

## **I See**

**By Hassan Nafis Ansari 2004**

*I see my bothers in Blues and Reds,  
Fighting and Dying for no cause...  
I see my sisters feeling that they are loved  
And having to raise a young life on their own...  
I see my brothers selling drugs in the streets...  
Instead of going to college,  
I see my sisters selling themselves on the streets,  
Instead of making a decent life for themselves...  
I see my race, I see problems,  
I see young people being thrown into prisons,  
For making the wrong decisions...  
I see my people feeling all that they can do,  
Is sing and dance when they are worth so much more.*

*I See This*

*I See Problems*

*I see rappers go from thugs to business men and actors.  
I see brothers becoming millionaires  
when they were raised in the streets.  
I see my sisters being strong for themselves  
And their young one.  
I see my sisters doing things that once  
Only men could do.*

*I See This*

*I See Hope*

**Passion**  
**By Steven Avery**

*It lies in all of us sleeping. Waiting. Although unwanted, unbidden.*

*It will stir...open its jaws and howl.*

*It speaks to us, Guides us. Passion rules us all. And we obey. What other choice do we have?*

*Passion is the source of our finest moments: The Joy of Love, The clarity of Hatred, and the ecstasy of Grief.*

*It hurts sometimes more than we can bear.*

*If we could live without passion maybe we could know some Kind of peace.*

*But we would be hollow...like empty rooms, shuttered and dank.*

*Without passion we would be truly Meaningless.*

**Little Brother Little Sister**

By Rachel Bonin 2001

**Little Brother Little Sister**

you called your foundation  
fight for Freedom and many Freedom Fighters joined

**Little Brother Little Sister**

your dreams of equality started many more

**Little Brother Little Sister**

now your dreams are a part of mine  
still fighting the freedom fight to make ignorance disappear in every ones eyes

**Little Brother Little Sister**

I have a dream in my mind  
when everyone will realize  
we all bleed  
we all feel  
we all cry  
we all have pride

**Little Brother Little Sister**

that we all live on this earth brothers and sisters alike  
so its time for us as people to put all hate behind  
and begin to coexist  
like ancestors dreams believed in  
and have every person no matter what race join the freedom fight

## Spheres

By Maisie Davis

The lazy eye turns itself away from the world,

Trying to hide from this masculine violence of today's society, not effected by guns,  
bombs, the silver bullets.

Instead of taking the test, he picked up a fire- armed mess,

Dancing in the symphonic silence,

Of turmoil of our hatred.

## Being Cut From The Team

By Esime Dzata 2002

Why was I cut from the team?  
Coach said I didn't do enough,  
In the off-season.  
Why did they steal,  
A black girls dream.  
I don't think that's the real reason.

I was on JV last year  
Now they don't want me  
I say its politics  
They say no that's not it  
Now I feel like their blocking me  
What is it, I am my peers just don't get it.

One girl who made JV her freshman year is still on JV and she's a junior.  
What's wrong with the system?  
There isn't really any humor  
Now I heard coach is leaving this year, it's probably a rumor.

My friends and I who play ball don't agree with the system.  
There are no black girls on South's Varsity team.  
What's wrong with this picture.  
They're bursting at the seams.  
This isn't right and we are going to fight that's right.  
No one has said anything yet, because we're scared  
Scared of what you might say. The white mans world.  
It still exists even in the game of basketball.

I've always played basketball.  
Aren't I tall?  
People always say you're so tall do you play ball?  
I say I use to  
But not anymore.  
Then they ask why don't you play  
But all I can say is It's too much politics.  
But the real reason is  
I got cut.  
It doesn't feel good  
It hurts  
Like something turning in my gut.

There's been a lot of black girls who can play ball  
But they're not necessarily tall.  
They have the skills and the potential  
But does the coach was others to see the girls shine.  
The Basketball coaches are fouling up what we know we can achieve

The real politics that we're facing is black verses white  
My good friend was put on JV again  
Even though they told her she will make varsity  
Why did they lie and make her cry.

Betta' believe there will be a fight.

What do I an my other black friends do now  
All we can do is watch the team from the sideline  
What I see is a sign  
A sign to keep on playing ball  
Proving who's right  
And who's wrong.

I'll do that from stealing  
The ball from them  
Like they did to me  
Hurt them like they hurt our team  
Block them like they blocked me from the game  
Allow them not to receive any fame

Oh one more thing I will foul them so hard that they hurt and feel  
Feel just what I felt.

**Watermelanin**  
**Desiree Williams 2001**

So cold and sweet on a hot afternoon  
Like a forbidden fruit I just have to consume  
Put the pink juicy confection to my enormous lips  
I forget about the cotton fields and the cracking whips  
In a mouth full of sweetness the seeds are undetected  
I swallow the dented, the forgotten, the disrespected.

I swallow seeds that are black and small  
I swallow seeds that have no chance at all.  
I take in each one of the little black tears  
And swallow the repression, disgrace, the fears.  
I swallow dull seeds, dark, so dark  
Bent and broken, stabbing through my heart.  
Too cold to taste, too hard to chew  
They slide down my throat, a black pebble stew.  
Each one a pupil who has no sight  
No visions of hope. No visions of light.  
I swallow the seeds; neglected and poor  
Each one lands within my core.  
The seeds people spit out, I swallow them whole.

I swallow the seeds and they nourish my soul.  
With each seed I swallow comes a great sense of pride  
I swallow those seeds and something good grows inside.  
I swallow rounded coals that help to create  
A fire that devours all the hate.  
I swallow the seeds, I feed the flame  
A power that blazes sadness and shame.  
Lighter than air with the freedom to breathe  
Thankfully, I swallow the very last seed.  
The heat died, the ashes fell  
Now I am buff holding an empty shell.

**Escape Artist**  
Desriree Willimas 2004

You've put me in a box, a cell, a cage.  
Depending on my weight, my race, my age.  
When you assume things about me, the real me fades.  
I'm not just friends, clothes, hair and grades.  
You can't define me based on what you've seen.  
I'm not your typical boy-crazy teen.  
I have knowledge and ideas and I'm actually kind of deep.  
I bet none of these descriptions are the assumptions you keep...  
But that's just my assumption.

You've put me in a box, a cell, a cage.  
Judging a book by its cover without turning a page.  
I'm not going to test your intelligence, but I am going to question your ignorance.  
You never thought to stop and get acquainted.  
You've grown accustomed to the stereotypes that world has painted.  
And even if you knew that I was different and unique  
You would view this as a bad thing and label me a freak.  
Well, now *I'm* making a generalization.

You've put me in a box, a cell, a cage.  
Leave behind your simple judgments; move on to the next stage.  
Go beyond what you hear and see, look can be deceiving.  
You could find out more about me, or just keep believing  
That I'm just your average black girl "hip-hoppin' it" with the homies.  
Put me in a category before you even know me.  
The cage has cold bars of assumptions and a stereotypical lock.  
You think you've got me trapped but you're in for a shock.  
You can assume all you want, but only I know the real me.  
Therefore, you can't keep me inside of this box because I hold the key.  
...Now **That's** a true statement.

You've put me in a box, a cell, a cage  
...And I escaped.

**Chameleon Rain**  
Crystal Willis 2001

I listen to the mellow murmur of raindrops  
God's own luxurious lullaby  
I turn my palm in the air to feel  
His cool crystals drop gently from the sky

when I reflect on rain, I remember rainbows  
a glimmer of Hope hidden behind dark clouds  
but what if the sun was blocked forever?  
would Hope become desperation and doubt?

I wonder who or what managed to  
transform God's life-giving rain  
into life-taking  
metal shots of agony and pain

bullets tear though churches, homes and schools  
showering blood and debris down like rain  
threatening to cause a flood of blood  
bringing torrents of torture, loss and shame

it's always the same afterwards  
the drizzle turns to tears  
tears of Love, grief and failure  
the harsh reality of our fears

here is one question I've longed to ask  
God,  
why did you Let you crystal clear rain  
turn into dark crimson blood?

This is my Family  
By Sehli Thomas 2002

*This is my bound family  
Though we may be under scrutiny*

*We'll pass the test  
Unlike all the rest  
We're there for each other eternally.*

*This is my proud daddy,  
He's proud of his close family.  
He's watchful and takes care of all my needs.  
And he loves me.*

*This is my bro.  
At six foot three,  
No one would dare bother me.  
He's too far away for my eye to see.  
Yet he protects me.*

*This is my sis,  
And anyone can see,  
She's always there to comfort me.  
She listens and advises my mind's wonderings.  
And guess what? She loves me.*

*This is my sister, one above me.  
She is my dear and close buddy.  
When I need a good fight,  
She's good company.  
Still she loves me.*

## BLACK STRUGGLE

I'Esha Henderson

They say struggle is ordained, but does it got to be fate  
It's hard to juggle more pain when there's a lot on our plate

The Black race was preyed on by vultures and left in anguish  
Robbed of our true culture, religion, and language

Gave 4 ½ centuries of labor, blood, sweat and tears  
Given no real favor, just the shortest month of the year

We're constantly trying to grind through strife  
Physically walking free while our minds do life

It seems all has failed but we hope to run for president  
But it's hard as hell when there's dope and guns in our residence

Our school's curriculum is focused to revere the European  
While we persevere to be seen as complete and pure human beings

The n-word has us belligerent and irate  
I hate us being called ignorant primates

I'm tired of these thugs and gangsta fools  
What happened to Elijah Mahammed, Dr. King and Langston Hughes

Our talents are seen as hopeless gimics  
When Elzis or Eminem do it, it's a quote and mimic

Big botties and skimpy clothes is the theme in videos  
Black women are not respected, just seen as pretty hoes

There are too many mothers that are young and less big mamas  
Too many brothers been hung and streeeded with drama

The Black community is unjust and poor  
They jacked our unity, trust and more

No peace when police hunt us down and act racist  
Pull out firearms on account of our faces

We've been able to survive with strength and the Lord's push  
Even through the fables and lies of Goerge Bush

Freedom, justice and equality is something we never knew  
Along with respect, power, truth, and revenue

We struggle with gangs and violence  
Witnesses hiding in silence

We struggle with single parent households  
Deadbeat fathers untold

We struggle with youth drug deals  
Experts at how to steal

We struggle with a jail fate  
Shootings at a high rate  
Rent always being late  
Jobs that discriminate  
State to state  
From our birth to death on Earth  
We live in the **BLACK STRUGGLE**

Jassmen Heath

You see last year she was lost  
Searching for her self, with  
Blind eyes only to find.  
Depression and tears to cry  
True to who she thinks she is  
And a doormat to what  
others know she is  
her smiles are in spite of her pain  
and the feelings never remain the same.  
Hoping, wishing.  
The humor of her brother,  
The strength of her mother,  
Or how about the sternness of her pops  
Or maybe the disappearance of her father.  
Whatever the problem is  
This sistas lost her cool  
She's about to slit her wrists and lay in a bloody pool.  
Now she's got you thinking she suicidal,  
But the truth is, this chick should be an idol.  
She cannot fit into any book and you'd know this  
If you'd take the time to look.  
She is a sister, a daughter, a cousin  
A sister and friend but neither can she blend  
She appears bold and confident and stands tall,  
But the truth is she can't even be strong.  
Torn between two worlds of confusion,  
Take a step into her world of illusion.  
In this world relationships don't last  
And to her it just seems like they're all in the past.  
Always reminiscin' and repentin' for all the sinnin'.  
Trying to stop the retaliation and promote more communication.  
The end of a bright future is near but with eyes like mine it's just not  
Clear and what good is it to take time to share  
When to others it looks as though it smeared.

### **After The Fact**

This original poem refers to the Emmitt Till killing. It is written from the view of Emmitt Till after his death and he doesn't understand what is going on. Not knowing for sure what he is witnessing, holding broken memories, and most of all, surfeit human emotions he doesn't understand, we join him in the discovery of how he came to be as he is now.

I look down on the wooden box,  
Laced with flowers, for the occasion set before me,  
Set just for me.  
A woman cries, and I look;  
I know that face.  
I reach out to touch her;  
To tell her it will be all right.  
My hand slides through her soldier,  
Resting on her heart.

A beating heart, not cold, I realize,  
Like my own.  
Drawing back, eyes downcast,  
I melt into the procession passing the box,  
Inspecting the box;  
Hand carved mahogany  
The best money could buy  
Being passed by many people,  
Who did nothing but cry.

The crying woman leaned over;  
A tear fell on the chest of the disfigured... Thing,  
I gripped my own, feeling a sudden burn,  
A moment of feeling; not my own,  
And then, nothing.  
I looked into the casket again,  
Turning my head so I can fully see;  
I have a blind side I realize.

My gaze unfeelingly, in-forgivingly  
Rakes over the mutilated body,  
The head is squashed flat.  
I see someone touch the empty black eyehole;  
My blind side feels a brush as light as air  
How would I know what air feels like?  
I've always been this way,  
Haven't I?

Feeling out of place,  
I try to cry;  
I know I can't.  
"It's just the cold cruel justice of this world"  
That voice...  
I close my eyes  
Trying to concentrate,  
Feeling for emotions  
I know I shouldn't, couldn't be there,  
But I can't help think they are.

But, I have eternity for that,

Now is time to think about the procession of people.  
I open my eyes,  
Many people have filled the room.  
A box of twelve whites  
Chosen to, in turn, to choose a fate.  
A man with a gavel,  
And the same woman  
Who had been crying,  
Sitting at the table  
Near the box of twelve.

Then I heard two words, "not Guilty"  
I don't know why,  
A sudden swell of anger  
Arose in my throat;  
It would have choked me,  
If I had had the ability.  
Then I saw the face  
Of the accused,  
That face;  
It brought back the answers almost instantly.  
Left over humanistic feelings flowed from my...  
Whatever I was...whatever  
He had made me.

I looked at my mother;  
And blew her a kiss,  
It flew on the wind of a different world,  
Sailing past her,  
For we were not of the 'same' anymore.  
I bowed my head,  
And willed to die.  
To finish what was started;  
As the world started to fade,  
I heard someone say,  
"Goodbye, justice..."  
Back in ignorant bliss,  
I puzzled at this, then,  
"Goodbye Emmett Till".

So you think you know me?  
Seli Thomas 2003

Are you kidding?  
I must have heard you wrong.  
You think you understand my pain,  
And why I stay strong?

C'mere, let me talk to you a minute,  
Let me explain som'n to you  
You don't know me, or what I've been through.  
You can't understand the magnitude  
Of hurt and pain and every small thing,  
You can't understand, how much pride, it gives me just being.

I've been forced to live "outside the box"  
I've been forced to find my own keys,  
To doors that are locked.  
I've struggled and I've made it through.  
Believe me, I've struggled just a bit more than you.

I've carried weight on my back,  
That you'll never have to bear  
I've endured injustices that I wouldn't dare share.  
All the words and hatred spun out in its web,  
This Arachnid's web,  
Each silky strand I must carefully tread.

White folks do like me,  
But when push comes to shove,  
They be gone in a heartbeat  
See now where's the love?  
They will side with the side that they understand best.  
And I'm kicked to the curb, just like the rest.

You don't know me.  
You don't know what I'm about.  
You don't know what makes me cry,  
Or what makes me shout.  
You don't know what keeps me strong,  
And you don't know how I carry on.

You don't know what I been through,  
How many scares I bare.  
You don't know my heart, my mind,  
And can't comprehend the feelings I don't share.

Do you know what it feels like to be hated for the color of your skin?  
Do you know how it feels to be scorned from the outside in?  
"So what I'm Black?  
You're White.  
So my hair's dark.  
Well, sweetie your's it Light."

I don't need you to hold my hand,  
And don't even tell me you understand.

Don't explain how you get it too...  
They don't do this to people like you.

You don't know how long it's been  
Since I had a true black friend.  
Someone who's always got ma' back,  
No matta' where I'm at.

Do you know how much strength it took me to get here?  
No, don't answer that, I know what I'm gonna hear.  
You just don't get it yet,  
Listen to me I'll try my best.

My dreams have carried me so far.  
God's strength has carried me to the stars  
Family support has lifted me to the moon.  
When will I get back? Not very soon.

No matta' whatcha'll do.  
With our strength,  
We gonna pull through.  
With his love I'll stay strong,  
With my faith I'll carry on.  
And all the things that pull me through,  
They sure don't reflect on much of you.

## **From The Comfort of My Own Home**

By Paul Stubbs 2002

His teary eyes stared into me like a jagged dagger into my heart, which bled a desire to  
help, but I did not

In his eye were tears of frustration, tears of pain, and a loss of hope as is tomorrow would  
never change.

His dirt stain cheeks and the pestilence proximity of flies that buzzed busily around his  
skinny body.

His stomach puffing out aching for food, but seeing little or none, but yet I did not reach  
for my wallet.

He is being punished for the crime which our society, our world, had condemned him for  
life.

Then as if the yell of his cry had come from the pits of my stomach. It made me want to  
cry too.

Although his pain was not mine, I felt the longing to feel his ache. I wanted to take his  
pain and engulf it  
Into me and cry "It's okay."

But my body would not wake to the realization of what had happened to him.

He was alone covered in dirt, and loneliness, and hunger, and persecution.

For the boy had no food, and no home, and no mom or dad and stood all alone.

I watched helplessly in the seat which had been in the comfort of my home as I sat and  
watch the channel

Change from my cold hands which were the ones I controlled. For I no longer could  
stand to see his pain, but could

He, would he, stand to see us turn our backs away.

For any time we ignore or say it is not our problem we turn our back away.

Hope for the Tattered Bird  
By Courtney Howard 2005

She holds the clutter. The mess he made.  
She'll take his infliction to the cold dark grave.

The wounds that bleed after many years. Helpless to  
his disease that couldn't be cured.

But all her pain, could it ever end?  
The fact that he chose something so useless over her?

He came back in searching for his place.  
No sooner that the tears had dripped down her face.

His wandering heart soon grew feeble.  
He stopped his pain pricking with a needle.

Numb, not wanting to care for his past,  
She sat left to fester like yesterday's trash.

She knew he was gone, fear made her shrink. Things got  
Harder so she began to think

Blame washed away like words on the beach.  
And her freedom thirsty souls started to reach.

The truth became known, soon it was clear.  
It's not your fault so why are you crying here?

Matured she threw burdens to the floor.  
No more crying like this. It's not your fault anymore.

Once mingled by lies, too blind to see  
The tattered bird can take flight and now be free.

**Who I am**  
By Che Von Simmons 2004

Looking over my skin  
of my skin  
of my skin.  
The color, light brown with a hint of cocoa  
So soft, so smooth.

Abs as I look at my body  
of my body  
of my body.  
The curves of my hips, the spread of my nose  
How dare I notice.

No...  
I am not another black girl walking around with her head hung down,  
In search of her femininity, and who she is.  
I am different.  
I am me.

A young, black woman, who is not afraid to stand up and say...  
I like the shape of my eyes,  
The spread of my nose,  
the thickness of my lips,  
and the curve of my lips.

My coarse, nappy hair, I sometimes straighten  
But know...  
I am not ashamed of my braids or my locks or my look all natural  
I'm in love with me...  
Me, a young black woman  
Who can honestly look in the mirror and say...  
I'm in love  
I'm in love  
I'm in love  
With me.

Everday Life  
Tony Morgan 2002

I can't let go,  
My heart won't say no.  
It feels like the pain you feel on a television show.  
We sit face to face this one last time,  
Hoping we won't erase our precious spent time.

The pain is like a knife straight to the heart,  
It can't be erased no matter where we start.  
We have shared so much, what can I say,  
How can I convince myself it is just another day?  
Another day to cry  
Another day to laugh  
Another day to smile  
And say it will no longer last?

We laugh and we cry  
And we ask questions why,  
It feels like I am drowning and I can't survive.  
I am scared we won't talk or I'll forget your name.  
Truthfully, I am scared that life will never be the same.

The choice we have to make is very hard.  
Do we argue and fight and make things hard?  
I sit by the phone and wait for your call.  
If I call you, is there anything to talk about at all?  
If I call, will you say you still care?  
Will we argue and fight or will it feel like I am talking to thin air?

## Black Soul's Cry

Who's free?  
Not me.  
Not you, not them.  
We're all in bondage for a white man's sin.

He broke our hearts,  
He wounded our kin,  
When he stole our lives, families, our friends.

Hee took us from our homes,  
Tried to break our hearts to him  
When that didn't work,  
He resorted to our skin.

But, no matter what he did to our outside parts,  
He couldn't steal our souls, our hearts.  
Yes, he tore them apart when he took our young.  
Yes, he wounded our hearts  
And the lashes they stung.

Still, forever we stand,  
He cannot break our tightly joined hands.  
He cannot tear our unity,  
Let him try, he'll soon see.

That, we are stonger that he first thought,  
This is not the first time that we have fought  
For life beyond what his mind sees,  
Our strength will serve our means.

We're stronger than that,  
In this life it's am ust,  
So, no matter what you do to Us,  
It will only make Us stronger, able to carry on,  
You can't break what can't be broken.

The Black Soul will never die.  
The Black Heart will forever cry,  
For kin it's lost and the past unknown  
Torn from them as they were from home.

Why Me?

By Shawnika Palmer 2002

Why does everything bad have to happen to me?  
Why don't people just let me be?  
I wish I could hide and climb up in a tree.  
I guess it's just the way things were meant to be.

Why can't I be smart and get straight A's?  
I guess it wasn't supposed to happen that way.  
Why can't I live in a big house, at the top of the hill?  
But if I did, it just wouldn't seem real.

Why do people have to lie straight to my face?  
Are they trying to make themselves look better  
Or act like the better race?  
Why do I sit in my room these long lonely nights?  
Crying myself to sleep, hoping everything will be alright.

Why do the people I love the most have to hurt me so bad?  
They're tearing up my heart, especially my dad.  
Why am I called "white girl" everywhere I go?  
I thought black girls could be cheerleaders too,  
Sorry I just didn't know.

Racial slurs being thrown from left to right,  
But they just make me stronger everyday and night.  
Why am I despised, because the color of my skin?  
Can't people see past that, cause until they do  
This war will never end.

I should be happy I have a mother,  
Brothers, sisters, food and a home  
Because there are other children out  
Who eat, sleep, and live alone.

My heart aches, and tears I cry,  
Cause in the end, I realize it's all just lies.  
I don't need a big house, or need to get straight A's,  
Because Jesus has more for me,  
And will reward me in other ways.  
I need to stop asking the question "Why me?"  
Because everything that's happened in my life,  
Was definitely meant to be.

Dear God  
By DaNaDia Joanne Green

Under your eyes, we are all equal; **Color** does not matter, or how tall, how small,  
or how wide we are.

To you, we are Beautiful!

My skin to them is as warm as the chocolate that melts in your mouth,  
not in your hand.

But God,

what you see is different.

To them my nose is not pointed; my hair does not sway freely.

My eyes are not the color of the ocean.

But they always want to touch my braided hair.

Craving, wanting and wishing they had it.

My skin to them is that perfect tan;

they say for this, I am very lucky

because they are so white.

God, I do not seem to think the same way.

When the teacher talks about my history, I am the only one showing interest.

I want to be like Rosa Parks who sat down to take a stand.

But every year it is the same.

The other kids think it's so funny

to sing rhymes about her at recess.

By now, I know them by heart.

Maybe the teacher will have us write an essay about her struggle.

But I doubt it.

Why do I not know who I am?

My friends are white; so are my teachers.

I feel my parents are annoyed, tired of my questions.

I am tired of asking questions, **BUT** I am more tired of not knowing who I am,  
as a person.

**GOD**, I wish that I could sit up high with you,

looking over the world, and help you solve the

world's Problems;

I wish that people could look through your eyes God.

Christians,

Jews,

people of other different religions read their Bibles,

but do they understand its meaning?

The seem not to understand the way I do.

I walk down the halls.

I can feel the stares.

I can hear the faint whisper,

but God,

I walk on.

For I know you made me,

and the world I live in,

beautiful, for a reason.

God, Thank You for making me!

The Cry's of South Africa  
By Blake Pool 2004

Why must we cry?  
When our children die.  
Oh God why  
They're only using their voice  
And it's not just in rejoice.  
They did not have a choice.  
All they could do was pray  
But day-by-day fiends and family pass away.  
Yesterday my father and I went outside.  
I saw his face and it told me to run and hide.  
The police began to beat on him.  
I felt like I had lost a limb.  
I wanted to kill them.  
But they did not care  
About the pain, I had to bear.  
When they left, it smelt like death.  
I had to be strong  
Because life goes on  
And so do the cries of  
South Africa.

Nature Echoed a Child  
Ashley Patterson 2004

Sunlight pin-pricked the smooth earth,  
The first speck of greed appeared in the caressed ground.  
Family and friends stood in amazement to witness the child's birth.  
A soft, joyful cry was heard by people all around.  
    The earth rumbled swiftly.  
    The sky tumbled quickly  
    Nature echoed a child.  
    Precious time went by, but was meek and mild.  
Rain flowed eloquently towards patient roots.  
One tall and skinny stem, stood strong.  
Features clumsily grew to shape the toddler with her rubber boots.  
Laughter traveled through the trampled puddles all day long.  
    The earth flowed calmly.  
    The sky streamed rapidly.  
    Nature echoed a toddler.  
    Time went by diligently, not patient for a dawdler.  
Fiery waves of light beat upon the sprouting flower.  
The soft white petals reached toward the sky with thirst.  
Soft blue eyes melted into maturing hands, drained of power.  
The stress life compiled on her heart with a sudden burst.  
    The earth grumbled painfully.  
    The sky bubbled tragically.  
    Nature echoed a kid.  
    Time grew through and around everything she did.  
Darkness fell earlier and lasted longer.  
The budding white flower yearned for light.  
She searched for attention of friends and family which made her grow stronger.  
The flowing love from her heart helped her sight.  
    The earth reached gently.  
    The sky stretched desperately.  
    Nature echoed a teen.  
    Time engulfed every heart beat as though it had not been seen.  
Feathery grey clouds forcefully spread throughout the sky.  
The fully bloomed, astonishing flower, glowed in the shadow.  
She had excelled in the darkness, and was ready to fly.  
Though humble, as she glided through the trees, strangers whispered, "Bravo."  
    The earth clapped happily.  
    The sky drifted contently.  
    Nature echoed a lady.  
    Time encouraged proceeding, and she was ready.  
Harsh wind beat upon the fading flower's strong hold.  
The beautiful petals flew violently and were twisted.  
She stood strong on her views, no matter how bold.  
Her opinions had strength, and the achieving of her goals were destined.  
    The earth struggled harshly.  
    The sky fought forcefully.  
    Nature echoed an Adult.  
    Pounding time pushed upon her heart to continue without revolt.  
A light snow gently fell upon the frozen blossom.  
Stiffness overwhelmed the magical flower.  
Though she remained firm within her soul, her body because troublesome.  
Her exuberance resided in her smile, when the effects were shown of the fading of her power.  
    The earth trembled hesitantly.  
    The sky faded unwillingly.

Nature echoed an woman.  
Time was drifting away from her, but she kept on drumming.  
The harsh hail storm thrashed upon the ground where the flower lay.  
Beads of ice snuggled and covered the wilted bloom.  
People came from around the world to be with their friend as she faded away.  
She left as she entered, with laughter and tears, and family and friends all in one room.  
The earth remembered strongly.  
The sky memorized joyfully.  
Nature echoed the wise.  
Time continued to live and flourish without any despise.  
A warm sunrise pierced through the crisp morning air.  
Threads of green grew around where the flower once had stood.  
She passed on her wisdom to the children who followed and all who still cared.  
Their lives began to flourish and she was not forgotten, her love continued to do all it could.  
The earth lived devotionally.  
The sky thrived lovingly.  
Nature echoed a child.  
Time forever will flow, and to others her love will always beguile.

SHE HAS A NAME

Jennifer Lee

The sweat of captivity drips from her brow,  
The fierce winds of injustice attack her lips causing them to dry,  
Break and bleed.  
The blinding sun engulfs her skin, burning the brown, black.  
Her eyes are the dark canvass of painful memories,  
Memories of the sale of her husband and son.  
Her back- Her back!- tells a story of endurance,  
The endurance of a whip.  
Her body is bent is silence,  
The silence of the field.  
Her bare feet have waded a thousand miles of hate-covered land.,  
Her scarred hands have filled a million bags of unrighteous cotton,  
But her soul, her almighty soul screams a different story.  
Her heart, it beats proudly,  
Loud as the most furious drum.  
Her breathes are long and patient.  
Her stare is fierce.  
Her touch is beckoning.  
Her voice does not waver,  
It rumbles like the deepest thunder.  
She is mother,  
She is wife,  
She is listener,  
She is voice.  
She is woman,  
She is queen.  
She will not cry.  
She will not fall.  
She is not a possession,  
She has a name.  
She is me.  
She is my sister.  
Look behind you. She is your mother.  
Look in front of you. She is your child.  
She is you. She is all of us.  
And she has a name.

We  
Takana Thomas 2004

We need a new we  
Other than rappin', jean saggin' other things they picked up off T.V.  
That's not how it's supposed to be  
You see they learn from we  
We are the eminent culture and that's what they want us to be  
Because we are voracious in everything we do.  
We shine like the stars and are lit up like the moon.  
It is a shame to see what they have labled us.  
Very pernicious now- a-days they pay to see us back washin' dishes.  
Lately there's not enough we  
But when there is we either back stabbin', mad mouth gabbin',  
or talkin' themselves away from we.  
But to them there is plenty of we  
When it comes down to having everything.  
From nothing to the most common STD  
When will we have time away from this impunity?  
It's killing WE.  
No!  
It's killing ME!  
Young and still got a future to see  
No more of this inane possibility.  
Because there is a break in the line of we  
To confront it we need more than just guile  
To mend and repair what other might do to WE.  
Now is the time for us to lift every voice and sing.  
We don't need to fabricate anything  
Because the life we once lived was of lack luster  
But don't try to avoid what we need and that is each other  
It is a bitter pill to swallow, I know.  
But, it is better than letting this infection get out of control.  
That's just looking back on the time when we were afraid  
To stop looking in the past and look in the future we contained.  
It has been said a million times, and let it be said a million time more.  
The words of Dr. Martin Luther King  
The words that we have all been assured.  
" I have a Dream..."