



In A New Voice

*Poems of John Bartram
High School ESOL Students*

*Special Poetry Class Issue
June 2006*

Xuong
Quang

Introduction

The poems in this booklet arose from a Poetry course I taught in Bartram's ESOL Department during the school year ending in June, 2006. Peter Exarhoulakos, our coordinator, decided to offer the course in response to the remarkable quality of poems written in previous years. (Some from my classes have been collected in earlier issues of "In a New Voice.")

An intriguing chorus of voices speaks on these pages. You'll hear the concerns of most teenagers: love both hopeful and hopeless, betrayal, the sweetness and bitterness of family life, loss and death, the excitement of new experiences, fresh looks at everyday objects. You'll share their delight in playing with words, and the fun of finding humor and strangeness in otherwise normal situations.

Some of the poems reflect more unsettling realities. Many of our students are West African refugees who have lived through the horrors of brutal wars. Quite a few are separated from parents living in Africa, and some have witnessed the death of family members first-hand. Some must deal with unspeakable pain and trauma while already trying to adapt to a new culture and overcome gaps in their education. But fortunately for us all, poetry allows the unspeakable to be spoken. Several of these young poets, grabbing hold of the possibilities with energy and honesty, have written eloquently about dispelling the darkness through faith and hope.

Among the high points of the year were two visits by poet, songwriter and storyteller Oni Lasana, who inspired us with her poem "I Dreamt," based on Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous vision. The students developed their own "Dream" poems over time, and performed them for Oni alongside the music track from her CD. Most of these have been published separately, but a few are included here.

Other than providing an opportunity to write (and inflicting constant practice in using detailed sensory imagery!), it really takes very little to get students to become "real" poets. Though many of the class members struggled with very low skills, each one contained universes waiting to be expressed -- and all those who wrote regularly succeeded in finding their own unique voice. Only two poems needed revision beyond minor technical corrections. The energy, imagination, honesty, humor, and depth of these emerging writers will become apparent to you as you read. Like a candle, may they pass the flame of inspiration on to those still waiting to awaken their own unique gifts.

If you have questions or comments, or would like a copy of my published article that includes a suggested sequence of activities, send me an e-mail message at: Naila786@verizon.net.

Claudia G. Schulte, Ed.D.
John Bartram High School
Philadelphia

Note: Except for pages 24 and 44, the poems are arranged in alphabetical order by the author's last name.

DON'T CRY WHEN I AM GONE

(For my mother on my father's death)

Why cry? When he died, Mother was sad and full of fear and tears. Carry him and bury him. Maybe I should have married him when he was alive, cried Mother. Father was a kind king; he fought like a knight with a bright light, tight knife. Father smiles from heaven and says to Mother, Why cry when I am gone? Wipe your tears away, fight your fears like you don't care. Your death has carried me deeply into darkness and pain, said Mother. It has carried me into sadness. Without you there won't be any loveliness, Mother said to him in heaven. We were like flowers growing so pretty on earth. We were loved by everything around us, we were loved by the white sky, green grass and blue water. But why did you have to say good-bye like that?



Emmanuel Jack Benson
Ghana



GIRLS

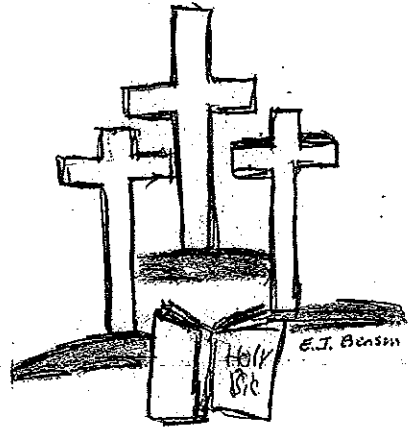
I love girls girls girls girls all over the world.
I love all kinds of girls -- Asian girls, African girls,
American girls, Australian girls. Girls that will help me
when I need help. Girls that will stand me up when
I am down. Girls that will make me see when I am
blind. Girls that will love me when I don't have
money. Girls that will love me not for the way I
look. I love fat girls, tall girls, black girls, white girls,
and a skinny girl that I will call my Candy Girl.
Boys need girls to live a good life. I need this.
But I can't have that. Give me this. I will get this.
Pray for this. Look for this. Pay for this. Buy this.
I need some of this. What is it you need? I need a girl but my
money can't buy love. Love is something that money can't
buy. Love is important to us humans
and animals like me.

Emmanuel Jack Benson
Ghana



I DREAM OF GOODNESS

In this world,
whatever you do you pay for.
We treat each other like animals.
Water, rocks, and trees
are all different from us,
but they have feelings like us.
If we treat each other badly,
the water dries up, the trees die,
and the rocks start to fall apart.
The killing and the raping
affect the whole world.



But where there is no dream,
there is no life, and I have a dream.
My dream says if our life is good,
if we love each other and get along
with everyone, we'll see
the wonderful things God made
that we've never seen before.
If we stop the killing and live good lives,
the things around us will be saved
and we too will be saved.

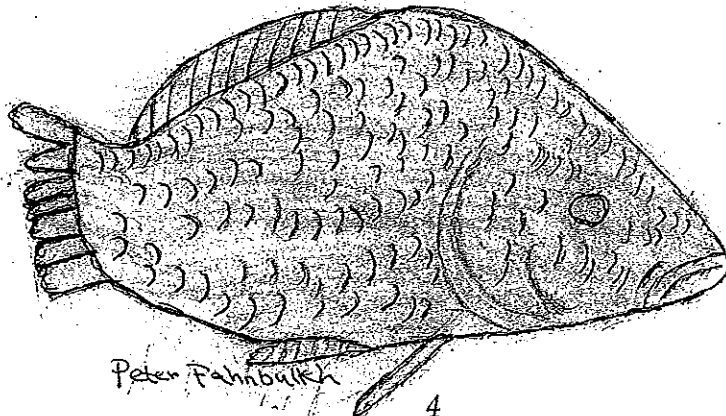
When the time comes, people will lie and die
like a dead fly who was flying for peace.
My dream says this world is full of darkness.
If you fight your way out of the darkness,
there will be righteousness,
and the best way.
Should I make my way to die, or to cry?
Let us all stand for one peace, one place,
one world, and one God.
Let us not stand for darkness. Let us stand
for righteousness and brightness.
Let us stand in the Light
and make our way to God.

Emmanuel Jack Benson
Ghana

Trip to Penn's Landing

Trip, trip, trip, trip. Trip all over the world.
Trip to Egypt to Africa, trip to the Atlantic
Ocean. Trip that will make you see something
you've never seen before. Trip into the water
to see fishes you've never seen before.
White fish, pink fish, black fish, green fish.
Fish that will laugh at you and say, "Ugly human,
you know you can not breathe under water."
Fish that you would like to keep as a pet. Fish
that you will eat. Fish that you will play with
and let go. I love fish. Country fish, Ghana
fish, stone fish, flooding fish, flying fish. I love
fish that will poop and let the other fish eat it.
Fish that will say, "I look better than you." Fish that
will say, "I got more girls than you." Fish that
will eat other fish but not the little ones,
because I love little fish. I love them all.

Emmanuel Jack Benson
Ghana



Who I Am

I like to run like a coyote,
my feet moving like a hungry spider.
I'm heavy like a rock,
light like paper.
I'm the one who makes people
have a dream.
I'm the fire girl,
I'm gonna burn you.
I'm the water god
who's gonna cool you.
I'm the people girl,
popular like a museum.

Luah Dahn
Liberia

THE EFFECTS OF WAR

War! War! War!
War is not good.
War made me lose
my aunt and uncle,
and my grandfather.

War! War! War!
I need my aunty
I need my uncle.
Can you give them back to me?
Why did you have to take them
away from me? Why?

War! War! War!
I hate everything about war
because war took the only thing
that I ever loved, my uncle.
I hate war, I hate war.

Luah Dahn
Liberia

I LIKE. . .

I like the thunder clouds.
I like when the lightening is flashng.
I hate when the rain is pouring down.

I like to see men and dogs walking
through the pasture.
I always like to see the white and
beautiful houses in the distance;
it looks so much like paradise
that you can't stop looking at it.

I hate the black or brown dog that's
always barking; it takes my mind off
the beautiful clouds in the blue sky.

I like everything about the weather,
but not the rain.
I like the blue clouds.
I like the rainbow clouds.
I like every cloud in the sky.

Clouds! Clouds!
They look so beautiful with their
colors and their shapes.
I hope they'll never disappear for me,
because I love to watch.
Always love to watch.

I love thunder clouds.

Luah Dahn
Liberia

Blessing to the World

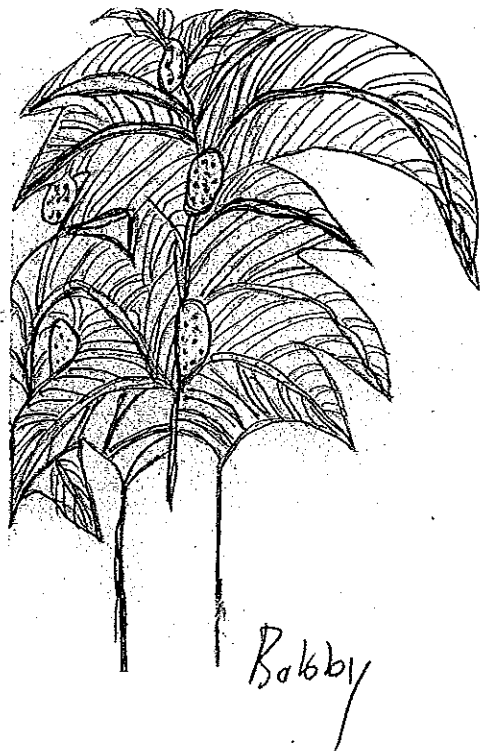
Bless those who respect
each other.
Bless those who call upon
their mother and father.
Bless those who give
their gift to the world.
Bless those who ask
for their gift, and for their
gift they shall receive.
Bless the rain that falls
upon the nations.
Bless the moon that
shines upon the trees.
Bless the grasses and
the trees that grow
in the world.
Bless the sun that shines.
Bless my mother and father,
who live to be called parents.
Bless the work of the hands
of the poor.
Bless the dead
who died in war.

Myer Daniel
Liberia

MONKEY SONG

monkey jump in the tree
monkey get down
from the tree
monkey like to eat banana
money fall from the tree
monkey like to be in the tree
monkey in the tree
monkey jump from the tree
monkey live in the tree
monkey, monkey get down
from the tree
monkey, monkey come here
monkey, monkey get away
monkey, monkey fall down
from the tree
monkey, monkey get up
from the ground

Myer Daniel
Liberia



BLOODY ROAD

**Lonely road, full of blood.
Lightning shooting from across the sky.
Coyote howling from the top of the mountain.
Raven whistles and cries. Turn back, I hear.
Yet I walk on down the bloody road. Fear fills my head.
As I gallop through the bloody water, I look back.
at a sad little girl dressed in a bloody white gown.
My head is rising; my pupils open wider and
wider and wider. My body shudders with fear.
Still I pierce through the bloody road.
I twist and turn; my sweat turns into blood.
My hands turn filthy. Blood begins to flash
from my nails like water flashing
from a faucet. Blood flows from my nose
like a little stream of water running down
from a mountain. The road keeps getting bloodier
and bloodier and bloodier. A slow beautiful song
arises from nowhere. Help me, I plead, but the song
keeps getting louder, and louder, and louder,
no longer beautiful.
The horror never stops.
Darkness begins to feed on my living body.**

**Jorgen Geleplay
Liberia**

Ambivalence

(Poem from a Sense List)

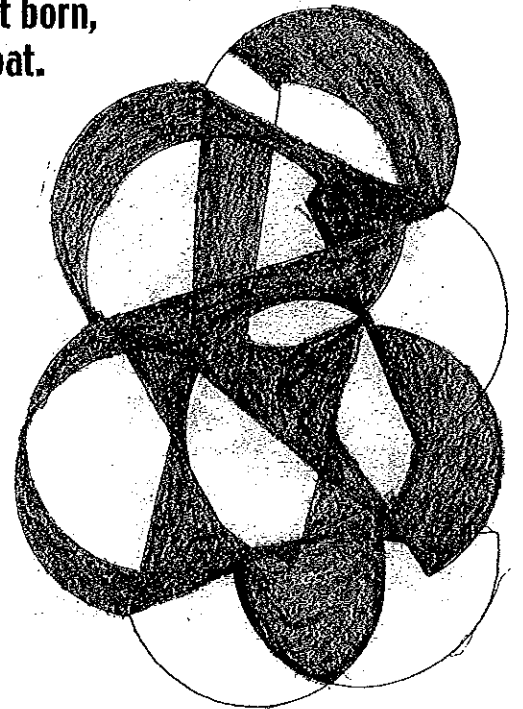
I was sitting alone waiting for the sun to set.
Waiting for Grandpop and the smell of meat again.
I never liked the smell of fresh meat,
and never liked the smoke that puffed
out of Grandpop's mouth.

Whenever I entered my Grandpop's house,
My eyes never moved off the wall.
All I saw were animals' heads, teeth, and hides
Grandpop's hunting was like boiled water
on my skin.
I loved Grandpop, but hated his killing animals.

Grandpop's rug felt like a kitty that was just born,
and smelled like a twelve-year-old billy goat.

Grandpop's house: The love, the sickness.

Jorgen Geleplay
Liberia



YANKU MARAH

Wind Man

*I'm the Wind Man,
fast like the wind
and moving at the speed
of light.*

*I'm the Sun God who
burns all his enemies before
him. I'm the flaming bird
known as Raven.*

*My powers are
like the lightning; they
keep shooting and shaking
earth.*

*My skin is burning
like the morning sunrise.*

*Jorgen Geleplay
Liberia*

The TV Speaks

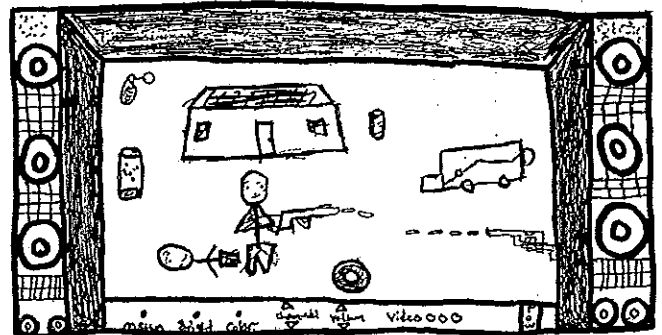
**I'm that ugly TV
that has only two channels.
I'm that dirty TV that
can't even play a VCR.**

**I'm that TV that
everybody hates. I'm that TV
that can't even show things
clearly.**

**I'm that TV
that just can't do
anything. That reckless
TV that kids don't even
watch.**

**I'm that nasty, useless
good-for-nothing TV
that shows only bad movies.**

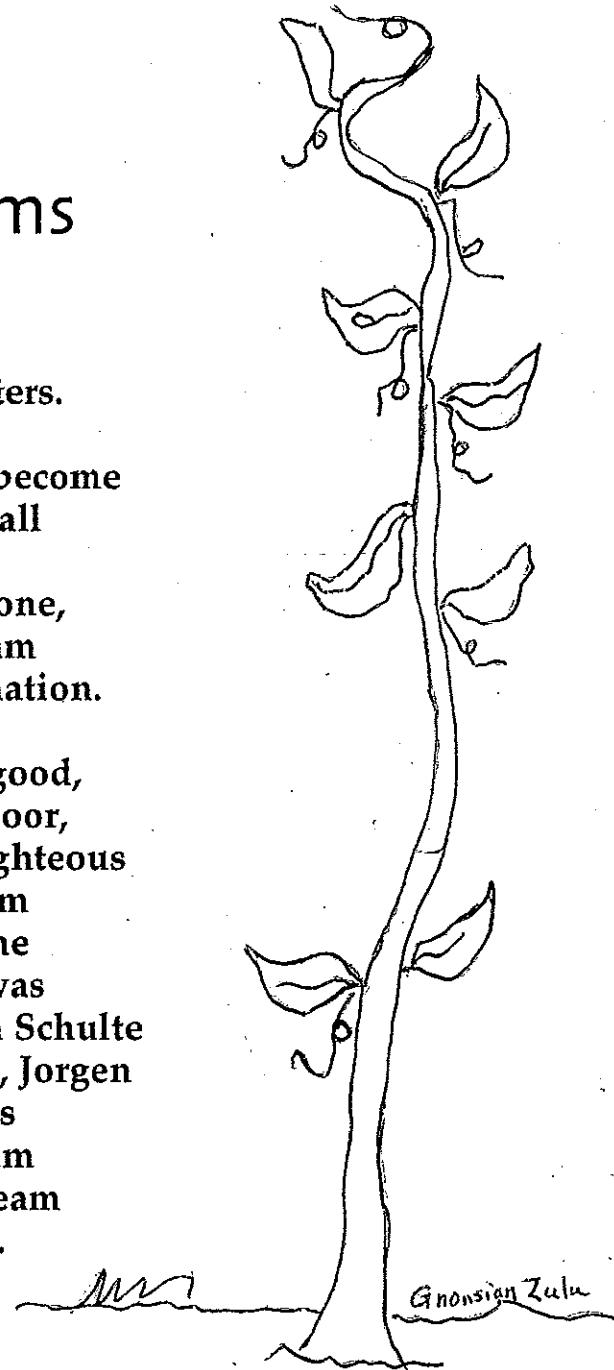
**Jorgen Geleplay
Liberia**



By Abdul Conteh

Dream of All Dreams

**This is my dream, brothers and sisters.
This is a dream that I had for us.
A dream that the human race will become
one. A dream that all nations, and all
tribes, will unite as a family.
A dream of how God, the mighty one,
wants us to be in his sight. A dream
of one people, one love, and one nation.
I had a dream that we will all be
together in a peaceful place. The good,
the bad, the lazy, the strong, the poor,
the rich, the young, the old, the righteous
and the unrighteous. I had a dream
that Martin Luther King, Jr. was the
King of Dreams, Ms. Oni Lasana was
the Queen of Dreams, Ms. Claudia Schulte
was the Mother of Dreams; And I, Jorgen
Juty Geleplay , sat on the throne as
the Prince of Dreams. I had a dream
and in my dream I had another dream
and another one, and another one.**



**Jorgen Geleplay
Liberia**

INNOCENT STAR

An innocent star that
has not yet found its
destiny. An innocent star
that has been abandoned
by the moon and the sun.
An innocent star that wanders
in the dark giving light
to the dim stars. I know
I have been shining a lot.
That's the reason why
the envious and jealous stars
hate me so. I was, I am,
and I will always be
an innocent star. One day
the moon and the sun
will bow, coyote will howl,
dogs will bark, stars
will spark before me.
I know I've been
shining a lot.
I will be back,
not with fire nor
with sword, but
with roses and
light. Not to punish
or go to war, but
to bring light to
the stars of all creation.
I know I've been
shining a lot.

Jorgen Geleplay
Liberia

LAST DAY

The last day is here.
The earth is tearing apart.
Volcanoes are spitting over
the trees. Their leaves
burn off and the branches
fall. Mountains split with
great anger, causing earthquakes.
The sea shows its wrath,
from which millions of people
are swallowed.
"It's Ednuimikos (ed-new-me-cuz),
King of Judgment," cries the Earth.
"The last day is here."

Trees and water dry up
as the sun looks upon them with
anger. Cars crashing, lightning
shooting, rain falling furiously,
darkness approaching more
every second.
Living thing seeking refuge.
The last day is here.
No mortal can resist
the terror.

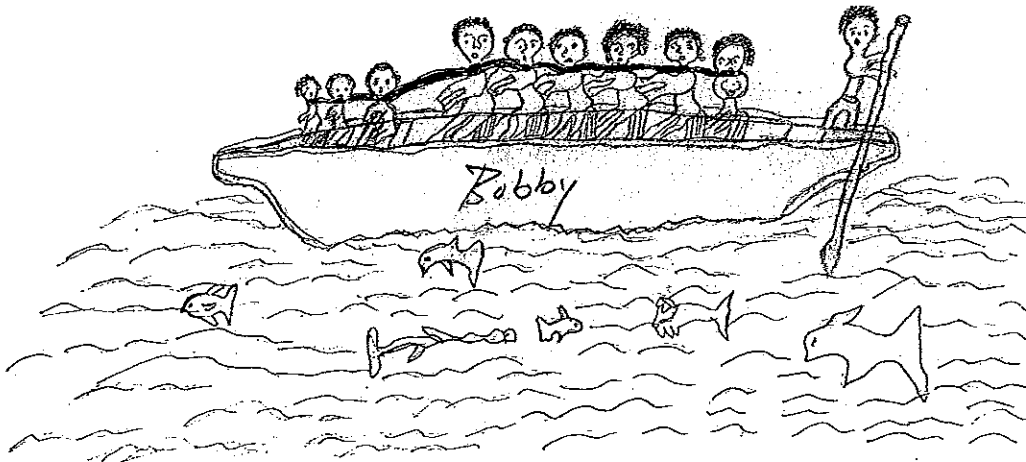
Jorgen Geleplay
Liberia



AFRICAN BOY

I'm a poor African boy
who loves dreams and keeps
it to myself in the right place.
And I'm a boy who loves money for
honey in the morning.
Dream, Dream, Dream, it's very important
to me to dream like Martin Luther King, Jr.
I'm a poor African boy who loves
Apple for rapper, and I'm a poor boy
who didn't have money in
Happer County, Liberia,
and a rapper. People always call me
rapper, and I need a helper to
get dapper like my slipper.
And because I'm a poor boy
people call me Scooby-Doo to get
food, because I'm Crazy. I'm
a poor African boy who needs repair
before I can be dapper to get a helper
to remember.

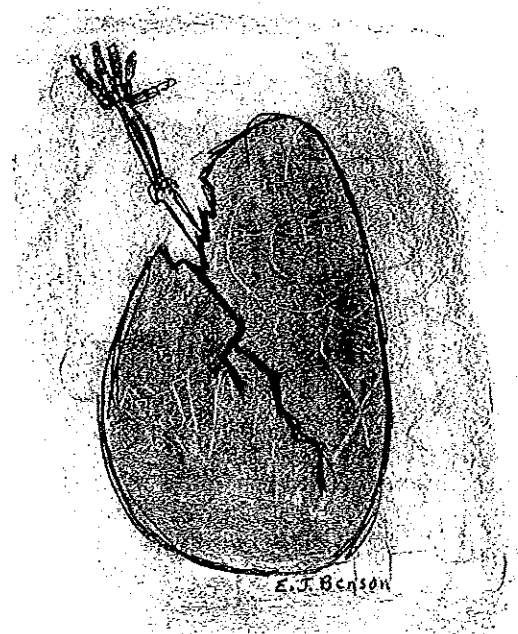
Bobby Horton
Liberia



SORROWFUL DREAM

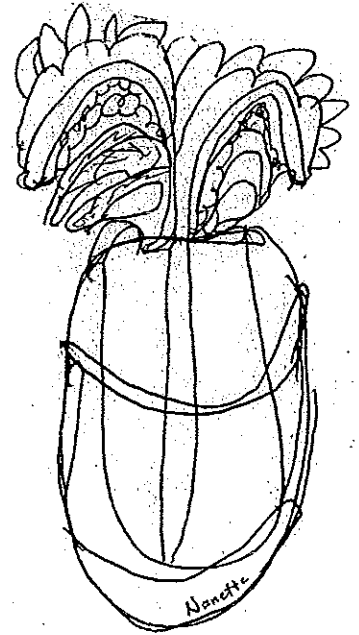
Sorrowful dream,
the dream that made me cry.
It was sorrowful and sad.
I saw a bright sky pointing
in front of my eyes. . .
but when I looked, I saw a moon
in the form of a beautiful woman
who looked like my mom
singing a sorrowful song.
She said to me,
"I hope that if you love to dream
you'll keep your vision in your dream
and stay small. Little boy, take this
message to the world.
Tell them. Say
there will be no water,
there will be no food,
there will be no light."
She said, "People will
begin to cry, but it will be
too late."

Bobby Horton
Liberia



WE CAN

*We can
love like you.
Hear the leaves touch the
ground. Feel the soft fur of a
kitten or puppy. Smell the dew
on the grass. Learn how to climb
a mountain. Hurt when we are sad.
Touch your heart if you let us.
Sense a smile.
Yearn to be seen for who we are,
accepted for what we know.
The one thing we cannot do is see
through our own eyes.*



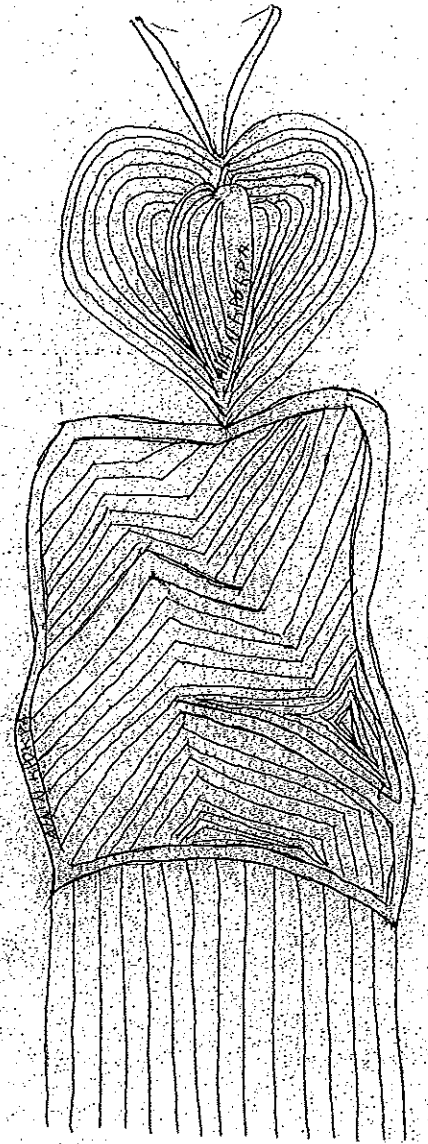
Masiame Jaboteh

People I Love

My mother is a beautiful butterfly, flying from tree to tree, eating sweets down the river, giving her children one love, taking them up and down and kissing them on the cheek.

My father is a bear. He likes to walk in the snow, white and black, and he also likes to put his food under the snow. He sings and sounds just like a river running down the hill. He is a white bear. He can look like a golden tree shining in the sun, or white like snow melting on the floor.

My friend Swaretta is a beautiful bee shining like rain water, falling like snow, making a happy family in her home, touching the water like the sweet earth.



Massara Kanneh
Liberia

Poem

It was at 3:10 p.m.
in front of Bartram
and I saw all these people.

The colors they wore were
black and white,
black and white.

Black and white
everywhere. Black
and white in the
streets. Black and
white in the school
yard.

I saw something
that I hadn't seen
in a long time.

This boy got
beaten so bad
that I even
cried for him.
I was sad
and mad for him.
My heart was beating
as loud as a drum.
Tears were coming
out of my eyes like
water pouring down.

And all I did
was take the
bus and
leave with that sad, sad
moment.

Giftens Kpou
Liberia

As The Day Goes By (After Hurricane Katrina)

Bodies are still passing by
as the day goes by.
Houses are down, nowhere to go
but bodies are still passing by.
I am sick and I don't have
any food to feed my family, but
bodies are still passing by.
Let's go to a better place
and start all over, but bodies
are still passing by. Don't worry,
everything is OK now, but
bodies are still passing by
as the day goes by.

Giftens Kpou
Liberia



NEW TOY

(This poem was inspired by the movie, "Get Up and Stand Up," which showed how the Black community is economically left out.)

"Mom! Mom! Look what I found!"
The beautiful smile
Makes the dark skin of the little girl
Really stand out.
With her smiling face,
the girl shows her mom
an old, dirty, messy, ugly, smelly doll.
"Can I keep this, Mommy?"
"No, Honey!" the mother sadly answers.
"But, why? I found it on the street."
"No, honey! You can't play with it!
Be good. Now, put it back exactly
where you found it."
"Yes, Mommy." The smile on her face disappears.
Slowly,
the little girl turns and heads to the door.
"Sorry, dear,
I can't afford to buy you toys,
But I don't want you to be
mocked because of this old toy."
Stepping closer to the window,
the mother sadly looks at the kid,
throws away her "new toy."
A teardrop falls down to the ground
from the eyes of two unlucky stars.

Ngoc Le
Vietnam

DREAM POEM: AM I STRONG ENOUGH TO CARRY ON?

Step by step,
my dream's climbing up,
and reaching closer to the top
of the highest mountain.

Am I strong enough to carry on,
to where I can touch
the warmth of success and happiness
with my hands?

Am I strong enough to carry on
to where I can smell and taste
the delicious odor
of perfection and victory?

Am I strong enough to carry on
to where no failure is allowed to enter,
or crisis has a chance to exist?

Am I strong enough to carry on?
My dream is rising,
like a sun at dawn.
It could light up my little magical world.
It could burn off the negativity and
weakness

that are resisting in my heart.
Am I strong enough to carry on?
Suddenly,
the hands I used to hold my dream
broke;

the will I used to control
my persistent soul
shut down, because of
so many big dreams to bear
with my two little hands.

My dream,
my mother's dream of becoming
the most wonderful designer,

my father's dream of becoming
the best artist, and more.

Am I strong enough to carry on?
I failed
to hold onto the dream.
I scream aloud,
seeing my dream fading away;

I'm crying and blaming life
and people for being too hard on me.
Am I strong enough to carry on?
My dream,
like a heart-shaped balloon, popped;
like a heart-shaped crystal, it broke;
no cure for it.

Am I strong enough to carry on?
My father and mother gave up
their dreams
because they had to realize
their parents' dreams.
I wonder about my destination:
Will I have a chance to wear
a sky-blue uniform and gloves?
Run around the hospital
taking care of people,
easing their suffering away. . .
or become a designer?
or become an artist?
or just end up on the street
with no clear path or dream?

Ngoc Le
Vietnam

My Mother

She was always there for me
when I was sad or happy.
She'd try to make me
feel better when I was sad.

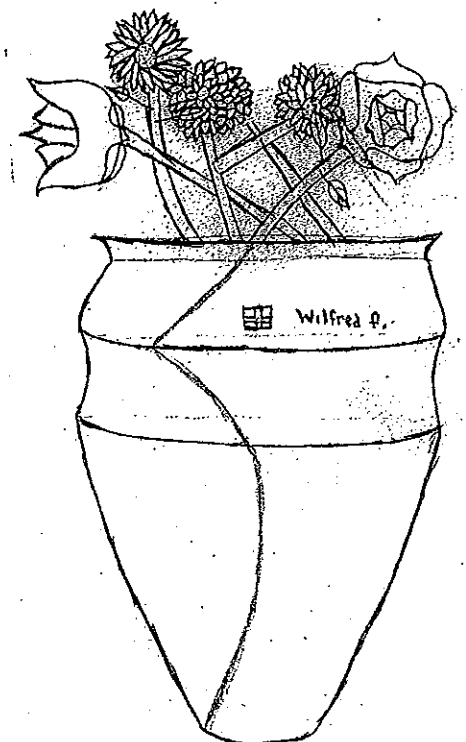
She was the best mother.
What else could a boy ask for?
We were like the moon and the stars.
She'd do anything to keep me safe.

One night I came home late
and we had an argument.
She was mad and I was too.
We talked in the morning.

I apologized just to make her
feel good, and she said,
"Don't ever come home late again."
I said, "OK, Mom." I'll never forget
that day.

She was mad as lightning
knocking everything down.
She was mad because
I told her I wasn't
a little boy anymore.

She said I would always
be her little boy who was
on her arm like a baby.

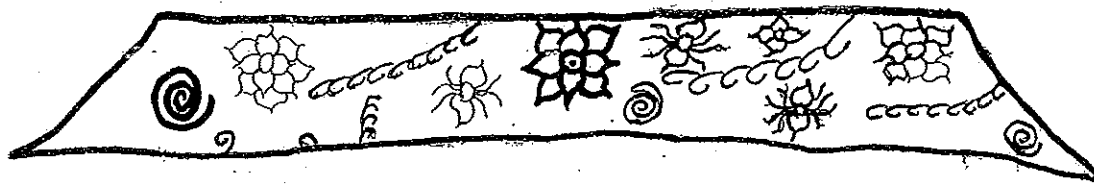


Frezer Mamo
Ethiopia

Cobra vs. Tarnue (Zoo Poem)

I went to Uncle Cobra's compound.
Mr. Cobra was moving amazingly.
So I asked him in my mind,
Are you black with yellow scales,
or are you yellow with black scales?
Mr. Cobra looked at me from toes
to nails and asked me in his mind,
Are you happy with an angry face,
or are you angry with a happy face?
Are you noisy with some sad days,
or are you sad with some noisy days?
Are you stupid with a clever brain,
or are you clever with a stupid brain?
Are you nasty with clean ways,
or are you clean with nasty ways?
Are you wicked with good ways,
or are you good with wicked ways?
Are you smart with a dull attitude,
or are you dull with a smart attitude?
Mr. Cobra asked me so many questions;
I was so confused I forgot to eat my
lunch. I started walking zigzag ways.
I promise never to question a cobra again
about its scales or colors.

Tarnue J. Moiyallah
Liberia



FAMILY POEM

I wonder how my mom
came across my dad.
Maybe I was the one
who made it possible for them
to come across each other.
When I was in the other world,
I was searching for a good
mother and father. I saw
some bright-complexioned
ladies in a canoe over the
River of Peace and Love.
I chose one of them
as my mother,
which she is now.

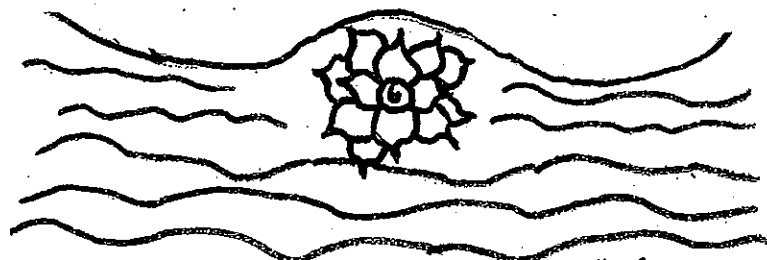
Then I saw a group of men
in a palm tree trying
to commit suicide.
I saved one of the men,
who is my father.
When I went home,
that night I had a dream
with my dad and mom.
When my eyes opened,
I saw myself on my mother's lap
feeding at her breast.

Tarnue Moiyallah
Liberia

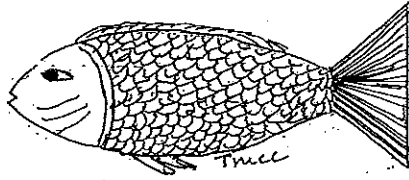
WALKING OVER HELL FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN

The trip to New York
in the helicopter
was like walking over
hell from Earth to Heaven.
My heart and breath
were judging me for
all the sins I'd committed
from childhood to adulthood.
I could see my late
great-grandmother's house painted
with blue and white colors.
I could even see myself with the
beautiful angels in Heaven.
The last thing I saw before arriving
was Martin Luther King Jr. with his
family in the park having fun.
Traveling in a helicopter
is like walking over hell
from Earth to Heaven.

Tarnue J. Moiyallah
Liberia



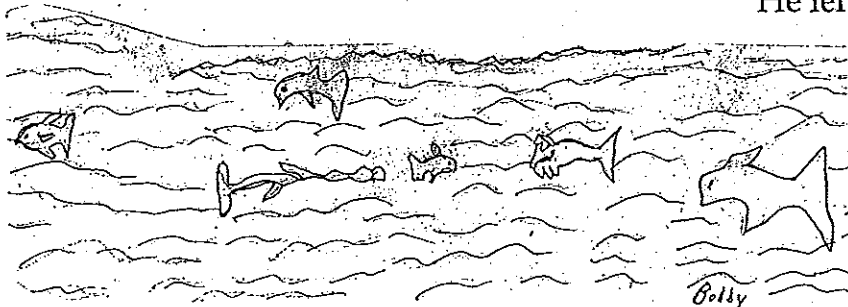
Abdul Conteh



Poem About Penn's Landing

The Penn's Landing trip was so fantastic, I just want to be there throughout my life. If only I had the power to rewind the past as you rewind a cassette or CD disc, I could rewind yesterday to have the same fun we had, the same kind of fishes we played with, the kinds of experiments we did, the way we fished, the way we wore our life jackets like an F.B.I. man wearing a bulletproof jacket; the way we sat in the boat like an old fisherman, like an old soldier going to the war front, and the way we were taken care of, as if to say we were special on earth.

Tarnue J. Moiyallah
Liberia



THE REJECTION DREAM

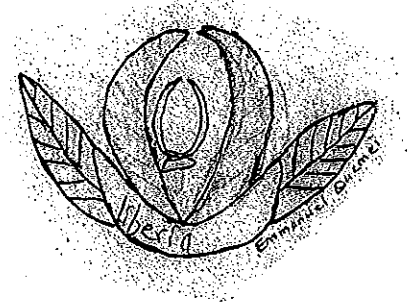
I had a dream last night about Bobby. Bobby was rejected by God and Satan. While people were going to Heaven and Hell, Bobby was just rotating in one place until he disappeared. His spirit was trying to enter Heaven. The Angel punched him in his mouth. He cried for Mama. . . "Mama. . . come for me." He tried to enter Hell. Satan gave him a kick. He cried for Papa. Even his own soul refused him.

So he went to a camp called Limbolia where there were thousands of people who had been rejected by God and Satan. Later all those people were saved but Bobby wasn't. He was so confused he started asking, "Am I insane, or was I miserly? Was I gullible to Satan? Who am I? A goat or limbo-dweller?" He left still confused.

Tarnue Moiyallah
Liberia

THE BEST DREAM EVER

I had the most incredible dream
about our sugar Africa.
Can you believe that I was
a king who represented this
great continent, Africa?
Can you believe that I was
the most creative, most wanted,
and most attractive scientist of
poetry the world ever wanted
to see?

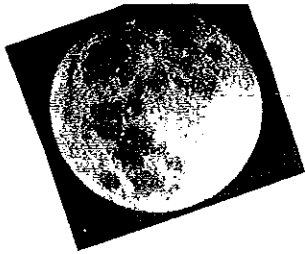


Oh! My friends, I had
a good dream about our
Mother Africa. In my dream
I could see that all the people
who'd lost their legs, hands, and ears
were well now. They were good-looking,
and all their body parts that were missing
were corrected. I even saw
the pregnant woman who was killed
by two boys who were arguing about
her baby. One said it was a girl
while the other insisted that it was
a boy. So they decided to find out.
But for this wonderful day she was
alive and happy, living together
with her family.

I have a dream
that we'll make Africa Second Heaven.
Let's just give peace a chance --
Africa will change.

Tarnue J. Moiyallah
Liberia

STARS



NIGHT

comes

Stars

Out
of

the
sky

stars

Sparkle

They

twinkle

up

above

the

WORLD

so

HIGH

STARS

like

A diamond

in

the

SKY

AS

they

bright

and

Spark

light

TRAVEL

in

the

dark.

and.

I know

What

you

ARE

TWINKLE

twinkle

little

STAR

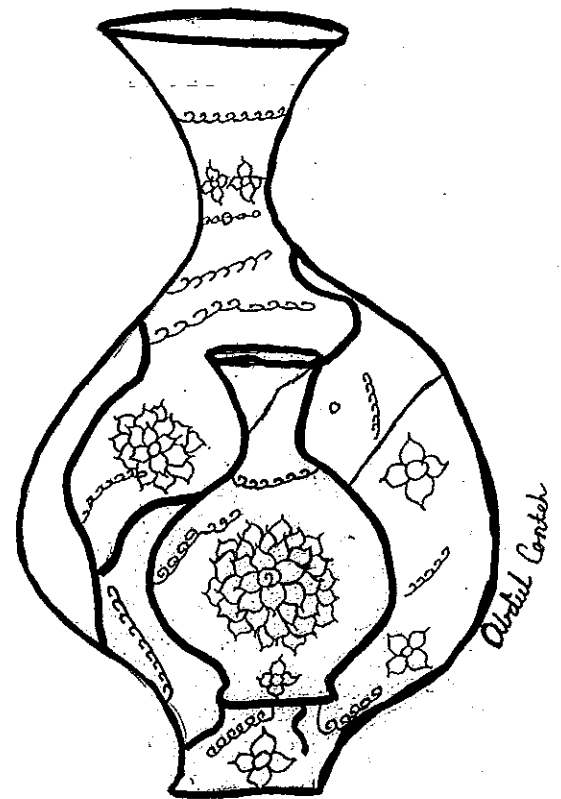
FAMILY HISTORY

The door creaked as I pushed it open into my mom's room. In a little, tiny whisper I said, "Mommy, I can't sleep. I miss Daddy."

Before I knew it,
her right arm was under me
and her left arm was over me.
"Shhh. . . just close your eyes
and I'll tell you a story
about him when we were little."
My mom said:

"I was washing my family's clothes
by the riverside;
then I heard a ride
going by. I turned around
but didn't see anybody.
I felt a cool breeze
on my shoulder
on a hot, sunny day.
Before I knew it
I felt a pressure on my back,
knocking me off my feet,
then into the water. . .
I took a deep breath
and saw a glimpse of a figure
running away."

"Was that Daddy,
Mommy?" I asked.
"Yes, yes it was."



Anda Ngo
Vietnamese American

Dreaming

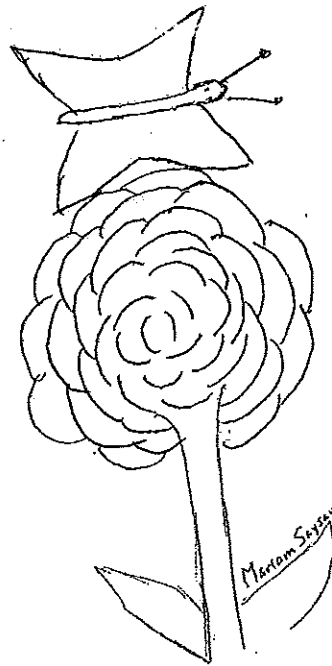
I dream of one day becoming
a butterfly
who can fly from one flower to another.
I dream of one day becoming
a jellyfish
so I can flow my mind, body,
and soul with the ocean.
I dream of one day becoming
a turtle
who can walk through life
slowly and steadily, one step at a time.
I dream of one day becoming
who I really am.

Anda Ngo
Vietnam

JULIE THE SNAKE

*She sneaks around all day
and doesn't make a sound,
quietly roaming through the
kitchen
of someone's room.
You can't sense or hear her
coming.
She crawls on the floor.
She can smell things from far
away.
She bites you hard.
We call her Julie the Sneaky Snake.*

Emmanuella Pierre
Haiti



I AM THE PURSE

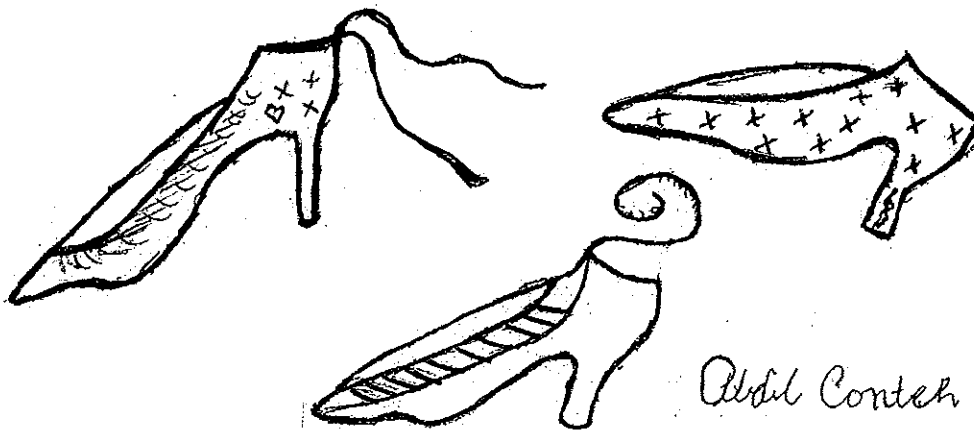
**They stuff me somewhere dark,
full of other things
such as sharpened pencils.
The objects boss me around;
they always poke me.
I am the purse.
I'm broke most of the time,
so I feel very empty.
Just when I'm comfortable,
they take away the money.
They don't appreciate me.
I am the purse.
They need me,
but they don't realize it.
They keep me dirty,
throw me around.
They don't realize what they
had
till I'm gone.
I am the purse.**

Emmanuella Pierre
Haiti

SHOES

Shoes, shoes, all types of shoes
Big shoes for big feet, small shoes for small feet
Boots, sneakers, and sandals too
Open shoes, closed shoes
High shoes, flat shoes
Ugly shoes, cute shoes
Fuzzy shoes, leather shoes, and even wooden shoes
Shoes with flowers, and shoes with straps
Shoes with laces and shoes with zippers
Shoes that go up to your knees,
And shoes that go down to your ankles
Different colors of shoes, and different shapes of shoes
Sewn shoes and glued shoes
Shoes for pleasure, shoes for pain
Comfortable and uncomfortable shoes
Shoes for girls and shoes for boys
Millions of shoes in millions of stores
Other than shoes, what else could a girl ask for?

Emmanuella Pierre
Haiti



THE EYES

He was always staring at me.
I wondered what was
going through his mind.
He could never take his eyes
off me.
I thought he was weird,
'cause he was always so quiet.
One day as he stared at me,
I stared back.
Our eyes met.
His name was Franklin,
and he had beautiful eyes.
His eyes were sparkling
like stone-cut diamonds.
He was as mysterious
as a murder case,
quite hard to figure out.
A wonderful person he is,
as fragile as an egg
and yet as hard as a rock.
I knew him long ago,
and can never forget the joy
he brought to my life.

Emmanuella Pierre
Haiti

CAN YOU IMAGINE?

*A world without war
Bill Gates without a car
Words without letters
success without go-getters
Houses without roofs
Magic without poofs
A country without schools
A school without fools
A body without bones
A road without stones
A sky without blue
My life without you*

*Emmanuella Pierre
Haiti*

* * *

GIRAFFES

**yellow and black
spotted and dotted
long-necked
tall
the females looking
so feminine
very careful walkers
never stay still
give me that weird look
looking at me like they
want to kill me
rolling their eyes at me
so slow**

**Emmanuella Pierre
Haiti**

MY BABY GIRL



*She's an angel God
sent to me from heaven.
Any time I look at her
all I see is the beauty
in her eyes.*



*The darkness of her skin
shines brightly.*

*With her smiling face
she's like a sparkling
diamond ring. Slowly
under the water the
beauty of her skin
looks like a shining penny
from the bank.*

*The beauty from her
hair makes all the fish
melt in the water.*

*The smile on her face
makes all the flowers
grow well, and makes
the water overflow
to the sky.*

*Mariama Sarnor
Liberia*

A SPIDER WHO TRAVELS

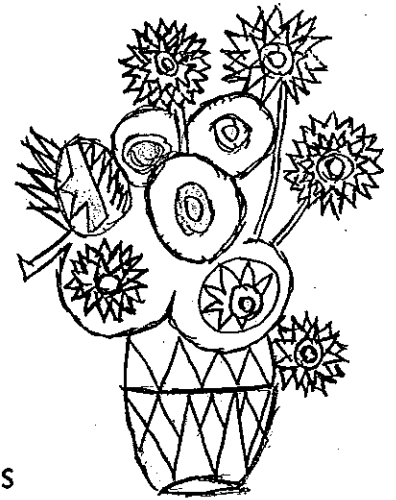
Spider that travels
from place to place
skinny spider
small spider
big spider
Spider with wings
rough wings
smooth wings
hard wings
Spider with marks
white spots
black spots
brown spots
Spider that travels
with a light on
his narrow body
and four long legs
with colorful light
on his wings
Spider that travels
from web to nest

Mariama Sarnor
Liberia

APPLES

I like apples
fat apples
little apples
skinny apples
tall apples
apples with marks
lights
colors
Apples with leaves
flowers
roots
skin
I like apples
green ones
red ones
yellow ones
I like apples
excited apples
mad apples
sweet apples

Mariama Sarnor
Liberia



MOHAMMED YILLAH

Running Man

My name is Mr. Running Man.
Mr. Running Man always knows
lots of things, but the thing
he likes best in his life is running.
He's always running
all day and night.
Mr. Running Man, that's what
people call me. They don't know why
I need that name for myself.
All they know is to make fun of
my name, Mr. Running Man.
People don't know why I like to run
every day and night. They always say
I'm stupid. But I tell them
I'm not stupid; I'm just trying
to exercise my body.
You don't, but all you know
is to call me Running Man,
and to call me stupid too.
That's all you know. But one day
I'll tell you I'm not stupid.
One day you'll be sorry.

Prince Saydoway
Liberia

I WISH...

I wish you could just listen to me
when I talk
I wish you'd let me do what I want to do
when I want to
I wish you could say "I love you"
so I could say "I love you too."
I wish, Mom, you could
let me be.

Baba Seck
Senegal

* * *

ANGRY

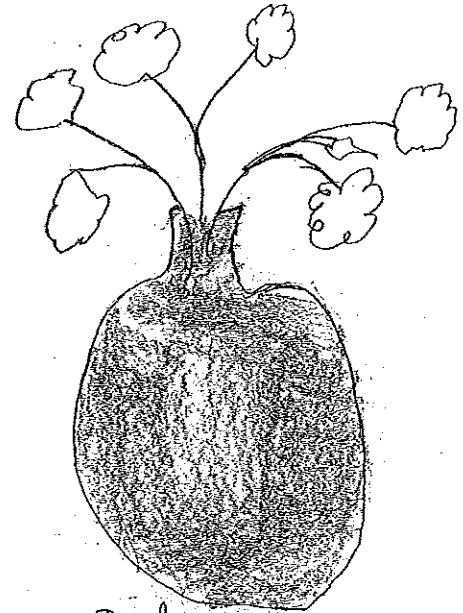
I'm angry --
foot-stomping,
door-kicking,
wall-hitting,
book-throwing,
desk-slapping,
drawer-slamming,
pencil-breaking,
teacher-hating,
paper-tearing,
Mad.

Tsion Tadesse
Ethiopia

I Need to Know

*I need to know
what makes my heart
like you
without knowing
who you really are.
What makes my mind
not stop thinking
and dreaming about you.
What makes my eyes
not look at any other person
but you
and follow everywhere you go.
What makes my mouth
shut when my heart
tells me to say words.
What makes my hand
write all about you
when I don't know
what you love and hate.
What makes my legs
walk next to you
when I'm not a friend of yours.
What makes my nose
smell the love wind
that you breathe from inside.
What makes all this happen
when you don't feel anything,
but my heart carries you
wherever I go?
I need to know.*

*Tsion Tadesse
Ethiopia*



Paulin Snijders

UNFAITHFUL

The one I've lost my heart to
is an unfaithful girl.
She is faithless.
My love for you is indeed a curse.

When a glass gets wrecked
it causes a shrill noise
but the cries of a broken heart
no one listens to.

I'm crazy, mad, obsessed
with her memories; I live in my
love for her.
The state of my heart
she will never realize.

A million times I reason with her
but she's still not going to listen.
How wicked are her charms.
She's treacherous, a betrayer.

The one I've lost my heart to
is an unfaithful girl.
She is faithless.

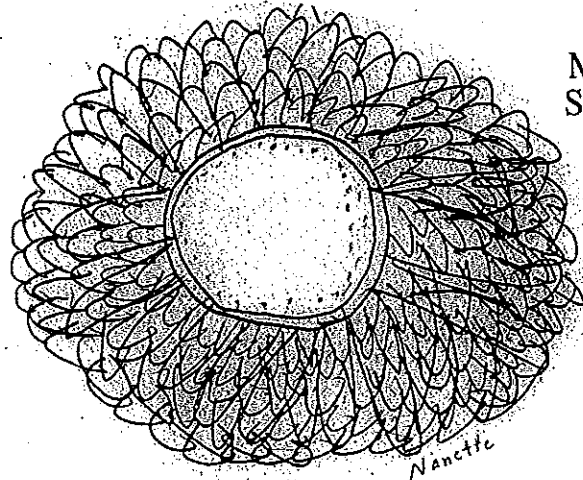
May she never sleep.
May she lie awake all night
for someone's love.
May she pine forever.

She has tormented me;
I will torment her too.
In this gathering today
I'm going to disgrace her.

There's a fire on my breath,
a restlessness in my heart.
She sits with her head bowed
in another man's arms.

The one whose charms
I'm drunk on
is a betrayer,
a faithless one.

The one I've lost my heart to
is a faithless girl.
Oh, what a curse love has been.
You are disloyal.
You are unfaithful.



Musa Tholley
Sierra Leone

A POEM FOR THE PEOPLE

(Based on the TV film "Get Up, Stand Up")

Get up, stand up
Stand up for the rights of the people who died
Keep standing and don't give up
Stand and beg for mercy for the people who lied.

Get up and stand for your right
Stand up and don't let them take it
Stand up and work for it every day and night
Stand up for every step you need to get it.

Get up and show that you're proud of our nature
Stand up and make you and your family rise
Stand up and show that you are part of the culture
Show love and respect, make people feel nice.

Stand and stay away from your enemies
Don't let them take what is your right
Act as if you like your enemies
But also sometimes fight.

Don't forget it's your right
You have to defend it
You have to know what's good and bad in the world
And what you need to get it.

Musa Tholley
Sierra Leone

My Dream

I had a dream.
In my dream
I saw a bunch of Negroes
black as the night is black
cleaning the floors of New York.

Their lives were like
that broken-winged bird
that couldn't fly.
They did work without getting paid
and they were valued less than
the food we eat.

I had a dream:
In my dream
I saw Negro souls were full of color
like the wings of a butterfly
when they notice
they're about to be free.

They missed their children,
their families and their lovers
while doing things
that they'd never thought of.

I had a dream
but after my dream
I noticed that
the words 'Negro' and 'slavery'
were gone like
last week's paycheck
for this week's bills.

I had a dream
and my dream has come true,
that slavery will never come again.
It's gone, gone, and gone forever.

No more slavery or Negro names.

Musa Tholley
Sierra Leone



SONG OF THE BIRD

In the garden,
the bird flies to the tree
where monkeys live
and starts singing the bird's song.

I have two legs
but I can do more things
than monkeys with four legs,
from now to the end of the world.

They hate me,
They make me frightened.
They fight no animal but me.
They stop me from eating.

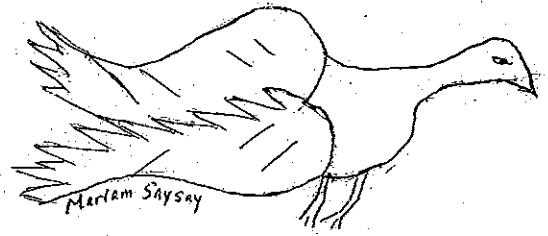
But they will never fly like I do,
never work like me.
They will hate me but they can't do
like I do.
They always work to kill me.

But I will not die,
and this is the bird's song.
We never lie
and we're never drunk.

Either you hate it
or you love it.
I will be happy,
not faking or lying.

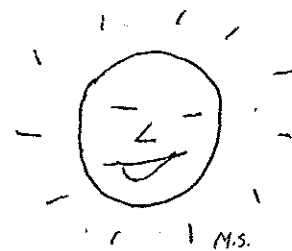
Musa Tholley
Sierra Leone

The Dream I Had



The dream I had,
It was a dream to remember;
It was the dream of a lifetime.
In this momentous dream of mine,
I dreamt that our own fathers, mothers, sons, chiefs,
didn't trade us to the white man.
In this dream of mine,
I dreamt that the KKK didn't hang, burn, and
destroy my people, and that they were the best of friends.
I dreamt that the Jewish weren't provoked, killed, and destroyed
by the Nazis, and that they were also the best of friends.
In the dream I had,
I dreamt that the white man didn't kill and rob
the Native Americans off their own land.
I dreamt that all nations had a system of government
in which no one was deprived of being heard, or of making a change
with their voice.
I dreamt that no nation undermined other nations,
and that the people of these nations would accept other nations.
In this life-changing dream,
I dreamt that Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was alive and saying his
dream to all,
and that equal rights, equal opportunities, and happiness rang for all.
In my dream,
I saw the Jewish, the blacks, the Asians, the Africans, the Europeans,
the poor, the rich, the gays, the conservatives, the open-minded
living in a world of happiness, peace, and acceptance.
I dreamt that people were equal, and that they weren't divided by race,
skin color, political parties, religion, culture, and by what society tells them
In the dream I had,
I dreamt that Tupac was still alive and representing West Coast hip-hop,
and that many were not closed-minded about his message.
I dreamt that the Notorious B.I.G. was still the king of New York, and that
there wasn't any East versus West, and that they both combined to make
a sound or music that no one had heard before.
I dreamt that I was walking through the street of past pop-culture.
I saw Marvin Gaye.
As I passed,
That brother asked me, "What's going on?"
As I walked through the street of love and peace,
Bob Marley told me, "One love."
The dream I had,
It's a dream I will never forget.

Dargar Yammue
Liberia



Good-bye, My Sun

I love to see my beautiful sun,
the sun that makes me feel fine,
the sun of my life.

I love to see my sun.
Every man loves to see his sun.

Even though I don't see my sun,
the beautiful sun of my life,
I love to see her picture,
and I wish to see her one day
up in heaven.

I love to see my sun.
Good-bye, my sun.
Good-bye, my mom.

Massaboi Yarkpawolo
Liberia

Zoo Poem: Baboon

Baboon, are you pretty
and cute, or ugly and stupid?
You look like you want to eat
some of my apples. Do you want
some of my apples, or do you
want some of these girls
that I am walking with?
Your big, ugly mouth
stays in the zoo for a living.

Don't be mad 'cause you're not
cute like me. Your face
looks sad, but your heart
is strong and tough.

Baboon, what you do
for a living is eat and sleep.
Baboon, do not look
at my girlfriend, you
ugly gorilla.
Next time I come back
to this zoo I will bring you
some food.

Constance Zoegar
Liberia

My Backyard

**I sit in my backyard
and look at the ants, bugs,
and flies. They all come
together, sit down, and eat.**

**The fly came and sat on my
hand. The fly
was spreading his wings
like my hand was his bed.
After that the bug came,
sat on my foot, and started
climbing my knee. Finally he
sat on my lap.**

**Next the ant came and sat
on a chair near me.**

**I looked at all of them and
smiled. I said to myself,
"I am the king of living
creatures now."**

**I feel happy that they're not
afraid of me like other animals.**

**Constance Zoegar
Liberia**

BLUE FLY

Blue, blue fly, put
your blue light on
again, again.
Let me see in
this dark room.
Blue fly, your
light
shines like the sun, like the
moon, and like the
little stars in the sky..
Don't be ashamed, don't
be ashamed, show me the
light, let me see, Mr. Fly.
My room is dark, Mr. Fly.
Can you give me your
shiny blue light?
My room is dark.,
My room is dark.,

Help me with your blue
light. I need it. Help, I can not
see with my eyes in the
dark. My eyes are dark.

Mr. Fly, don't walk away
from me.

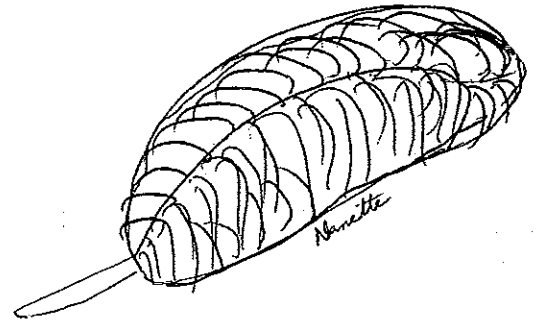
Your light is
powerful and beautiful.
Thank you, I'm so grateful.
Can you come back
Another time, another time,
another time and another time?

Constance Zoegar
Liberia

MY SISTER WASHING DISHES AT HOME

My sister took the broken plate
and put it in the sink.
I came and passed by her, smiling..
She was upset with me
because she wanted me to help her,
but I didn't.
She took the pots and started
to scrub them with lots of water
In the sink some of the water
wet the clothes that she was taking
to her friend's party.
Her work is to wash the dishes.
She put soap on the spoons
to wash them.
Some of them fell on the ground and
broke the glasses that were in a pan.
Mom came home at 12:00 p.m.
from work. I ran to her
and told her that my sister
broke some of her glasses.
Mom got mad and started
to yell at her.
My sister looked at me
in the eye. She was so mad
that she wouldn't speak to me.

Constance Zoegar
Liberia



When It's Time

**When it's time, we will be left with nothing
in our life. Our body will be dry like
a desert. We will be by ourselves.**

**There is a place where all of us will be
prepared for judgment.**

**When it's time, our living will be useless like
an old TV someone threw in the trash
that can't work anymore in its life.**

**When our time comes, it will be encountered
like a soul in a living human being that can
leave the body without your knowledge.**

**My time will be like a switch
that turns off lights in the night.**

**When it's time, don't be worried about
other people's lives. Think about your past,
what you have done to others,
and you'll know that your time of living
has ended with death, like
a soldier falling in ambush.**

**Constance Zoegar
Liberia**

Who Are You, By the Way?

I am kind,
I am what you
dream about at night.
I am like the Red Rose
that opens up its leaves
to say something
that you and I feel
but can't hear.

I am like
a fairy godmother
who will say and think
nice things about you,
who will come at night
in your dreams
and show you how
your life will be,
either good or bad.

I am always there with
you, like a guardian angel.

REAL LOVE

Love started in the
days of old.
God made love, when he
made Adam and Eve.

He said you need a friend
to share with,
not a friend to fight with.

Then he talked about
sharing love.
God shared His love
with Adam and Eve then
with us all, who
we now call Men and Women.

Then came Romeo and Juliet
who increased in love,
followed by Julius who
fought for love, and then
Samson who died for love.

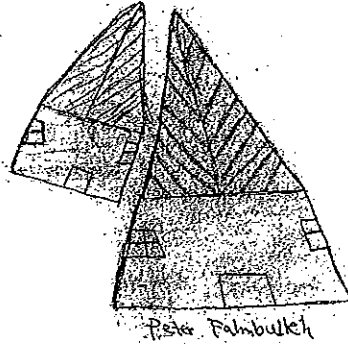
Now what can't you and I do
for love?

Sandor Zoegar
Liberia

Sandor Zoegar
Liberia



UGLY GIRLS



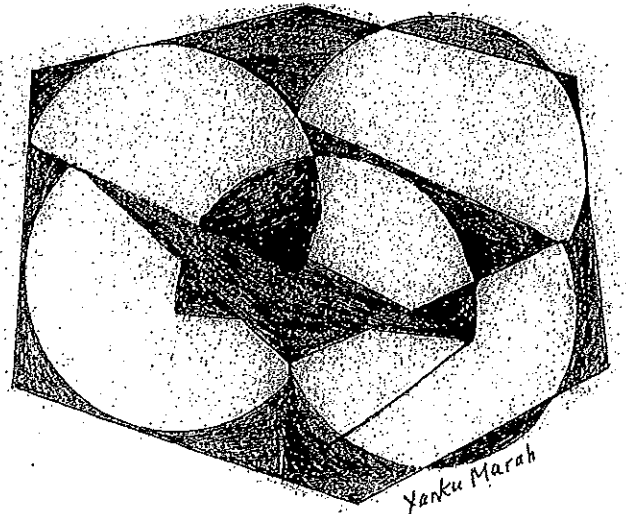
Family

*Ugly girls,
I hate ugly girls.
Ugly girls always
act stupid and ugly
in public.
I sometimes like
ugly girls.
Even when you love to be
their friend, they can't
do anything because
they're ugly.
That's the only thing I like
about ugly girls.
I hate their hobbies and
like their bodies, but
not their face, smile, and
the way they dress.
Ugly people always jump
on you when they
see you among a lot of people.
Don't tell anybody
when you're going out with
an ugly girl, and don't
let her come around
when you're out with
your friends.
Oh! My God, I hate them.
No ugly girls should come
around me.*

*Sandor Zoegar
Liberia*

I'm entering my house. I hear a noise. Little brother crying. Mom shouting at little brother, and sister looking for her food. Dad confused. What's going on? I say. Why-is brother crying? Why is Mom yelling at him? Why is Dad so confused? Why can't sister find her food? What is going on? I said. Why is everybody so confused? Why is my family so confused?

*Swaretta Zoegar
Liberia*





The Lovely Moon

Part I

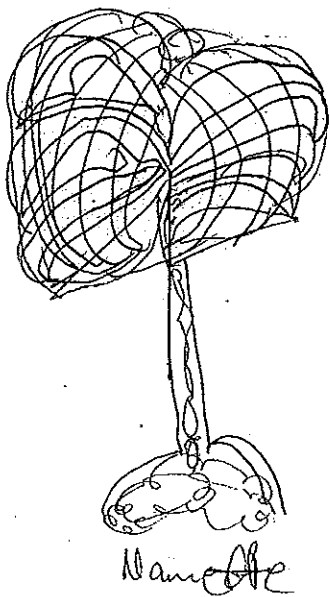
I looked at the moon.
The moon looked at me,
smiled, and said,
"Look at Swaretta down
there with attractive
appearance." And I said,
"Wow, you look like Dr. Schulte.
You have on glasses with long
dress, amazing appearance, and
lovely smile." She said to me,
"I am Dr. Schulte. I want to shine
in your future and dream as
I am shining now." I
couldn't believe it, talking
with the moon seeing Dr. Schulte's
face. Later Tarnue appeared near
Dr. Schulte in the star with blue
clothes on him. He said to me,
"Swaretta, listen to Dr. Schulte.
You will get the benefit of
good education and achieve well."
I've got my achievement
and the shininess of Dr. Schulte
in my life.

Coming soon:
The Lovely Moon, Part II.

Swaretta Zoegar
Liberia

Vacation Acrostic

Variety of people
Asking about parties
Cars running
Activities everywhere
Tomorrow there will be one
I can't wait to go
Ocean full of people
Nations all around the world



Oumoul Khairy Ba
Mauritania

Cinquain

Lion
talented, fearful
springing to attack
he balances on ground
amazingly

Haiku

I love my mom so
but she hates to see me grow
like a young flower

Tarnue Moiyallah
Liberia

* * *

From the final exam:

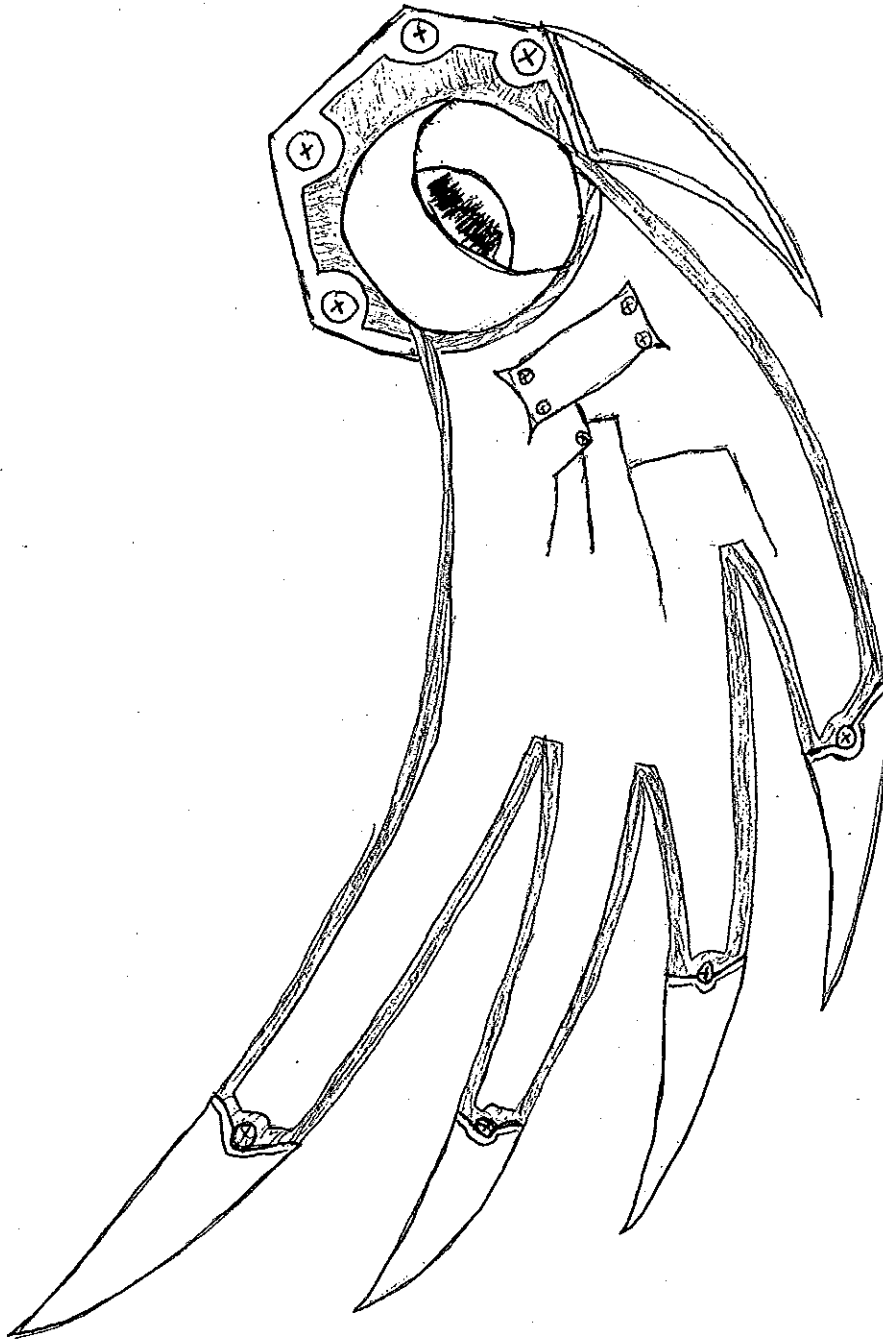
Her face is bright like
the light that comes on when
a child is about to be born

Musa Tholley
Sierra Leone

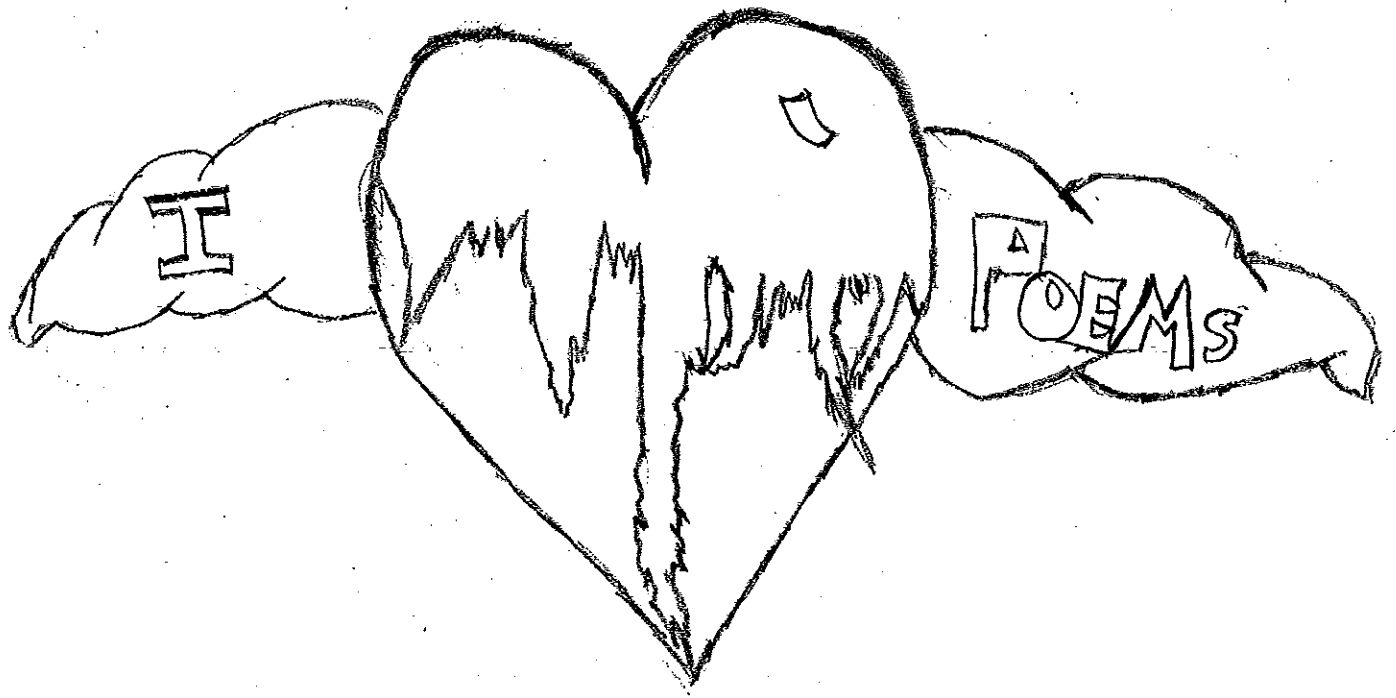
My poetry teacher talks like
a newborn baby crying

Constance Zoegar
Liberia

Torgen Geleplay



THE WING OF CHAOS



By: Mercy Baahol