well, may I begin?
My hijab is for me, fitting me perfectly
Giving me confidence to hold my head high
And, yes, sometimes I want to cry
Sometimes it's hard not to be like the rest of them
But do I still try? Why, yes, of course
I show my beauty in many ways
By my hair and my scarf
By my skin and my garments, that covers it
I may not be perfect, I may not be the best
But when I put on my garments
I am an easy breezy beautiful
Covered girl

BROCK
Melissa B., 15
Brookhaven Boys & Girls Club

An inspiration and an example of hope
Proving that you can succeed no matter where you go
A passionate, strong-willed woman,
she empowers her team
She is one of the fearless leaders
of the Atlanta Dream
She shows women that their futures are bright
She encourages each player to succeed
and never dim their light
She is a person to admire
Her strength and courage will build an empire

A GIRL IS...

Kishira M., 15

Douglas County Boys & Girls Club

In present day we have more than enough,
But you can't help the natural...
It happens, life happens

Stereotypes...

It's a natural way of life
There's at least one for
Everything and everyone
But the relentless torture women endure
There's always that little buddy following not far behind

Work

Women are to have "clean jobs"
Women are nurses not doctors

Physical ability

Women aren't as strong as men
Women don't play sports
Women are quieter than men
They're not meant to speak out loud

Sexual output

Women are flirts
Women are meant to be the damsels in distress
Not the hero

Authority level

Women aren't meant to be in charge
Women are supposed to be submissive and do as
they're told
Women aren't politicians

~~—WOMEN DO NOT NEED TO GO TO COLLEGE—~~

*Rumor has it that the stereotypes begins the very second
gender is revealed. Essentially, parents unknowingly are
setting their daughter up to be the "perfect lady."*

EVERYDAY

Jakare B., 15

Warren Boys & Girls Club

I've been trying to come up
Wash a couple of cars trying to gain a quick buck
I've been praying to God trying to get some good luck

You know it's hard out here
All you have at night is that chick in your ear
I don't walk around with fear
I just think of how to cheer
about how I didn't have to die this year
I never had to shed a tear
If your work is done the way is clear

If you walk in the light you can find your way
Think of how you lived to another day
Every day I get up to wake up and pray!

Kevuyab H., 15, Day of the Dead, Adamsville Club



BLACK LIVES MATTER

Ariana H., 13

A Worley Brown Boys & Girls Club

Why does it cost to save lives?
I can name you five people that just recently died
Next it could be me
It isn't easy living in this year of 2016
Walking around these streets now you get shot by the police
Black man selling cds
Trying to provide for his family
Gets shot by a white guy
No one really knows why
Why does it cost to save lives?

AS I WALK

Nahomy P., 15

Brookhaven Boys & Girls Club

As I walk down the street
I see signs and letters pass by me
Here I am completely unaware
Of the future I can barely read
As I walk down the street
I see people pass by me
Laughter, chatter, and smiles
While deep in my heart, I frown and frustrate over
The signs I see and letters that pass by me

SORRY

Johnathan H., 15

Warren Boys & Girls Club

I'm sorry that I lied to you, that I couldn't even
tell you the truth
I thought that you'd be able to forgive me
but why do I get that feeling
that you don't even trust me
When we first met, I was blinded by what I felt
A feeling that I can't explain
The feeling that make me happy in many other ways
But now I'm sitting here just thinking
about how I mess up something great
Now can I feel it messing with me
I just had to tell you my age
I'm sorry that I made your heart sink
but now I see what you mean
I don't know what else to say
It's alright my heart got taken away anyway
No matter what you say, I still love you anyway
Cus at the end of the day
these feelings won't even be able to go away
Sorry



CONFIDENT KNOWLEDGE

Armoni M., 13

Warren Boys & Girls Club

Verse 1

Everybody look when Moni waking towards their way
Dressed fresh have all ya'll haters quiet got nothing to say
Music turns on me and my crew getting lit
Have all you jealous girls wanna fight me but ya'll stay sit
I grow more confident cause my ego always getting raised
Making good grades in school so I'm always getting praised
Never had a day where my life was being phased
As I kept my reputation of being goofy and crazed

Chorus

Watch as I grow imam end it
Show the whole world I can be independent
Ya'll man cause I'm confident tryna comprehend it
Dummies thinking hard but they brains steady spinning
Gotta lot of knowledge so I'm winning
Still got my innocence so I'm never sinning
Instead of starting drama I laugh it off walking away grinning
So ya'll haters can give up on whatever plan you was pinning

Verse 2

I feel that Trump gone change my free rights
Have me working like a slave and feel depression long nights
Ruin all the beautiful sights
Just too waste money and replace them with his selfish delights

Chorus

Watch as I grow imam end it
Show the whole world I can be independent
Ya'll man cause I'm confident tryna comprehend it
Dummies thinking hard but they brains steady spinning
Gotta lot of knowledge so I'm winning
Still got my innocence so I'm never sinning
Instead of starting drama I laugh it off walking away grinning
So ya'll haters can give up on whatever plan you was pinning

SHE
Takiya B., 15
A.W. Tony Matthews Boys & Girls Club

She tells herself not to worry
Because she knows it'll be okay
She says, "Be patient"
Because there will be another day

She looks up to the sky
And asks why
As she waits for a reply
When all she wants to do is cry

She carries nothing but stress
Anyone can guess
She doesn't want more, but less

As she relieves the pain
She still thinks it is all the same
But who is she to blame
When all there is shame

Music is her only way out
Of this world we know as a drought

She knows it's a new day
And she knows she will be okay

I WONDER HOW THE MOON FEELS
Dionte D., 15
Paulding County Boys & Girls Club

I wonder how the moon feels
As it flies throughout the night
It's multi-colored throughout the year
But black as it is white

I wonder how the sun feels
As it shimmers through the day
Orange, yellow... can be any color
But it also brings disarray

I wonder how the stars feel
As they twinkle through the year
But in the shadows of the moon size
It sometimes brings them fear

The summer days and winter nights
Can turn our lives around
Sometimes joy, sometimes fright
But they never bring on frowns

As we wonder through the night
And question through the day
We finally understand our answer
After recurring dismay



Matthew M., 16, Final Dance, Barksdale Club

NEVER SETTLE FOR LESS

Ashanti M., 13,
Newnan/Coweta County Boys & Girls Club

Never settle for less
Always strive for your best
You are blessed
Don't have to be stressed
No Need to fill blue
Just always be you
Never settle for less.

MY DAYS

Jaylen B., 15
A.R. Gus Barksdale Boys & Girls Club

My days on this earth I cherish
Every moment as my last
No time to regret or focus on the past
A new time is up ahead waiting to be explored fresh starts,
open hearts, even open doors
Don't ever take life for granted because it could be your last
Look forward to your future and forget about the past

Rayne M., 10, The Forest with Secrets, Carroll County Club



DEEP INSIDE

Marlon W., 15
Lawrenceville Boys & Girls Club

Some roses aren't red
Some violets aren't blue
Some foes aren't fake
Some friends' aren't true

Sometimes things aren't hard
Sometimes things aren't easy
Sometimes things are even
Still people don't need me

Everyone wants to be rich
Everyone wants fame
Everyone wants to have it to all
Deep inside there is still shame

Everyone isn't cute
Everyone isn't ugly
Everyone is different
No one can judge me

This world is money
To love is to hate
Everyone is a critic
And don't give extra plates

I don't paint pictures
But I do picture paint
My brain is a world of its own
Therefore I never thank

I write from my heart
And speak through my soul
I listen to the lies
And pray God's plan unfold

MY FUTURE GRIEF

Jemiah F., 15

Samuel L. Jones Boys & Girls Club

Death was a stranger to her
An invisible figure
I'll steal your last breath
I tried to ask but death beat me to it

Death became her associate
I heard more of him
He seemed to become closer to her
A figment of the imagination became more of a figure
seen by us

Death became her friend
Around when we were out
When I came he sat close to her
Slowly she seem to fade into the crowd
The crowd of people he stole

Death became her best friend
Together forever never left her side
Until she finally left mine
Sight for sore eyes when I saw her
Laying there she became a dead leaf that had fallen
I had become the wind
Trying to blow life back into her
But I had been too late
I hadn't seen her fall
Lost to suicide
She became my DEAD
Best friend

RISE TO SUNRISE

Kimberly H., 13

A.R. "Gus" Barksdale Boys & Girls Club

Have you ever thought?
About what life would be like in a world where your
worth was not determined by what you bought?
A world without obstruction?
A life devoid of sin and destruction?
There is a possibility for the world to be
What others consider to be make-believe
However, we would have to stand
And create our own safe-haven land
We need to be willing to work and plan
Our new land will have a new form of man
Humanity would stick together through rises and falls
There will be some who witness it all
Who witness destruction and then its reprise
Maybe they will get to see the sunrise

Michaela O., 9, Lions Adventure, Jones Club



SOME OTHER CINDERELLA

Kennedy C., 14

Paulding County Boys & Girls Club

You told me once that I was your princess
Though now I feel more like the damsel in distress
Because I waited all this time for you
But I found out you weren't waiting on me too

Some other Anna knew where to start
Some other Elsa unfroze your heart
Some other Rapunzel let her hair down
Some other Belle showed you she cared

Some other Jasmine made the best wish
Some other Tiana knew how to kiss
Some other Pocahontas knew the secrets of the land
Some other Aurora was good with her hands

Some other Mulan passed all your tests
Some other Snow White was kinder than the rest
Some other Ariel traded her voice
Some other Cinderella made the right choice

I wanted so much for you to care
Sadly you never seem to notice I was there
So here and now sitting on this top shelf
I've decided that I'd rather rescue myself

THE SOCIETY TODAY

BrookeLynn B., 14

Jesse Draper Boys & Girls Club

Today, when I look at the world we have created, I am disgusted
We've got black men being shot down by police officers
We've got gangs running around killing innocent people, breaking into homes, doing all sorts of criminal activities
We've got students who settle with low B's and C's and don't want to strive to reach that A, barely achieving in school
We've got teens and children, running around after school not doing something beneficial with the time they have to run around and play all day
We've got everyone today cooped up in the technology realm and not out their communicating face to face with other people, leaving their social skills unsharpened
Why?
We need to empower our youth today with words and action
Show them that they don't have to be in gangs to show that they are tough
They don't have to have low B's and C's or failing grades to stay the great and cool one
They need to know that they can achieve in school and beyond
That after school, they can do worthwhile things like volunteering, studying, or helping others and not things that will get them into trouble
They don't have to listen to the smart remarks of others
That this is their only life and that they need to live it to the fullest
That is the society we need today.

TRUE COLORS

Kennedy C., 14

Paulding County Boys & Girls Club

The way you think about someone or something
Is not always the way they truly are
Take 2 birds for example
A dove and a crow
One is black as night and the other is white as snow

One stands for peace and the other destruction
One is irrelevant while the other is perfection
One's pure as gold and the other fake as fools
There's one who's high maintenance and the other
crafty with its tools

Nothing is as it seems
When the dove attacks and the wounded crow sings
True colors are revealed in a fatal turn
To which bird will our country crash and burn?
Everything is not what it seems
Sometimes the angels are the ones with dark wings
So my question for you, sir
Which bird would you prefer
If it were to be judged by character
And not by its color?

UNLOCKING THE KEY

Kimberly H., Age 13

A.R. "Gus" Barksdale Boys & Girls Club

Anger Greed Sin Fear
These are the boundaries by which we adhere
Where people and their mentalities are always unsafe
Maybe we can make our own raphe
There is a side of humanity where we live to advance
All we do is strive to enhance
The ideals of our nation, and its priorities
This side of humanity wants to
CHALLENGE the authorities
Challenge the rules, challenge the standards
Make a change, be our OWN commanders
Maybe then will we finally be free
Just take a look in your mind, you have the key

UNTITLED

Aurielle-Savon P., 15,

George Washington Carver Boys & Girls Club

I look around and all my friends
Are either dead or locked up
Never thought I'll see a year
When I felt like my heart was chopped up
I'm tired of R.I.P and long live this and that
I wanna see a day a mother doesn't have to worry
About getting her son back
I don't understand why we can't put down the guns
I swear this world would be so much more fun
I just dread the day I see one of mine in the casket
Is it too hard to take in what I'm asking?

-Long Live Rudy-



Chayse G., 9, Picasso Hues, *Anderson Club*



Chris W., 15, African American, *Adamsville Club*



Stevie H., 11, See the Rainbow, *Mathews Club*



Fatou M., 12, Helping Hands, *Whitehead Club*



YOUR SMILE

Attim B., 16

Samuel L. Jones Boys & Girls Club

Sometimes you make me laugh

Your Smile

It's special to me

Your pearly whites, brighter than the lights from heaven

It engulfs me in a happy place

Keep me here forever

Sometimes you make me cry

Your eyes

They pierce through my body, straight to my soul

They make my tears boil with rage

But I just wipe them away like nothing happened

Sometimes you make me flinch

Your hands

They ball up into fists and puncture my side

Leaving bruises throughout my body

Those same hands run down my chest to my thighs

I feel relaxed

Sometimes you make me feel loved

Your words

They jump out at me like words from a page

Anger, remorse, affection

All of these feelings smack me in the face

as you yell at me

But I forgive you anyway

And when I'm lying in that hospital bed

I just think of your smile

My happy place

Please, just keep me here forever

BANG!

Attim B., 16

Samuel L. Jones Boys & Girls Club

Bang!

That's is the sound of your pistol

Making a clean shot through

the middle of my forehead

A silver bullet with your initials: U.S.A.

Now, I'm dead and because of what?

Is it because I looked you in the eye,
and made you feel intimidated?

Because my afro is too nappy for your comb with red
and white teeth and a blue handle?

Maybe it's just because I am of color

Yes, as in black, as in African descent

You once loved me when I was just a stupid,
illiterate negro

You once loved me when you raped me
and impregnated me with your mulatto child

You once loved me when I was only good enough
To pick cotton on your white washed plantation

But then I was set free

I learned to read and write

I invented more than half the things you use

I lead activist groups against your hatred

I fought for my rights and became powerful

More power than you can handle

You became terrified of my power

Terrified of my beauty

Terrified I would over power you

So you figured out a way to get rid of me

Bang!

That's the sound of your pistol

Making a clean shot through the middle
of my forehead

With a silver bullet initialed: U.S.A.

SUPERHERO SONG

Julian T., 16

A Worley Brown Boys & Girls Club

Back when I sitting, spitting, and getting kisses

To back when I was tricking and shooting and getting misses

To back when I was spitting hidden from doing dishes

Was always hoping for some odd parents to make some wishes

But now I'm ripping and killing and spilling

licks from every villain

Not well they're feeling need to prescribe some penicillin

And I'm willing to fill in for them and take they're position

Dr. Evil killing 1 million shaved black cats like no superstition

Back then didn't know when

My super power was gonna kick in

Felt like I was always losing

Dodgeball they would never choose me

That's groovy wish life was like a movie

Wouldn't have these dudes snoozing

I would never be losing

Or moving around these tricky situations

Someone tell me where they came from

Work out tell me how I make them

Oh god I really hate them

It's very low key like providence

I got the brains and common sense

I know not to touch an electric fence

I just don't know about my confidence

Like there are times when I can fly and defeat the bad guy

And there are times when I can walk up to that girl and say hi

But there are times when I'm walking and trip over my shoe

There are times when they're loose I don't know what to do

So I'm running as fast as I can chasing the ice cream man

Ramping it fast in these Vans passing all of those vans

Hand stand over the stands in band the tunes for these fans

Crammed from all these exams, my feelings can go in the can

I do the best that I can

I really do when I try -- it's dope

When I don't, it's a noose hence don't need any rope

Because when I do the best I can, I don't choke

I have a fire desire to find one to admire
The feeling is higher than the boss that will hire
I get tired of selling feelings that're becoming expired
About to just donate them, I'm done waiting for a buyer
I wanna feel stronger to lift up these buildings
The strength in my brain, the power I'm building
I wanna X-ray vision the trees that I'm wilting
My mind has been X-rayed too many times, it is wilting
I just wanna do the things I'm not able to do
I just wanna go up and talk to you
I wanna connect like super glue
Like your shirt, I just wanna get close to you
Talk to that girl I really like, I can't
Go for that job I really want, I can't
I wanna give you a bouquet of flowers
But I can't. I don't have my super powers

KARMA KRIES

D'Andrea M., 16
Douglas County Boys & Girls Club

O karma, O karma
Look back at the drama
What goes around comes around
And you turn people's smiles upside down
Karma, you think you deserve a crown?

O karma, O karma
You give people hate, not only their size but even mistakes
Run, run, run and don't look back
Karma you are being served like a snack
Whole body shattered with every step you take
O karma, O karma you've been waiting at the gates

Tears, tears, tears
No rescuer here, karma you cry in depression and fear
Welcome to our society where challenges are near
Pushing and tugging strengths are here
Karma creeping and sneaking
We can only get here heavily breathing

Pain, pain, pain
Ouch you hurt
People's hearts pounding like shovels in the dirt
Dirt, dirt, dirt thrown on your name
For being the devil just for the fame

Weak, weak, weak
The bitterness stabbing you in the back live knives
How much longer can you take this ride?
Riding the waves of tears and pain
O karma, O karma

Wait, it's not over
Karma has put a chip your shoulder
Mad at the world and mad at me
How could karma have such longevity?
Why? Why? Me? Full of nonsense and guilt
You don't even know where to start
So come on and let's build

Tough
Your heart and mind can only take so much
Karma, why did you do this to people in a rush?
Lord, pain, pain, pain, what's your name?
Make a scene and let's play this game

O karma, karma
I hoped you enjoyed your stay
In people's hearts and minds
You'll eventually fade away

Knock, knock, and knock
O karma, is that you?
No more hurt and tears right in front of you
Karma, are you kidding?
Tears running down your face, swimming

Karma, karma, karma
You make people feel like a lie
O karma, O karma that's why you cry

MY HAPPY PLACE

Khadation S., 16

Douglas County Boys & Girls Club

You're my heart and you're my soul
You're my life
I don't think I can live without you
Not having you is like the earth without the solar system
We can never part
Even though we've had our ups and downs
I will always run back to you.
You comfort me when I'm sad and happy
I have tried to experience you in many ways
Even though I may have failed, I will still try again
You will be with me until the day I die
You're my favorite
I love you...Music

Chayse G., 9, Metric Spectrum, Anderson Club



WORDS

Amauri R., 17

Lawrenceville Boys & Girls Club

It's funny how letters compose words, turned to phrases,
then a sentence
Like how minute things become bigger within a minute
Minute, minute same spelling different connotations,
one stressed syllable and words mean confrontation
Like my life is a dream, your life in magazines,
but criminals get life letting go magazines
See that's life as in living, life like the magazines,
and life as in prison words are never what they seem
Cause tend to perceive simpler things better first, but the
same people criticize me for being simple in a verse
Simplicity is infancy, I'll tell you where I get that from,
Adorable babies speaking gibberish,
moral is its cute to be dumb,
The less they excel, their cells, the more they seem to sell,
Catching winds like a sail until they're locked in a cell
Because the more syllables, the more you enhance the
mind, do you mind the mind of mine that blows like a mine
Are you smart or impertinent?
Stupid or imbecilic
Mad or infuriated
Violent or overzealous
It's crazy when you think about the theme and as wild it
seems they all mean the same things, impertinent is smart,
imbecilic is stupid, infuriated is mad but it's different
In how you use it)
This is the part where you snap or you Snap because
these words have made you angry in how you react)
I progressively used the same the same words growing
bigger in these lines I used synonyms that mean the same
thing but are different in the mind)
It's funny how letters compose words, turned to phrases,
then a sentence
Like how these minute things became bigger within a minute)
Peace.

AMAZING

Syleste T., 16

A.R. "Gus" Barksdale Boys & Girls Club

It's amazing how you can always be there for someone when they need you.

It's amazing how you can stick with someone regardless of what happens or what they may do.

It's amazing how you can love someone so much and they don't even know.

It's amazing how you would give your life for someone, although they wouldn't give you a dollar.

It's amazing if someone falls you will always be in there corner, if they like, they can just grab you.

What about you?

You need someone too

To stick with you regardless of what you do or what happens

Someone to love you so much and you never know that they would give their life for you
To fall and have someone in your corner just in case you need them, you can just grab them

You search and search and you don't find anyone
You scream so loud but no one hears you, so you search again, again and again to only find God!
Realizing he was there the entire time
You just didn't notice.

AMAZING!

MY DEAREST FRIEND

Janae F., 18

A. Worley Brown Boys & Girls Club

I have this friend that seems to have grown fond of me over the past couple of years

This person is willing to give me the time of day, when I have no one else to turn to

I was alone, nothing seemed to fit in my shattered world but her
She found a way to make life better even if it was secretly destroying me

She made me feel wanted when I was rejected by myself
She showed me the ways of carving out the little pieces that didn't fit

The waves of emotions that escaped my body in that moment felt as if the waves of the midnight ocean were crashing against my fragile frame

I felt content with life for that brief moment as the waves washed the pain from my exposed body

I have this friend that absolutely refuses to go away

She is the only one till this day that drowns me with the fact that I will never be what society desperately begs me to be

For she is the depression that haunts me on lonely nights
She has grown into the very vessels I try so hard to cut out, the very lesson that was taught to me

Left with the empty vessels that I pitifully claim as my own

I have this friend that has been around for years

Trying to find ways to end my suffering, ways to end me
But what was I supposed to do?

I was lonely and she was my only friend

DIFFERENT TYPE OF HUSTLE

Sergio W., 17

Newnan/Coweta County Boys & Girls Club

I'm out hustling. Trying to sell my name
I want the money. I don't want the fame
Give me a full tuition scholarship and a meal and I'll be
alright. I'll sleep tight
I just want to accomplish all of my dreams and look out for
my friends and family
Make sure nobody starving or dying in the streets
Do the most I can to help the people most in need
A young boy just trying to set it off in a world full of
criticizers and non-believers
In a world full of hate, respect is a must
and that's only trill fam to my haters man

IT'S MY TIME

Brianna P., 17

Newnan/Coweta County Boys & Girls Club

It's almost my time
Just watch it go by
All my achievements could make you go blind
The love I care that was given to me
Help me go all the way and succeed
Sometimes you may wonder how I'm the best
It's really because I was never stress
People always advise me to use my eyes
But I couldn't usually compromise
Walking in school you know I had to slay
Like every day was my birthday
You know I outshine
Because this is my time

LIVING NIGHTMARE

Anonymous, 17,

Lawrenceville Boys & Girls Club

I can't sleep
I haven't been able to sleep for days now
When I try, the nightmares come and with it comes the fear
I can't even fall sleep for an hour
If I try I wake up screaming or shaking drenched in sweat
This is my living nightmare

I can't eat.

I'm always hungry

Never full

No matter how much I consume there's a void I can never fill.

A void filled by one

Without her there is just, emptiness

This is my living nightmare

I'm never happy

Each day goes by as quickly as it came

With no joy

No peace

I can't remember the last time I smiled

Maybe I forgot how to

After all,

This is my living nightmare

I feel so cold

Like I have no heart

I forgot the sound of its beat

Its warm sensation

All I feel inside is darkness

A darkness with no light

This is my living nightmare

What is life?

What is death?

Am I alive?

Am I dead?

I'm neither

I'm living an unlived life

A life without purpose.

A life without her IS a living nightmare

SO I MUST GO
Lecurtis R., 16
Carroll County Boys & Girls Club

I must go
I will go
because when I was worrying
at home
you were at clubs and bars
asking for drinks until you couldn't take anymo'
I must go with the flow
and put yo' stuff by the do' and
now you're in tears crying to me
about why I want you to
Go

I must go because my dreams
are plans that I have been
planning for a while,
I don't want anything to do
with you so when you see my
number, don't bother to dial
My dreams were above your
head
So I thought it was best that I
left instead

I wanted to be a cardiologist so I
could mend broken hearts because
your lies tore mine apart
But I decided to do what I do
best
and that's being me cause I
am nothing like the rest

So now I know why I left
you and I'm glad I did
cause
if I didn't I wouldn't know what
a good man is
I'm glad to say that I got rid of you
and your childish games, KID

I must go cause it's best for me
So now I'm worried about me
and not you
and I'm doing better
You're going to need me
watch and see

HEY DAD
Dalyn S., 18
Lawrenceville Boys & Girls Club

Hey dad
Can you hear me
I failed
I failed to understand who you are
In my mind you were dead
But In your mind you were trapped
Sadly I don't know the real you
And I probably never will
I hear stories
Apparently you were perfect
Don't misinterpret
If you were a jerk it wasn't on purpose
But on purpose
It felt like you jumped off
With no purpose
Got me asking what's my purpose
In fact
I feel like
When you lost your conscious
I became more conscious
You could hear the dead
But I can hear the head
Of every beast in Line
To take feast n dine
On my peace to climb
On my seat

BLACK! NOT THE COLOR BUT THE IDENTIFICATION

Stephanie S., 16

A. Worley Brown Boys & Girls Club

See, they tell us all black men are dangerous
All black men are "dangerous"
How come every time he walks past you
You seem to clutch onto your belongings
Seemed to have already judged him
Because of the color of his skin
Do not put him in your definition of a black man
He is a man, a man born by the sweat and tears
of his ancestors
Born and raised in prejudice and hate
All he wants is a better community for his people
And for his culture not to be terminated
So before you put him in your definition of a b-l-a-c-k
Black man, I say this
We refuse to be your victim
Refuse to apply for a job and be a loser
to the white man
Simply because he was the 'right person for the job'
When we both know the selected candidate
was under-qualified
So give us an opportunity
We are tired of being the minority
One of these days while you're judging my brother
I'm telling your brother or pal to check himself
Because the next time he walks past you
You will not grab onto your belongings
You'll be grabbing unto your mind
Because his intellectual ability will take you for a ride
His intellectual ability will surpass any
preconceived notion
His intellectual ability will be ranked higher
than you can ever imagine
His intellectual ability will be judged for his unique
persona and not your definition of him
Because he is a k-i-n-g

A king descended from the breasts of Nubian queens
His brothers they are k-i-n-g-s
Kings, and us his sisters, his q-u-e-e-n-s
The queens!
We are all one big happy family
Reason being that our struggle is not the same
as your struggle
When you struggle for one, you struggle for one
and one only
But when we struggle , we struggle for not one,
not two but the whole dawg-gone family
So with all the authority in my voice, I tell my brothers
and sisters to get up
We are not dangerous
We are smart
We have bright futures and we have h-o-p-e
Hope , F-C-H, Faith Consistency and Hard work
So the next time you see him, you'll probably
judge him again
But he's not bothered
You know why?
Because of the one that gives life to you and me
BLACK PEOPLE are S-T-R-O-N-G
STRONG!



McKenzie S., 17, Heart Lips, Lawrenceville Club

THAT GIRL!

Chasity M., 18

George Washington Carver Boys & Girls Club

She's getting older
And her goals are getting closer
She's becoming an adult
But has NO clue what it means in the adult world
Success is calling her everyday
But she is afraid to answer
She knows that success is her friend
But she fears it
She knows when she gets to the top
Everyone will be knocking at her door

I AM A LYRICAL PROPHET

Stephanie S., 16

A Worley Brown Boys & Girls Club

I AM a LYRICAL PROPHET

Suppressing this fire with knowledge

Don't get it mistaken

There's a lot of things being reported and faked
and our community is aching

We learn as a family, to keep it solid

We are here to teach and learn

We will educate in order

To survive on this hell on earth

Overcoming almost all society doubts

United we stand

And by the day things seem to have gotten a lot worse

But we are moving through

My light is illuminating this entire equation

I know it might seem unthinkable

But soon I'll teach my generation to be communicable

Parents told me not to have too much fun

Because my oppressors are watching and

they are dumbing me down

Society is hunting me down

It seems like we're jumping around

But we are the daughters and sons of king and queens

So we are bred to be leaders

I will follow the order and steps

Become a Nubian queen and I will earn my respect

And like medicine, will heal

Like a counselor, I will comfort

My hope is alive, and it is waiting

Waiting for me to summon it

To spread and fight like a soldier

and send it into battle

LESSONS OF LOVE

Tyler H., 16

A Worley Brown Boys & Girls Club

Dear Bae, why you had to leave
Dear Bae, god came between
I'm texting your phone like you going to hit me back
I'm still dreaming in class thinking of where you sat
You in heaven while I'm sitting in hell down here
Since you left everything just been so downhill
Baby, send me a message, let me know how you feel
Going crazy sometimes, I still don't even think it's real
At your grave everyday bringing a thousand roses
They telling me to let you go but baby I'm still holding
Saying that there's plenty fish but it isn't like your ocean
Feeling like I'm going to drown but baby I'm still floating
Missing that gorgeous smile so bright, I bet it's golden
Missing how we would fight then laugh like we're joking
Missing date night sometimes it was Netflix and chill
When the others were fake, baby, you keep it so real
Missing all the videos, Instagrams we would play
Missing all those little corny things you would say

I'm going to give you advice and,
you better grasp it, okay
I'm going to tell you this once
and then I'm out your way
Anyone who has a bae, you better keep your bae
Hold 'em tight, when it's hard
tell them you're here to stay
Say I love you every day when you can stand their face
Because you don't ever know what day
could be your final day

WHAT IF

Jazmyne D., 18

Carroll County Boys & Girls Club

What if the sky wasn't blue
And trees never grew
What if love wasn't true
What if I were never me
What if you were never you?

What if my mother was your mother, but we weren't related
What if you were the daughter she always wanted
And I was the daughter she hated
What if you were a better fit to the family
What if you ended up being a better me than me?

What if you were right and I was wrong
What if you were in my shoes and left me with nowhere to go
What if I was a disappointment and my talents were all gone
What if my life never existed
And you were the one she chose?

But what if I could change the world
And make a great difference
What if I could stop world hunger
And make technology great with lots of cool widgets?!

All this time
My what if was my kryptonite
So let's rewind this and make it right
What if my life could change me
For the better and not the worse
What if I would just be the best me
And not worry about my past hurt

What if my life helps save another
What if I'm the better life they need
Now, what if my what ifs didn't help each other
Then my what ifs wouldn't have helped me appreciate me!

WORLD AS IT'S SEEN

Kevin Huntley, 16

Douglas County BGC

He throws a racial slur... his white skin says, "I've been in your way forever, even in history/ He says this to me in a black history museum/ roadblock speed bump spike strip flatten the hopes of equality in a black history museum/ fossils sediment mass extinction holocaust pay for hollow streets empty of the colored that's how they want it to be/ airlines Delta flight delayed shot down dreams nightmares Freddy's back cross double take two action packed suit cases full of racism virtuous ability taunt ignorance towards blacks/ but respect the man flip the switch gymnastics acrobatics change tone different mood Arby's food truck/ home security no insurance State farm like a good neighbor the jail cell is there for the black man for non-committed crime convicted/ lesson learned before taught they tell you to halt your dreams we've been yelling for years and they act like they don't hear our screams/ people like me are equality fiend in my opinion people fail to view the world as it's seen.



SMILE

Matthew Milfort, 16

A.R. "Gus" Barksdale Boys & Girls Club

Trapped.

Society tells me I'm a weirdo, a freak. But in my head I can be who I want to be. The noise fades, insults and sharp-tongued jabs fall silent, and suddenly, finally I feel Peace.

All at once, expectations and the harshness of reality cease to loom over every waking minute. It's just me and my thoughts. Possible art pieces, random facts...

They all feel so –

Comforting.

Comfort like my friends bring me. The friends who can't always be there, who won't always be there. Here's where I start to overthink. The future seeps into my thoughts and my calm turns to....

Panic

The future? What will I be, what will I do ? How will I impact the world? It's all so much and I'm so young or so I think.

One small year, before I'm thrust into the adult world.

What a strange word....

Adult.

Responsibility. Jobs. Bills. Rent. COLLEGE. Take a deep breath....and relax the future is just that.

It isn't now so worry about the....

Present.

My friends? They're by my side. Those insults?

I don't really care? The future?

I'll worry about that when I have to

I open my eyes, and I SMILE, everything will be okay.

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Kaleb Anderson, VOX Atlanta Intern

Ogechi Ofodu, VOX Teen Staff Member

Faith Lucas, VOX Teen Staff Member

Christian Stallworth, Atlanta Teen Voices Teen Editor

VOX is Atlanta's home for uncensored teen publishing and self-expression. We connect metro Atlanta teens to resources for building their confidence, increasing their capacity to meet life's demands and ensuring their future success. VOX is creating a culture where adults and teens alike value the voices of teens in metro Atlanta, and where through VOX, teens will be prepared, connected and valued. VOX's program, Atlanta Teen Voices builds partnerships with other teen-serving organizations and amplifies the voices of teens throughout Atlanta.

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