2026

ANTHOLOGY

Word. Sound. Power. in the Classroom

BAM

Word. Sound. Power. in the Classroom is BAM's in-school poetry residency for high school students.

Each year students explore the art of poetry and spoken word through a chosen theme inspired by history and current events. Over the course of 12 sessions, these young poets found inspiration and cultivated their own love for the written and spoken word. This anthology reflects that sense of discovery and serves as a culminating document of the students' participation in the class.

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Word. Sound. Power. in the Classroom

Teaching Artists

Magenta Naaku is a creative writer, poet, and workshop facilitator from Brooklyn, NY. She's passionate about music, Black femme joy, Black queer joy, and afrofuturism. Their work is in *Catapult*, *Carve magazine*, *Teen Vogue*, *Allure*, *GQ* and more platforms.

Alisha won the *Carve Magazine* Poetry and Prose Prize of 2020 for her lyrical essay *Fruit Snack Fairytale*, judged by prolific essayist and poet Kendra Allen. *Carve Magazine* also nominated Alisha's essay-poem for a Pushcart Prize.

As a workshop bae, Alisha curates loving and imaginative writing spaces for us to explore different realms within ourselves. *The Words Between Us*, *Black Nightmare*, *Unraveling Our Inner Child*, and *The End…* are some of the many spaces they created for Black people to play, heal, and grow through words and world building.

Jennifer Cendaña Armas is an NYC-born-and-raised performing artist, educator, and community worker committed to telling stories of diaspora. She was a commissioned 2023 artist for Restorative Justice Initiative, was a 2022 Harlem Stage WaterWorks Emerging Artist fellow, and recently served as directing observer and understudy for Elyria at Atlantic Theatre Company. She is also a Social Impact Advisor and Coach with Inspire Justice.

Vee Arumemi is a storyteller and second-generation immigrant who loves food, film, and music. He values authenticity and the vulnerability of expression, creative or otherwise. Vee is ever-curious and always looking for ways to translate inspiration and ideas across different mediums, and to diverse audiences. Recently, he's leaned into filmmaking, but he also loves to write, perform, take photos, and collage. Currently, he's intrigued by finding ways to combine multiple artistic practices and noticing how they inform and compliment one another.

In 2022, Vee self-published a short collection of poetry entitled *member*. Last year, his short "give thanks.," which he wrote and directed, was an Official Selection at the Chain Film Festival. He also completed a multimedia project entitled, *port(als) of entry* in partnership with the Restorative Justice Initiative of NYC.

Yasmar Cruz was born in Puerto Rico and began her artistic training early in life. She is a published author and has written and directed plays at international theater festivals in New York, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic. Cruz is the director of Danzartes and received the 2021 Communitas Community Impact Award for a wellness initiative that helped BIPOC women during the pandemic. She holds a master's degree in Dance Education from the City University of New York.

Jashua Sa-Ra has been a musician for over 20 years, an award-winning performance poet for over ten years, and an actor for seven years. As an active artist in his community, he has produced and/or hosted several critically acclaimed performance events, including seven open mic venues, a jazz and poetry showcase, a hip hop showcase, a slam, and a variety of special events. Currently Jashua is the creative director and host of *Saturday Mass Mic*, the most attended open mic in Brooklyn. He also produces and hosts two events, a weekly performance venue called *The Sun Set*, and a quarterly freestyle competition, *The Core*. Jashua has been creating and implementing arts-infusion curricula for over a decade.

Marcus Smalls (@MarcusSmalls) is a teaching artist and writer who uses his lifelong love of hip-hop to moderate creative environments around spirituality and identity. Marcus is a teaching artist at BAM and is currently querying literary agents for his debut novel, *The Divine Sinner Chronicles*. Marcus is also the Chief Creative Officer at Prayer Kloset Productions and is pitching *The Divine Sinner Chronicles* as a stage production.

About

A celebration of Nikki Giovanni and the power of women's voices

This year's Word. Sound. Power. in the Classroom residency centered the work of Nikki Giovanni and women's voices to amplify and celebrate their brilliant work. Exploring Nikki's canon, students engaged in themes of family, community, justice, and human rights as they worked with our community of amazing spoken word teaching artists.

Mikal Amin Lee
Education Manager
Word. Sound. Power. Programming

Student

Works

Legacy Leadership High School

Teacher
Cornelius Griffin

Teaching Artist
Magenta Naaku

Gedesia John

My Bed
My Bed
It is my Escape
My bed
It's so comfortable
My Bed
It's a queen size bedframe
With a full size mattress
My Bed
Green and pink flower sheet
My Bed
When I lay it's like a cloud
My Bed
The naps I take be so great
My bed

I Am the Future
I was born when the stars decided they needed a leader.
The sun borrowed my smile
to learn how to shine,
and the oceans practiced their waves
by copying my hand.
I taught eagles how to

soar,
and mountains grew taller
just to see me pass by.
My voice is louder than thunder,
yet gentle enough

to calm a storm.
I can paint dreams across the sky
with a single thought,
and I carry a million possibilities
inside my mind.
When I walk,
the future follows behind me,
taking notes.
I am the author of tomorrow,
the builder of great cities,
the inventor of ideas
that have not been imagined yet.
One day my name will echo
through classrooms, stadiums,
and history books.
I am courage.
I am creativity.
I am determination.
I am not waiting for greatness—
Greatness is waiting for me.
No comments, just music
No problems, just flow
My soul goes with the music
My soul goes to the beat
I finally feel free
Am I different or am I me?

Maybe I'm not around the right company

El-Haj Bah

Without her, the world is out of tune
A silent sky without the moon
She brings the color warmth and light
The gentle calm, the steady fight
In every place where life begins,
Her quiet strength stitched within
The world may turn, go on
But all its brightest parts are gone

Gabriel Garcia

One feels like they're useless
Powerless like a nation trying to rebel
You worship God as if he were revived, but you try again
Thoughts going out the head and filling the world
You try so desperately to find a way, a new life
But nevertheless, the never ending stairs slow down your route
Sunset falls as your dreams slowly fade away
Fading away from you like a smooth breeze, but you try again
Alongside the powerful Huitzilopochtli
You stand up and stand your ground
Stomps heard around the nation
Setting the standards and rebelling against evil
You see the corruption and evilness
Together stronger than before,
One nation together in all, you try again.
As the voice sets the tone, you reattempt
Stronger than Mike Tyson himself,
Leadership better than JFK,
Together we need to rebel
And try again.

Tu-Amillia Morris

She's just misunderstood

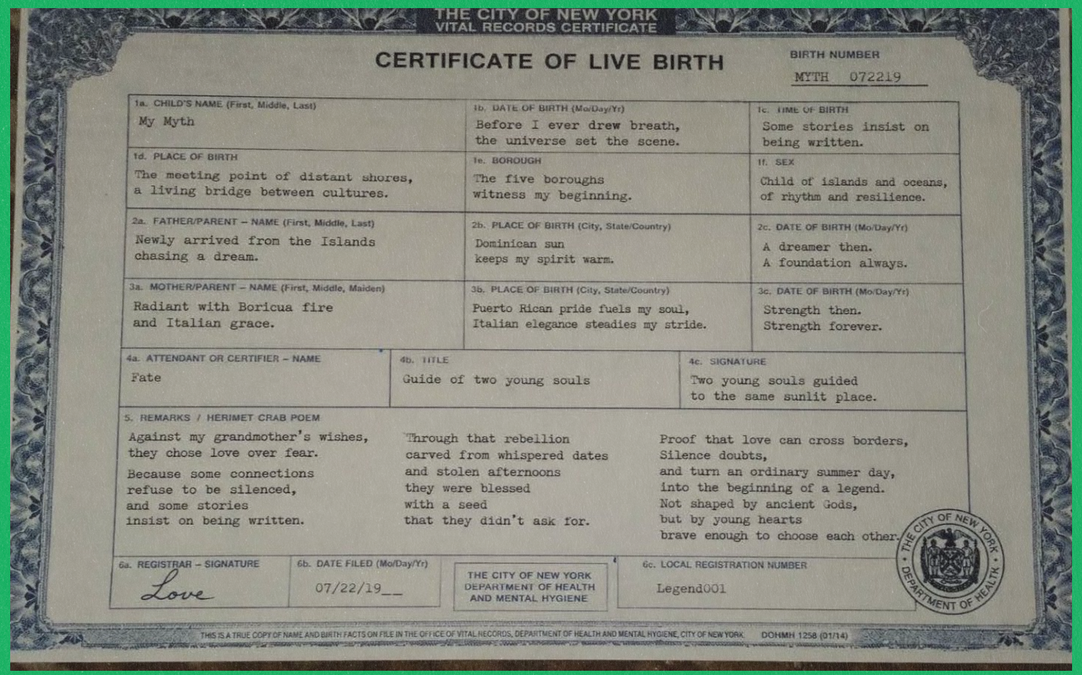
She stands in the corner, a quiet flame, with eyes that hold stars, but no names. Her smile is a secret, a soft, gentle light, but no one dares to reach out and fight.

She's pretty, they say, with a face so fair, but they don't see the pain in her heart's despair. She wears her heart on her sleeve, but it's hidden tight.

No one knows the stories she never shares, the dreams she holds close, she's misunderstood, but not wrong. A girl with a heart that's full of songs. The world may not see her, but she knows the truth: that beauty can be a burden, and loneliness can be a youth. The girl who's misunderstood.

Joshua Duverge

My Myth



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
VITAL RECORDS CERTIFICATE

CERTIFICATE OF LIVE BIRTH

BIRTH NUMBER
MYTH 072219

1a. CHILD'S NAME (First, Middle, Last) My Myth	1b. DATE OF BIRTH (Mo/Day/Yr) Before I ever drew breath, the universe set the scene.	1c. TIME OF BIRTH Some stories insist on being written.
1d. PLACE OF BIRTH The meeting point of distant shores, a living bridge between cultures.	1e. BOROUGH The five boroughs witness my beginning.	1f. SEX Child of islands and oceans, of rhythm and resilience.
2a. FATHER/PARENT – NAME (First, Middle, Last) Newly arrived from the Islands chasing a dream.	2b. PLACE OF BIRTH (City, State/Country) Dominican sun keeps my spirit warm.	2c. DATE OF BIRTH (Mo/Day/Yr) A dreamer then. A foundation always.
3a. MOTHER/PARENT – NAME (First, Middle, Maiden) Radiant with Boricua fire and Italian grace.	3b. PLACE OF BIRTH (City, State/Country) Puerto Rican pride fuels my soul, Italian elegance steadies my stride.	3c. DATE OF BIRTH (Mo/Day/Yr) Strength then. Strength forever.
4a. ATTENDANT OR CERTIFIER – NAME Fate	4b. TITLE Guide of two young souls	4c. SIGNATURE Two young souls guided to the same sunlit place.

5. REMARKS / HERIMET CRAB POEM

Against my grandmother's wishes,
they chose love over fear.
Because some connections
refuse to be silenced,
and some stories
insist on being written.

Through that rebellion
carved from whispered dates
and stolen afternoons
they were blessed
with a seed
that they didn't ask for.

Proof that love can cross borders,
Silence doubts,
and turn an ordinary summer day,
into the beginning of a legend.
Not shaped by ancient Gods,
but by young hearts
brave enough to choose each other.

6a. REGISTRAR – SIGNATURE Love	6b. DATE FILED (Mo/Day/Yr) 07/22/19__	THE CITY OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE	6c. LOCAL REGISTRATION NUMBER Legend001

THE CITY OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

THIS IS A TRUE COPY OF NAME AND BIRTH FACTS ON FILE IN THE OFFICE OF VITAL RECORDS, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE, CITY OF NEW YORK. DOHMH 1258 (01/14)

Zeeandra Whittaker

My Story

I am a young woman with grand aspirations and a generous spirit.
I am an artist capable of transforming a blank canvas into
a work of art.
I take pride in my identity and origins.

Growing up in New York has provided me with
unforgettable experiences
Many of my mornings begin with a bacon, egg,
and cheese sandwich,
an Arizona beverage, and some Now and Laters before
heading to school.
The busy streets, corner stores, and familiar faces make New York
feel like home.

My Jamaican culture is a huge part of my identity.
Family gatherings were filled with laughter, music,
and amazing food.
The smell of Jerk chicken, rice and peas, and sweet plantains
always bring back good memories. My culture has taught me to be
proud of my roots and appreciate my family.

Some of my favorite memories are with my cousins.
We would spend hours creating dance routines so we
can earn sleepovers.
We make slime together and pretend we are famous
Youtubers recording videos for millions of views.
Those moments were full of creativity, laughter and fun.
In the future, I want to become a nurse.
I want to help people when they are sick and make
them feel cared for.

I hope to bring comfort and support to others during difficult times.
Making a difference in someone's life is what inspires me to
work hard.

Rihanna inspires me to stay confident and believe in myself.
She shows me that with determination and hard work,
anything is possible.
Her success reminds me to keep chasing my goals no matter what
challenges I face.

Art is one of the ways I express myself.
It allows me to create beauty and share my ideas with others.
Through art, I can turn my imagination into something real.

I love my long, thick hair and my curly lashes.
They are a part of what makes me unique
I am proud of my appearance, culture, talents, and dreams.

I am strong.
I am creative
I am determined.
And one day, I will achieve everything I set my mind to

Amiya Best

my name
I love my name
My name is unique
How so?
Watch so
A-Always ready with a smile
M-Making connections
I-Including everyone
Y-yielding friendships that I hope to grow every year
A-A friend to many
Amiya
That is my name
And how I love it so.

Nikolai Salina

I count my dreams in stacks and late-night schemes,

Gold in my pocket, fire in my dreams.
Money talks loud, and I know the sound,
Built my own wave when they counted me down.
My friends beside me through the highs and lows,

Real ones stay solid, everybody knows.
Laughs in the city under flickering lights,
Turning small moments into legendary nights.
But I still love silence when the world moves fast,
Peace in my solitude always seems to last.

Ramia Woodbury

The sky bloom when the sun rise
Bussing sweats catch that bus
The sun rise is there light in our sky
Is too dark to see tears from eyes
community cry but the sun rise
We hope with feathers
Birds don't flock together
The sun rise did rise
Is a belief in hope
Can we change one day
The world change everyday
Why can't we be the change
The sun rise but we die
Started with many barely left

Siane Aranda

I am the calm breeze you feel
when you take a step outside
The breaths you take while feeling relieved
The pillow you lay on while resting
The shoulder you can cry on without embarrassment
Warm tea you drink when you feel unwell

I am a cozy bed on a rainy day
A soft serve Ice- cream on a hot day
A bed rest after a long day
The ac blast after scorching

I am a queen
Resting my arms and bottom on a silver throne
With my jeweled crown placed on my head
Slightly tilted,
But still in place
I am imperfectly perfect
Exciting, uplifting music some days
Sad sorrow music on others
Either way,
Its enjoyable
I am Siane

Teyana Ryan

I have devoured a million galaxies since breakfast
And crafted the moon by stitching them up with my hands.
Stars have asked me to show them how to shine,
For my dreams outshine the brilliance of a million suns.
I have rolled the galaxies like marbles in my palms
And taught them how to spin and dance like galaxies.

I have traveled through the mountains that stand forever
And left my signature scrawled on the faces of every comet.
The winds bow down to me whenever I whisper,
And the oceans leap for joy at the sight of my feet.
I have splashed the clouds with rivers of lightning
That has circled the world twice from all their heights.

I have laughed so hard that the planets change course,
And every star explodes into firework displays.
Cypress trees grow a billion times their height
Just so I can give them a high-five while flying.
With a wink, I turn little villages into kingdoms
Where countless stars light up the darkened skies.

Someday I will outpace every shooting star alive,
And the cosmos will engrave me into eternity.
My story will be written in giant letters,
Which will be bigger than anything in history.
This is because I contain everything that is,
Even infinity can

Tyara Ortiz Harrison

Poem by Tyara Ortiz Harrison:

Editor note: Tyara's poem is in a presentation format located at the QR code. Please scan with your device and the link will take you to a Canva presentation. Please read the poem from left to right.

Anonymous


RED ORANGE AND YELLOW ON THE TREES
I DON'T LIKE ANYTHING THAT MAKES ME OR OUTSIDE NASTY
I LOVE WHEN THE LEAVES POP AND BLOOM BEAUTIFULLY
I DON'T LIKE WHEN THE SUN IS MELTING MY SKIN
I HATE HEAVY RAIN DROPS SLAMMING ON THE FLOOR

Legacy Leadership High School

Teacher
Ms. Jasmin Fearon Weekes

Teaching Artist
Vee Arumemi

Dayanna Maddy 10th Grade

Mother

I remember every morning
you'd wake me up to go to school
with kindness, patience, and care,
You filled my life with rules.
Love filled your every action
Everyday when I came home
from school, you helped me
with my homework
with kindness
and love
While you were
strict!
strict!
strict!
strict!
Even though you were strict,
you have always
shown me that
patience is key and
to always treat
people with kindness.
How can I ever thank you enough?

Quedraogo Fadilatou 10th Grade

Where I grew up

I come from a place where men are honest,
A place where the whole neighborhood
is a second family
Where happiness reigns.
I come from where beneath the mango trees,
lie the gathering spot for lunch
I come from a place where every evening,
you hear mothers calling
their children for the
shower.
I come from where you wake up
with the smell
of damp earth in your nose.

I come from Burkina Faso

Ishaq Ahmed 10th Grade

Home in Yemen
I'm from Yemen, where people come
and go
A place of history
A place where I call
home
I'm from where people like to drink tea
in the morning
I'm from where my mother
wakes up
early in the morning,
to make breakfast
I'm from where friends gather around
the soccer field to play
soccer
and have fun

Jayden Brigade 10th Grade

Ode to the Sun
5/20/26

The heat
is like a flame
that represents
one of my favorite
seasons.

Summer.

It feels like a hot day on the beach
when I feel the sand.

It feels like tiny rocks,
you can't see but I know
they are there
on me
hearing
the people sets a vibe,
being chill and excited
and goes worldwide
like a nice and cold
water slide.

Runiel Mathron

Untitled (Jamaica, One Love!)
I grew up in Jamaica,
a place full
of love and joy.

I love everything about it.

I love the food,
the beefy, juicy, flakey
patties
oxtails,
very tender,
it just fall right of the bone,
the rice and peas
very flavourful
with the coconut milk,
simmering

I love the people,
their friendliness, the way they will sit
and play
domino together
and tell jokes
and laugh.

Jamaica, One Love!

Sanyya Vandenburg 10th Grade

Untitled
I remember hot days
at the beach
I remember hot days
at the beach
the blazing sun
the crashing waves
the laughs
of the people
all around me

I remember hot days at the beach
the screams of joy
the talks of nostalgia
the birds soaring
through the sky
I remember
hot days at the beach
sand beneath my feet

loads of water that runs
up on the shore
bodies soaked
or buried in sand
and as i go
back home

the only thing
on my mind is

those hot days
at the beach

Shemaar Vandenburg 10th Grade

The weight I carried
Every morning, every night,
their words weighed more
than me
a gravity I couldn't escape

Hallways
became orbit lines
and I was the wrong planet,
pulling stares
instead of light
So, I stopped showing up
stayed home,
in the quiet
floating
like a single atom,
no one noticed
missing
No guidance
no help
just

space

But I learned
this
gravity
isn't just weight,
it's what keeps you

grounded.
One day,
I'll choose
what pulls me in

Yulisa Vaquez Tuy **10th Grade**

Football
One thing I love
is football
it has six letters
one word
one world
one passion
one feeling

one

dream

my elation
my feeling
that I've loved
for a long time

football

is like a love
I want to cherish,
to guard it as if it were made of
glass, for if I were to ever fulfill that
dream, to kick a ball with skill and
grace I could say, "It wasn't easy but
I did it" and then I would continue
to care for it like a delicate
crystal, one that might shatter
at the slightest touch
or like a newborn baby
because when you love

something you have to take care
of it
and fight for it

So, I want to fulfill my dream of being
able to play in a world league and
then everyone says,
"this girl has finally arrived"
although late
but
here
present
in the league
she had many things in her
way but she never
stopped dreaming
that one day
a great player
would arrive

Yulisa Vaquez Tuy, cont.

EN ESPAÑOL

El fútbol
es como un amor
que yo quiero cuidar como un
cristal porque si logro cumplir de
poder patear un balón con
cuidado he de decir no fue fácil pero lo logre
y seguir cuidando

el futbol
como un cristal que se rompe
al mover como un bebe
que acaba de nacer porque cuando
uno ama algo con todo el
corazón lo tiene que cuidar y luchar asta
el final asi que
Yo quiero cuidar de el y cumplir
Mi sueño de poder jugar en una liga
mundial y que todos digan
esta chica al fin pudo llegar
aunque tarde pero aqui presente
en la cancha esta pateando
con el balón
que tanto soñó

PS 373

Teacher
Bilal Wrights

Teaching Artist
Jennifer Cendaña Armas

Anisha Mazumder, 19

I Love

I love my mom
Mom takes care of me
She hugs me and kisses me.
She buys me clothes and food
She watches TV with me.
I help her to wash the dishes
My mom buys me gifts.
I love my mom and she loves me.

Saron Bitew, 22

My Family

I love my mommy
She is the best
She cooks doro wat
I love my aunty
My daddy is the best
He is a chef and cooks many recipes I am happy we are off from school in December I love to love my family

Shariya Blackmon, 19

My Best Furry Friend
I love my cat

Every morning I wake up
I stand up
Head to the door
There you are sitting in front of the door meowing at me.

You always follow me everywhere I go
You even follow me to the bathroom

You always meow at me
Purring and rubbing on me

You're always by my side like a spirit god.

Christian Chantez, 21

The World I Live In
I am a born American and I live in a world where immigrants are being deported from the US
I live in a world whereby I am scared of ICE

Families are stressed and worried because ICE is coming
They are detaining people
They are destroying people's lives
They are not nice.
Those are the people they call ICE.

I live in a world where parents are snatched from their homes and children are left alone This is what they do, the people they call ICE.

Not nice, not nice those people they call ICE.

Shareef Knight, 19

I Love My Grandma

I love my grandma because she used to care for me
She used to cook for me and celebrate my birthday, too.
Me, mom, and grandma went on a cruise in the summer
We celebrated her birthday on July 31st.
When she was around we celebrated the holidays throughout the seasons
But now I celebrate with her in my heart.

Jade Ollivierre, 20

Friends

I love my best friends
They give me good advice:
One day my mom and I were arguing.
“Give your mom some space. Talk to her later,” they told me.
My best friends are always there for me.
Sometimes we just enjoy each others company. I defend them and they defend me.

Nahkeem Shepard, 20

My World
What kind of world do you want to live in?
The world I would like to live in
Reminds me of Atlanta, Georgia
It is peaceful and fun
I remember going to the park with my brother and my friends as kids

Khalima Smith, 21

What do I say no to in My World?
I say no to people that lie
I say no to racism
I say no bullying

What do you say yes to?
I say yes to people being kind
I say yes to people being friends
I say yes to persons who are truthful and honest

That's just a glimpse in my world!

This Year

This year I feel happy because I'm spending time with my family.
My family cares about me because they feed me and take me on vacation in the summertime. My family cares about me because I get to speak to daddy on the phone if my Guardian lets me.
Next year I will watch the ball drop and spend the new year with my family.

Cidelle Garner, 21

Realistic Fantasy
Waking up around three
The first thing I see
is matcha tea looking back at me.

I go into the common room
to brush my hair
and I
just stare.

I continue brushing my hair
until I feel a long glare
but when I turn around
there is nothing there…

But my reflection of time.

I turn away pained at the thought of
being late for school today
trying to finish my floral mehndi
I will then have to look for my bindi.

I freeze remembering that today
was supposed to be a special day
I now have to face
The cold stares that come my way.

The kind that follows me everywhere
Reminding me
I'm different because
My family is not from here.

Just when I am about to go into class
I do a 360 and notice someone with long beautiful
hair staring at me
I notice her
But she doesn't notice me or the way I look at her.

It was all a dream

Damaris Rodriguez, 22

FAMILY
I love and trust the love of my family the same way I would help them with anything I could do.

My mom and my sister care for me when I'm not okay.
I love my mom because she is always a good listener.
I love my mom because she feeds me and helps me with cleaning my room. My sister and cousins defend me when we're outside.

My mom, sister, cousin, and I celebrate our birthdays together.
We listen to music, dance, and watch movies together.
I will always remember the way we celebrate our birthdays and exchange gifts. I love to celebrate and spend time with my family.

I love and trust the love of my family the same way I would help them with anything I could do.

Alex Viteri, 19

Family Love
I love my Mom because we enjoy watching movies together and going out to eat with my sisters and my aunt.

I love my aunt because we talk about our day.

We also go to BBQ and parties all night to have fun.

I love spending time with my family.

We care about each other and support each other as a whole family.

I love the way we enjoy our freedom to be happy as a family.

Harvest Collegiate High School

Teacher
Wendy Rivadeneira

Teaching Artist
Jennifer Cendaña Armas

Miley Tavarez-Santana, 15

Messy Miles
A very real imaginary scar

Pain through my arm,
Pain through my heart
in my mind— and
Through my little jukebox that
lumps through my parts bleeding
until the death of—
my soul breaks me apart.
There is no pain, my dolly,
There is no pain, my sweet—

Your words would've meant more
If they weren't so sickly sweet.

Why is there pain in my little cotton–
heart?
why is there pain in my head–
Where it rings so hard?

There is no pain, my dear–
You just don't like to cheer.

Are you sure because my pain—
feels so greatly
clear
My snitches are leaking into an ocean of emotion and parts,
The parts that were cut apart

Stop…stop
Lying to me

And
Rude in telling me
Harsh things about myself
Piercing my skin and positivity
Don't you see the knife you
put in me?

In a place I don't want it to be
Where my vocals–
And Morals connection is blurred,
my cotton heart deters
My little Jukebox isn't heard,
Open hollow hateful
The things that are considered tasteful

You're CrAzY.
you're not—THiNkIng smart

hmm

You lost the needle that closed
My mouth to start
You brought here pain
Never To Explain.

Ashley Mogollan-Pena, 14

The Guggenheim Epiphany
White is not a color.
Not a hue
Nor paint
you smear on a page.

White is danger.
A damn bullet
The knife used
To carve jagged
Marks on the walls of
America.

Hah!
Could you see the vigor the
Craze?
That is if you ever
Dared to see
Dusty mounds of wood
Crowding at their feet.

This nation chants
We are a free country

We are the most damn welcoming of them all
That's a bunch
Of bull.
You know very well
Your men didn't think twice at throwing some red to the picture

Knowing rich imbeciles will then again
Paint

Over it

How many times does this have to happen again?
To listen to the muffled screams of lost souls

But we are a free country!

Yeah, sure
The clashes of black and white beg to differ.

Gabriel Diaz, 14

Someday I'll love myself again
Poems use craft:
Imagery diction figure of speech.

One day I'll love myself again.
I know this is hard but I'll reach it

It will explode with so much heat and love

I know I'm a boy from the projects who doesn't get as much love in school
It breaks my heart and it's so cold.
I want my heart to wear 2 jackets of love but it's very hard for me to carry it
I want my heart to feel like it has love for me
I want it to feel like we belong together like peanut butter and jelly on two pieces of
bread

My heart doesn't love me anymore.
It's like it got bullied or rejected by the cutest girl in school.
I try so hard

Enough

I would stay out all night and not get any sleep if it only means one thing
For my heart to love me
Again.

I miss the red velvet smell of our love and relationship
I miss the old times when my heart showed a lot of love but

one day
i´ll love myself
again.

Thesis.
The poet redeems himself
He's grown up
He writes
Context.
Across their connection the poet especially returns to who he is as a poet.

Christopher Gerbier, 14

The Prayer

I hear my mother pray I feel calm when she speaks
to god about her life.

It's like she writes a poem about the things she did in her life
Knowing that the world is black and white, trying to handle all
of that.
She lets all her feelings out when talking from her heart.

Sometimes I feel the same way
When I start praying into my subconscious
I smell a sweet vivid strawberry candle
Even though the world throws trash at you, you get back up and
start fresh.
My mother influences me to pray
It's like lighting a candle that fills warmth and love inside my
soul.
It helps me keep going.

A book that comes in verses to teach you advice about life
being thankful, happiness, love and sacrifice.

Zaniyah Laverpool, 14

Today

Today I'll wake up new as leaves growing back on a tree after
winter
Maybe I'll pick out my own clothes and wear them like a second
skin
But instead
I'll be told I'm dressed like a
Slut
Whore,
Skank.
I'll hide away
Paint my face a mask that won't break and swallow my own
tongue
I'll be bold, self-assured, sincere.
But instead
I'll be told I
Won't make a good wife
Your father must be disappointed
What a shame
And I'll hide away
Wearing a pale white sheet like a ghost and devour my
emotions like a tasteless dinner plate.

Today I'll wake up and
They won't tell me to pluck my healthy flowers from my stem
because I'll be woman
Today I'll wake up and show how powerful I can be
because I'll be woman
Today I'll wake up and experience sorrow, loss, fearfulness
And trudge through with kindness inspiration tenderness
Because I'll be a woman.

Maryam Satorova, 14

Father
Dear Dad
I'm writing this poem to you

Dad is the man who lights the way for his children
Dad is the man who will never let anyone hurt his children
Thank you for always being there
And for being with me at any moment

No matter how hard it is for me
Knowing that you will support me
I move forward

I will always remember your words
Never give up
Only move forward

Yes, I affirm my dad is wonderful
He is a hero who came into my world
Making me happy
The one who always believed in me

Thanks to him I realized
Love can be shown through action

My dad is the best

Iliana Wladis, 14

(The Human Mind)
I step into the fabric woven solely by my mind
Strings of memories you never had until the very moment
A sea of chaos, changing color by the second
A place in which logic is the craft of the crazy
A world in which talking to your pet lion seems self-evident
Your mind playing a puppet show of which you are the star
Oblivious to the illusion that is your own making
Only hints of the the world behind the curtain
How is it we can say so confidently 'this is real and this is not?'
Maybe the curtain is just the reflection of one's own stubbornness
Maybe memory is just un idea, ever changing,
So how is it that we have such trust in our mind when it strings us along so easily

Maylene Turner, 14

Dealing With My Own Problems
What the fuck is wrong with my life?

Curveball after curveball until my face smacks against the ground
And I've never heard a silence so loud

I always hated the telephone game
No matter which side I choose I'm always to blame
How am I playing victim when I genuinely don't know
And it's blow after blow until they finally run out of air
But i'm already high off the taste of blood I no longer care

I'm becoming a trauma dumper
It's taking a toll
I have to learn how to deal with my own problems and not hang off the damn poll
Okay, deep breath, yet the anger doesn't go away
And I'm pretty sure it will never—not today
Why are my words getting twisted into something entirely different from what I said?

I'm tired of people who won't actually talk to me about something I did wrong
And half of the time I didn't even do anything wrong
It's just in their head
How can I hold my children in my arms and leave this story unread?
My father told me there will always be someone out there that hates you because ur you

I have started to believe this was true
Until msgs become so dry I could dry my clothes with them
Clothes soaked in tears that'never stop pouring with or without thicker skin

I shouldn't cry no more, I get told I'm too nice
But if I stop playing nice will I become a person I no longer like?
A person who's heart is filled with hatred, hurt, and anger
That blessings god sends me will be no more?
I try to follow god, forgive and give until I'm damn near useless,
How am I supposed to be the bigger person when my patience is running thin?
But I'll always feel bad so I'm forced to forgive

Nanaca Yamamoto, 14

Morning of December 5th
I woke up that day
in the cold, dry air of December.
my eyes felt weird.
looked at myself through my phone's camera
saw my face swollen up like a balloon
especially around the eyes
all red and itchy and painful.

I was confused.
I don't remember scratching it.
apparently
my skin became so dry
when I was sleeping
it cracked like
cracked ground in a desert.
all those tiny cracks added up
then exploded
ending up in this.

on top of that
I caught a cold.
my body felt heavy and I was coughing like crazy
But I got up
and dragged
my body toward the black and white Strat
that lay on the ground.

grabbed it
plugged it into the amp
and started playing

and playing
and playing.

I kept getting the urge to scratch my eyelid
my cheek
my neck,
my whole body
but despite it,
I kept playing
and playing
and playing.

because sometimes
in life
the cold winter wind will
beat you up
and the dry, brutal air
will scratch a million cuts across your skin
and the snow will cover your eyes
to the point where you can't see anything
and everything will be painful
and ugly.
but you can still make a sound
that's beautiful.
you can still touch the thing
you love
and you can still scream back
at the cold winter wind
and the dry brutal air
and the snow
that you are here
and you're not going anywhere.

after all
that's what rock and roll is,
isn't it?

Harvest Collegiate High School

Teacher
Wendy Rivadeneira

Teaching Artist
Marcus Smalls

Fatima Aguilar, 14

Artist Statement

I believe that art matters because if art, true art, comes from the heart, it'll have and will more likely have a greater impact on someone more than if it were ingenuine.

Untitled Poem #1

New York, New York, just like Sinatra said
The song that plays every New Years as the ball drops in Times Square
The city that never sleeps
Born in Wyckoff, Bronx raised
My whole life
D train, Bedford to Coney Island
Am I ungrateful because I'm not fond of the Bronx?
Am I "evil" because I like new wave, punk and folk in the birth place of hip-hop?
It's not fully bad
I've met some of the greatest people there
And had some good memories too
Sergio and I sitting on the brownstones laughing over our history teachers sleepy, monotone voice
New York, New York, it is up to me
Thank you, New York

Untitled Poem #2

Silly pomeranian
Stubborn father
Angry-loving mother
Lost sister
Dumb-dumb brother
Me, me, me
Not in a self-centered way
That's just who I am
At home
At school
Everywhere
Especially at home
Mom's food
Brothers screams of joy and laughter
Fathers stern, hurtful voice
Sister hiding behind laughter
My music loud
Room filled with posters
Music is #1 in my heart
Besides family, friends and love
Music will always echo from the other side of the shut door

Untitled Poem #3

(to Nikki Giovanni)
I wonder what you would think about the contemporary rap artists,
About the state of the world
Are you proud of the current black contemporaries?
I wonder what your thoughts are about current black youth?
You're right. Pac didn't deserve to die.
That was a person who held a saying and said it over and over again
That was someone's son
I wonder what you'll think about everything

Andrimar Henriquez, 14

Artist statement

Hola, me presento. Soy Andrimar pero mis amigos me suelen decir Andri. Dicen que es más fácil. Ya que mi nombre, no se les queda en la mente porque no es un nombre común, pero hoy no vine a hablarles de mi nombre. Vine a hablarles de cómo fue mi experiencia cuando llegue a New York por primera vez en mi vida.

LAS MARAVILLAS DE NEW YORK

AL llegar a new york que esto era algo muy cubierto
De Personas, niños que andaban con sus mamas tomadas de la mano
Para no perderse en tanta belleza,he maravilla

Cuando me monte en mi primera atracción fue en el ferry una experiencia
Muy bonita donde podía ver la estatua de la libertad que desprende
De ella tanto poder que se notan de lejos que para mi fue algo único

Estaba bajando las escaleras cuando
salimos de un pasillo muy largo y
Cansada, pero al salir de allí se
sintió tan único que me dije, “Valió la pena pasar por aquí”

Fue una experiencia única,
fue tan única que para mi era algo de
como mi primera vez que lo veía.

de donde yo vengo no se ven cosas
Como esas pero,si lo hubiese la experiencia
hubiese sido lo mismo
Porque cuando digo que la experiencia es muy
Linda es porque mirar hacia arriba y mirar tantas pantallas
Se que esto no sería la gran cosa pero para mi si lo es.

Estaba tan impresionada que quise preguntar , como se llamaba
Ese lugar, y una señora muy amable me respondió y me dijo que
Ese lugar por alli era time square.

Tristan Lopez, 14

The disappearance of Justin P.

As I wake up I get this chilling feeling.
It's like I'm next for something sinister or maybe worse.
I shake it off and get ready
I got breakfast with my family and after that I left without them.
I go back to my house and gear up.
I'm going to find my friend that's been missing for 2 days.
There was a search party made by the community after they found out he was missing for a day.
Everybody was screaming at the top of their lungs his name but they never found him, they just simply gave up on him.
But I haven't.
I noted that they have not searched the woods. Since its around 345 acres of land.
Its way to big to search.
Thats what i thought so but. I'll do anything to find him.
I don't care if it takes me days to find him months or even years.
My plan is to map the entire woods and search places which I haven't looked at. And it starts now.
I ride my bike to the west side of the woods. Chain it up on a pole and start my search.
I search
And Search
I can't find him.
But I made a promise to myself don't give up now.
I can't give up now.
Right?
Its only been the first day but im so tired.
Until I see a red balloon floating around 5 feet away from me.
I thought some kid just lost their grip and it floated away.
But there was something strange about this book.
The chills i got in the morning came back.

Conscience?
Then it floats away then I follow it.
Then it starts to enter the main entrance of the town's sewers.
Then it pops.
There was blood in the balloon.
I get shaken from the blood and fall down to my bottom.
Then i see a clown. Not a friendly one a creepy one with blood all over his costume.
Then he says “dont wander to far kiddo”
Then i see his razor sharp teeth sharp as a sharks.
I run away far far away.
Im running as fast as i can jumping over logs that fallen down from yesterdays storm till i bump into a hiker.
I ask for direction to the entrance for the west side.
It was only 2 miles so decided to walk the trail.
I get to my bike and ride back home.
And call one of my old friends that knew justin.
I ask to meet up by the entrance of the sewers hes agrees.
And i head out back to the woods but little did we know that someone intercepted our call and is waiting for us.
We meet up at the sewers but the cops were waiting for us and tackles us to the ground.
They arrest us and ask questions about justin but we didnt know nothing.

Tristan Lopez, cont

The Nobody

My mom died when i was 12
Ever since that day I've been broken.
Missing a big piece in me that I can't find.
I'm hopeless.
My dad tries to help me.
But it's just not enough.
I need my mothers love.
To cheer me up.
But my mother is dead.
I get beat up everyday.
Everytime the teacher calls my name everyone in the class says "who's that random?"
I feel like i dont belong anywhere
I'm a nobody
Im a small little fish in the sea looking for a school they can assimilate into.
but I can't do that because I'm too weak.
Im a nobody
I sit alone in lunch while everyone stares at me.
Im useless as a little child learning to speak.
Im a nobody.

Madison Mikell, 14

Routine

Drifting off, waking up as quickly as a blink of an eye.
Shower, brush teeth, get dressed.
Its a daily routine. Taking the elevator downstairs,
going to the car, driving downtown, dropping my mother off on 14st 1st ave.
Its a daily routine.
Falling asleep inside the car from waking up too early,
I am not a morning person.
14st 5th ave, on the side of where the building spirit halloween used to be in,
dropped off from a blue outtie my father owns.
I walk to dunkin with my fingers and toes almost freezing off,
its brick outside.
Waiting for my friend to come off the M14D.
We walk into harvest, a school in between all these tiny shops. We put our phones in our Yondr pouches and scan our student ids.
We walk up all these steps to the 4th floor.
Its a daily routine.
We either go to fitness or yoga as well as advisory depending on the day.
We end the school with foundations, tired and hungry.
We go to our usual lunch places. Mcdonalds, playa bowl, bowl,etc.
We split up and say bye, ending our day driving home, and starting another day as quickly as a blink of an eye.

Faiza Neeshad, 14

Artist Statement

Art can be storytelling, poems, writings, drawing, music, performance, drama, scripts, books, or physical art like sculptures. If anything could be confusing, it would be storytelling, poems, and performance-related things. How can they be art? Storytelling is creative, telling stories. Poems are creative, with literary devices. And performance, are creative, with design, preparation, and play. Art is…..

#2 NYC poem

This is New York.
I live in williamsburg
New York city is unique in many ways
Near where I live
There are playgrounds
Each borough is different and unique in their own ways.
Brooklyn, a nice classy borough that nothing is wrong with.
Manhattan, what I call the fancy borough, is crowded everyday, but has the Statue of liberty, little island, the edge, and time square.
Queens, I love how it's so diverse in culture, its home to many languages to people, affordable housing, and love the name, queens.
Bronx, great with the zoo and museum of arts.
Staten Island, literally a borough, that is an island, separated.
This is New York

#3 Grandparents poem

During the evening
At home
My dad sips his tea
While my mom lights up the candles and incense
My little brother plays roblox
While my older sister walks around the house
The sunset can be seen
Breathe in
Look at the sunset
With beauty in the air
Breathe out
All that negativity
Is out
Time to have some rice

#4 poem to Nicki Giovanni

Dear Nicki Giovanni, you have a lot of poems
With the literary devices
Such as imagery
And apparently famous to many poets
What should I say?
I should ask, how did you find your passion in poetry…
In the first place.
Because for me……..
I HATE POETRYY!

Marlon Pilco, 14

Imagination

Yes discipline there are no changes
Without changes there is no strength
Without strength there is no future for me
The story I write is what I decide to be
What I discover for myself
It's what I choose between a sea
Infinite possibilities

Sometimes I feel like I'm slow
Sometimes I feel like I'm not moving forward
But I keep going and going though
The day weighed me
I continue even if I hesitate or give up
I continue even though the world outside roars
Like a restless sea
But I don't hide

I open the doors
And I let him find me
I think about who I want and I can be tomorrow
He told me that the change begins
In the small
That every day I spend
Account

My story is not written
My voice is just starting
This road, although
It's long, it's mine.

Poema

A veces miró lo que tengo enfrente
Y siento que algo despierta dentro de mí
Como si cada pequeño detalle fuera
Una evidencia de mi mente

Puede viajar más lejos, miró colores
Sombras y formas y aunque
Parezcan normales Yo las convierto
En mundo secretos un cielo que
Se estira hasta mis pensamientos

Un dibujo que se mueve
Cuando no lo miran un silencio que
Tiene historia

Pero las cosas que veo todos los días
Me hablan bajito, como si me dijera que puedo
Imaginar más grande" sin imaginación
No hay me","sin imaginación, no hay
Sensación"," sin imaginación, no hay voluntad
Ni deseo"

Danexy Vegas, 14

My room, Your room

just because i don't show it
it doesn't mean i don't feel it
sometimes i just wanna feel
heard.

yea, "you're a girl, be strong"
but what if strength looks
different on me?
what if some days my voice
shakes,
and my hands feel heavy
and all i want is for someone
to notice the silence im carrying?

because im trying, even when
im tired
im fighting battles no one sees,
and maybe i dont say it out
loud,
but i still need space to breathe,
to break a little,
to heal a lot,
to not always pretend
im okay.

and i get tired…
tired of apologies that don't
change anything,
tied of people messing up
and thinking a quick "sorry"
make the hurt disappear.

i want people to know
when their actions are wrong,
to understand the damage,
to actually try
to make it right.

and somewhere in all of this
pain,
i keep pushing people away
not because I don't need them,
but because im scared
of loving the wrong person too
much,
scared that the ones i choose
will be the ones who hurt the
deepest.
i love quietly,
softly,
with my whole heart
and it feels like nobody ever
loves me
in the same way back.

i hate that i still care,
even after the tears,
even after the late nights
where im trying to convince
myself
to let go.
but my heart holds on
to the people who hurts it most

that is the part that breaks me.
im craving understanding,
not excuses.
i want someone who stays,
who listens,
who doesn't make me feel
stupid
for loving hard.

but even when it feels heavy,
im still learning how to rise
still learning that soft doesn't
mean worthless,
and loving deeply isnt a
weakness.
im learning that healing takes
time
and its okay to give myself
room to grow,
room to rest,
room to breathe again.

and maybe im not okay yet,
but im getting there,
slowly
with every deep breath,
every quiet player,
every tiny hope i hold onto
even when my heart feels tired.

i may not show everything i feel,
but im trying,
and learning
and giving myself the room
to finally become the version of
me
who feels heard,
who feels loved
who doesn't have to beg
to be chosen.

Tonight Feels Different

Tonight feels lonely,
but I keep thinking about you
and how you helped me
understand myself
through poetry.
I write my feelings now
because you made it feel safe
to finally let my heart speak.
Your words lit up parts of me
I didn't know I could express.
And even though I miss you,
I'm thankful
thankful that you believed in me,
thankful that you helped me
grow,
and thankful that you showed
me
how writing could help me
breathe again.

Joshua Jackson, 14

Untitled

Telling a story through your pov
Opens a world of creation
My race, religion, and my love for stop
My great and grandparents story
Messi, Ronaldinho, modric, sane, di maria, dybala, Cristiano
Ronaldo, ect…

My neighborhood sounds like honking cars and
People yelling at each other from across the street
My neighborhood smells like fresh pizza and deli sandwiches
Taco, burritos, chicken and rice, and beef
My home sounds like loud hip-hop songs blasting from my sisters
room
V6 engines and refs blowing their whistles coming from my room
My dad yelling the the giants on tv like its going to do something
My mom trying to make dinner while shutting out the noise
But all in all my house is warm
To my grand parents
How was it like being segregated
How important was your family
What was it like being a kid during that time
How was it like in Mississippi
Did you ever experience discrimination
How was school
How was life

Dear Nikki,
How was it growing up in segregation
Why did you like 2pac so much
Did you ever meet him
If you did how was he was he nice.

MS 266

Teachers

Leandra Mayers

Imani Ragguette

Teaching Artist

Yasmar Cruz

Camila Urquiola 8th grade

Sunset
Sun goes down into the sea,
while the light switches from bright to dim.
Into the other part of the world,
it appears as if the sea in front of me beams colors of fantasy
pink, yellow, and orange too
are the colors of the sky that was once blue.

Breeze hits the palms, the sand, and all beyond.
In this eternal twilight, the world stands still in perfect peace,
as day's last golden gleam disappears.

Desmond Welch 8th grade

Sports
Sports bring people together every day,
athletes work hard in every way.
Running, jumping, scoring with pride,
teamwork and effort stay by their side.
Winning and learning make sports a great ride.

Ethan Laster 8th grade

How I became who I am today

I remember when I started middle school
and was so scared.
But then I found out that they welcomed me in
without a stare.
They prepared me for the world with many
different values.
I was even on the basketball team, and when
we lost, I got some bad news.
A favorite place I return to often is my
cousin's house.
I go there because of the memories and how
we played cat and mouse.
But the thing that made me, was my
kindness.
I'm happy I have this kindness to maintain my
positive mindset.
I used to dwell on everything bad and look
for no deeper meaning.
But now I look for the good in the bad and
create positive reasoning.

Passages Academy

Teacher
Mr. Vilaronga

Teaching Artist
Jashua Sa-Ra

Elijah

I Wish

I wish they knew the pain I felt
I wish they knew why I do what I do
I wish they knew it was for a reason
I wish they knew about what I didn't talk about
I wish they knew how I had to do stuff I don't want to do
I wish they knew how to understand me
I wish they accepted me
I wish I wasn't the odd one out
I wish they treated me better
I wish I wasn't the black sheep
I wish I didn't fall in this trap'I wish I knew better
I wish I didn't want them back
I wish I was okay

Nasir

Dear Mom,
I will always be your N1 son
I know I've stressed you out
A lot
Throughout the years
But I would never do anything to hurt you
And everything to always protect you

I wish

I wish they knew how much I love my mother
I wish they knew I like making music
I wish they knew I just turned 15

They can't see that I wanna be a barber
They can't see the pain I had to go through
They can't see that I didn't wanna do it that night

I wish they knew why I am who I am now
I wish they knew I would do anything to protect my parents

They can't see why I spend nights to myself alone

Jah-Leel

Dear Mama,

When I was young
I used to make all types of mistakes
And put you through it
I just wanna let you know
I love you to death
No matter what
I'm forever going to be
Your baby boy
And you
Forever going to be my peace
I don't need nobody in my life
To be great

I love you MIov!

Leaders High School

Teacher
Gabriel Fontes

Teaching Artist
Jashua Sa-Ra

LyAnna Jerome

We need love
What is love?
Is love manipulation?
Is love hurt?
Is love quiet?

I believe love is as loud
As your heart beating at full speed
I believe love is consistent
Like a dream you don't want to let go of
I believe love is truth
I know everyone is capable of love

I won't let love blind me
Like a light that can't turn off
I won't let love control me
Like a puppet caged forever
I won't let love drain me
Like a battery that can't charge

I will love to be loved

Samir

Mom
Dad
Aunt
Uncle
Aiden
Abdullah
Chet
I want you to know
That I choose you
Over anything
Amber
I still love you so much
No matter ever
If I have a crutch

I know that I love my grandaunt's
Cooking and her company
We never get into arguments
We need to work better
On speaking to each other
In our native languages
I won't ever get mad at her
I think she knows something
About me
That I myself don't know

Ariana Muriqi

I know there are many types of ways people love/express love
I think people will not accept all versions of love all the time
We need to understand that fact about love
We have to understand that fact about love
I will try to accept all types of love
I won't accept negative ways most of the time though
We still need to learn to change for love
We never do though
It shatters our resilience and self-esteem

Elijah

When I think of my family
I think of caring people
And someone to take care of
Me

Gino

My mom makes food so good
That I get reminded of her
Whenever I have good food
My dad is only serious
When he is mad
You know he's mad
Without telling you
It is sometimes funny

I know that love is something that everyone wants
I know love can be anything, like imagination
I know love will be harmful at times
I think love can give what people need
I think love is more than actions
I think love can be said but not meant

Nikoloz

Power is status
But it has many different meanings
If I had power to influence the world
I'd make it so people would become nicer
I'm not an artist though
I have no power
Before my parents
I was nothing
Not even a thought

Denis Altman

I know love could be paradoxical
I know love could be one-sided
I know love could be painful
I think love is good
I think love is powerful
I think every person needs love

Love my cat
My cat looks dumb
But he is brave
And he makes me brave
Love my mom
I could tell that she looks worried
When I come home late
Her worries
Make me want to be better

Angelika

Love is dangerous
I know it's able to do so many things

We need love, love is important
We need to feel like we're loved
We need to feel like someone needs us

I will give my love to someone
Who's gonna love me
The same I love them
For love
I will be loved more

Always wearing a hat
My darkness with a white heart
My reflection
My male version
My loved soul
Smells like a cold weather
Lovin summer
Sounds like love
Feels like love

Amil

To my mother
That gives me the best advice
That doesn't shut down my ideas
To the one that teaches me everything about life

I will love completely
I know that love is gained
And lost
But not as much
As it is gained

Emma Cortez

(For my Dad)
To the person I consider my idol
Someone who I look up to all the time
Hardworking and dedicated no matter what

I know love when I see it
Consideration is what's needed
We need to see many deep connections
Throughout actions
As people say everyday
And at the end of the day
Actions speak louder than words

Raheem Able

I know someone loves me
I know someone knows
I love them
As i'm writing this poem
With a pen
As the ink flows
I think of those
Who show me
Loyalty
Respect
And kindness
All on different days
All in different ways

My Friend Group
One has green eyes
One has a birthmark
One is really tall

One thing I'd like to tell them
Is that I appreciate them
When I think of them
I think of power

Shanayah Davis

I know
    Some people don't believe in love
    But a lot of people do
I know
    There are many people
    Who express their love
    Through comfortability
I know
    Many people say they love
    That person
    But their actions
    Don't show it

Anonymous

My mom has a certain
Cozy vanilla laundry smell
She wears glasses square
And looks old but new
She makes food
That you can tell is hers
She laughs and it's
Different from others
Not forced, but unique
Today makes her a year older
Happy glowing skin

Word. Sound. Power.
in the Classroom

BAM