

# WALK LIKE YOU KNOW

A COLLECTION OF  
NANCY B. JEFFERSON  
ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL  
STUDENT WRITING



2002-2003

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--- Dr. Diane Salmon, Dr. Peter Fisher, and Dr. Terry Jo Smith, Project Directors

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On the cover: "Scary Out Here" by Anonymous

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WALK LIKE YOU KNOW

## A BOOK

A BOOK  
A BOOK is like a little  
golden door.  
It takes me to places I've  
never been before.  
It leads me into countries,  
strange, near  
and far  
And best of all, it always  
stands  
ajar.

Qweba G.

## Piano

if I was a piano  
I'd make beautiful sounds  
like the sound of my mother's  
voice, saying cut the TV down  
her voice is pure  
and nice like the wind  
blowing off Lake Michigan

Brian J.





## La Voca

and me  
my dad  
I like to SING  
bring rrrhythms we  
over night sky  
across the red sea  
we give music  
every girl's voice  
shall not be thrown  
angels are him  
and her

Gina C.

## How 2 Rap

Well first it depends on what you wanna rap about. Emotions, anger, love, or problems. If you choose problems or emotions all you have to do is think about the hard times, the past of your life or even someone else's life. Write it on a piece of paper and then you go over it, adding and taking out words, rhyming or not. Talking is a form of rap. If you choose Love do the same thing. Think of your girl, your ex, or a loved one and rap a story about it. Rap to me is like a story in rhythm. Last, anger. That's my favorite. You must think of an enemy and everything you wanted to say and wanted to do you put it in a rap. It can be unbelievable but you can write it. Finally put a little beat with it and you're through.

Snypa



## Scar

The scar on my wrist is when I  
was fighting  
and razor blades were involved.

The black circle on my knee  
is when I fell playing IT  
with the boys.

The scar on my back  
I thought in my sleep I  
was being attacked till  
one day I found out it  
was my birthmark.

Rhonda J.

## Think About America

Bush  
Saddam Hussein hitting  
Bin Laden  
Money  
Gangbanging

Jason R.

## I Am

I am the size of the universe.  
I am the color of rich soil.  
I am the scent of love from a parent.  
I am the regret of pain from a lost child.  
I am the sound of darkness.  
I am the whisper of the ocean flowing.  
I am the laughter of the afterlife.  
I am the anger of American citizens at war.  
I am the quickness of life itself.  
I am the joy of freedom of a convicted felon.  
I am music of the soul of living.  
I am Michael W.

Michael W.



## The Call

There was a time when I was good,  
back when I was young  
and as I continued to grow up,  
things started to go wrong.

I tried to be slick to find a way out,  
but then I realized it caused more problems.  
Soon, down the line, it caught up with me,  
and then I had to solve them.

As I continued on my road,  
I faced harder situations.  
But then one day I sat in that room  
and then I came to a realization.

"If I stop doing these crazy things,  
then maybe things would be okay."  
But for some reason, now  
I think it is too late.

Now, as I say this,  
someone or something has called.  
I really didn't know what it was  
but when I stood I began to fall.

This thing began to speak to me,  
about my unrighteous past.  
And then this thing told me,  
"I'll give you another chance at last."

My heart started to pump real fast,  
as though it was gonna pop out of my body.  
But now I started to realize  
that I don't have to change my image for nobody.

This thing made me realize  
how special I really am.  
So now when I get out of here,  
I will continue to praise that special man.

My life is going to change,  
and it won't just be this fall.  
And I will thank this person every day,  
for sending unto me a special call.

Hannah H.



## Hate

You've been with me since I  
was 11 years old. I'm tired of dealing with  
you. You've even caused me to hate the  
ones I love. You've raped me, you've  
beat me, you even took my mother. I give  
you up, you'll never take me. My heart,  
body and soul belongs to me. Go away.

You're always in my damn head.  
You're messing with my brain. I'm taking  
pills to get rid of your headaches.  
You think you want me, but I'll be the  
one to kill you. You want me to hate  
my children, but I'll never go that  
way. I'm telling you now, you're dead.

Tekia D.

## When I Tried To Swim

me and my brother jump in the water. I  
went so far down I touch the ground  
and I almost drowned I didn't know how to swim  
but somehow I swim back up to the surface  
then I jump on my brothers back  
and swim back to the sand.  
we put on our clothes and went indoors  
my heart was beating so fast  
and that was the end

Cordarryl S.

## Red

The nail polish on my nails  
Round roses in my vase  
Ribbons and trophies in my room  
The graduation dress and the shoes  
Lipsticks and eye shadows I have  
Covers of books on the shelf  
The uniforms in Juvenile Detention Center  
Bricks I look at when I'm in my room

Zorica P.



# Sounds

Gun shots  
Police cars  
Dogs  
Ambulance  
Silence

Laurence L.



"Different Route" by Anonymous

## Outside of Myself

If I could step outside of myself  
and contemplate on who I am  
I'd see a talented girl with a sad existence.  
A beautiful swan inside a ugly duck.  
A good person who's shy and mad.  
I'd see finally I'm somebody and can make a difference.  
I'd finally know I don't have to act like a fool  
to be noticed.  
I'd say, "She is beautiful and has a lot of sense."  
I'd also wonder why she doesn't  
know all these things about her.  
But most of all I'd ask her, "Do you know  
what's right and how to do right?  
Why is your life all wrong?"

Monique P.

## I Wish

I wish for honesty in our youth.  
I wish for no pain when the dentist  
pulls your first tooth.

I wish for peace and love in our homes.  
I wish that our young people  
stop their moans and groans.

I wish for that unconditional love  
that is mainly between mother and child.  
I wish for smiles that just go wild.

Carcitia P.

## I AM

I am the ice that makes things cold  
I am the game that's not to be told  
I am the light shining through the dark  
I am the spark when u shoot your gun  
I am the theme when you're having fun  
I am the heart stopper causing u to die  
I am the pain causing u to cry  
I am the love that u feel inside  
I am the secrets that u try to hide  
I am the water that puts out fire  
I am what I am and it gets no higher.

Antwan S.



## Why?

Why do I have to listen to you?  
You don't know anything for sure.

Why do you try to tell me what's right  
and you have never seen my type of fight?

Why do you want me to be just like you?  
All I want is my dreams to come true.

Eliza

## A Day in the Summer of '88

A Day in the Summer of '88  
A change of my fate  
My father to mourn  
DD is born.

The years have gone fast  
I hope I can last  
Mr. Hahn, a cast of a few  
Dr. Williams, Dr. Cadive, Dr.  
Carroll, Ms. Adams, too.  
All with a fresh start  
Giving all from the heart  
Students have come  
I remember some  
Hands in your pockets against the wall  
Jesus I try to pray for them all.  
Charlie Bone, Tim, Andre, Petty,  
Melvin, Cas to name a few.  
Donald, Manuel Labor too,  
Sonya, Rhonda, Sandra, our girls  
Who tried to keep them stylish curls.

Day by day  
I continue to pray  
Lord give me the strength to stay  
To show a few the way.

Mr. Dillon - NBJ Teacher



## Fractured Bones

This is where the bone was broke.  
The arm couldn't move, but it's okay  
cause fighting for defense is common.  
I had a purple cast. It was so pretty.

That is where I couldn't move my finger.  
My thumb was numb and I felt kind of dumb  
cause fighting for no reason gets you hurt.  
Believe me! I had another cast. This time it was  
blue cause I didn't want white. White sucks!

Now this is where I did the dummy  
in school acting a fool, didn't care.  
I fell down the stairs, twisted ankle. Boy that hurt!  
That cast I will never forget.  
I couldn't really walk normal but  
hey, who wanted to walk while it was snowing?

Well, well, well last but not least, the darkness really  
gave me a big one, running around, running from the boys  
not looking where I was going BAM! right into the tree.  
I didn't think nothing of it until I  
seen the blood on my hands, running down my face  
and onto my shirt. Three stitches was my reward  
and the number one prize was picture day next week!

Monica T.

## I Am

I am the size of my people's change.  
I am the color of innocence.  
I am the scent of desperation.  
I am the regret of society.  
I am the whisper of reality.  
I am the laughter of ignorance.  
I am the hope of my generation.  
I am the anger of myself.  
I am the music of the ghetto.  
I am Jonathan J.

Johnathan J.





## Two Women

I'm in love with two women,  
the one that birthed me  
and the one that birthed her.

I see my grandmother cooking  
some lamb chops in the kitchen  
on a nice Saturday morning,  
and my mom wakes me up  
at the crack of dawn  
to clean up her living room.

Britany J.

## I Am

I am the color of a potent rainbow.  
I am the regret of a corrupted generation.

Miles B.

## Hai ku

A chill in the wind  
Suddenly my cat grows fond  
Of sleeping indoors.

Orange - gold sun rising  
Blares through curtained window pane  
I hide beneath sheets.

Life can span across  
The bridges of happiness  
Taking you homeward.

Johnny R.



## Bugger

Bugger in my nose that never pay rent.  
Bugger in my nose your time just went.  
Been sittin' in here, the landlord broke.  
He or she, which is the bugger?  
Do it taste sour or like sugar?  
Dude, I don't know. I don't eat buggers.  
Irritating thing that just sit still  
on top of my nose.  
Is it fake or real, something so green  
just grow in my nose?  
But I'm so tired of them I lost hope.

Andrew C.



"Fun" by Anonymous

## Chicken

Um-um-um. That chicken looking  
at me, staring. I just be like "damn,  
can I cook you?" I tell my dad to pass  
the peas like he used to do. I can see my  
dad shaking the bag with the chicken  
into the flour coming to my mind as  
snow cause they are both white.  
It make me feel like it's snowing outside.  
Chicken is good with hot sauce and bread,  
dripping from your mouth.

Danielle A.

## Day and Night

day and night tingle  
as the sun and moon  
ricochet through my life

Joseph Q.

## Green

My lungs in a few years  
What I spend at the store  
Don Juan's Rolls Royce  
What my grandmother makes me water  
every other day.  
5G in the hall  
Tomato carrier  
Fried green tomatoes

Britany J.

## We Are Thinking Pt. 1

Oh My Brother!!

Brother, Brother, Brother, Brother, Brother!

What are you thinking about  
as you stand on the corner  
in front of the liquor store,  
in front of the projects,  
in space, on space, out of space?

Mama Akin

## We Are Thinking Pt. 2

Sister, Sister, Sister.

My Sister, I am thinking about life. How I  
can survive in this community.

So much has been taken from me in this  
lifetime.

Oh my Sister, no words can explain my true  
feelings.

Out of space...[poem ends because he was  
interrupted by county staff].

Eugene H.



## My Body's Marks

That's a burn on my skin.  
I got it from smoking a cigarette,  
Thinking someday I'd win  
the popularity I always wanted to get.

There's a scar from the holidays,  
from me scraping the corner of a table.  
Me and my graceful ways,  
I never seem to be that stable.

There's a mark from when I was a child.  
I ran into a parked car with my bike,  
doing tricks and acting so wild.  
Boy, was that a really hard strike.

I have so many marks and scars.  
Some have various shapes like stars.  
Each one has its own story to reveal.  
They're just like a book with a seal.

Kelli K.

## Visions

I feel I have visions only a blind man can see  
'cause the ones with eyesight get distracted by the  
things in the scenes.  
No need for a petition  
Let's get rid of these politicians  
who treat the poor with derision.  
Let's do and stop wishing.  
We have to make a decision  
as easy as an incision.  
All we have to do is envision  
a world with government that's not putting its  
people in prison.  
I have a vision of starting over.  
No poor, no hunger,  
that's what I can see.  
I can't help it,  
I just wanna be free.

Danny G.



## Dirty Nine

Where I'm from you sell to eat  
and stay up all night and barely get any sleep.  
Selling 8-balls, halves, and quarters.  
Make double your investment then flip your cash.  
Juke parties, smoke outs, drinking til you earl.  
Waking up in the middle of the night  
getting your toes curled.  
We pop ex all day, drink hen all night.  
Don't it feel good to wake up and know your s\*\*\* is tight.  
But then there's got to be a trick, some snitch  
that's got to come out and f\*\*\* up your s\*\*\*.  
Dic-boys bust in, "Get down on the floor!"  
It's all she wrote, you ain't gotta say no more.  
Kids screaming and hollering "Get off my daddy!"  
Then little fast Na-Na scream "You ain't nothing but a sissy!"  
Get to the station, bail posted \$12,000, \$1,200 to walk.  
My uncle called my baby momma saying we need to talk.  
This my hood. Treys for days. Living the life, love, loyalty.  
That's all I got to say.

Elatia S.



"Mig it Man" by Michael V.

## Another Chance to Deal

All of the abuse towards women  
I was raised around  
all of the drugs used by my parents  
I laid around and all I could see  
was the worst in my life  
mother being abused, my people misusing  
my sister and I going back and forth  
from Ohio to Chicago  
my mother, deep in the addict life  
we had to panhandle on the streets  
wondering if we'd ever see her again  
at times it was a blessing to see her face  
'cause my father was an angry man  
his use of drugs, it's his own fault  
all my stress and depression  
I blame it on him  
back and forth out of different facilities  
all I pray for is a better day  
and another chance to deal with my reality.

Corey

## In Search Of

Lost confused, feeling of emptiness,  
overwhelming happiness,  
shyness when eye contact is made  
with that light-skinned brotha  
braided up, standin' on the block.  
That feeling you have when you take  
that first hit of a Newport fresh out of jail.  
Not exactly sure why I can't stay away  
from handcuffs, "pigs," and judge's decisions.  
Standin' on the corner 50 deep, cool  
summer night, with a 1/5 of  
Henney and a blunt, waiting for  
our pharmacist to arrive.  
Instead of being inside looking at TV  
with nothing better to do besides  
being a lame -  
I'm in search of myself.

Ruby R.

## On the Streets

Walking down the street just passing by  
I looked to the left and to the right side.  
On the left side, there was a liquor store.  
On the right side, there was a gas station.  
In the liquor store is where the people went  
But on the right side of the gas station  
is where a lady was bent.  
She had on lime green, pink and red.  
She even looked doped up, drunk and mad.  
She was bent all over, snorting white up her nose.  
Her shoes were so ripped up that you could see her toes.  
I looked at her just thinking why.  
Then she glanced at me with an awful sigh.  
I wanted to know the problem and wondered why.  
I didn't want to be disrespectful so I didn't ask why.

Anonymous

## My Life

I am an only child, people say when I was  
born every thing was mild. But if you ask  
me I say it was wild. I witness violence at  
a early age, seein' my father charge at my  
mom in an angry rage. I saw a dead body  
at the age of five, see his family cry as his wife  
asks the Lord why did he take his life. Throughout  
the years I felt I was different, different from  
childish kids laughin' and acting all gigglish.  
There were times that I felt I was the devil's  
child! I felt that I was weird and not from  
this Earth, people fillin' my head, that I was a  
devil from birth. When I took a man's life I  
didn't repent, didn't shed a tear or feel any regret.  
I see how much talent God filled me with,  
But havin' people labeling me with labels, naming  
me names, and they are the so called people who care.  
F\*\*\* that, they're all the same. But don't trip I'll also  
give them a name. I can go on and on about  
my life. But if you ask me who I am I'd ask  
you the same question! Hopin' that one day I'd have  
an answer to give.

Anonymous





## Adrenaline

The adrenaline rush of my pressure  
and the tingling of my fingers  
at the time it was a low self-esteem-mind  
I began pacing  
then a laugh or a cry  
bullets began wasting, no lie  
The adrenaline rush of my soul  
turned my heart cold  
finger printed  
mug shotted  
then I start plotting  
hand cuffed  
then thinking it ain't enough  
I'm too tough man I tell you  
I feel the adrenaline rush flashbacks  
a red bloody gush in such a way  
I wish I wasn't from Stateway  
being bad but in my mind feeling sad  
I truly began blind  
The adrenaline rush of my spirit  
thought I could do it  
walking on 3D  
scared the first time  
people looking at me  
I change clothes and didn't know  
where I was about to go  
put into a room or what  
who knows  
full of bricks and a cell door  
then an adrenaline rush made me sick  
I came out  
ran back on the block  
holding my Glock  
saying I was wicked  
next thing I know  
it repeated

Lena K.



## Reminiscing

Looking up to the brick wall,  
I see the way my sister smiles.  
I look to the floor I think of  
my baby brother's crawl.  
When I eat, I remember when my  
mom cooked my favorite food.  
When I look at myself, I see  
my other brother cause we look alike.  
When I pray at night, I think of  
my dad, the way I used to go to  
church. When I see my stomach,  
I think of a beautiful baby I  
could have had.

Gina C.

## I'm Looking Forward to the Day

I'm looking forward to the day I see my son,  
cuz I'm locked up for a crime I haven't done.  
Can't wait to look into his light brown eyes,  
I miss him so much, I hope somebody hears my cries.  
He's so cute with his dimples and braids.  
He was sittin' inside,  
while I was out selling yay.

Lauren

## I Am Tired...

...Of my infants rambling in the midnight hour  
Watching you young women defiling your bodies  
Observing young Christian soldiers  
selling Satan in viles  
Seeing police cars with children stuck on them  
like flies on paper  
Watching them drive off to racial disparity  
Seeing the minorities being the majority  
in lock down facilities  
Women having to lower their moral and spiritual  
standards to get by  
The men and women in power sitting on their asses and  
doing nothing to elevate  
All of my senses being triggered by  
Lawless acts of violence  
Waiting for it to end and our Savior  
Jesus Christ to return and start us anew

Mr. Walker - County Staff



## Call it what You Like...

Suicidal missions, screams and cries.  
The man next door getting raped, inside he dies.  
Songs, poems, raps, stories of life put into flows.  
What really goes on inside my brain no one really knows.

You can call it what you like but do you know  
what to find?  
If you were locked down in a cage  
could you comprehend the struggle in my mind?  
Kill, mess up, tease, play and most of all destroy.  
These are the thoughts in the mind of a little boy.  
Love, treasure, sex on golden sand.  
These are the thoughts of a grown man.  
Well maybe I can't speak for everybody else.  
But I can speak for myself,  
so call it what you like.

Walter B.

## Confused Happiness

I look to heaven  
and I see  
that I am blessed  
I blossom in the sun  
in the garden of peaches  
sweet honesty of paradise  
and I live in the vein of a cloud  
celebrating the wisdom  
holding stone  
holding down love  
and life

Joanne

## Finding Your True Self

Why should I kill? Slavery has been going on tooooooo long!  
People think I am a coward.  
Some think I am a fool because I choose  
not to put my hands on another brother.  
Too much time has passed us all for us not to see the truth.  
We talk about one another, kill one another,  
we do everything to each other but we never help each other.  
The KKK has been going on tooooooo long.  
We have let them trick us into believing  
we are ugly and evil,  
but the truth is my brothers and sisters,  
I can not say too much,  
but I will leave you with this message,  
we are all beautiful and it is time to wake up and see that.

Eugene H.



## I Am

I am the size of a stadium stuffed in a baseball.  
I am the color of brown sugar over grits.  
I am the scent of baby powder marinated in a great lake.  
I am the regret of a white-owned investment bank.  
I am the sound of drums in a soundproof room.  
I am the whisper of the wind yelling through  
the Audy Home walls.  
I am the laughter of children at a circus.  
I am Daniel C.

Daniel C.

## I Am

I am the color of brown trapped in northern white.  
I am the scent of vegetable soup.  
I am the regret of misspent youth.  
I am the sound of How Great Thou Art.  
I am the whisper of a golf announcer.  
I am the hope of the newest generation.  
I am the anger of an unemployed worker.  
I am the quickness of a crawling baby.  
I am the joy of the start of baseball.  
I am all the things I would like to be, but never will be.

Mr. Duffy - NBJ Teacher

## I Am

I am the color of diamonds washed in blood.  
I am the scent of lilacs in May.  
I am the regret of a student who didn't study.  
I am the sound of a bass being played by Mingus.  
I am the whisper of a willow remembering its youth.  
I am the laughter of girls winning a  
double dutch tournament.  
I am the hope of my grandfather's discipline.

Anonymous NBJ Teacher



## The Letter

He sat close by as we wrote the letter.  
He looked at me as if he was searching for the  
right phrase  
to fit into his trend of thought.  
He would bend over to see how I wrote the letters  
on the paper.  
He would pick up the letter,  
read it,  
and look at how "long"  
the letter would extend on the paper.  
We finished the letter.  
Folding the letter and putting it  
into the envelope  
was also very important to him.  
He displayed a sense of satisfaction -  
he had a letter to send  
to his significant other.

Mr. O'Brill - NBJ Teacher

## Dear Sadness:

Why are you here? I don't want to feel you or see you around. To me, you overstayed your welcome. I am sorry, but it's the truth. Nobody wants you and never will. But you keep coming and coming. When would you get it? You're a feeling that nobody likes. All you do is bring hopes down, bring tears and take away the happiness we have. Everywhere we go you are there. You keep following us around. We hate the tears, the hurting, and the aching. We just hate the way you come, at night, in the morning, and the afternoon. When you come, you bring other feelings that are not welcome, like you.

Sadness, you break people up and that's not right. So I am going to put an end to this, you are not welcome ever again, and if you try to come, happiness will take you right away. SO GOOD BYE. Peace.

Gina C.



## I Remember

I remember when my dad came home drunk  
and yelling at my mother for no reason.

I remember when my dad told me  
never to drink but I didn't listen  
and I did it anyway.

I remember when my dad caught me smoking  
and he put me on punishment  
and I came back out and did the same thing again.

I remember when me and my dad went to  
Disney World  
and we had the times of our lives  
and I will never forget that time of my life.

I remember when it was my dad's birthday  
and I threw him a surprise party  
and he was really happy that I thought about him.

I remember when me and my dad went out to eat  
at Old Country  
and we ate good that day  
and we came home, rented movies  
and spent some time together.

Michael V.

## Bluest

This major part of the sky forms around me.  
The jeans I wear cover this brown moist skin  
1/4 the color of a rainbow or whole portion  
of the ocean  
a sad, gloomy feeling, the dye of someone's shirt,  
a part of the ink from a leaking pen.  
The song of a bluebird enters my ears as he is  
singing the blues of another form of life.  
The stitching in an ancient quilt,  
the darkness in a winter coat.

Monica T.



## Misery and Happiness

Misery is when u thought u was beautiful  
but people tell u u ugly.

Misery is when u think u passed your test  
but u didn't.

Misery is when u thought u had  
a big dinner coming but they only  
gave you 4 pieces of chicken nuggets.

Misery is when u think u can sing  
and u went to the Apollo and got booed.

Happiness is when u thought u  
was havin' a boy and u had a girl.

Dominique W.

## Hate

The hate I feel is like  
a basketball player trying to  
play ball with two broken legs.  
It hurts just that bad. My  
hate is my hate. Will it  
go away? Who knows  
but the hate feels as if  
it is imprinted on my heart  
like a mark with a  
permanent marker. Fade away  
hate. Leave. You're not  
wanted here anymore  
leave just leave...

Angel D.

## See Me If You Need Me

Hey Fat Ass  
Lame-0  
You're Bogus  
Where's the Merch?  
I said  
You said  
Why You Playing Me?  
Hey Lame-0 give me a mint/JR (pepper) (Jolly Rancher)  
On the down Lo  
No one will Kno  
Just you and Me  
No one will See  
Can't help you Man  
Have a nice day, Sir.  
See Me  
If you Need Me!

Mr. Dillon - NBJ Teacher

## The Color Red

When I think of the color red,  
blistering, boiling, burning hot summer  
day comes to mind.

I think of fire, scorching, blazing  
flames red flares everywhere.

When I think of red, flaming hot  
comes to my mind, the little devil down below.

One day, I'll be getting out of a  
stretch limo with a red carpet on the ground  
showing how important I've become.

When I think of red, it makes me  
me think of the big fat red  
F I got once before.

Monique F.



## The Person Who is Looking at Me

This person who is looking at me  
looks as if she knew me for a long time  
She looked into my slightly slanted eyes  
and explored my ins and outs  
She knows that my whole life is moving  
too fast for my own good  
How sweet 16 came at a blink of one eye  
Unorthodox is my style, Uniqueness is  
my way of living with creative and artistic  
thoughts, a touch of attitude to make  
me complete. The girl who was looking at me  
was me.

Shaki ta S.

## Public School

Drop off  
locker check  
fine girls  
people woofin  
suspension

Walk in  
dean's pass  
nice butt  
closed fist  
out school

Ricky L.

## Public School

Changing Classes  
Education's Boring  
Fine girl  
Big School  
June came

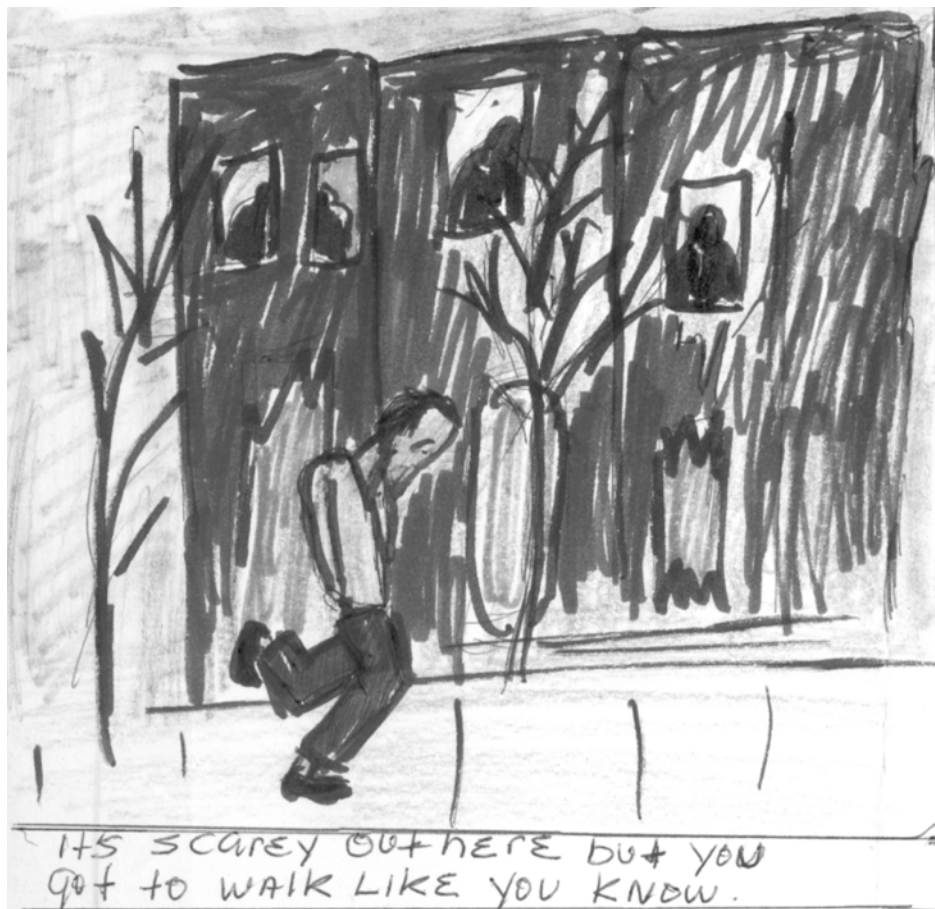
Rotating people  
Smelly teachers  
Ugly Guyz  
Large cruel  
graduation

Juan C.

## Life

As I look back on life  
I realize that it's not fair.  
I feel like a boy with no teeth  
biting on a pear.  
Looking back on life  
I can't get mad  
Because all the stuff  
going on in the world  
I don't have it bad.  
When I look back  
it's life  
I could have been shot  
or stuck with a knife.  
So looking back  
I think I had it really rough  
But think about it  
it's life  
it's tough.

Treddest P.



"Scary Out Here" by Anonymous

## Blame

Don't blame me for being in this world.  
Don't blame me for the death of my father.  
Don't blame me for what you went through  
or are going through.  
Don't blame me for nothing that happened  
in your life.

Janicka M.

## My Pain - Can You See My Tears?

I am not a kid, I am not a man, I am a boy, but  
most of all I am a young man.

I see children outside of my window with nowhere  
to go.

I feel like those children are me and my friends.

People look at movies and see slavery on TV.

People see their money.

People see their boyfriends and girlfriends.

Those people are my family.

Those people see everything but those people  
do not see me.

Now can you see it, my pain, can you see my tears?

Eugene H.



## Untitled

Handsome  
Respectful  
Intelligent  
Athletic  
Articulate

with a large bandage  
on his abdomen  
and a small, recently  
closed wound in  
the middle of his back.

The address of the exit of a  
powerful police bullet.  
I exited his life also - almost.  
He had done the unpardonable.  
He had tried to kill one  
of the brave protectors of society.

I thought -

The policeman had shot  
him in the wrong place -  
this handsome, respectful  
intelligent, athletic,  
articulate boy was still  
alive.

I thought -

How can I teach this  
boy whom I think should  
be dead?

I learned -

Never ask why someone  
is here.

Mr. Lillig - NBJ Teacher

This Is Dedicated to a Special Friend  
Johnny Salazar Who Passed Away  
On August 11, 2002

--Real i ty--

This kid was a nice, funny, creative guy. He was 14 years old and his life was taken away from him by a police officer. Now his mother, his sisters, and friends and me will miss him. He used to tell me that gangbanging was- n't right and I used to tell him "I know", but it's hard to live out here and letting other gangbangers hurt you for no reasons. He understood but still he was a young boy that used to hang out with the wrong crowd and one day he went to do something with his family's friend on the north side but it ended up to be a disaster and a tragedy. My best friend got shot by a police officer 7 times in the chest. When I heard about it I was in the juvie center and cried for my close friend that passed away.

Sincerely,  
Juan C. and his Boyz

P.S. He left a whole life ahead of him and people will miss him through all these years.



## Missing You

I'll miss you when  
the sky is gray.

I'll miss you when the  
sky shines like the glimmer  
in your eye.

Why couldn't you have  
stayed one more day?

It's OK you're not too  
far away. All I have  
to do is remember  
those days smokin' a "J"  
and tagging our names.

I still go back to that place  
hoping you appear but  
no one's ever there.

I can't think of that unrestful  
night, that night you died  
before my eyes.

Now all I do is cry.

Still seeing flashes off that 9.  
Why'd my boy have to die that night?  
That was the worst  
night of my life.  
Watching you die  
as tears dropped  
from my eyes.

Amy Z.

## Myself

It's hard to be myself,  
because I have nothing left.

Deep inside my soul,  
it's like it's a hole.

All in there, where there's no love.  
It flew like a Dove.

How people act in the world,  
it's like ballet people, they twirl.

Derrick D.

## People Talk About Pain

People talk about pain but what  
do they gain, because the eyes of  
memory are so quickly darting  
searching in vain for a place in the heart.

Have you experienced pain?  
Not the physical but the mental.  
Well I have, and this is what  
pain is to me -

Pain is being molested.  
Pain is seeing your mother beaten and divorced.  
Pain is having your mother tell you you're worthless.  
Pain is being raped.  
Pain is seeing the life draining from  
my best friend's eyes.  
Pain is having to pull the trigger.  
Pain is seeing my life flash before my eyes.  
Pain, to me, just *is*.

And you say what do I gain  
by talking about pain?  
It's two words:

My sanity.

Angelina D.

## Non-fiction

Poetry is like a person when it says,  
f\*\*\* my daughter  
for my husband. Disown her before she  
ruins my marriage.

Poetry is like a person when it  
gets caught up in material/luxury;  
in order to maintain it, it allows the  
provider to abuse her seeds (children).

Poetry is like a person when its husband  
abuses it mentally & despises her seeds  
because he's prejudiced and they're biracial;  
he's faced with it when he's faced  
with their sperm donor (father).

Iesha M.

## I Don't Care

I don't care about the world  
don't care about the earth  
don't  
care about the things surrounding me.

don't care about the president  
don't care about the lawyer  
don't  
care about the things surrounding me.

I don't care about my wife  
don't  
I don't care about my kids  
don't  
I don't care about  
the things that's surrounding me.

Herbert H.





## Dawn

It's dawn, I'm ready.  
Coat is on, tools heavy.  
I cough and sneeze, I feel lousy.  
I can't walk, too tired, I'm real drowsy.  
My head's spinning, my face is red.  
I should turn around and go back to bed.  
I can't eat can't see can't think can't breathe.  
While I walk down the street I try to believe  
I have a cold, it'll fade away.  
By night I'm lightheaded, it stayed all day.  
I called the doctor. He makes house calls.  
He gave me tests, and stood and paused.  
He said who was the last person I had sex with.  
I said his name was D\*\*\*\*\* S\*\*\*\*.  
I said give me the paper and let me see.  
This n\*\*\*\* done gave me H.I.V.

Monica T.

## Young

A young mother don't know her.  
She sit and talk  
but it's always the baby father's fault.  
She made a decision to have a baby.  
When all the time she a child herself,  
now isn't that crazy?  
Now she's sad  
and mad  
because she is all alone  
and everyone who she thought loved her is gone.  
So she pray and wait for that day  
when God will put her troubles away.

Dominique J.



## A Night of Fun

she danced  
giggled

and sang at the party  
always drinking  
to feel drunk  
boy said LOVE  
then she's high  
hurt

in a bedroom  
she cries alone  
lying

naked  
feeling horrible  
she's being examined

o  
o  
p  
s

it's a baby girl

why me  
why him  
with me  
with him

he said  
he's not  
the dad

Gina

## I Can't Tell You

I can't tell you I stole from you  
I can't tell you I did it  
I can't tell you what my heart says  
I can't tell you I did the crime  
I can't tell you w'sup  
I can't tell you the drugs I do  
I can't tell you I'm pregnant  
I can't tell you you might not be the baby daddy  
I can't tell you nothing  
I can't tell nobody.

Nereida C.



## Nights

My nights  
feel dizzy  
When girls  
Make me wait  
For thrills  
To talk about

Thomas

## One Arm

I would fight off dragons  
to protect you from harm.  
If it made you happy,  
I would do it with one arm.

Eureka E.

## My Advice to You

Trust no one.  
Love your self.  
Make men fall  
in love with  
you. Keep your  
true love in  
shape. Never  
take your  
grades down  
for him.  
He may be  
your love  
but he'll  
deceive you too  
not once  
but twice.

Tegina M.

## How to Take the Next Man's Girl

If you grew up with the girl  
and her man somewhat like a friend  
you wait until they get into a big fight.  
Most likely she's coming to talk to you about him.  
First thing you do you take his side.  
If he in the wrong,  
flip the script (you take her side)  
make her feel good.  
Once she feel like you sweet  
she gonna fall for you.  
Now you gotta find a way to keep dude  
from thinking you hated on him.  
So most likely it's going to be an argument.  
You might have to kick his ass  
or you could just spoke him.  
Once that's over this story is over.

I'll holla.

Cedric

## Love

Love is a powerful word.  
Don't just say it to make us feel good.  
Love is a passion that no one should  
use if you don't mean it.  
We are grown women.  
Find somebody else to play with.  
You play with our heads and our hearts  
and you don't realize what you are doing to us,  
hurting us. That's why y'all windows and cars  
don't be there when you come outside.  
Please, if you truly love us, tell us.  
Don't play with us.

Sade "Niddy"

## The One That I Loved

The man I loved was a big mistake.  
He turned out to be nothing but a fake.

This is the man who held my heart,  
and was also the one who broke it apart.

The games he played were cruel and harsh.  
Hurt me so bad I don't know where 2 start.

To begin with this man was a handsome black brother  
and the love I had for him was like no other.

When we first met I felt that vibe.  
You know the one strong enough to make  
a grown woman cry.

But soon enough I had come to find that this  
beautiful man was not just mine.  
And then it ended, as in done,  
come to find out my man had a wife and a newborn son.

Because one sunny day  
I went out to play  
I saw this fine gentleman walking my way.  
And who was it  
to my surprise  
but the cheating little punk that made me cry.

He hugged me tightly whispering "I love you."

I said, "That's something you can't do.  
You can't love me and love your other too."

The moment grew silent as I stared into his eyes.  
"Let me explain," was his reply.

"There's nothing 2 explain. I know the truth."  
And from that day forward I gave him the boot.

The moral of this sad story, you see,  
is never make the same mistake as me.

Find out what's behind those beautiful eyes,  
and whatever you find will come as a surprise.

Zandra R.



## Lost Love

I once knew a girl full of beauty, full of  
grace, with the most beautiful face. Just  
took me into the most wonderful place!

I once knew a girl, so righteous, so divine  
that I knew one day she had to be mine.

I once knew a girl with the most beautiful  
smile that made everything seem worthwhile.

I once knew a girl with sparkling eyes  
that seemed to make the stars in the  
pitch black skies.

I once knew a girl that I still truly  
adore. That day by day my love is ever  
more. But now I just sit here alone,  
wondering, "where's mi amor?"

Jean P.G.

## I Try to Forget

I try to forget this day when  
the bell rang for the fire drill.  
Excited to see the boys  
and disappointed because it was a false call.  
Now as I try to forget  
I'm always reminded  
by the ring of the school bell.

Tierra

## My Wishes for the Opposite Sex

I wish for boys to have to go through  
life worrying about whether or not their  
bra is adjusted right.

I wish for girls to be able to  
walk through the neighborhood on summer days  
with their shirts off.

I wish for boys having to worry about  
having breasts and whose looking at them  
and having back pains from carrying  
babies and having big breasts.

Rasheni ece W.

## Bad Breath

relax  
go get a mint  
'cause when you speak  
I smell feet  
and I know  
it's not me  
so please  
go brush teeth  
it feels like a heater  
so go away sir  
I am about to faint  
please don't wait  
it smells like crap  
take a bath  
it's your last chance  
so go brush your teeth  
and get away  
from me.

Alexis M.



## Slick

When I hear the word slick,  
I think of raw cars riding down  
my block with the slickest ghetto  
n\*\*\*\* driving in the wind. Actually,  
there's a good looking man on  
my block that got a slick jacket  
on and the whole block wants it.

My uncle thinks he's slick by  
trying to take my money out  
my pocket but only do he know  
I'm the one who made the word  
slick.

Driving down the road that I didn't  
realize was a slick ice path,  
but by me being slick I went  
the other way.

Doing my hair in a very slick  
and cool style, I went to  
school and everybody thought  
it was fly.

Sherry

## How To Get Your Mom To Let You Have Company

First off start your morning by fixing breakfast,  
then on your way out to school tell mom  
have a nice day at work.  
During school think of what you will do  
when you get home do all school work.  
When the last bell rings rush home  
and start your job.  
When you hit the door wash dishes,  
clean bathroom, vacuum, and mop.  
After a long day of hard work rest  
on the couch and wait for mom.  
When she gets home she'll see what  
you have done and say you're ready.  
Ready for new challenges, ready for  
young adult privileges, ready for company.

Laurence L.





## Seafood

So many creatures under the sea  
Why they gotta be so delicious to eat?  
It's kind of sad that we gotta kill  
the little creatures to get our grub on,  
but once they get cooked right, you  
can't be wrong.

Crab legs, shrimp, lobsters and fish  
but squid and oysters, you won't catch  
on my dish.

I'll love to go to the Chinese restaurant  
to get me some shrimp fried rice  
with a little bit of spice.

Red Lobster is one of my  
favorite restaurants  
with they buttery herb biscuits,  
even Popeye's ain't got nothing on them.

Dip your hot well done crab legs  
into some melted butter and  
then eat and enjoy them with  
your one and only lover.

Now you know what I like to eat.  
I like to eat the little creatures  
under the sea.

Willette D.

## Poesia esta como en persona como...

La poesia es cuando una persona lo siente!  
Por eso la poesia es como una persona  
porque en la poesia  
Esta escrito lo que la persona siente, lo que  
Piensa, y acerca de sus pensamientos  
y sentimientos.

La poesia esta como una persona cuando  
Alguien esta leyendo lo que siente porque  
Lo pensamientos y sentimientos de una person  
Estan escritos en un papel asi  
sea de tristesa, alegria o agradecimiento  
a alguien.

Cuando se lee una poesia que te escribe  
Alguien es como si te lo dijera la persona  
Porque ella la escribo.

Erika O.

Poetry is a person when she feels!  
Poetry is like a person because poetry  
is what a person feels, what she thinks  
and pushes away her thought and feelings.

Poetry is like a person when  
someone is reading what they feel  
because the thoughts and feelings  
of a person are written on paper  
to show excitement, happiness or thankful ness  
to someone.

When you read a poem that you write  
to someone, it's how a person tells you  
about herself because she writes.

Translated by Gina C. & Tara Betts



## Little Brother

My little brother look at me  
telling me I do not need to be on the street  
I look at him though  
hope I can change my life around  
Everybody up in here  
pray and cry at night  
and they always fuss and fight  
Staff telling everybody to get along  
but the same thing go on and on  
It don't matter if you black or white  
you going to always have a fight  
I tell my little brother  
you don't want to go to jail  
because you'll hate to be in a cell

Emanuel W.

## I Am

I am the house  
you were born in  
Then you left me  
and went traveling  
like a child  
without parents  
or fortune  
You went traveling  
I am where you are going

John A.

## Lil' Vicious in Jalisco

After a couple of months of being a CLK, I was getting into too much trouble. My grades in school were lower. I didn't like school. I wasn't going to school like I was supposed to. The worst problem was when my parents found out that I was doing drugs and that I was a CLK already. So one day without me knowing anything, my parents bought me a plane ticket and sent me to Mexico with my grandparents. I didn't make a bad deal out of it. I mean it wasn't that bad because I needed a lil' vacation anyways to chill for a while. Besides, a lot of my family members were over there for vacation. They were mostly my older uncles and cousins, but they respected me and treated me like an adult which made me feel good about myself. All my family used to tell me that I was growing up too quick because of all my experiences and my maturity.

When I arrived in Jalisco, Mexico, it was night time. One of my uncles, Jose, was in the airport waiting for me. It wasn't hard for me to find him because I had met him a couple other times when my family and I went to Mexico. My uncle greeted me with a big hug and helped me with my luggage. As he put my luggage in the back of the pickup truck, he told me that I had grown up and changed. As we drove to Santa Rosa, which was a small ranch where both of my parents were born and raised, I was excited and anxious.

After a long drive we finally got to the ranch. It was exactly how I remembered it. It was nice and quiet. As we got by my grandparents' house, my uncle parked in the road. We got out of the truck and grabbed my luggage and we walked towards my grandparents' house, but everyone was sleeping so we woke them up. My grandparents Maria and Guadalupe were the first ones that I saw when they opened the door. Then I saw my Aunty Abi, my mom's smallest sister. They greeted me with hugs and kisses. We stayed up talking to each other about each other. Then my grandmother showed me my room and where to put my stuff. As my uncle was leaving, I reached in my pocket and gave my uncle some money for gas and for taking his time to pick me up. After that, we all said good night and we proceeded to our rooms and went to sleep.

The singing of a rooster woke me up. At the same time, I heard people walking back and forth, so I got up and got dressed. Once I opened the door, I saw my grandmother making some homemade tortillas and cooking. I told her good morning and gave her a hug and a kiss on her cheek. I loved my grandparents and all my family. I was everybody's favorite. To this day, I don't know why. I asked my grandma where my grandfather was and Aunty Abigail, and she told me that they were out milking the cows. So I walked through the cornfield where they were milking the cows and I helped out and I tried to learn how to milk a cow which wasn't as easy as it looked. After they finished milking the cows, we took some milk home to have for breakfast. After breakfast, I gave my grandparents and aunty some money my parents gave to me to give to them. Then I gave them some of my money to buy themselves something.

Later on that day, around 7:00, I saw my cousin Ricardo



who was around 19 years old. He was also on vacation. He was in a dark pick up with a sound system in it. He asked me to get in. As I got in, he drove off the road and went to my Uncle Jose's store. Once we got there, my cousin got out and I stood there looking around in front of the store and I saw three groups of people. One was a group of old men. Secondly, a group of girls and the last, a group of teenage boys. I was shy so I got nervous because I didn't recognize nobody from the other times that I had been in Mexico. Slowly, I got out of the truck and felt everybody was looking at me. I kept looking around to see where my cousin Ricardo was. All I heard was people whispering about me, asking others if they knew me and who I was. I saw my cousin Ricardo with the group of teenagers and he introduced me to some of them. Some of them looked familiar from the other times I was there before, but they were all grown up. My cousin and I walked towards the girls and he introduced me to them. After I got to know everybody in that group, we walked with the older people who surprisingly remembered me and my parents. Most of them were related to me somehow. Everyone was telling me how grown up I was and all the memories they had about my family and I. I was the center of attention and that made me feel good. All my family was known. "The P. Family". Everybody called me Lil' P. because of my dad. It didn't take long before everyone found out why I was there. Everyone knew I was in a gang just by the way I looked. I was bald headed with a shag, pierced ears and baggy clothes. After I was introduced to everyone and got to talk for a minute, we went into the store and bought some pops and chips. We asked a couple of family members if they wanted anything. It was mostly lil' shorties that wanted candy and other stuff so we bought them something and kept talking and getting to know each other.

It got late and they were getting ready to close the store. Everyone started to leave. So my cousin and I got in the truck and drove off. As we were driving down the road, my cousin pulled up to Lorena, who was 18 years old. She was trying to catch up to her sisters. My cousin started talking to her and messing with her. I was quiet, just sitting there looking at them. Then my cousin asked her what's up with me, trying to tell her that I liked her and I wanted to go out with her. I just sat there nervous. Then my cousin and I looked her over. When my cousin asked me if I thought she was good looking and I said yeah, her response about me was "I don't know, maybe." So my cousin told her to think about it and we drove off. We went to another store where only men around thirty used to hang around and drink. The owner was also my uncle but he was in Chicago at the time so he left the store to his son and wife who lived next door to the store. My uncles and cousins that were on vacation were all there with other family members and friends, talking about the old days and drinking. Everyone was buying twenty-four packs of Coronas. Everyone was getting drunk. Some of them were doing cocaine. But the thing about my family was that whatever they had, they would share it with others as long as everyone had a good time.

We used to be in that store late. We would leave any time

we wanted and come at whatever time we ran out of beer. All we had to do is go to their house and wake them up or they would just give us the keys and we would get whatever we wanted. We could get anything on credit. Everyone knew each other over there. I mean there were no cops around, only in the city. Everyone knew each other and trusted each other. Nobody really got in your business. The drugs were easier and cheaper because the drugs were grown over there. Teenagers could go to bars and nobody made a big deal out of it. It was less dangerous and more friendly. I mean you could go to a party without knowing anyone and it was cool. You also had more privacy. I mean it felt like I had started my life all over again. On the other hand, in the Chi, cops are everywhere. You can't even walk down the street because they would think you are up to no good because of the way you walk, dress, talk and look. Most of the time because of your reputation. In Chicago everyone is worried about someone else and what they are doing. They are always in someone's business. They have too many laws for drugs, violence, gangs, etc. It does reduce drugs, violence and gangs, but there is always more drugs and violence, and gangs keep increasing every year. I mean I ain't that stupid and I could see all these things. I know that the government sees the same things, but they just want to profit off our crimes, building more and bigger jails. They also build restaurants and hotels around jails. I mean what kind of job can we get when we've got felonies? It's real hard to find a job. I mean we can't even get a second chance in society. In Chicago, you can't even drink a beer in front of your house or hang out on the corner with your friends. You can't even get along with people you know in parties even though you were invited. On the other hand, you could drink in Jalisco, Mexico anywhere and you could stand on any corner at any time of the day. Nobody would tell you anything. People there treat you with respect and that's how you meet new people.

Most of the time I would wake up early when everyone is out milking the cows and feeding the animals. Most of my cousins and uncles would be asleep so I'd go and wake them up. We used to start getting drunk early in the morning and doing cocaine all day. We used to go for days without sleeping, just partying. Half of my cousins and uncles didn't do cocaine, but it didn't take them long to start. My cousin Hilberto and I were the ones that used to go to different cities to buy cocaine. Over there, they only sell from grams and up. We were the number one customers in every spot they sold cocaine. Sometimes, we would buy large amounts of cocaine to sell. I mean, the cane over there don't have as much cut as in Chi. The cane there was dark beige and the odor was strong. There were times that if you snorted some cane, your mouth would get numb and you would need to drink a beer to wash it down. Sometimes, it was so good, it made you take a s\*\*\*. When we used to go to the city, we got chased by the federales in pickup trucks and other cars, but we never got caught because my cousin Hilberto had a white 4 X 4 pickup truck and he was a good driver. He also knew the roads like the back of his

hand. The federales had trouble keeping up with us. They also had accidents that would help us get away.

We would sell some of the drugs we bought, but we would end up doing most of it and sharing it with friends and family members. Over there, whatever you had, you would share it. No matter what it was. All my family would trust me with their money and drugs. They would give them to me to hold when they knew that they were going to get drunk. We used to do so much cane that when I woke up in the morning I could hardly breathe because I would have chunks of cane in my nose. I would take the chunks of cane from my nose and put it on a mirror and chop it up and snort it. Many times, I used to feel like I was going to pass out because I hardly slept.

The weather over there is really hot, especially if you haven't slept and you are all drunk and high on cane. How would you feel? Nobody really smoked weed over there. My cousin, who we called "La Changa" which means "the monkey", had a connect for weed. One day I asked him to take me to buy some weed. So he did. We drove over to his connect's house. Once we got there, he asked me how much I wanted. So I gave him 200 pesos and told him to get me all this is worth. One dollar is worth eight pesos in Mexico. So he asked me to stay in the truck and about five minutes later he came out with a grocery bag full of weed. I was shocked because it was about four pounds or more. So I gave my cousin two handfuls of weed for just doing me the favor and buying it for me. I used to get high all day, every day.

Saul P.

## What the Water Gave Me

Love can't get you thru life. So here I am. Let me finish this s\*\*\* (I told you I don't know how to write a book. This just memories, pencil & paper). So one night I was gonna stay with my friend (By the way, Thanks Dogg. I miss you) but I decided I was gonna stay with my cousins. So in the morning my Aunt walked in the room. I thought I was dreamin' so I didn't say s\*\*\*. I went back to sleep. At 7:00a.m. the police came. I hid underneath the bed and my brother in the closet. They came in the room and caught my brother first. That pissed me off, but when he grabbed my arm that f\*\*\*\*\* my head up. I asked them could I change cauze I was wearing a tank top and some shorts. They said no. I slapped the one holding me. My cousins helped me jump on them. It was 2 of them. At that time my brother changed into some clothes so he gave me his socks. It was winter time. They dragged me out the house kicking and screaming and put us in the back handcuffed together. I looked at my cousins and we all started to cry cauze I knew as well as they knew my freedom was gone and so was my brother's.

I came to the Audy Home since my mother decided that her b\*\*\*\*\* ass didn't want me home. Did she think that was supposed to affect me? Actually, I told her I didn't want to go home. I was happy there. I met my best friend Victoria whose story was similar to mine. We stayed in there two months together and grew closer to each other. I had always been attracted to females, so when she told me she was bisexual I asked her out. She was so happy and I was too, but then I had to go. I went to a group home but I couldn't stay there. I missed Vicky so much. The plan was I go there and do six months and then I'll go to Maryville where she was going to be til, well, when they decided to let her go. But I couldn't do it. I got kicked out in a week. That's f\*\*\*\*\* up cauze when I came back she told me she was leaving the next day. She requested to be transferred to Maryville as soon as possible. So she left. I must have cried every day for the next two months. I was sent a lot of different places and I lost her address. It was amazing how I remembered it. I had a dream that I wrote her a letter, so the next morning I woke up and wrote her a real letter. As I started writing it I turned on the TV and Ja Rule was on. She used to always sing "Put It On Me" and that's the song that came on next. I wrote her and told her to call me.

When I went home on a pass, I talked to her. I was so happy. She gave me her phone number and everything but then they caught me sniffing. So my P.O. said I needed rehab. I went there and I was doing a little bit of everything: tattooing, piercings, sex, gang graffiti, basically sex mostly so I got serious with one of the females in



there. She asked me to stop calling and writing Vicky, so I did. The rehab people kicked me out cause I was with a girl. I straightened up everything except that and they let me back. They said they saw changes in me so they let me go on a home pass. Almost a year and I've been home only twice. But they found out that I was still with her so I broke up with her and ran away from rehab with one of my friends. I got caught, so I came back to this f\*\*\*\*\* place. I turned fourteen in here now about to turn fifteen.

February 28th hurt my heart. I found out Vicky was dead. She hung herself. Sometimes I wonder if it's my fault or if I'm gonna end up like her. I hope not, but sometimes I think why not? I ain't got no s\*\*\* to look forward to. I hope she watches over me. My teacher Mrs. Arthur asked me to write about a day in my life and I did. It inspired me to write about my f\*\*\*\*\* up life. I'm looking to a year in placement and Lord knows how long it's gonna take for them to find me one. So to all the people out there struggling, it's gonna be ok. Suffering has its rewards...I think!

Dedicated To:  
Victoria Petersilka  
and all those  
who helped me  
through my life.  
Thank You.

Esmerelda O.



## My Miracle - Faith and Angels

My wife is currently incarcerated at IDOC Kankakee MSU. She pleaded guilty and received a 3-year sentence. By IDOC guidelines, her sentence was halved to 1-1/2 years and further reduced by 6 months good time. She is currently working on completing her second Gateway Contract. She received 45 days good time for the first contract. With another 45 days good time, we hope she will return to her family in February 2004. But this story is not about her, it's about Faith and My Miracle.

My wife surrendered herself on May 5 in Dupage County. She remained in Dupage until May 9. She was transferred to Dwight Maximum Security Women's prison and was processed. During this procedure, since it was her first and only conviction, she qualified for IDOC Kankakee, a Minimum Security Unit. She was transferred there on May 19. She currently is an inmate at that facility. On Memorial Day weekend I called the Visitor Center and I was told I was on my wife's visiting list and visit on Saturday, May 24.

I live in Oak Lawn, a Southwest suburb. I drive I-57 to Exit 322, drive west 10 miles then south again 2 miles. The drive takes about one hour.

On that Saturday, I left my house about 8:15 a.m. and arrived at Kankakee MSU about 9:10 a.m. At Kankakee, there are no barbed wire fences. There are no weapons. It is not threatening. I arrived in the parking lot, was searched and proceeded into the Visitor Center. During the procedure (driver's license and Social security number as my identification), I was told that my wife's papers for visiting were not processed and she was not allowed visiting privileges. I was devastated. I became very upset and emotional. I pleaded my case. I told everyone that I was an honest good man and needed compassion. One guard told me there is no compassion in the prison.

As I left the Visitor Center, I was crying. Two black ladies approached me and asked me why I was so upset. I told them about my ordeal. They then asked if I would pray with them. I think I would have prayed with Satan himself, but it was not evil that gave me strength. It was my faith and the faith of those ladies that gave me hope. Black people pray, really pray. Us Catholics could take a few lessons from them in faith and prayer.

While we were praying, a guard came up to us and told us that I had to get in my car and leave and if the ladies were going to prison for Bible Study they had to enter now. One of the ladies asked the guard if we could pray for two more minutes. The ladies asked me what was my wife's name. I told them Beth. They said they would tell her that I came to visit. During this praying, one of the ladies spoke out and said Jesus told her that I would

see my wife today.

I left in bewilderment, wanting to drive my little car into a wall as I traveled on I-57 back to Oak Lawn. As I got closer to home, I called my wife's sister to tell her that she would not be able to visit on Sunday as we planned since she wasn't permitted visitors. My faith, hope tested.

As I entered my house to face my children, my heart ached with despair. Despite my lack of faith, my miracle happened. Someone called from Kankakee and told me I could go back and visit my wife. I was so upset that someone from Dwight came to Kankakee to open a cabinet and find my wife's visitors' list. A Miracle.

People who have greater faith than I said those two ladies were my Guardian Angels and God sent them to make sure I didn't do anything dumb. They also gave me the faith and strength to make it through the ordeal. I promised my God that I would proclaim My Miracle to all, since not telling defeats my faith, and one never knows what hope and strength one can receive from hearing of God's great power. This miracle is something that no one can take away from me. It will give me hope, faith and strength for the rest of my living days. Peace be with you.

Mr. Dillon - NBJ Teacher

## Maniac Lucky

January 15<sup>th</sup>, two months after I came out of D.O.C. I was chilling in the hood, you know. It was early in the morning. Making money and serving clucker after clucker on some thirsty stuff. The morning went by. The afternoon went by. The night went by, too. I was just juking my life off like I never had. That was the first time I ever juked like that. Like two in the morning cluckers still coming by so I went to stay out there, juking still. I was with my guy Mike and with my brother Panfilo. My brother broke, he left with a clucker that had come for twelve for \$100. I stood with Mike on the corner of Rockwell and LeMoynes. It was already about 3 in the morning...2:30...2:15...2:20 in the morning. We was standing there for like, man, thirty minutes. Mike was wiggin out. He was on PCP. I was high on some weed, on some dro. Out of nowhere one of the Folks from Rockwell came. He was telling us, "Get off the corner" and to go by him because he got the gun with him. But Mike was wiggin out and he didn't want to go by him. Mike said, "Come on, let's take a walk to Talman." It was already about 3:20...3:30. We were smoking, right, just chilling there. It was getting kind of boring.

About five minutes later one of the Folks from Rockwell and Cortland picked up my brother and they went to get some weed. Then me and Mike walked back to Rockwell. So Mike, he jumped in the car with some girls and I stood out there with Folks on Rockwell. Folks told me, "I got the .44 revolver right there under the bumper of the car." This shady-ass white '98 Lumina Chevy, tinted up, passed through us. He slowed down to see who was standing out there. We knew something was going to happen. So I'm out there standing. It's already about 4:40. Mike came back. He got dropped off right there on Rockwell with me. We see a car coming down LeMoynes. Mike posted up on the corner like he was ready to do something. He had a .38 revolver on him. He must have got it when he went in the car with those girls. He's telling us, "There's a car coming down LeMoynes with no lights," but he can't see what kind of car. I went by the corner to see who it was. The car was coming kind of fast but it was still stopping a little at the stop signs. I go duck down by a car so the people won't see nobody out there. Mike is by me with the strap. The car was straight. It went through us real slow.

I got up, thinking things was cool...but out of nowhere that white Lumina comes through again. It must have come back around and the car with its lights off was just to distract us. The Lumina had on its high beams. He came shooting, so I ducked down and reached up for the .44 under the bumper. I got back up and started letting them have it, "Blam! Blam!" until I ran out of shells and Rapper, one of the Folks from Rockwell, comes



out of the gangway. The car stopped. He's letting us have it out of the driver window. Then he kept on going in the car. He must have run out of shells. We thought he was not going to come back around. Mike didn't use any shells. He just stood there. He said he only had four shells but he didn't use any. So I gave the gun back to Rapper because he was going back into the gangway to reload. He went to go reload then he came back.

By the time he's coming out of the gangway that same Lumina coming around with somebody in the passenger seat. They coming shooting. Mike grabbed me and put me to the ground and Rapper ducked, too. All three of us ducking down. I don't know who got up because I think I already got hit. The car stopped at Rockwell and LeMoyne then opened the doors and started shooting. I got up and was going to run into the gangway. I didn't see Rapper or Mike or nobody. I just seen the car. The car drove up towards me. "Blam! Bl'am!" I hear the bullets going by me, hitting the fence, hitting the gate. I feel something burning. I didn't know what it was. Rapper tossed me the gun, but I didn't catch it. It fell to the ground and a bullet came out the m\*\*\*\*\*. I picked it up and "Pow Pow Pow" shot it three times. I tried to shoot again but I didn't have any more shells. That's when dude said, "I kill Maniacs!" then I covered my head with my left arm. I guess when I put my arm up that's when I got hit an inch away from my heart. I fell on the ground.

Mike came and shot his four shells. The car left already though. Rapper came by me and I gave him the gun and got up on my feet. Rapper went to go put the gun away and he told me before he left, "Just hold on tight little brother. I'll be right back." My brother Panfilo came out of nowhere. He got out of a car and said, "What happened?" I could not say nothing. I tried to say, "Take me to the hospital." He put me in the car and took me to St. Elizabeth. I was scared and thought I was going to die. Folks and them said, "Hold up. Check yourself good, you probably didn't get hit." Panfilo unzipped my coat and I lifted up my hoodie...A lot of blood dripping right in the middle of my stomach. I got to the hospital. I'm going in with my arms across my chest and my hands on my shoulders. Panfilo said to the security guard at the door, "He's been shot!" They took me to the bed. I unbuttoned my pants and put them halfway down. They ripped my hoodie then they saw my white shirt filled up with nothing but blood. F\*\*\*\*\* nurses just telling me, "We don't know if you are going to live or die," until they checked my back and saw holes where the bullets left my back. The only thing I'm saying is, "I don't want to f\*\*\*\*\* die. Why did it have to be me?" I was asking for my mom. My brother left to tell Mano's mom that I got shot. I don't know why.

Like two hours...like an hour...half hour later my mom was there crying. The doctors was telling me that I needed



trauma. They couldn't leave me in St. Elizabeth's. They put a tube in my chest, then an ambulance came and took me to Cook County Hospital. I was feeling a lot of pain, I don't know, I was thinking I was going to die. I know I'm in Cook County but I still ask the doctors where I'm at. B\*\*\*\*-ass doctors said, "This is Cook County Hospital. This is where gangbangers come to die." I guess they put me to sleep or I fell asleep on my own.

Next day I woke up upstairs in a room. It was afternoon when I woke up. I was with my family. I couldn't move nothing. Every time I moved blood would come out of the chest tube. I coughed and blood would come out of the tube. Doctors told me not to get up and walk. All day I was in the bed. Next day they told me not to get out of bed, but I didn't want to be in bed all day. The only things connected to me was the chest tube and the thing they put in my penis. The tube in my nose, I took that out.

I was in the hospital only two and a half days. I came out the hospital and went right back onto the block. I didn't lay down or nothing. Started smoking weed, cigarettes. Doctors told me not to smoke. Two weeks later they killed my cousin. I'm mad because I got shot. I don't know who I'm mad at. I can't let it out.

Gerardo C.





# Do You Have A Plan?!? Keep Writing!! Get down with Young Chicago Authors.

Young Chicago Authors is a nonprofit writing organization devoted to promoting literacy and literature among Chicago's youth.

Student writing is published in magazines and edited by our talented staff. Young Chicago Authors also creates individual chapbooks for some of its young writers. All youth can participate in open mic readings, poetry slams, special guest performances, and attend the free Worldwide writing workshop. Worldwide starts at 6:00p.m. every Tuesday at the Wicker Park Field House, an all-ages/no smoking/alcohol-free space, located at 1425 N. Damen, near the Damen blue line "el" stop. Also, students can go on field trips to theatres, literary events, and college campuses. During the summer, you can do community volunteer work or YCA can hook you up with a job, such as a teacher aide at a local elementary schools. For more info contact:

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