



A+ Schools Program  
of the North Carolina Arts Council

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# Voice & Vision

By Rochelle Middle School Students  
*Rochelle Middle School, Kinston, North Carolina  
An A+ School, Centered Around the Arts*

This program is funded by the NC Arts Council with a grant from this State agency to the Community Council for the Arts .

Poems crafted with *Glenis Redmond*, Poet-in-Residence  
Art Installation created with *Jane Horner*, Artist-in-Residence

## About *Voice & Vision*

*Voice & Vision* is courtesy of a partnership between Rochelle Middle School and the Community Council for the Arts in Kinston, North Carolina. This opportunity was made possible under the administration of Sandy Landis, Executive Director of Community Council for the Arts, who secured a charitable grant from the North Carolina Arts in Education with the North Carolina Council for the Arts, a State agency.

*Voice & Vision* is a collaborative vehicle of expression derived from an educational experience conducted in the Spring of 2016, featuring two artists-in-residence. During each week-long session, Glenis Redmond, a professional poet from Greenville, South Carolina, and Jane Horner, a sculptor from New Bern, North Carolina, shared their artistic expertise, encouraging students to confidently reflect inwardly, and to express themselves outwardly through the formation of words and visual arts.

Glenis Redmond began her visit by hosting informal performances, sharing her life story with her poetry, and encouraging students in dialogue through question and answer sessions. Students discussed the importance and relevance of sharing and learning personal, societal, racial, and cultural history. Students were then tasked with writing their own poems, drawing upon their individual experiences. These poems were gathered in this booklet to provide a *Voice & Vision* about their world and the world in which they hope to have.

Jane Horner assisted the students in creating "talking sticks" – instruments of communication often found in Native American culture. This artistic device consists of a simple stick of wood decorated with beads and chords. The way the stick is wrapped and the materials and designs created express the individual's *Voice & Vision*. The students' singular designs were then collected to create a permanent and collective art installation.

## Special Thanks

Rochelle Middle School Teachers:

*Vashawn Daniels, Tracie Dixon, Darice Harris, Fabrienne Kittrell, Sarah Sloop, Jennifer Worsley, and Rebecca Zarrow*

## *Voice & Vision* Installation Details

In the Spring of 2016, Jane Horner served as a guest artist, instructing students as a part of Rochelle Middle School's A+ program. The artist-in-residence program is made possible by a grant from the North Carolina Council for the Arts to the Community Council for the Arts in Kinston. The grant was initiated and implemented in order to help the school shape its curriculum around the arts as a way to engage students.



Jane worked with students to create "talking sticks", crepe myrtle branches wrapped and decorated. The project, reflective of American Indian culture and traditions, was introduced as a method by which students could share their stories, as a self-portraiture.

In Native culture, the stick was used to encourage dialogue. With an individual's possession of the stick came the power to speak the truth from the heart. Those in possession of the talking stick would be ensured their voices would be heard and they would be treated fairly and equally.

In keeping with this tradition, students personalized their art using leather, fabric, beads, feathers and other materials. Once completed, students' individual art pieces were then organized into a single sculpture depicting their *Voice & Vision*.



## About Jane Horner

[www.janehornerartist.com](http://www.janehornerartist.com)

***“My work combines emotions and spirituality, and moves beyond those personal places to a visual situation of force and lift — as when the force of propulsion creates the lift of a vacuum above the wings of a plane and these two forces combined, raise the huge weight and mass into the air and keep it there. I think that art is one such force in this world.”***

Jane Horner is a life-long artist. Glimpses of her experiences in archaeology, garden restoration, and teaching art can be seen in her paintings, sculptures and installations. Her artwork has been displayed in galleries, art centers, museums and universities, within and upon large walls of concert and lecture halls, skylights and atriums. Sample of her work are shown below:



Jane was born in Springfield, Illinois, and has lived in Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, New Mexico, Washington, DC, Cape Cod, Boston, and Vermont. She now lives in New Bern, North Carolina. She earned a Master of Fine Arts from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She is a Fellow of both the Fine Arts Work Center of Provincetown, Massachusetts, and the McDowell Colony of Peterborough, New Hampshire.

She has been constructing installations since 1992.

Jane Horner, a life-long artist — An artist of Voice & Vision.

## Foreward

Dear Readers:

It was my pleasure to work with the teachers, administration and students of Rochelle Middle School. These poems are the result of a two-week poetry residency sponsored by the Kinston Community Arts Council made possible by a grant through the North Carolina Arts Council. During the first week I instructed them to create poems of origin. The second week of the residency, I taught them to turn their poetic gaze outward and look at both significant people and places in their lives.

The sixth grade class stole my heart. When I walked into their class, they got to their feet and acted out my poem, “Nerds Rule” that I taught them during a poetry performance at the beginning of the residency.

Nerds Rule  
I’m a word nerd.  
I’m a book geek.  
I’m a reading freak.

One day the universe will be mine,  
understanding MC2 like Einstein.

Do you want to be large and in charge?  
Then get yourself a library card.

Another stand out moment is with Jennifer Worsely’s students who danced to my poem “I Wish You Black Sons.” It was literally an embodiment of poetry. My time at Rochelle was both fruitful and rewarding thanks to Sandy Landis’s foresight.

Working with the ELA teachers I was able to be present in each class. I learned from the students from what they chose to express through their poems. As one student so elegantly wrote: *A poem will change how the people think of Kinston, NC.*

Yours-n-Verse,  
Glenis Redmond



## About Glenis Redmond

[www.glenisredmond.com](http://www.glenisredmond.com)

**"Poetry has followed me all the days of my life."**

For more than two decades, Glenis Redmond -- poet, teaching artist and activist -- has logged more than 35,000 miles sharing poetry and encouragement in diverse venues all across the country. Glenis describes herself as a

self-proclaimed native of nowhere. Through the many relocations she experienced growing up in an Air Force family, Glenis developed a voice for words and stories, collecting memorable character studies from her travels and visits, and establishing a framework as a poet through her refuge -- the love of reading.

Glenis received a B.A. in Psychology from Erskine College and a Master's degree in Child and Family Studies at Texas Tech University. Glenis has designed workshops for both amateur and professional writers, from ages nine to 90. She teaches how to access personal creativity and inner voices to expand worlds through words. Influenced by her background in counseling, she uses one of her chief talents in working with at-risk teens. She uses poetry to dismantle the barriers created around hearts, and encourages students to engage outwardly to express themselves and find healing.

Whether speaking in prisons or universities, festivals or conferences, intimate keynote engagements or instructive school assemblies, Glenis accepts the mantle of Road Warrior Poet. She articulates verses of passion about family, culture and community, sharing Afro-Carolinian roots and speaking the universal language of love, loss, celebration, sorrow and hope.

Among her many accomplishments, Glenis is a 2005-2006 NC Literary Award recipient and a Denny C. Plattner Award winner for Outstanding Poetry awarded by the *Journal, Appalachian Heritage*. She has been inducted in the Mt. Xpress' Hall of Fame for Best Poet in Western North Carolina after winning for more than a decade. In addition, Glenis is a Workshop Leader with the Kennedy Center's Partnership in Education Program in Washington, D.C. Her work has aired on National Public Radio and she is a past winner of the Southern Fried Poetry Slam, twice, and a top ten finalist in the National Poetry Slam.

Glenis has been published most recently in *Meridians*, *African Voices*, *EMRYS*, *Asheville Poetry Review*, *Kakalak: A Journal of Carolina Poets*, *Appalachian Heritage*, and the *Appalachian Journal*. Her manuscript, *Under the Sun*, was short-listed by Autumn House Press. Through her poetry, Glenis has found community and belonging. She has been associated with many organizations such as YWCA, Girl Scouts, Our Voice, Project STEAM, NC Center for Advancement of Teachers and NC Center for Non-Profits, homeless shelters, half-way houses, Blue Cross Blue Shield, and Helpmate.

Once a native of nowhere, Glenis now knows that she belongs everywhere -- a poet of Voice & Vision.

## Hear Our Voice

By Chanda Platania

Hear Our Voice Or We'll Keep Talking  
Kinston is a black hole for broken dreams  
future ghost town that people will drive through  
on they way to the beach  
We used to be kings but now, we are the Chi-Town  
of the east coast  
We are Detroit without the industry  
If you weren't born to money  
your self worth is questioned.  
A history of gang violence  
where kids first words are 'Bloods' or Crips'  
Runaway fathers and baby mamas  
Another shoutout RIP  
Another lost soul, in God's name we pray

A reality of segregation  
Between schools, race, and income  
You don't have the new J's?  
What a shame but I don't speak broke

We're on our way but not soon enough  
Bullet holes on basketball courts  
Shattered glass sprays the streets  
At the same times there's drive by,  
there's a wine tasting downtown  
Our voices are being silenced  
by a dollar bill slid across the table  
Our heritage will not be erased  
because of where we're being raised  
For the only exit ticket out  
of this place is a voice and a vision

## Guardian Angel in Men's Shoes

By Mina Platania

College dropout  
Military service  
3 kids  
6 gracious grandkids  
Leftover spaghetti for breakfast  
Never too much coffee  
Fishing on the coast  
Just keep swimming through the day  
Pickled eggs in a jar on the counter  
Sicilian family values of modesty and hard work  
Theatre and football games  
Charlottes Web in the big red chair  
Giant stuffed bears named Shampa  
A gypsy in disguise  
What A Wonderful World  
Rainbow Connection echoing through the halls  
Warm nights watching the stars  
Homemade tomato sauce  
The Beatles  
Congratulations on your graduation  
High hopes  
Catholicism  
Long car rides  
Chapel Hill  
IV and Chemotherapy  
Hospital waiting rooms  
Innocent confusion  
Absence from first days of school  
The light in all the darkness  
Finally free

# Praise Poems

## Rise Back Up!

A Collective Poem, By Ms. Daniel's Class

I am from "when someone shows you  
who they are believe it the first time."

I am the quickest lightening bolt,  
but the softest raindrops,  
bright as a diamond  
the brightest light.

Music is my 5'11 of Greatness  
dancing like the butterfly in the sky,  
a little hip-hop in my step —  
shooting like Steph Curry,  
twisting, turning leap after leap.

I have the passion of basketball. It is my dream.  
I am an albino lion marching along the Barbadians  
sparkling mint green diamond dreams.

Hobby is an understatement —  
passion is everything to me.

I am as bright as my future singing  
and dancing with art surrounding me every-  
where.

I don't walk I dance.

I shake and glide-rise up like a surprise  
still moving to the break of dawn.

I'm 5'10, but on the inside,

I'm as tall as how much I love to sing.

I am tall behind the mic, when I let my voice be  
heard.

## Teaching Life

By Caleb Gooding

He didn't make it to the NFL,  
but made it to be a good father and man.

Teaching life, love, and hope,  
and how to be a panthers fan.

I know he didn't get me everything,  
but he helped give me life.

Teaching me how to talk, walk, and know wrong  
from right.

And as I grow, teaching me how to treat my wife.  
His temper and attitude isn't low it's higher then  
space.

That really gets me ill.

It just turns my head upside down.

I remember when he taught me how to form my  
shot.

I wasn't really good,  
but now when I shoot it forms a tsunami.

He taught me how to stand up for myself  
how to respect adults.

He might talk crazy sometimes,  
but that's him.

I'm glad that's it's over because he's getting sober.

The crazy thing about it is.

He's not a professional football player,  
but he is a professional father.

## My Momma Taught Me

By Julius Lawson

My momma taught me the difference between "dis  
& dat"  
like different between hot in cold,  
look both ways before you cross the street

My mom taught me how to stay out of trouble  
like fights, being rude, instigating  
everything that goes on

If I didn't I would get a spanking,  
but my momma was my first teacher  
My momma taught me how to ride a bike,  
also how to spell and walk

My momma taught me how to cook  
Eggs, bacon and how to wash dishes  
and clean clothes  
and work strive for greatness  
and manners like yes sir and no sir

My momma taught me how to grow up  
and show love and respect.  
Also, she taught me how to potty  
So I would not pee on my self.  
She also taught me how to tie my shoes  
My mother gave me life  
and some brothers name: Jamel, Jaquell, Jamarion  
she also taught me how to walk in life.



I am a sky full of baby blue, with a ray of code red.  
As red as a rose, yet black, with a ray of code red.  
I take pride on both sides.  
I stick with cool blue waterfall attitude,  
so my fiery volcano side don't do no crime.  
I am like my father, big and bold,  
but don't like to be touched,  
a winter rose even through  
the cold and darkness,  
I still manage  
to get to the light.  
I am not running for freedom,  
my ancestors did that  
so I can run for my future.  
You can catch me and keep me,  
but I will always break free,  
like the Phoenix,  
when I am put down  
I rise back up  
like nothing happened.

## A.M.

By Akira M.

I am as tall as the water  
gliding and sliding down a tall mountain  
I am as bright as the sun on a hot summer day

My personality is sweet like cotton candy.  
I am as shy as a puppy, yet fierce as a cheetah.

I am the water flowing down the fresh blue river.  
I twirl and dance through life like a colorful fairy.

When I sing, my voice is like the strong wind  
I come from a family with puffy, curly hair

I have the strength, the knowledge,  
and the power as a goddess.

## The Life of a Raven

By Cornelius H.

Everyone loves this sweet, delicious mocha  
I was born in a violent desert  
where the young die too soon,  
but I am a raven, black and strong.

I survive this desert to fly where I belong.  
I stand 5 foot 6 with the strength of Godzilla.  
Try to destroy me and you'll fail miserably.  
When they see me, stoplight red,  
they are frozen by my heat  
My eyes are like fire,  
when I look at things they scorch and burn.  
My flame swag leads the way leaving smoke in its path.  
My family is the light to the flame under this raven's  
wings.

## 30 Things I Associate with You

By Zamoria Edwards

Her words  
Religion  
Hard times  
Scars  
Fears  
Insecurities

The way she still gave out hope  
Help  
As if she was a protector  
Warrior  
A women at war  
With herself  
But never shows it  
She bottled up her emotions  
She almost stopped to fight  
Almost lost the fight

Can never forget the past  
The way she acts  
Nutrition drinks  
Awaiting couches  
Lies

Stories  
Old TV shows  
Bojangles  
Love  
Hate  
Knitting  
Quilts  
Lost  
Loneliness

## What a Son

FOR Uncle Robert Smith, JR.

By Lemiria Dixon

Here  
Then gone.  
Far  
But still close.  
Flight  
Flying high and dry.  
Away  
Left to deal with life struggles.  
Jewelry  
Watch it bling as he walks away.  
Young  
Can't adapt to the world.

The stiffness of your walk  
The braveness in your talk.  
Be blessed by the great lord  
Given strength for you to be hold.  
Story after story  
He always brings back a adventure.

He's gone  
But will forever remain here.  
His small, clean head  
Sitting high on his tall, small figure.  
A Large structure  
    very frail but bold.  
He would always surprise you.  
Always bringing back something new.

Food is never not on his mind  
Grandma's food always brought a tear to his eye.  
Turkey wings, collard greens, Mac and Cheese.  
Used to be a trouble maker  
But age took a toll on his behavior.

## All About Me

By Shaniya Washington

I don't walk I dance  
I shake and glide  
I rise up like sunrise  
And still moving at the  
Break of dawn

I am the hands of a  
Professional hairstylist  
I do box braids, relaxers, Senegalese braids, and  
    blowouts

I am the hands of a  
Professional artists  
Ready to paint the world  
With my many colors

I am as tall as my guardian  
Angel protecting me  
Day and night  
I am in a small town  
Surrounded with shaves  
Of light blue

I am as red as a bright lovable heart  
Sometimes I'm like lighting when people  
Irritate sometimes I'm like a rainbow  
I am a baby panda calm and huggable

I am *Shaniya Nicole Washington*  
And my mom name me that for  
A reason so don't call me out my name  
Or there's gonna be a consequence

## Peaceful Thoughts

By Breanika R.

I am music  
I flow smooth  
I like the beat and rhythm of the smooth flow  
I am bright like an angel.  
I have wings to help me soar.

A breeze touches me and relaxes me.  
Music is wavy like an ocean  
while the waves are going,  
they are smooth like a rhythm.

Music  
It makes you relaxed  
I have peace  
Gangs and fights do not bother me,  
but they bother the community.

A poem will change how the people think of  
Kinston, NC.

I am tall like a high note  
where I come from,  
they love music and poems  
that have bright messages  
and meanings.

## The Hometown Rookie

By Ka'Nyah Baker

The black and proud rookie,  
Six feet nine and a half,  
can ball till his feet fall off.  
Size seven and a half, he fits his shoes perfectly.  
Green, white, and gold he was,  
but now, blue, and white.  
Twenty-four points and ten rebounds per game,  
we have a shooting star!  
Eighteen long years ago, September 2, 1997,  
someone arrived,  
from a small city called K'town.  
Do you know who this is?  
Not sure?  
It's your man, Brandon Ingram.



## Untitled

By Jaimya Mitchell

Pop Belly Jelly Joe  
I gave him that name you know  
He claims I got my name from over yonder  
Monkey, Clown, and Ugly  
5 kids  
Only one grandchild left  
I was his favorite besides his White Buggy  
Laughing  
Joking  
Those delicious cheese biscuits  
Going to the garden  
Trying to pick up watermelons  
He doesn't think he's old  
To him he's only 16  
All gray and white hairs  
Just bald on the top  
Singing Lord you're The Land Lord  
Yet you made sure there wasn't a leek in our building  
Dancing  
Singing  
Praising  
Sharing your testimony  
Giving your Powerful Prayers  
By the grace of God  
You still here today  
I've learned to share him  
With friends who call him Grandad and Grandaddy  
Both April Baby's  
Taurus vs Aries  
"Now a days youngins' think things just come free  
"But back in the day, hard work and Family made us a  
home you See!"

## I Can Only Wish

By Caleb G.

Sometimes, I am an odd robot  
that's not a myth.

I sometimes move stiff.  
I sometimes move swift.

I'm a lightening bolt diving in the ocean.  
I moonwalk on the stars getting you to any  
adventure  
or game you would like to play. My ancestors were  
slaves.

My gift is a unique sword because my moves are so  
sharp  
I play sports, but I have walls.  
My heart doesn't beat it bounces like a basketball  
My heart loves the sound of a wet, sloppy swish.  
I need to improve my gift, but I can only wish.

## The Football That Soars

By Amarion C.

I am the best all around like Muhammad Ali  
"I float like a butterfly fly, sting like a bee."  
I can throw hands so good,  
you'll be knocked out the first round, you'll see.  
I look up to my daddy and want to travel to:  
Africa, Memphis, Oregon, and someplace Irish  
with my Great Great Grand pappy.

I am as tall as Mount Everest.  
I'm like a spider: quiet, sneaky, and scary.  
If I don't mess with you, don't mess with me.  
I'm aquamarine, the prettiest blue you've ever seen.

I can be nice or like a bomb,  
but make one false move and I'll go boom.  
I'm a football that soars through the sky  
and hopefully gets caught  
and not dropped on the ground.

One day, I'll be the sparkle in my mom's eye  
when she sees me become a man up on the  
stage  
getting the paper saying I graduated.  
I am like college all the kids want to come to me  
to get more knowledge about the world  
and how to survive the streets  
without going to jail or ending up in a grave.

## All About You

My stepmom Latisha  
By Shaniya Washington

Is a hairstylist, very friendly,

always on fleek,

short,

call her MaTish,

positive,

wears colorful lipstick,

Beautiful, caring, Inspiring,

Successful, works a lot,

Keeps it 1hunnid, well known,

loves to dance,

the color of dark chocolate,

always have on something new,

has her on style, a leader, never a follower,

always say my house better be clean

## Long Live Granny

FOR GRANDMA CHRISTINE

By KAMYA BRADFORD

Baked Chicken

Chocolate Bar

"Baby girl come gimme kiss on my check"

"She roll the money up, and put it in my hand"

"And say keep it on the low"

"I love you sugar plum"

Cry

Fly high

She love me as much as she love fried okra

Encouraged me to keep reaching for my destination

Creativity

Dance to church music

Like greater is coming

Love the color pink

Believed in the cross

Faithful

Hope

Sometimes mad

"Shut up lying"

"God don't like liars"

"What I tell you about lying to me you don't got to lie"

From a place called home

Lives by herself

Drinks juice

Sleep all the time

March 1st

Gone somewhere now

Gone but never forgotten

## That Mermaid

By JAZMINE WEBSTER

I am that mermaid that flows by,

that glows beautiful with a hint of blue and pink.

I've come in peace to bring you happiest and joy.

I am that light that bring you happiness and peace

I see everything that you do

I walk, crawl, run, and stand.

It is safe you can take my hand.

I see you from a distance and so far

and I can see you love me through your heart

I am that mermaid that flew.

I am above, but now I'm here to you.

I am that mermaid that flew to you.

If you came to find me,

look up in the sun,

run your hands in the waters orca waterfall,

then look up in the sky and make request

Then, I will be beside you.

## How I Feel Inside Me

By Camari Williams

I am a volcano  
my lava is bloodstone red.  
Before I erupt,  
sometimes I'm dormant.  
To escape the volcano inside me  
I try to concentrate so my mind can become  
free  
I want to flow like a river and glide like a hawk.  
If anyone tries to keep me grounded  
I'll fly higher and faster  
I know I have potential and I really believe,  
but how can I if my mind and I don't know how  
to seize it  
My heart, he is an eagle,  
but my soul a hawk  
They want to soar and be free  
and my legs and feet fast as a fox  
yet quiet.  
But as for now,  
the volcano lies dormant  
That's how I feel deep inside me.

## Never Got to See

For Annie Sherrrod

By Lesley Sutton

We never spoke  
Your voice equals silence  
But I imagine a thousand words  
Your sweet light skin  
Black course hair  
Big circle glasses  
A memory I never got to see  
Different yet same  
Older version of me  
Hope  
Like you're right next to me  
You gave me the best mom I could ask for  
I'm here because of you  
You left your mark  
You had the perfect vision  
Did you ever see the picture  
From up above  
Do I really make you proud?  
I can only dream of the  
Old school cooking  
Warm cozy house  
Help when I need it  
Car rides  
Rhythmic music  
Your voice  
My best bud  
We were meant to be  
Every step I take I feel you there  
Guardian Angel Annie  
My Grandma

## My Love For You

FOR TAMARA GREEN (MOTHER)

By COURTNEY WESTE

Music, love, full of hope,  
Joy, West Indies, shopping,  
Old-fashion, food, children,

Short, strict, Bible,  
Christian, kind, generous,  
Loves her country, mother, tears,

Stress, accent, faith, Honest,  
brown skin, wise,  
Positive, brave, beautiful,  
Special, helpful.

## Sisterly Love

FOR EVA NEPOMUCENO-SORIANO

By ALINE NEPOMUCENO-SORIANO

Fierce  
Claws  
Wine on the lips  
Smokey eye  
Winged liner  
Lana Del Rey blues  
Sagittarian truth-seeker  
Trustworthy love  
Giggling at our sayings  
Well good  
Let's not forget her candles  
Black is never out the question  
Mexican spanglish laughter  
Oh but how much I love you  
My dear sister

## Blank Piece

By INDIA FRASER

I am a blank piece of paper waiting to be drawn on  
I don't have much going on,  
but I have hope I can reach my goals  
and make my life as exotic as the meals that I eat.

I will not just be a lone wolf of the night  
looking and howling down.  
I am the alexandrite of the groove.  
My emotions are every changing like the colors of the  
sky.

I think fast like a cheetah, but take it slow like a  
turtle.  
Like soft butterflies whispering in your ear,  
I am a blank piece of paper just waiting to be drawn on.

## All in One

By ZYKIA ANDREWS

I might be 5'3.  
But I am the height of my dreams to make it to the  
WNBA.  
No one can stop the power and purpose of my dreams.

I am the power of my ancestors rising high like MLK.  
I don't walk I run.  
I am not running for freedom my ancestors did that,

So I can run for my future.  
I am as deep as Garnet but I sting like a bee.  
I will stand like Rosa, I'll always have the last word.  
As my creativeness flows, flowing like a stream.

## The Life

By Jalen M.

My ancestors come from where smarts come from,  
but I am like water and go with the flow.  
My patience is short because I am a raven, black and  
strong

raised in Kinston where violence is  
but i walk like the flow of water  
letting material flow past me/

I am as dark as a latte on the outside,  
but inside I am ocean blue,  
because I touch everything with my wisdom.

This boy is 4'11" in height,  
but has a mind as tall as a skyscraper  
and moves like a ball on the football field

I shoot like a penny falling in the ocean  
and my family is as big as a planet with love as  
sweet as a piece of cake.

## The Star

By Elizabeth Martinez-Zamora

This poem is about a young man  
that's a basketball player at Duke.  
His name is Brandon Ingram.  
When we hear his name it's  
like a hero coming to save the day.  
His number is fourteen.  
When he shoots a three pointer  
it is nothing but net.  
He is like a shining star in the  
night sky.



## Aunt Polly

By Jordan Cherry

Aunt Polly you have the faith  
You have the strength  
You were hardworking until you met your end  
We were music buds, and I loved the hugs  
It's was a music blend  
That I loved to spend  
If there were visiting hours I would attend  
If I could send a letter you know I'll send  
Were divided now it's a dividend  
I miss you now because you were my best friend

I love sharing pigtailed on Thanksgiving  
The things I did are technically unforgiving  
Thank you for the life you lived  
The love that you gave  
I just wish you were still living  
It's one thing, two things  
I remember August 15 you gave me a promise ring  
But now without you I'm a guitar without strings  
I love you Aunt Polly on Everything

Oh well  
I almost fell  
When I found out you went to a Heaven Hotel  
But now I'm locked up in a grieving cell  
Writing my story what I'm about to tell  
Our love is still parallel  
Bout time I came out the shell  
I'll see you soon Aunt Polly and I still rep #12

## The Compassionate One

By Mahogane Williams

"Let's get his done,"  
The inspirational  
And wise one said.  
Bright like the sun,  
Smart like me,  
Confident and bold like me.  
Pen, marker, laptop,  
And a brain full of knowledge.  
She tells me,  
"You have skills; use it."  
Intelligence,  
Challenging  
Don't lose it.  
Creative,  
Determined,  
Outgoing,  
I am.  
A hardworking,  
Educated Woman  
Here to interact with the world,  
A vision to my future.  
I succeed!

## Brave and Happy

By KaCeion Williams

I am like my father big but don't like to be touched

I am a 6'2" Milky Way spinning like a basketball  
moon cool and big

I am a big body of water with a touch of fire red

I play brave and strong when running up and down  
the football field

I am like a tree wolf; soft but cannot be touched

I came from a long line of Williams

We were a sunrise family that gives you joy we are  
know for cooking

My parents are from the brother love city

I came from a small successful county of new  
athletes'

Like basketball player Brandon Ingram

I am a jaguar with an amethyst shining with happy

## Essie Mae

For my Great-Grandma, Mama Essie

By Na'shon Burney

Fish fry

Yelling "boy" to get my attention

Humming songs in her favorite chair

The smell of bacon

One house

Kids playing outside

The sound of old-school music

Then doing the Cupid shuffle in the front yard

Essie Mae, the one person to keep us in line

A walker

Giving us wisdom everyday

Made sure we did our school work

Either watching westerns or game shows

Deal or No Deal

House dresses

Reading the comics every Sunday

Diet Dr. Pepper

Don't get her or she would cuss u out

Seeing her smile warms your heart

Hearing her say "boy honor thy mother and father and  
you'll live longer"

Calling home sick all u could hear on the phone was  
"boy is that you"

She kept a switch beside her

Sitting in the car with her at the flea market

Not liking to take pictures you had to take off guards

Everyone chilling outside

We moved and saw her less and less

Woke up to my mom screaming

Riding all night crying

Then seeing her put into the ambulance

Our family will never be the same without you

Mama Essie, we miss you

## Michelle Obama

By Mallory Miller

Michelle Obama,  
Walks five feet eleven plus,  
In her heels everyday.  
Speaks her mind,  
Her hair so black,  
With a touch of blond.  
She stands so strong,  
With her head held high.  
Always see  
Her confident smile.  
Like she says,  
"Success isn't about how much money you make.  
It's about the difference you make in peoples lives."  
She is like a breath of fresh air to America.

## Elements of Me

By Sylvester Brown

I am fire ready to burn the ones who hold me  
captive.  
You may catch me and you can keep me.  
I will always break free.  
  
They try to put me out but I am the eternal flame.  
That burns only to speak my mind so let me be.  
  
I am water flowing freely and smoothly.  
I am blue water flowing taking the heroes  
And Savors away from trouble.  
Flowing like rivers alike I can be stopped  
But I will flow aging.  
Spilling over like thoughts in my mind.

## My Black is Powerful

By Nigerion Williams

I'm like a lion  
I want to rule the kingdom  
As big as my dreams when I'm sound asleep

My dreams are my clouds  
We float around  
But never know where we end up  
As strong as a tornado  
When I'm on that baseball field  
Jackie Robinson Who?

As Red as a Rose  
Yet as black as my ancestors  
Yes, I'm black  
An Ebony Brown Broth  
As blacks we fought for our rights and we won  
This is why my black is POWERFUL!

## Egyptian King

By Korielle Dail

He was the richest  
He was the goldest  
But not even  
The oldest  
His mask is  
As shiny as  
New quarters

He was the pharaoh of Egypt

He is the king of 1341 BCE  
His empire is valued  
Like Oprah's net worth  
He's more than just life  
He's more than money  
And fame  
He was the youngest King  
Now that he's gone  
He's a young dead soul  
Living in the afterlife

## Known as Reggie

By Cecily'a Wheeler

Reggie is a brave,  
smart, respectful,  
six foot seven ball player,  
that is also a good player.  
He is the color of the soil.

The smartness in his brain is evident.

He will always keep his loss sibling in mind.

Looking brave down the court,

Ten seconds on the clock,  
having the ball in his hands,  
flying in the air like a plane.

## Tall as the Mic

By Jamyia Mitchell

Something like a Cardinal Star, from your one and  
only designated earth  
I walk with swag, not worried about anything  
I am *Jamyia Mitchell*  
I am as tall as the Mic, to where I let my voice be  
heard  
Continuing to grow that this young girl may be  
known  
Dancing and Singing, my inspiration comes from Dej  
Loaf  
"Let's just be HONEST, Let's just be REAL."

That I am like a tinted Peach with a third of a  
scolding Red Flame  
At times I am Swift Rain, but then I turn into a Fierce  
Flood  
The Orange Flag with 7 Gold Stars is why they call  
me Kola Bear  
Taking the right path in the way of the light

Granddaddy Wainwright would say  
Only be you and you only  
I still miss you and Uncle Mike till this day  
I am the color of Hershey's Almond  
Smooth taste and a pinch of crunch  
Like a safari mystery roaming around the world  
Shall my season start once more?

## The God of Love

By Adonis Kittrell

You can't touch me because I am the wind that feels good on  
a hot day

I am the rock of friendship that never breaks

I am the Greek God of Love

I am the sprout from my roots

I might be 4'11 but I am as tall as my passion for singing

I am the caramel-filled chocolate bar in the candy aisle of the  
grocery store of society

It's not my choice but I like it

I am the brown-skinned Michael Jackson that can't dance

I might be brown but on the inside I'm as bright as a dia-  
mond in the brightest light

I am the sunny orange that glistens on a baby blue ocean

I am the bob cat to the lion

I am the husky to the wolf

Life might be the hog, but like the sun I'll rise . . . . .

Eventually

I am the singing bird to nature

I am Adonis to civilization

## The King of Pop

By Zy'Teyah Lender

Sang a wrong note and was abused by his daddy for  
being himself

But that never stopped his song

I'm starting with the man in the mirror,  
I'm asking him to change his ways.

He moonwalked on to the stage,  
brought us light,  
and tears to our eyes.

And he always said,

"If you enter this world knowing you are loved

and you leave this world knowing the same,

then everything that happens in between

can be dealt with."

Michael Joseph Jackson

## Words Are Weapons

By Ashley Munoz

Michelle is smart as a  
Teacher.  
Her words are weapons  
That fight for  
Children.  
Michelle is  
As brave as a  
Dragon.  
Now, she is a  
Hard worker  
At the White House.  
She became a  
lawyer and writer.  
Graduated from  
Princeton  
And Harvard school.  
She said, "One of  
The lessons that I grew up  
With was to always stay true to  
Yourself and never let what somebody  
Else distract you from your goals."



## Majesty

By Lemiria Dixon

I am 5ft 6in of darkness,  
Long and strong, holding great power of dance.  
An Opal Panda I am, a majestic flower,  
Gazing up at the twinkling stars.  
I am a tree,  
I may get blowed over but I will never fall.  
I am a splashing waterfall,  
Spilling over a singing dolphin.

The country of cardinals,  
Is where I stand.  
An Albino Lion, marching along the Barbadians,  
Sprinkling mint green dream of diamonds.  
The name Sheka racing through my mind,  
Giving me life 'till her death  
Cosmetology the chocolate crow calls,  
Be great, be graceful, be the bridge to success.

Show the fist your Uncle gave you,  
Give the ruby of gold Rosa gave you.  
I am the main moon of the future.

## Internationally Known

By Na'shon Burney

I am like a Panther stalking its prey  
I am like a Phoenix when I'm put down  
I rise up like nothing happened because

I am 5'5" with the love of my family  
I grow tall  
I live in a little town named Kinston,  
Which is troubled but still has a lot going on

I am like a raging fire you can put me out but I'll be  
back  
I can also be calm as a stream flowing free

My family might not be a perfect diamond  
But they are perfect enough for me  
My dad named me Rakim after his favorite rapper

Like Rakim said "I'm internationally known when I be  
on da microphone."

## The Willingness

For Equannia Gooding

By Tieonna Lanier

Sunrise  
Birth  
October 14, 1982  
Dark Chocolate  
With a hint of spice  
Life  
600 Daughety Road  
That's where it all started

Through pain  
Suffer  
And Faith  
But she had God there to lead the way  
Hope  
Joy  
Children  
That she's willing to do anything for  
Explore  
Encourage  
Even though there are challenges

Through heartache  
And headache  
Day in and day out  
Keeps a smile on her face  
Through the good and bad  
Ambitious  
Willing to try new things  
Skydiving  
Foods  
Comforts  
And protect like the sunset

## MR. MVP

FOR Ronnie Isler  
By KaCeion Williams

He says run boy run  
He shares stories  
We drink Kool-aid  
He love talking about politics  
Eating chicken  
Watching movies  
Watching building shows  
Eating Chinese food  
The color blue  
Wearing suits  
Wearing plaid shirts  
Has two God kids  
Went to college for six years  
Played football and got hurt  
He is disabled form his waist down  
He learns from other people mistakes  
He loves laughing and joking  
And not a mean person  
He lives his life in a wheelchair  
And stills working at discovery insurance  
Our favorite Kool-aid is Blueberry lemonade  
We drink it almost ever day  
I learned so many things from him  
He thought me some things about politics  
How to deal with my anger  
How to prevent from being mad  
Tips on being a man  
And accomplish new things  
Helped me when I am down  
In my eyes he is the real MVP

## The Person Inside Me

By Courtney Weste

I am the color of nutmeg with a pinch of cinnamon  
I move gracefully and elegantly through what is  
going on in the world  
I'm like a 5'4" panda, calm and lovable  
I come from the city of lights and dreams

I am as yellow as the color of the sunset  
I am a stream because I go with flow  
I am as bright as my future of singing and dancing  
With art surrounding me everywhere

I love my guardian angel with all my heart  
And the little angels that surround her  
I rise up like the sunrise at the break of dawn  
Deep down I am as unique and as calm as the  
oceans

Moving side to side while the wind is blowing  
I am a strong mountain standing very tall and  
unbreakable  
I am creative in so many ways  
And different every day

What can I say that is just?  
The Person inside Me

## Small Town, Big Dreams

By Jordan Cherry

I am, 5'11 of greatness  
The haters were hatin', when I made it  
They couldn't stand to see a African American on a  
stage, a court, even a field performing  
But hey, I ignored it, and I kept moving because I  
was striving to achieve, ao I believed in what  
God had in store for me

My great-great grandparents were slaves  
Everyday, they had no choice or anything to say  
But one day, a man named Martin Luther King  
Had a dream, He stepped on his life so you and me  
could be free

I am, a musician  
Using the talents what God has given  
To me, at the age of 3  
I play the bass, keys, and lead  
Drums, sax, and I can sing  
Music is my world, it shines over my life  
Its shines brighter than the stars at night

Music Is My 5'11 Of Greatness

# People & Place

## The Light I See in Myself

By Teionna Lanier

I am the height of a dancer,  
Dancing in the shadows;  
With a slight passion for dance,  
I do it all the time;  
I dance and walk with grace, dedication, and  
satisfaction,  
Like Misty;  
But sometimes I switch it up a bit,  
To fit the hip hop within me;

I am a jaguar, dangerous and fierce,  
But with my own little twist,  
Coming from the seeds of my ancestors;  
The color of butterscotch,  
Dancing across your taste buds;  
I stick with my cool blue waterfall attitude,  
So my fiery volcano side don't do no crime,  
Cause I'm as soft as lavender with a dash of ruby  
red;

I am strong with beauty and light,  
I stand proud and tall knowing where I come from;  
I don't sit in my sit in judgment;  
Cause I know my future is bright,  
Brighter than any star in the sky;  
I might can't talk the talk or walk the walk, yet,  
But I can do my own thing,  
My own way, NOW!!!

## Pride on Both Sides

By Alena Rivers

I flow like the turquoise waters of my last name  
I am way taller than the net with my dreams  
included  
I can be the brightest yellow with a splash of blood  
red  
Like a caged lion roaring to get out  
So I can fight for justice like my brave ancestors

I walk through this world so slow, paying attention to  
EVERYTHING  
I'm so fast people don't even know I'm there  
All they see is a wave of the lightest chocolate  
And a puddle of a dark marshmallow

Yes!  
I am like a two in one  
Like defense and offense  
I take pride on both sides

## This is Who I Am

By Kamyra Bradford

I am the sunset who rise  
The gram cracker who cries

I am as tall as seeing  
My future in the sky  
The sun shine bright

I am from North Carolina  
Where we see the sunset rise

I like dancing like the  
Butterfly in the sky

A little hip-hop in my  
Step shifting like  
Stephen Curry

I am Rosa Parks who  
Sit at the back  
Of the bus who had  
To give my seat up  
To a white man

## On the Inside

By SaNaaya DuBose

I'm 5'10 but on the inside I'm as tall as how large my  
passion is for singing.

I'm an opal in the rough waiting to be polished to  
be the center piece of a necklace.

I'm a garnet tiger prowling through the jungle come  
in my domain I'll pounce on you.

I'm a Carolina Tar heel born and raised in Kinston.  
I'm a Hershey chocolate brown rich in texture and  
sweet.

I'm like a volcano dormant most times but the  
second I get furious you can't shut me down.

I'm like fire I might seem dull but when I'm doing I  
love I'm passionate about it

I'm untouchable as Alicia Keys said, "This girl is on  
fire."

I have hopes and dreams just like everyone else  
does but I used to be afraid to share them  
because I don't know if people will like them but  
as Beyoncé said, "The time has come for my  
dreams to be heard they will not be push aside  
or turned"

Now I'm not afraid to speak my mind

I have my own opinion just like everyone else.

## I'm Just Saying

By Velvet Grant

I am who I am  
I came into this world as cloth a type of woven  
tufted I am a hot  
Red with a little cream on the inside  
I am as tall as the whispers the way I measure is by  
how much love  
I have with my brother

My brother always told me friends aren't really your  
friends

I am the color of a cookie  
I am Cole black with a hint of royal red  
I move with a swift and I keeps it fierst I even keep  
my hands moving because if I didn't  
It wouldn't be grooving

I am me myself and I can be a tornado or I can be  
a rainbow

Maya Angelou gave me advice, "when someone  
shows you who they are believe them the first  
time"

MJ taught me to never give up  
I have my own reason so smooth they didn't name  
me Velvet for no reason

## My Power

By Nikylah Williams

I am *Nikylah Krishon Williams*

I am an extension cord carrying the power  
From the Williams and Plymouth-Staten family that  
they  
Have passed down generations and generations

I am as tall as the leap I take through the air across  
the dance floor,  
Spiking down the fire I have Inside, and with that fire  
I will heat up the floor with every queer step I take.

I am a SKY full of baby blue with a ray of code RED.

### **Watch Out!!!**

I have flow of the River, eyes of a Wolf and the  
feistiness of a Koala Bear.

I am the body of toffee, hard and dark on the  
outside  
But as you chew, I become sweet.

I am a Topaz Tar heel, prancing on the tips of my  
toes,  
Lightly sketching my future on my life size canvas of  
my relevé on this Earth.

As I'm on my knees looking up to the heavens,  
praise, and state.

"14 years down, hundreds to go."

## Purity and Richness

By Keniyah Becton

My 5'2'' frame is infinite as the words in the universe,  
I am the mocha latte waiting for the richness in my  
life; the delight to lift others,  
I'm a ball of royal blue sparkles with the brightest  
orange surrounding,  
I'm the quickest lightning bolt, but the softest  
raindrops

I am the result of the trinity of the most beautiful  
women shining through me:

Mrs. Roberts; teaching me friendship,  
My grandmother; showing me the walk of faith,  
My mother; giving the love for it all,

Because of them, I move like this:

I move gracefully as the dancing words of the  
angels  
I'm the pearl moon, shining for the world to see  
more purity, not filth,  
I'm the drums of gospel and soul, feeling the pulse  
of truth,  
I am the sunset wolf, seeking the adventure through  
those before me,  
I'm the griffin; I have the fierce soul to soar towards  
success

## Fly, Fly, Fly

By Lesley Sutton

I am a butterfly  
Full of mystery  
I carry myself in a eager soar  
Humble and strong  
Soaring as high as my imagination  
Doing the things that I love  
Ruby red and lavender purple wings carry me  
Exciting but tempered, deep yet soft

I am Jeanne', Jean & Anne  
A twinkling light in the night gathered by MY people  
The stars before me stood together, stood strong  
and loved everyone  
From a family of many different flavors  
I am a quiet shade of chocolate upon loud  
unspoken words  
Twisting, turning, leap after leap  
Hobbies is a understatement passion is everything in  
me  
Hearing the sweet sounds I feel free like there's no  
care in the world  
Like I could just fly, fly, fly

## Truly Too Hard to Find

By Zamoria Edwards

I am as quiet as rain before the lighting and thunder kicks in.

When it does come I become a swirling voice,  
And nobody can control which direction I go in.

People seem to notice as  
My caramel with a gram cracker exterior,  
Comes walking among the paths to get the Kinston, NC  
outer banks.

As I move in silence,  
I come across the turquoise waterfalls.  
As I Move I stare at my shadow,  
My 5, 3 or 5, 4 apparel stares back.  
Anxious to break out my shell but it never happens.

I am never afraid to speak my mind,  
I just do it at the right time.  
I will debate for my ancestor's just like  
Malcolm x Debated for black power and freedom,  
And tell others that's how they raised me.

As if I'm a panda searching through the forest for bam-  
boo.  
But instead I search for new ambitions that helps me  
read, travel and cook better.

I'm the type of gold you find to keep,  
But one wrong way of using me I burst into flames,  
And I disappear in Smokey gray air.

I am that person you cannot forget.  
I am a person truly hard to find in a world like this.

## The Life of Me

By Aline Nepomuceno-Soriano

I am as tall as  
the loved ones before  
me gave, the flag  
representing the country that's  
bonded to my heart

I fly smoothly, my feathers  
Navy blue and Scarlet red looking  
as where to go next  
as my spirit seeks a beautiful  
Emerald my mind wanders to the  
knowledge that is  
stored in the bookshelves'

I recall the memory as my  
Mother tells me that no one in  
this world can tell you  
what you want to be but yourself  
I know that the Virgin de Guadalupe  
Is watching over me

I am a Winter Rose,  
Even through the darkness  
I still manage to the light

## The Light

By Babi' Docher

I am a computer,  
Grasping every type of information in my CPU,  
I am a 5'1 swirl of words that surrounds me from my  
head, down to my feet,  
I am the caramel type,  
Sweet and oozing from top to bottom,  
Walking detailed and with perfection,

Duke blue comforts me and sticks by me as I walk  
through the world of UNC,  
I flow like a waterfall,  
Cool, calm, and collected,  
I am the stars,  
Blinking and twinkling in the night's sky,  
Growing up with cotton stories,  
Filling my head with Mr. King, marching as if they  
were ants for freedom,  
Lavender sticks to me,  
With a strike of ocean blue,

I am like Cassius Clay,  
Boxing against the people that try to bring me  
down,  
I am a box,  
Contained with surprising contents,  
I am a tree,  
Branching out my knowledge,  
I am a lock,  
Find the right key and I will open,

I am like a mountain,  
Standing tall in my dreams of becoming an  
achiever,  
I am a gazelle,  
Swiftly gracefully towards my future,  
Who knew my name would deal with my future?  
My memories are like lyrics,  
Replaying over and over in my head,  
I am a light,  
Shining bright,  
And blinding the people who thought I didn't make  
it.