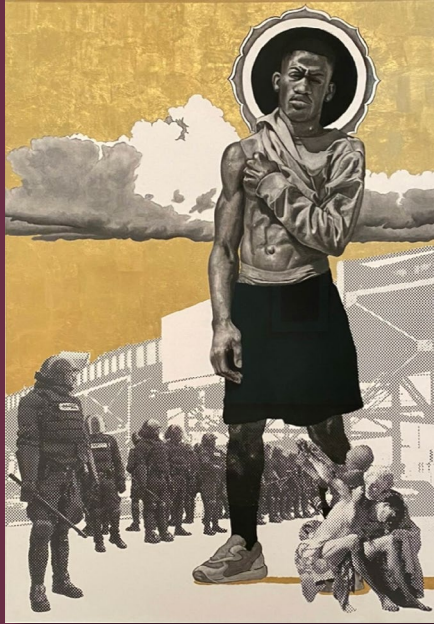


MUSE IN THE MUSEUM



LANGSTON MIDDLE SCHOOL POETRY RESIDENCY
MARCH 2024



Allen Memorial
Art Museum

DESCRIPTION OF RESIDENCY

The Allen Memorial Art Museum, in partnership with poet Lynn Powell, conducted a poetry residency at Langston Middle School in March 2024. The Allen's Education Department visited all 7th and 8th grade English Language Arts classes for a day of learning how an artwork can be “read” to increase visual literacy skills and explore meaning in art. Then Lynn Powell visited each class with a poetry lesson that invited students to look at art through the imagination and language of a poet. A self-selected group of enthusiastic poets visited the Allen to write a poem in response to an artwork in the galleries. The 7th and 8th grade poems written during those museum visits are published in this anthology. In addition, the 8th graders had the opportunity to record their poems as an audio tour in our Allen App, which can be accessed at amam.oberlin.edu/lms24tour or by scanning this code.



For supporting this residency, we would like to thank Langston Middle School's 7th grade ELA teacher Margo Fox, 8th grade ELA teacher Molly Angney, art teacher Tiffany Georgiadis, principal Sheila Hicks, and superintendent David Hall. Thanks also to Oberlin College Creative Writing Assistant Professor Elizabeth Rogers and the Writers in the Schools (WITS) program for supporting the publication of this anthology.

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FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

ALEX KARSHNER, 7TH GRADE

Inspired by: Henry Ossawa Tanner, [*Flight into Egypt*](#), ca. 1910

Hooves crunching on frost-bitten ground,
donkeys huffing, unable to stop,
a great escape.

Mary cradles her precious son,
legs straddling tightly to the mule's back.
Joseph rides in front, on edge,
waiting for any cries that would rip away their secret.

They sneak through the night along pathways,
ones that never held such hostility till now.
Bounties above their head,
just like their son has a halo.

THE MYSTERIOUS COLORS

KA'RIZMA CLARK, 7TH GRADE

Inspired by: Judit Reigl, [*Écriture en Masse*](#), 1961

It's dark with hints of red and blue I lean over the soft velvet rope just to get a closer look then suddenly I get pulled in I see that it's very dark with just a little bit of red and blue I walk around not knowing where I am just to my surprise something lightly touches my shoulder I turn around to see blackness I stand there confused as ever I start to walk again but then I stop to see the red, black, and blue have come to life they burn as bright as the sun in my face I take a step forward and touch the red and blue as I run my soft hands across this madness I take another step then I fall I fall into this black and blue abyss not a word I say I just fall fall fall as I fall I close my eyes and feel the wind as I fall I come to my senses and open my eyes to realize it was just a vision, a vision of my life I step away from the soft beautiful velvet rope and smile as I smile I say, *touché*, world, *touché*.

LOOK

ASHLYNN JENNINGS, 7TH GRADE

Inspired by: Michael Boyd Roman, [*The Smallest Giant Makes for an Easy Target*](#), 2023

I sit here and look at this painting.

To some it looks like your modern 20th century painting
but if you really

look

I

mean

really

look

You can see the bigger picture however you may
perceive it. Whether you see it to stop gun violence
or to even address stereotypes.

However you perceive it, it is what effect
it has on your life.

FREE ME

WILL LOCKLEAR, 7TH GRADE

Inspired by: Michael Boyd Roman, [*The Smallest Giant Makes for an Easy Target*](#), 2023

If I knew what I was about to do would get me here,
I definitely wouldn't of did it.

Getting hurt every day. I hope the Lord is my witness.

I hate it here, getting beat by Prison Guards, locked up
in a cell, I deserve a ribbon.

I get it, what I did was bad, but when I was in the act,
I couldn't control myself.

But if I had some self-control, I wouldn't be
in this place of hell.

Please Lord, I need a big favor, please get me some help.

THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

FALON VARGO, 7TH GRADE

Inspired by: Yang Yongliang, [*Glows in the Arctic*](#), 2023

Miles upon miles of city
bustling with cars and mechanical voices.
The water toppled with fog
as boats skirted the teal surface.
Mountains filled with specks of light
blinked with the islands.

The streets and bridges were clean
and filled with life.
The stars twinkled alongside the masses,
a fog blending into the deep blue sky.

Then come the lights.
The streaks of green, violet, blue, and white
bolt across the sky.
The cars lessened
and the mechanical chit-chattering silenced.
Boats dissipated
with the reflection of bolting lights replacing them.

I'VE CHANGED

ALESSANDRA SANZ-FEKETE, 7TH GRADE

Inspired by: Jenifer K Wofford, [*MacArthur Nurses \(Pushing\)*](#), 2013

“I’ve changed, I’ve changed, I’ve changed”

But no one listens. They think I’m still the same,

“you still lie”

“you still talk bad about me.”

But can’t you see, I don’t.

I was young

and dumb

But I don’t anymore, I promise!

But they don’t believe me. They

just leave me

It pains, and hurts.

But I’ll stick around, until you realize

I’m not the same anymore

I SEE YOUR CRIES

ALESSANDRA SANZ-FEKETE, 7TH GRADE

Inspired by: Audrey Flack, [*Macarena Esperanza*](#), 1972

Mother, mother!

Friends, friends!

I cry out, but no one hears.

Mother, mother!

Friends, friends!

I see them! But no one answers.

Mother, mother!

Friends, friends!

Still no answer? I run, I run, I run.

I must escape, I run to the place

where all my memories and sins fade away, I cry out

tear by tear, but there are no answers, where

are they? Can't they hear me? I'm screaming

"help" at the top of my lungs, on a cliff. But they're not hearing.

BERGMAN

CAMILLA QUINONES, 7TH GRADE

Inspired by: Andy Warhol, [*Ingrid Bergman \(The Nun\)*](#), 1983

I'm praying for my wishes
wanting to get better,
but I'm striving,
trying my Best.

I'm praying again and
every day to Get Better.

The sound so quiet, no
more loud sound.

The smell starts to fade away,
headaches stop, I want everything to Be the Same.

Praying for me to stay and change,
eye and body starting hurts, I'm trying to
get it all away. Praying every day.

PUSHING HARD

CAMILLA QUINONES, 7TH GRADE

Inspired by: Jenifer K Wofford, [*MacArthur Nurses \(Pushing\)*](#), 2013

The pain won't go away.
I must fight back, there's no way to turn back.
Walk in deep cold water and the pain hurts.
Put a serious face and stare.
Time to go and help people,
they are important. We must deal with our pain and
help people.
The pain won't go away,
try to not cry the pain out.
Want to cry but I can't,
So hold it.

MY BEAUTIFUL GARDEN

CATHERINE WALKER, 7TH GRADE

Inspired by: Miriam Schapiro, [*The Secret Garden*](#), 1973

Walk into my garden
the garden where there's no violence
no harm
everyone is too busy listening,
listening to the way the flowers
Bloom.

Smelling, smelling the sweetness of
the lake,
smelling the flowers
and the air,
and how beautiful each leaf falls
down one by one.

Seeing, seeing my beautiful garden
and the way it grows.

SCHOLAR'S ROCK

SOPHIE GEORGIADIS, 7TH GRADE

Inspired by: Chinese Artist, [*Scholar's Rock*](#), 19th–20th century

Different funnels I have many,
but through each hole I turn bloody.
Solid and Strong I once stood, whole with pride,
being what I could.
You put me here, up on a stand so jeweled, keeping me
from being, from moving so fluid.
But no matter how many times you make me cry,
no matter the way that I hide, we will always
be just you and me. Yes you may be still strong,
that you're the best, but there's where you're wrong.
I will always be stronger *because* I'm weak.
You are just one solid piece,
but every time you break me, my solid pieces multiply.
That's why I'm still standing, that's why I'm not crying.
The Earth's brutal winds will hit and push you down,
but they fly right through me.
And look, on you I'm looking down.
Yes, I may be bloody, much bloodier than you,
but if you hold up a light, the light
will always come through.

THE CITY LIGHT

DAVID SMITH, 7TH GRADE

Inspired by: Yang Yongliang, [Glowing in the Arctic](#), 2023

As the city lights shine
through the starry night, As
the cars drive by the river-
side, As the people walk
through the road of
chalk, As the mountain roads
turn to a boat, As the
waterside buildings
turn to glowing, lighting
the water up like a flash-
light, As the clouds
move, the people have
no clue, living in the
dark dark night, As
the lights go off
it's late at night,
the city life is
about to die.

THE NAME OF THE GAME

ELIZA REESE, 7TH GRADE

Inspired by: Artemio Rodriguez, [*The Triumph of Death*](#), 2007

We will all get death, but when?
How? Where? We all have this question
in our brain. Our life is like
a game. But who is playing it, who
is to blame?
Will you play the game? Are you to blame?

THE KING OF ROCK AND ROLL REFLECTS

HAILEY PETZAK, 7TH GRADE

Inspired by: Enrique Chagoya, [*Elvis Meets the Virgin of Guadalupe*](#), 1994

Looking back,
it's hard to understand
why, America, why I have chosen this life.
Forgotten the past,
the beauty of nature,
the purity and peace for something
loud music, fast food,
and a *whatever!* attitude
could never find.

The water slowly moving
leaves a trail,
a path, so
for a moment
I can see
Her
The Virgin of Guadalupe,
the symbol of mother nature,
who remembers her past.
She is brilliant, calm, caring,
a figure never brought
into my foolish head.

Until now.
Now I see
Now I admire
Now I regret
Now I am calm
Maybe now I can change
Not the world
Not the U.S.
Not my town
But maybe now / can change.

THE LONELY MAN

JA'KOURI WALDEN, 7TH GRADE

Inspired by: Charles Wilbert White, [*Micah*](#), 1964

This man shows he's had enough,
this man shows he's been through rough times,
but he still does what he has to do,
and at the end of the day he still cares.
He just wants others to do the same back.

THE NIGHT IN A BOAT

JOSHUA VOGAN, 7TH GRADE

Inspired by: Yang Yongliang, [*Glows in the Arctic*](#), 2023

This city
so busy at noon and dusk,
but at midnight
it's dead silent.
The northern light above my head
lighting the sky,
what a beautiful sight
on top of the sea.
Here, the old sailor proverb
“red skies at night, sailors' delight,
red skies in the morning, sailors take fright”
does not apply.
In this huge city, many colors fill
my sight.

IS IT GOOD OR IS IT BAD?

NOAH DOWLING, 7TH GRADE

Inspired by: Artemio Rodriguez, [*The Triumph of Death*](#), 2007

Is death good or bad

Skeletons are dancing around

so how bad can it be

Skeletons are suffering

so how good can it be

People crying, people cheering, left and right and in the middle

so is death good or bad

People fighting, people burning, while skeleton plays the drum

Smoke is dancing, while some smoke is falling

Skeleton wielding a sword, one is cheering and one person is
getting locked up

so is it good or bad, does it just depend

THE TRIUMPH OF DEATH

RAIGAN WATSON, 7TH GRADE

Inspired by: Artemio Rodriguez, [*The Triumph of Death*](#), 2007

Crows looming
while skeletons of Death roam.
The modern world is just like a
huge graveyard.
Liberty and freedom seem to be dead,
and soon you will realize
it's not in your head.

Seven deadly sins intoxicate us every day.
Your childhood superman is gone.
Worldly things will be left behind.
The triumph of death is like a mime,
not a sound happens while it acts out.
Day in and day out.
Bombs, smoke, polluting our air.
Lakes turning black but who cares?
We are digging our own grave every day.
And all we can
do is go on tiktok
and write a little song
and who cares?
Nobody.
The triumph of death looming near
and you can't turn on your nightlight
to hide your fears.
You won't have your mom to wipe your tears.

HEAD HELD HIGH

JAYVIER SMALLWOOD, 7TH GRADE

Inspired by:

Sir Eduardo Luigi Paolozzi, [*Jesus Colour by Numbers*](#), 1965–70, published 1970
David McDermott and Peter McGough, [*The Anointed 1898*](#), from the portfolio
In a Dream You Saw a Way to Survive and You Were Full of Joy, 1991

When you feel down, keep your head held high.

When you feel God doesn't treat you right,
keep your head held high.

When you feel like praying,
make sure to keep your head held high.

When you hate how and why you have a life, keep it high.

Whenever you lose a loved one,
remember they love you, you love them.

Always keep your

Head.

Held.

High.

REMINDS ME OF MY FAMILY

RAYNE BARGER, 7TH GRADE

Inspired by: Artemio Rodriguez, [*The Triumph of Death*](#), 2007

My dad being the people drinking in the corner

My mom being the king in the other corner, just laying there

My little brother and sister being the two children on the cliff

Me and my older brother being

Everything else

Tired.

Exhausted.

Dead.

Hardworking.

Why does this remind me so much of my family?

THE PRESENT AND THE PAST

RAYNE BARGER, 7TH GRADE

Inspired by: Artemio Rodriguez, [*The Triumph of Death*](#), 2007

The present is self-centered

The smoke from factories

The barrel of oil

The bombs

Even all the People

All they do is sit around and destroy their own planet.

The past is dark and scary

The wars

The guns

The hanging

The fire

The swords

The killing

All they do is fight for their right to live and survive.

DARK

LOGAN PURNELL, 7TH GRADE

Inspired by: Yang Yongliang, [*Glows in the Arctic*](#), 2023

Dark starry night, cold and windy,
enjoying the view from up high.
Seeing people enjoying the city makes
people feel like they're in a new world.
Staying up high is like flying up high.
The city lights shine bright in the night
as the cars drive by the riverside.

MODERN WORLD

SADIE LENIX, 7TH GRADE

Inspired by: Artemio Rodriguez, [*The Triumph of Death*](#), 2007

Oh what has this world come to.

Screams and death galore.

I can never catch a break from my family members getting torn.

This world is based on luck, it is like a game,

most innocent people die,

but the ones who killed them get fame?

Oh what has this world come to.

This smoke and pollution fill my brain

and dance in my head to make me feel insane.

Oh what has this world come to.

People raiding and running from

fires on the shore, but people

laugh and giggle because there will be

much, much more.

I'M ALONE

SETH McFARLAND, 7TH GRADE

Inspired by: Arnaldo Roche-Rabell, [*Man in the Dark*](#), 1989

Someone help me,

I'm so alone, in this dark creepy place.

My leg is detached, blood everywhere
with scars on my body.

Please help me, I'm so alone.

My hands are slowly going away in the bits of darkness.

Please help me, I'm so alone.

The darkness gives me the shivers,
so please help me, I'm so alone.

MODERN DAY

SETH McFARLAND, 7TH GRADE

Inspired by: Yang Yongliang, [*Glows in the Arctic*](#), 2023

Those towers are so large.

What is this, is this
the modern day?

Boats, ferris wheels taller than buildings, huge
bridges and houses up in the clouds.

So many lights, they shine so bright.

Our world is ruined, there is nothing left.

IN THE CITY

SKYLER REEVES, 7TH GRADE

Inspired by: Yang Yongliang, [*Glows in the Arctic*](#), 2023

I feel the wind
as it blows my hair,
I hear the cars
as they fly down the streets,
I see the lights
as they shine over the towers.
It's a calm, dark, windy night
in the city...

I feel the boat rock,
as I float into sleep,
I hear the water glide,
as I sit by the shore,
alone with my thoughts.
I see the boat recede,
as I drift away as well.
It's a lonely, still, quiet night
in the city.

ALAN'S POEM FOR THE ALLEN MUSEUM

ALAN MANGES, 7TH GRADE

Inspired by: Arnaldo Roche-Rabell, [*Man in the Dark*](#), 1989

There was a man in the dark.
No matter how far I went, this blooded man
without a doubt followed me wherever I went.
And when I turned around,
and there he was, the blooded man
smirked at me,
and the dark came.

HEAVENLY

EMA McMILLION-JARVEN, 7TH GRADE

Inspired by: Miriam Schapiro, [*The Secret Garden*](#), 1973

Flowers are everywhere,
beauty is all that comes to mind.
All I can feel is flowers
that are drowning me,
fabric is everywhere.
Is this what Beauty is?
cause it feels more heavenly.
It looks almost “parallel,”
but it’s a secret garden,
it’s too beautiful for
my big beautiful eyes
they can’t take it,
I’m Drowning
not in sorrow
but in beauty.
Lilacs, Daisies, Posies, Daffodils,
it’s like a beautiful garden in
Heaven. It’s *heavenly*.

STONE EYES

AVERY WHEELER, 8TH GRADE

Inspired by: Burmese, [*Blue-Green Decorated Stoneware Charger*](#),
16th century

As I look into your old stone
eyes, I, little green bird, see your
wisdom and the burdens you carry

I know you look into the eyes
that gaze at your beauty, and see
their souls, but you need not look
into mine, little bird from long ago

I will tell you the secret
that makes it so I cannot appreciate
your full beauty, and it is that the
red dish sitting beside you, in its
shimmering glaze, reflects a travesty
done long ago

So little wise bird, who with your
stone eyes see the secrets
of the world, tell me, why did that
Man who stitched a tapestry of
the same elegant bird sitting beside
you, not too long ago, tell me,

why did he go

BETHLEHEM

ROSIE STREET, 8TH GRADE

Inspired by: Henry Ossawa Tanner, [*Flight Into Egypt*](#), ca. 1910

Under the fall of night.
a family of three flees,
flees from the Holy Bethlehem.
The dark clouds loom above
hiding them from view.
Mary cradles baby Jesus,
protecting him from the chilly air.
The sound of wind howling
echoes through the night.
The donkeys continue to strut forward,
despite the exhaustion and cold.
The hoof prints get erased from the muddy path
As the rain falls.
Unspoken sorrow fills the air
Masked behind the determination to flee.

HARMONIZING

JA'MARION FROUST-MUSE, 8TH GRADE

Inspired by: Horace Pippin, [*Harmonizing*](#), 1944

Gather Gather can you see
Church members everywhere singing in the street
Time Time flies by with 4 little Churchlins*
Getting on they gospel lines

Breeze Breeze passing by
Lovely bright day while it shines
Flies Flies all around flying everywhere while we're vibing
Clock Clock saying it's time for us to go to church while we're
being blinded

Singing Singing on the wall leaves leaves as they fall
Walking past the bright sky while the sun is shining
We go We go to our church to praise the Lord as we work

*my definition, Churchlins: people that go to church

DEAR LORD

ALEXIS LUCKEY, 8TH GRADE

Inspired by: David McDermott and Peter McGough,
[*The Anointed 1898*](#), from the portfolio *In a Dream*
You Saw a Way to Survive and You Were Full of Joy, 1991

One man full of Hope
full of faith
which makes Jesus say
Dear Lord I pray
I pray to not be judged
I pray to be Held
I pray to not live in darkness
Lord I want to feel loved
The Acceptance from u will
only bring to me and to whomever I love
Lord I Need to be one man
full of hope.

A GIRL WITH A MASK

AMYA HARTUNG, 8TH GRADE

Inspired by: Andy Warhol, [*Ingrid Bergman \(The Nun\)*](#), 1983

A woman with pain,
hiding behind a mask that doesn't fit her,
a woman that puts on a act to cover
the hurt that has happened maybe
in the past and future.

She wonders why is this happening to me?
Why am I always the one that slightly
feels happiness but then it flushes away and
the pain returns?

Waiting for someone to understand how she feels,
but do they ever come?

No. She still waits in the dark
for that person to understand.

THE DREAMER

BELLA STAUFFER, 8TH GRADE

Inspired by: Attributed to Oguri Sōtan,
[*Landscape with Buildings*](#), 15th–16th century

You wave to your village, walking up the steep
and skinny hills, your kimono gets stuck on a rock,
you try to get it free, not wanting to rip your kimono,
till you hear a roar, you turn back, a tiger
is behind you, looking at you with its fiery eyes.

You look back at it, trying to stay calm
but also trying to get free. The tiger just stares, watching
you struggle. You finally get free but your kimono
is now ripped. The tiger is still watching.
Before it walks over to you, then just sits down next to you.

You're confused, thinking about why the tiger
just sat down next to you, so you slowly
plop down next to it, scratching its head.
The tiger seems to like it, leaning into your hand for comfort
before you yawned, laying on the tiger's side,
its fur itchy but you soon find yourself asleep.
You wake up, it was just another dream...
The same one.

BIRDS

KACHI'NA SHAY SMITH, 8TH GRADE

Inspired by: William De Morgan, [*Copper Luster Pottery Charger with Peacock*](#), 1888–97

A bird of many feathers

A bird of few colors

A bird of fear

A bird of prey

A bird who tried

A bird who flies

A bird who falls

This isn't about Birds

6 MONTHS OF THE YEAR

NATALIE GRAY, 8TH GRADE

Inspired by: Yang Yongliang, [Glows in the Arctic](#), 2023

There are no birds in your sky.
The stars blend into your metal mountains.
The air is like sludge,
and it reeks of death.
Always walk forward. Always stay inside.
In your city, no one looks at the sky.
Neon lights reflect on the black water.
You distract yourself so you don't have to look.
Your bridges,
over your rivers,
over you.
You.
You are the city, aren't you?
Your city, the Arctic.

I SEE

DANIKA COLBERT, 8TH GRADE

Inspired by: Artemio Rodriguez, [*The Triumph of Death*](#), 2007

I see white and black.

I see smoke.

I see dead bodies.

I see skeleton.

I see water.

I see people.

I see them hanging.

What I see,

Is danger.

In front of me

There's a picture

All showing a

Piece of me.

TODAY WAS A GOOD DAY

DE'SHYANA FREEMAN, 8TH GRADE

Inspired by: Horace Pippin, [*Harmonizing*](#), 1944

Here in a circle it's just us four.

It's late in the day, it's probably four.

I got off work around three but if I we're gonna
be fair they really need to pay me.

Me and the bros got in a huddle but no one
wanted to hear us sing.

Thought that maybe this would help me catch up
on my rent but if we're gonna be honest
my voice is spent.

A RELIGIOUS FAILURE

GABRIELLE MIDDLEBROOKS, 8TH GRADE

Inspired by: Andy Warhol, [*Ingrid Bergman \(The Nun\)*](#), 1983

A nun. A nun in the darkness
even has her times. There is a lot
of pressure on her mind. Uncomfortable
in her religion? But that's all she
knows. The nun is trapped in this
redirecting hole. Her bright orange
lipstick tells the stories that are
untold.

ME VS. THE WORLD

JAYANA JONES, 8TH GRADE

Inspired by: Michael Boyd Roman, [*The Smallest Giant Makes for an Easy Target*](#), 2023

Guards. Me. Silence

Tension fills with silence

I'm black. I'm watched

I can protect myself

No one cares

The silence is confusing

...pain

Bullets all in my body

No help.

My self respect leaves

1 man hurting

50 guards watching

Pain.

Guards. Me. Pain

NO FEAR FOR THE CURE

LEIGHA KENNEY, 8TH GRADE

Inspired by: Uuriintuya Dagvasambu, [*Pandemic Diptych*](#), 2021

People gathered waiting the cure--
some weary, some determined,
and some that showed zero signs of fear.
Some sheep stared at the blue curtain
that acted as if it were a door, others turning
in its direction as if it were a huge carnivore.
Crows perched on top of the blue curtain
as a woman took a step, looking behind her
knowing the others were next.

WHY MUST HE BE MINE?

JAYDA GAINES, 8TH GRADE

Inspired by: Malangatana Ngwenya, [*O Bebé Poeta \(The Poet as a Child\)*](#), 1963

I'm not happy

I don't want this life

My son must eat

the cross shouldn't be on him

We have to have protectors no matter what

why is he light why must he be

mine. . .

he shouldn't have a cross we are

not god's followers

We must make him take it off

Why must he be my son.

HATE ALWAYS WINS

JAYDEN GREEN, 8TH GRADE

Inspired by: Artemio Rodriguez, [*The Triumph of Death*](#), 2007

Bonds separated by life and hatred

A game of life is being played

While some try and win, others succumb to hate.

Screams are heard while hearing “This is your fate.”

Chants overpower the cries, Everyone’s afraid,

Hate takes over their life while their horses are slain.

Banks are robbed, and the King takes the blame.

In the end of the game, hate wins the game of life.

GLOWS IN THE DARK

MYKA STEGGALL, 8TH GRADE

Inspired by: Yang Yongliang, [*Glows in the Arctic*](#), 2023

There are no stars
but city lights
No mountains
but mounds of metal
twisted into towers
tall as the sky
It's hard to tell
what is earth
what is man
what I can
what I can't
do
I know I cannot breathe
cannot see
cannot get ice from anywhere but the freezer
cannot see animals anywhere but in cages
cannot swim anywhere but chlorine-laced pools
There is no horizon
but a bar of light
glittering into infinity
An infinity of smog and tar and concrete and metal and
blaring horns and blinding lights and brown water and
lab-grown everything and truth of nothing

and no stars.

THE TRIUMPH OF DEATH

LUKE TRASTER, 8TH GRADE

Inspired by: Artemio Rodriguez, [*The Triumph of Death*](#), 2007

The water so deep
your lives fall so steep
we are here for vengeance
not to get a pension
you can't run and tell
it won't save you from
this Hell
we were buried and then
turned but this time, we
returned.

TEARS OF A WOMAN

JAYDEN SHORTS, 8TH GRADE

Inspired by: Audrey Flack, *Macarena Esperanza*, 1972

My husband divorced
me, I don't know what's
wrong with me...

tears on my face, that I should
erase, but I can't erase
his feeling inside me

I really wish you were
beside me

but what did I do?

I cherished you, I cared for you, I gave
you all my love I don't know
what else to do that's the above

but I'm wasting
my time on this guy,
I'm wasting tears
hoping he will come
back and care

I don't know why I loved
this guy, this isn't fair...

THE FEARS ARE STRONG

ROSE BOYER, 8TH GRADE

Inspired by: Artemio Rodriguez, [*The Triumph of Death*](#), 2007

No longer friends.

The screaming, the fights.

The fire, the burn.

Many have tried to be saved.

A few make it out alive,
the rest are in graves.

The water as dark as a soul.

It'll be haunted never more.

We'll ring the bell for liberty forever more.

We hear the drums, although
overpowered by the screams.

Our game of life has reached the end.

Our fears have won again.

THE BACKWARD GLANCE OF THE WOMAN LEADING HER CHILD TO THE CURTAIN

MS. ANGNEY, 8TH GRADE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHER

Inspired by: Uuriintuya Dagvasambu, [*Pandemic Diptych*](#), 2021

My eye wanders,
avoids filling in
the details of your face
covered by
cloth, a gloved hand
reaching toward us.
I cling to
your wrist, you are all
I have and even you
are not permanent, but
I can't see that
if I gaze past
the blue of each one
of your faces.



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On the cover: Michael Boyd Roman (American, b. 1981), *The Smallest Giant Makes for an Easy Target*, 2023. Charcoal, gold leaf, and 1.77 caliber steel BBs on paper. Courtesy of the Artist.