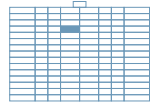


# Home

Lorenzo Pearson



Home is where your family is.

Home.

Home is not where you are.

Home.

Home is where love is in the air.

Home.

Home has a feeling which you wouldn't feel anywhere else.

Home.

Home is where you feel safe.

Home.

Home is your mother not afraid to express what she feels.

Home.

Home is where your little brother has a mind of a 20-year-old.

Home.

Home is a life that I will miss when you are gone.

Home.

## Why Do You Build

Robert Harrison



If you build to tear down, then why do you build.

If you build to break it up, then why do you build.

If you build to hurt lives, why do you build.

If you build and they have to evacuate, then why do you build.

If you build and they have to relocate, then why do you build.

If you build and waste materials, why do you build.

If you build to tear apart, then why do you build.

If you build to break up relationships, then why do you build.

If you build to separate families, why do you build.

If you build to destroy, then why do you build.

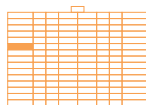
If you build to leave people without homes, then why do you build.

Why do you build, if you build to make memories,

If you build to break memories, then why do you build.

## Still Here

Daisy Delgado



I'm still here... I'm still here... I'm still here...

I still breathe.  
The wind blows.  
The sun shines.

Still I'm here... Still I'm here... Still I'm here...

Your halls stopped echoing.  
Your leaky faucets stopped leaking.  
Your doors stopped slamming.  
But...

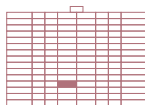
Here I'm still... Here I'm still... Here I'm still...

The trees so puny they used to be,  
And now they tower over thee.  
But...

I AM STILL HERE.

## My Room

Jasmine Dilworth



*“Lay me down to sleep my Lord, if I shall die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take”*

*“Babu-Gum, Babu-Gum in a dish, how many pieces do... you... wish”*

Looking at the building as it takes its last breath

Boom! It landed in the middle of my room

My room

My... Room...

My room!

My room was the place where all my girl cousins chose to hang out

My room

My walls

My color

But my color faded away

*“Babu-Gum, Babu-Gum in a dish, how many pieces do... you... wish”*

I wish I had just one more time to play before they all moved away

To where I don't know

But they were my best friends; I hope to see them again

One day

Sometimes I can still hear them laughing and running up and down

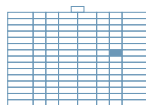
the fifth floor ramp, with purple popsicles dripping down their chin

Too bad we will never ever play again

*“Babu-Gum, Babu-Gum in a dish, how many pieces DO... YOU... WISH”*

# The Colors of Expressions

Deja Marshall



Red is the color of pain,  
when your heart is broken  
and tears come down like rain.

Orange is a relaxing color  
that releases stress like no other.  
Like sunsets do at the end of the day,  
orange makes the pain fade away.

Yellow, the first color of cheer,  
something to think about  
when you don't want to feel fear.

Green stands for envy,  
one of the things that people feel for me.

Blue is something you feel when you are sad.  
But eventually you get yellow and feel glad.

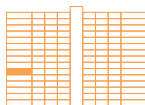
Purple is a calm and mellow color.  
These are the attitudes you must have with a little brother.

White is a peaceful color  
that makes you not want to fight.  
No matter what the situation is,  
in day or night.

Black is me, strong and beautiful.  
People try to hold me down and make me blue,  
but I always find a way to stick it through.

## Blocks of Color

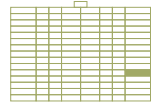
Imani C. Davis



Ever since I was little I used to play with blocks  
Putting yellow on top of blue with red on all four sides.  
Purple on top of red and green next to orange and black next to red.  
Not knowing the significance of blocks was going to determine how safe  
And secure I feel,  
The feeling of every emotion connected with a color

Blue the sadness of seeing people throw away their lives  
Green how money and greed can make you go out of your mind  
Red the color of bloodshed  
Purple the making of a sense of hope  
Orange a community coming together  
Yellow the color of light that is in everyone  
Black the danger of losing hope and seeing no light

Memories of playing with blocks when I was little make me wonder  
If I paint the blocks all the colors of the rainbow  
will the good colors pick up what the others lack?



Somebody

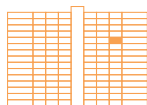
brewed coffee strong here  
learned the ABC song here  
woke up to chirping birds here  
found their first words here  
burnt cookies & broke glasses here  
wrote love notes & skipped classes here  
taught their niece how to dance here  
dreamt of traveling to France here  
got rejected from college here  
redefined their idea of knowledge here  
and I seen 'em do it  
I witnessed their tears & cackles  
their outrage when they felt shackled  
their whispers when they felt baffled  
I been here with windows & damp halls  
as into life's rhythms they fall  
I felt their dreams pulsing behind eyes  
shut so slowly, they always lie  
with one open  
I shuddered at their bravely sweating palms  
unlocking & locking & living & thriving  
their actions louder than bombs  
they sang through sirens & sometimes gunfire  
that, hey Cabrini, I'm home  
but now monsters tear me down  
battering at my rafters, afraid to drown  
in the history leaking through my ceilings  
and the memories dripping through my pipes  
you're ripping my heart race  
from the skeleton of this space  
that they built with their  
haves & needs & sweat & deeds  
it took years to construct  
my community you think's defunct  
called me trap house, den of louse,

seeded with greed you called me empty  
unfit for renting  
so you sent 'em packing  
and now knock on my hollow doors  
and now shock my fourteen floors  
with your metallic hatred, cool as Blago  
how many taps upon my spine, Chicago?  
'til I flow, a puddle  
of yesterday-strewn rubble



## It Was Home

Dorothy Garcia



It was home  
Was being the keyword  
Where I played, learned, and grew  
Where I saw hope, love, and unity  
For better or worse, it was there  
Always there, never left, never changed  
Never turned its back on me

Through ups and downs  
Lefts and rights  
A place of warmth and shelter  
Memories of happiness, fear, and sorrow  
All surrounded by four walls

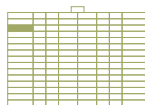
If these walls could talk, what would they say?  
They would tell you about birthdays, Thanksgiving, and Christmas  
They would tell you about pains and horrors that occurred

How could four tiny walls hold so much without bursting?  
These walls have strength  
Strength that has emitted into me, into us  
Strength that has held us through thick and thin  
Strength not strong enough against one man with a paper and pen

Gone now  
But it was home  
Imperfect and conflicted  
But it was home

# Farewell Cabrini Greens

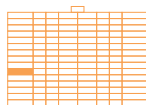
Monique Dickerson



The projects, oh I know them very well  
The Ickies, Cabrini Greens, and the Wells  
Were all a home to family and friends  
Yes, they're gone but a new journey now begins  
To some these communities were really rough  
People from there were labeled as tough  
But I highly beg to differ  
I feel they all are sweeter than a snicker  
My friends, my family are all fine and dandy  
No one knows their struggles or issues  
To these projects, I'm gonna miss you  
In a way this demolition is kind of good  
To crush all crazy madness of this hood  
A lot of awful things happened here  
And for this fact I shed a tear  
The good, the bad I've seen it all  
In these projects the fun, the laughs always had a ball  
My final goodbyes I must say now  
Goodbye Cabrini Greens, you must fall down

## How Did They Break It to You?

Michelle Stearn



Dear Former Cabrini Resident,

How did they break it to you?  
Did they send you a letter?  
A form letter, addressed to a number  
Anonymous, like the number on your door.  
A white envelope  
Innocent when sealed, but when opened—  
a shock of a thousand volts.  
A letter made from an arrangement of letters,  
assembled on a page  
as words  
Deciding the fate of your existence.  
How did they break it to you?

How did they break it to you?  
Did they come to your door?  
Knocking three times, serious knocks, hollow, devoid of  
potential.  
Did they look into your eyes when they said it?  
To see your reaction—or lack thereof?  
Did they react to your reaction?  
Or just blurt out the news and then bolt  
Like a hit and run, a drive by, a robotic telegram,  
an empty urn, serving you the news.  
How did they break it to you?

How did they break it to you?  
Did you hear it from a neighbor?  
From a fellow survivor, sufferer, witness of all things unseen?  
Or from a mouse, a rat, a roach—  
preparing for evacuation  
going off some inexplicable animal instinct sensing unrest.  
Or through the grapevine of gossip, from which you would soon be  
severed  
Cut off from the source

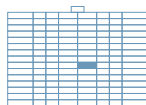
Cut off from the roots  
Cut off from the very foundation.

But these are mere speculations  
Inevitably ignorant assumptions, not unlike the ones that decided your  
fate.

So, you tell me,  
How did they break it to you?

## Can You See Me?!

Daesha Leverston

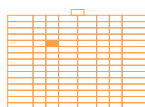


Look at my eyes  
Can you see me?!  
In a community where my parents raised me  
When I was young, they taught me to be a lady  
Manners towards people and pride to my image, determination in my  
Knowledge and leadership  
To do the right thing, but I never listen  
When it comes to the block, there's inner sense  
Look at my eyes  
Can you see me?!  
Can you see the lights?!  
Pause, when they ride past  
Look inside  
Just walk away and think  
Why so bad  
Look at my eyes  
Can you see me?!  
Can you see the water down my cheeks?  
People on the news everyday dying off their feet,  
Living in a hard life where my mother speaks,  
LISTEN  
LISTEN TO ME  
LISTEN TO MY FOOTSTEPS  
CAN YOU HEAR ME?!  
Waking up from the tosses and turns,  
You don't see me  
Above my eyelids is where my memories peek  
Younger mother in the struggle  
Two kids plus a double,  
Living from place to place  
Bad dreams, always a frown  
My mother's struggle has been given to me  
Passed down  
Standing here from my head to my feet  
It's pain

Looking to the sky  
Nothing  
Can you see me?!  
Suffering

## Just Because

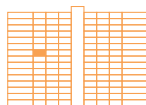
Marcus Pelt



Just because there is a high crime rate here  
Does not mean it isn't my home  
Just because some people make the wrong decisions here  
Does not mean we aren't people of morals  
Just because it seems like we're all hurting  
Does not mean we can't heal each other  
Just because OUR future wasn't made to look bright  
Does not mean we can't work for the better things  
It's sad how you can't see my world the way I do  
How individuals can be so addicted to tragedy or turmoil is very unfortunate  
We as a people blind ourselves out of fear  
Resulting from the blindness  
We train our eyes to only see the "norm", what's right for us  
If only WE knew  
If only we would stop being scared  
Scared of expanding and broadening a way of life for the human race  
If only we knew

# Momma Green

Joshua Garcia

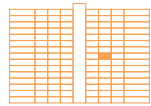


Funny how Chicago landmarks choose their own occupants.  
There she stood in the eyes of the beholder, unaware of what she's  
Destined to be.  
She housed immigrants who had trouble making a living, with open arms  
She stood like Lady Liberty.  
Painting a picture of opportunity, but after her use was up she stood forgotten.  
Through the darkness she picked up strays along the way,  
Whom were also abandoned, pushed away from society.  
Soon after she housed some wildcats, but she was the mother of 'em all.  
She wept as she saw her new occupants devastated by a tragedy,  
The assassination of a King in cold blood; *Rest in peace ya Majesty.*  
His death made the wildcats use their power, use their claws;  
But then the National Guard came in and enforced martial law and swept up  
The street,  
But Momma Green now had cracks on her head, arms, and feet.  
Her cats became family, for they knew little of the outside world beyond  
This so-called "Project"  
Lookin' past the crimes we learn that of the media's accusations of good Ol'  
Momma Green were not true.  
Momma Green had cats that formed families that lasted, for many, for years;  
From childhood to Old Age,  
So when Momma started fallin' apart it was reasonable to say that the  
Cats weren't used to the change.  
So Momma lost a limb not cuz she's a diabetic, NO she lost it cuz Poppa  
Daley lied and said she was infected!  
Claimed that these cats were tearing her apart, so he decided to let 'em  
Loose in the Chicago park.  
Now Momma is lying in her deathbed, the fear of losing her babies rushed to  
Her head,  
She wished to be stronger to keep 'em all instead, but Poppa Daley wants a  
Younger woman and hopes for Momma to be dead.  
We thank you, Momma; you housed the outcasts from society that were  
Forgotten and set aside.  
I heard my momma cried, I heard her pray the night Chicago died.  
For she stood in the heart of Chicago in the eyes of her beholder;  
Poppa Daley gave up.

As demolition begins, the cats stand by Momma Cabrini Green wishin'  
She can stay up.  
You've lived for quite some time and have finally met your destiny...  
R.I.P. MOMMA GREEN

## Boo-Hoo

Brian Vera



Roses are red violets are blue  
This building is being demolished but not because of you.

As soon as you hear BOOM! You're going to be gone soon  
They are going to move you to a place you don't know.

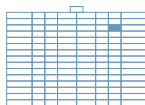
Boo-Hoo the woman said in room 442  
after big boom went through her room from the  
outside view. Boo-Hoo she said Boo-Hoo.

Roses are red violets are blue this building is being  
demolished but not because of you.



# 1 Question... Who Am I?

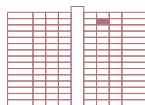
William Gallion



A simple teen  
Who appears to be mean  
Living life in a crazy scene  
To stay away from his notorious dean  
With huge dreams  
Of being successful  
Smashing on Krispy Kremes  
Can this wish be faithful?  
Coming of a crazy path  
Trying to figure out what I lack  
One plus one isn't always simple math  
Can I carry this world on my back?  
From a man who can't stand fish  
Who refuses to wash your dish  
Praying and believing in one wish  
Of hitting the game winning swish  
Living off an American creed  
With a dangerous need  
For sunflower seeds  
Trying to find the deed  
But not living a life of greed.  
1 question...who am I?

## Cabrini Green

Marcus Burks



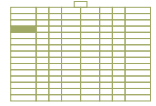
My home is my Empire.

When I get home I usually relax and chill out because I am in the presence of my home sweet home. At home I feel like I am the head and have to hold responsibility of my room/house. My responsibility happens to be keeping order and making sure my house is being respected. Keeping my room and the bathroom clean is the most important things for me, because no girl likes a dirty room and bathroom. So I always keep it clean for my mom. I hold the position of head of the house because I am my mother's oldest son. With me being her oldest son, no one can take that from me. Although someday I will have to leave my empire, the throne will be passed to my little sister. Now she will have the same responsibilities I once had,

So I just wonder how will the Empire be with a new Chief of Staff.

## “Our Place”

Helena Ambrose



Coffee rings on the Formica  
but I left the 4-0-9  
seven flights down  
with my boxes and bags and  
my pots and my clothes that  
I dragged with my own two hands  
before I swept up the dirt  
of our years at “our place”  
and made the rooms smell like  
winter  
and lemon  
and dust  
but fussing won’t help, must I remember  
you’re not coming back  
and it’s still moving day.

2 years 3 months and a day  
of sitting in the dust  
just waiting for that thing to ring,  
you calling home, and I’m trying  
to stop crying again  
because you’re never coming back  
and I’m sick of waiting in your dust.

The empty rooms echo mirth  
from our birthed universe  
of pancakes and brandy,  
and coffee, always coffee,  
at midnight especially,  
giggling for hours at those  
rain showers that drip, drip, dripped  
through the window  
and onto us.

And a day 3 months and 2 years hence, I  
jumped the fence I had built around

around you and me  
when you promised eternity  
and I found a place up north.  
It's small. It's warm.  
And most of all, it's waterproof.

And I will leave your dust behind,  
the tears and time of mine  
I never had a use for anyway  
but you and "our place".  
Just a few more boxes  
and I'll be gone by noon,  
'cause in a moon, "our place" won't be here.  
And if you should retract your  
promise to not come back,  
there will be nothing more than dust.  
Trust me.  
It's my moving day.

## I Can Be at Home

Alice O'keefe



There are places I can go not everyone would classify as home, but they feel like home to me. I can walk down the alley behind 53rd Street, see plastic crates that litter the grass's face and watch my friends paint. And I can be at home.

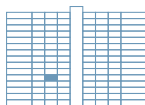
I can walk behind the library to the grassy knoll; sit with my back to the concrete wall and watch leaves blow off that tree like butterflies dizzy from too much whiskey. And I can be at home.

I can stand by the lake and watch the waves put lives at stake, as H<sub>2</sub>O flows and washes up on the shore. And I can be at home. And I can feel pain when I think about your grave, but memories of you make me feel at home.

I don't need four walls and a roof to stop the rain from falling on my skin, because the comfort from my homes can keep me dry, and when the rain pours I know we are feeling it from the same sky. No one place will last for eternity, but home travels with us through our sin and our purity.

## Life in Cabrini

Ashley Nicholson



Life in Cabrini, where the love was spread  
and tears have shed

Life in Cabrini was a battle, but we all fought

Life in Cabrini, where we had our Old School Mondays  
that felt like humble Sundays

Life in Cabrini—everybody had a friend or foe  
but majority still recognized we were a family

Life in Cabrini—the smell of those nachos,  
Man, everybody wanted some!

Life in Cabrini, where those wild boys  
would bring out mattresses and flip on them

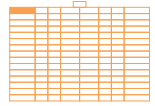
Life in Cabrini, where Mrs. Carter never wanted  
kids running past her door

Everyone will still have memories  
And will never forget their time in Cabrini

LIFE IN CABRINI THROUGH THE GOOD AND BADS  
WILL FOREVER LAST!!!!

# Alma

Chloe Mickle



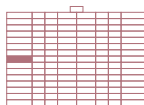
Sadly she was misunderstood  
But instead of giving up she was a survivor  
No matter how upset she may have got  
She never gave up  
Only having a dress as her uniform

She was my Super Woman  
My Wonder Woman  
Skin so shiny  
She was my night light  
Skin so smooth, soft, and warm  
She was my pillow and blanket  
I always felt safe in her arms

Hair so fluffy like clouds  
Arms so strong to give big hugs with  
She was my great grandma

## How to Deal

Deshawn Polk

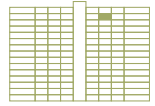


How do I deal with the fact that a place  
I used to call home is being demolished,  
I'm lost for words, and every time I wake up,  
a little piece of my heart is torn and abolished.  
Walking past I hear no music now,  
I see no people having fun.  
That building I considered my home away from home  
will no longer see the sun.  
How do I deal? How...Do...I...Deal  
My childhood memories will never be able to be manifested into  
Something real  
Only to be there as a reminder that this cruel cruel world is nothing to  
Play at.  
I remember getting dropped off to see my grandma,  
to give her a hug and kiss,  
to go say 'Hey Unc' right next door,  
to walk the opposite direction to say 'Hey' to my aunt...  
Things will Never...Ever...Ever...! Be the same.  
    Wait...What am I saying...I loved that building and the  
    memories, but it's time for me to man up and be strong for  
    my family, even though I'm deeply hurting inside  
Dwelling on the past stops you from seizing opportunities in the future.



# Who Am I

Cindy Mendoza



Do you know who I am?  
I hold you  
I help you  
I care for you  
Too much I fall apart  
You launch a dart to pierce my flesh  
Not fresh, new faces I see  
And it makes me wonder why I have no luster  
No gleam  
No hope  
Your smoke impregnates my lungs  
You have begun my destruction  
Destitute is what people see when they look at me  
Kick the grit into my eyes  
Scrape the Shhhhhh on your shoes onto my hands

Do you know who I am?  
You come to me when you cry  
Beat me when you're angry  
But maybe you'll understand, maybe  
That I've given all I can  
And man, you should thank me  
The grease from your cooking  
Cakes in my once flawless hair  
Throw up in my mouth when you befriend 40  
Is the age you will die because you don't wash me  
Stomp all over me when you're distraught  
Don't forget I taught you how to live

Do you know who I am?  
I showed you how to fight  
I put a roof over your head  
Lead fills your heart  
Hurts huh?

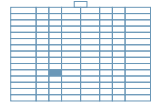
Took me for granted  
Too late I've planted my image in your memory made  
You love me now, I would have stayed

Do you know who you are?  
No, not Dontrell or Tyrone  
I got Tony and Vinny  
That corrupted my bones  
Is what you broke  
when you left  
Your attitude  
Was so obscene

Do you know who I am?  
I am Cabrini Green

## Our Destruction...

Marquis Steele



If you lived in my place, you would know that no area is truly safe,  
They made it seem as though all the crime was in the projects,  
Now that the projects are gone, I still haven't noticed the change yet.

They thought getting rid of Cabrini was a safe bet,  
Promising false dreams and writing minuscule checks,  
But that small amount of money won't cover the bills and their debts,  
Our problem is that we were put in a system designed to keep us down,  
When that happened, things could have only went south,  
We should have been applying ourselves and not making it worse by  
Running our mouths.

I understand that it was a struggle and everybody needs a hustle,  
But people were afraid of the projects because they felt if they walked by,  
They would get mugged,

But it wasn't that way; the buildings just looked scary because of the  
Bad wiring,

Passers-by felt afraid and it was getting tiring,

See, you can make anything worse seem worse than it is if you don't know  
Firsthand,

The media does a good job of proving that to be a fact,  
All they did was overlook the good and search for the bad.

Our destruction was the infrequent crime,

The crimes that happened every once in a while,

The crimes that looked worse on them because of the complexion of  
Their skin and where they were,

I guarantee it wouldn't have been a big deal if downtown wasn't  
So close to there.

But now the building and tenants are gone,

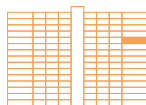
No more BBQ's and children singing double-dutch songs,

I truly don't care much because I left years ago,

But still, kicking people out for property value is low

# Goodbye

Christopher Guevara



Even though it was  
hard to live in Cabrini  
I could survive anything...I think  
MAYBE

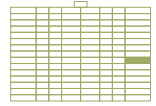
Boom, crash, bang  
that's all there is  
except for the yelling of men  
the crash of hopes, memories,  
even sometimes...dreams.

Times have changed  
It's time to change,  
time to say goodbye.

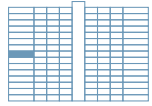
Goodbye cave-like hallway.  
Goodbye hot & humid rooms.  
Goodbye slippery steps.  
Goodbye cracks in the wall.  
Goodbye neighbors.  
Goodbye old friends.  
Goodbye old man across the way.  
Goodbye BBQ.  
Goodbye laughter from the room next door.  
Goodbye games from the lot.  
Goodbye Home Baptist Church.  
Goodbye crime.  
Goodbye drugs.  
Goodbye gangs.  
Goodbye crying moms.  
Goodbye Cabrini.  
Thanks for your memories.

# No One Asked

Danielle Coker



Considering we were the ones affected  
You'd think they would have asked our opinion  
But no one did  
No one asked us if we wanted to be wanted  
No one asked!!  
No one asked if change was what we needed  
No one asked!!  
No one asked if "perfection" was what we wanted a part of  
No one asked!!  
No one asked our memories  
Memories deeply rooted in what used to be home  
Whether they were ready to be demolished  
Sadly, no one asked!!  
No one asked our friendships  
Friendships that were supposed to last a lifetime  
Whether they were ready to be ripped apart  
No one asked!!  
No one asked our "lifestyle"  
A lifestyle we had grown accustomed to  
If it needed adjusting  
No one asked!!  
No one asked if we needed salvation from our own community  
No one asked!!  
No one followed the age-old rule  
"Always ask before touching something that doesn't belong to you"  
Instead they did the exact opposite  
THEY DIDN'T ASK



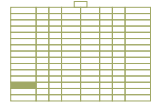
Charles Kilpatrick

When we moved in, it felt like I was already here  
But once it fell apart, I felt like shedding a tear  
When we moved out,  
I had visions of a second chance  
But I feel like Cabrini is forever  
There's no way we can be apart  
Good times and the bad  
Still here being strong and growing up without a dad  
Mom was gone but Grandma was there  
Mom came back and it was all good  
Emotions, anger, rage, happiness, sadness  
Days of sitting in my room, feeling abandoned  
But one day I went outside  
And began to make friends  
And we all stuck together as one and said:

We love Cabrini until the end

# Trapped

Jada Jones



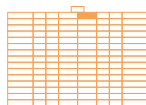
I hear voices.  
Repeatedly in the night, reconciling the sacrifice  
To darkness and disparity.  
Flustered by frustration,  
Acknowledging no chances for prosperity.  
Fallen from the fairytales skies, the place we sought for comfort and security  
Became an instrument of hate.  
Engaged in constant hurt and rage,  
Where sleepless nights met foodless days.  
Shortened,  
To the word *hood*.  
Never misunderstood.  
You see, no one really had neighbors.  
Next door lived an old lady who was mentally insane,  
And downstairs we heard the chaos from the family of 8,  
And the dude right outside explained where to find Mary Jane.  
There's no need for names.  
Our identities were erased,  
And replaced with statistics.  
Withdrawn from the world around us there were things unseen,  
But they were still quick to judge by our brown skin and baggy jeans.  
Unaware of our potential.  
Leaving us in desperation to suffer alone,  
What they called hell,  
We had named home.  
On the streets where children were once found,  
Transformed by evening to brutal battlegrounds  
That's where we belonged.  
We watched opportunities crumble deep in the pavements,  
Underneath tarnished souls of familiar faces.  
Memories only imaginations of the mind,  
Cause' gravity pins you down to the sidewalk of reality.  
Your legs travel on a path to nowhere,  
But success remains a distant dream to strive.

Heroes attempt to rise,  
Persistent in approach.  
With courage they pledged the torch of hope,  
That shined light in the labyrinth of our lives.  
But you can't help but push away the arms outstretched for protection.  
We never liked being guided in a direction we weren't looking.  
The struggle with concealing our feelings,  
Revealed the scars left by the loud silence.  
And the only outlet of anger resorted in violence.  
So we just learn to survive and settle with strife,  
You can't click your shoes twice,  
And disappear.  
There's no escape from the pain that's here.



## Things I Don't Miss

Desi'ree Wallace

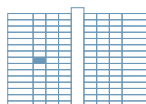


Lying in my bed, under those white walls at night,  
Lying thinking of other things then looking at all the orange street lights.  
Looking at these concrete wall, all cold, hard, and white,  
They hold heat in the summer, man those Chicago summers.  
But in the winter they keep us frozen, like the meat at Peoria's market  
Those walls, I do not miss

Small and wet  
Dark and green, those were the hallways  
These hallways seem strange  
Cracked up and uneven,  
Each level's ground  
That would come up in my nightmares  
DRIP...DRIP...DRIP...NOW I'M SOAKED!  
This mess isn't fair...  
Well neither is five flights of stairs.  
Finally, there is the wonderful sight of light.  
Those stairs and hallways I do not miss.

So what do I miss?  
It ain't living there, it's something much deeper  
I miss playing mountain of pillows with my lil' bro and sis...  
Turning back the clock and thinking,  
That sure was a creepy place.

Eboni White



Everybody listen, I'm calling u out,  
Everybody pay attention, I scream and shout  
I'm standing in the building trying to get their attention  
I'm standing looking stupid cause' ain't no one listening  
I walked down the street; it looked like a parade came through  
I asked for help; they act like they got the flu  
So my sister said she'll help me try to get the point through  
But it's too late, it's only two, the building is down  
I miss that place  
Now people want to listen  
Everybody is paying attention  
But it's too late  
The buildings are gone  
Now this is the end of my poem

## Gub'mint

Gabriella Cooper



You sleep  
On gub'mint sheets  
With gub'mint bars around your head  
Like hoop earrings

You breathe in  
Gub'mint smoke  
From Daddy's gub'mint cig'rettes  
You know;  
The ones he bought  
With gub'mint checks

You gobble up  
Gub'mint cereal  
You wobble up  
Gub'mint stairs  
Tryin' to keep Daddy from falling  
After he gets  
Drink  
Drank  
Drunk

You put up with Daddy's hands  
Like ashy gnarled tree bark that bites  
And bites hard  
You 'magine  
The gub'mint  
Comin' 'long to save you  
From his claws  
Comin' 'long to save you  
From him

You give in to frustration  
One night  
In the alley  
You give in to frustration

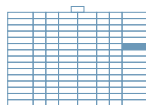
And you scratch that chick so bad  
You 'fraid the gub'mint gon' come running  
But it ain't

Gub'mint ain't ran nowhere round here  
Since it found the luxury of  
Indoor gyms  
The gub'mint  
Found AC  
While at the same time,  
You  
Found it hard to learn  
A to Z

Gub'mint -- stole yo' hope  
Gub'mint -- gon' steal some mo'  
Gub'mint -- gon' wrap its hands 'round yo' neck  
Like a noose  
'Cause the gub'mint knows  
Ain't nobody  
Ain't noBODY gon' come runnin'  
When you  
You  
You scream

## Still Kicking

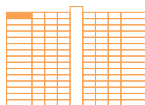
Dantrell Pearson



Pain mind broken  
Not from the heartache  
Just from the struggle  
Not worried about anything  
But the main thing—  
Getting out  
Stuck in what most would call a situation  
But what some of us would just call life  
Hard dealing with blood  
Tears  
Abuse  
And frustrations  
Wishing that there would be something  
That would extract me from the situation  
Trying to decipher  
Not knowing whether to give up  
Sorry, but gluttony in my life  
Is something I have learned to pick up  
Hey, I'm here  
I'm alive  
I'm still kicking  
Not because I post up  
Not because I jump tough  
Because I'm Dantrell Shaquile Pearson  
An individual  
And all the gang banging  
Violence  
Is something I have learned  
To fast from

## Wall

Gustavo Tovar



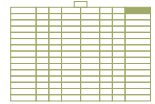
I am the wall from Cabrini Green.  
I have seen everything  
That has happened here.  
I have seen great things  
Scary things.

I have seen Joe kill his older brother  
From the enemy gang.  
I have seen people die because of the gang fights.  
I have seen reunion parties  
And even Bobby's third birthday celebration.  
I have seen history.

But now I am falling.  
I am falling, falling, falling.  
I am falling  
Towards my destruction.  
I am the wall  
The wall from  
Cabrini Green.

# Why

Alexis White



Why...why

Take away all of my memories?

Now people keep resenting me because  
I'm from the projects!

When Cabrini Green was the only way of stain-ability  
But why take down the only place that's known as home  
Even though my living conditions are horrible  
And gangs are consuming the streets  
And these same walls that were once all white  
Are now violated with graffiti  
Labeled as GDN

But why

When your father put up these buildings  
And YOU decided to tear them down  
But the reality is...That YOU would never last two seconds in the town.  
So I always tried to find comfort in my confinement  
Because the government always tried to tame me.  
We're getting blamed  
What's a community cracked up on violence with no fame?  
When cracks in the walls turn into bullets  
When peace is now danger  
Health with no healthcare  
And schools with bad teachers  
Is like a stop with no sign...useless!!

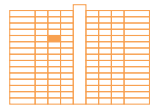
WHY

Are we so ungrateful??

When Cabrini Green residents are forced to leave their home tree?  
Pain inflicted over and over again  
Because not all wounds are visible  
When little is please-able to the world  
R.I.P. Cabrini Green  
You are the last to fall  
But don't shed a tear because we will shed them all.  
This is our last goodbye to you  
And we still wonder...Why...why...why??

# I Don't Know

Jonathan Vera



You can't judge,  
You don't know.  
If it's good,  
if it's bad.

Many children played,  
Not that many stayed.  
What happened to the past,  
Years went by so fast.

Many children have died,  
Moms have cried.  
Violence and crimes,  
Way too many lies.

That's just what I hear,  
I only see fear.  
But I can't judge,  
I don't know.

Oh, Cabrini Green,  
What many people have seen.  
One building left,  
Old School Monday's the best.

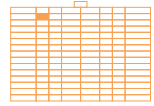
Built during World War II,  
Now time to say goodbye to you.  
Time to go,  
No more homes.

I can't imagine that  
they can't go back.  
I can't judge,  
I don't know.



# So What of Our Future?

Isabel Trumbull



So, what of our questions?  
More abundant than we could ever imagine  
“When will it be better?”  
“When will leaving everything we have ever known  
be good?”  
You say it will be “for the better.”  
But what happens when reality  
sets in?  
So, what of our future?  
So unknown, a mystery,  
uncharted land. You say  
it will be better,  
but what of our future?

Is it possible to make time stop,  
to stay right where we are  
Forever?  
You can't take away memories  
just as you can't take away loss.  
You make us move on,  
Say goodbye to the good,  
to the bad,  
to our homes.  
But what of our future?  
What happens when we shut the door behind us for the last time?  
So, what of our questions?

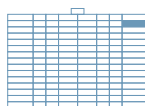
We stand before you,  
letting you choose what  
will happen to us

Why can't I stop time,  
stay here forever?  
Why can't we change  
how someone changes us?  
Why can't we change *sharpies*

to *showpies*, and  
have thingymajigers and  
thingamabobs officially exist?

So, what of our questions  
our worries  
our concerns  
our doubts?  
But what of our future,  
so unknown?

Jalisa Green



Friends come like the rain and snow,  
Much like love that passes and goes.  
Friends can be there forever,  
Much like family they're *Endless Together*.  
Just like the leaves that falls from the trees,  
They're there for a reason, just like every season.  
Through the stormy winds and cold nights,  
Friends can bear something you don't like.  
This friend of mine, who has been here,  
Through FUN TIMES, even when I shed tears.  
Arguments, fights,  
Laughs and giggles  
I love my friend till the very END.

## R.I.P. Cabrini?

Antoinette Boyd



I couldn't leave my apartment today, this day, a new day, Hooray?  
As some drunk-ass ringworm and his two pit bulls sat upon the stairs  
And as he opened his eyes, surprised, I realized I should probably have  
Slowly backed

Away...

Or that time when I thought I was out of my mind, confined  
Within these shallow walls I heard the screams of a young girl, fun girl,  
RUN GIRL  
As her voice encompassed me like a girdle furled.

Shot two times by her father,  
a doctor in that street narcotic, hypnotic, robotic zombie-creator.  
For Cabrini this was a history-maker

But, you know...

For me it was never a matter of better or worse,  
Be proper or curse because when emotions burst, this was home  
The only one we've ever known. Though the paint was peeling  
Walls cracked, jacked; relaxed was the mood here.  
And though guns kept getting cocked...we cool dear

Yeah, and...

Then there are those about, without a doubt,  
Who trying to make it out but they ashamed to say where they came from  
But look around, can you name one thing we ain't done?

From black presence, to residents, to presidents, we moving up  
Sit up, split up. Yes the grid system is evident, however IRRELEVANT  
Because it just a coordinate on a plane, like R.I.P. Cabrini is just one more name  
For one more of our government's mistakes, I suggest you fix it because you  
don't get two takes

And as we watch

This last building die, don't cry, the spirit of Cabrini lies, and will rise  
Once again

Like the transformers and the fallen, or that song, you know...

We fall down but we get up, get up, GET UP!

And good luck, I know it may suck

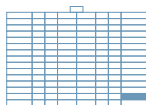
But ...

There's life after Cabrini, critical thinking, wishing, dreaming

Hopes to be fulfilled, praying no more dreams are killed.

## Home Is?

Evian D. Bridgeman



Home is...peace for me

Hustlers on the block selling *rocks* is what they show on TV

They lie, steal, and kill in order to get their bills P.A.I.D.

Girls mo' fast than a blast from the past

Thinking they're a dime when really they a 5 plus 3

8 cop cars always driving by, but never going far

Main cause for crime is that nickel and dime...

All they want to see is all green like a lime

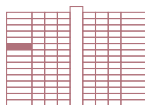
But does that green always mean go?

I DON'T THINK SO...

But home is...PEACE...FOR...ME

# My New Home

Jordan Stephens



The day we moved was sad for me,  
because I didn't want to give up my two bedrooms.

But we had to.  
The lady downstairs kept bothering us.

We got a moving van.

We put in my mom's TV,  
my TV.  
and my dad's TV.

We put my mom's bed  
and my bed.

The van was white and dirty,  
our car is gray and small.

We put my tent in the back of the van  
and grabbed my game system, which we played all the time.

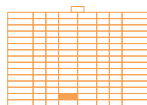
We took our pictures  
and put them in the car

We left the house  
and went to the new one...

...to celebrate my birthday.

## Dear Universe

Jenny Delgado



You have given land to all living things, and we all truly appreciate you for that.

You shouldn't allow human beings, who step on you every day, to create catastrophic movement. It will cause the innocent to move away.

It will be hard for a family to let go of their home, but as most people see there is nothing wrong with wanting good and change.

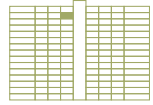
Even though the building that was once built on top of you is now gone, the spot where it once stood is still going to be there.

There will be a gathering, a get-together, a celebration to keep the memories of the past alive.

So universe, although most of the building's physical appearance is now gone, there will be plenty of memories to keep that building, known as home, alive!

# Isolation

Jamada Patterson



In some ways we always felt isolated with our social status as the cage, and when I finally think I am out the cage I'm only walking through a maze. When the frost of the city bites at me, I make sure I bite back, but at this point I feel like a mongoose fighting through a pit full of snakes. I'm trying to show the world that I breathe and exist. While climbing out of the abyss I have to counter downfalls like neat freaks with rakes, just to move one inch forward. If misery gets to you it'll kill you with ease. I know because it cuts through some of my friends and family like airborne disease. People see me as a man up the creek without a paddle, but I control my own life like a defendant with a gavel. The war against ignorance is never a lost battle.

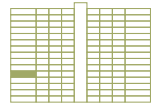
In some ways we always felt isolated with our social status as the cage. People think I am nothing more than anger and rage, but they don't know love covers our hearts, heads, and souls. Despite what the media makes of us. They drain, rape, and take from us without any feeling, no remorse, or conscience. Just for television views in abundance. We were plotted in a cycle. But they don't know the circumstance. Damn, news, really what is the point of views? No really, what is the point of view?

At 7, 5, and 10 p.m. got my home looking like the Terror Dome. Why is the Windy City so cold? I feel like I'm living in a snow globe.



# Untitled

Zia Jael



This poem is Untitled  
Not because I don't know what to name this  
No, no, no, no, no  
But because there are no words to describe...this  
We heard about the demolition of Cabrini Green  
We heard it all  
People make comments like 'It's about time,' and  
'Good riddance', But.  
If they'd just look past the hatred of the building  
They'd see the people

Some are probably devastated, not knowing where they're going  
Or where they'll end up.  
Lost.  
But there are still no words to describe this.  
What is this to the people living there?  
Hope? Fear? Excitement? And?

What's going to happen to the  
mom with five kids who  
has to walk to the fifteenth story  
every single day? Will she  
get a nice home in Indiana. Or,  
get a broke down apartment in the middle of the slums? Or,

the brother back from jail. Who  
wants to go back to high school, get his degree, get a job,  
just to start over?  
What will happen to him?

This is a new beginning, but it's so dang scary!

It's like a  
baby bird being forced out its nest. And it  
knows how to fly, but it

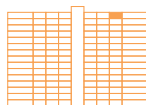
doesn't want to leave because it's  
So damn comfortable!

Or getting out of bed in the morning,  
knowing you have to get to school  
But you stay there laying, looking like a fool

This poem is Untitled.  
Not because I don't know what to call it.  
But because there are no words to describe this.  
So this poem is, and always shall remain...  
Untitled.

## Unknown

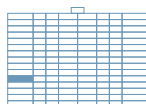
Mikayla Garner



Strands of threads forced apart  
By the hands of the unknown  
Making the knowledge of survival stronger  
than the knowledge of the outside world  
One by one being disconnected  
Being reused  
Being cut from all ties  
Forced to adapt  
To defend  
To protect  
Coming together  
Forming bonds  
Restoring hope  
Rebuilding strength

## Hey, You, Whoever You Are!!!!

Crystal Herron



Do you see the  
Destructive mess you created?

You move people out  
Their comfort zone and  
Don't realize they hate it

You scatter  
The family, the community  
Created  
You shatter  
The memories and bonds  
That were just the greatest

Like the time when  
We chilled at the park

Or the time we played hide-and-go-seek in the dark

Those were the good times we had

But right along with our community  
Those good times died

AND WE CRY

Right along with the jokes and the games  
We used to play

BY FORCE

Those memories and bonds HAVE to fade away

But why?

Hey, You, Whoever you are

LISTEN to these words I say and really pay attention.

## Distorted Class

Natrice Weathers



Murals on church buildings **disguised** as stained glass  
Giant bean called Cloud Gate gives our city **distorted** class  
I've got a tight grip on reality, **building to breakdown** history

In Africa, they take pictures of emotion, memorize it, **live with it**  
A picture's worth 1000 words, right?  
Well how much for a pile of **crumbled history**?

Cabrini Green  
Soon, it'll be a crumbling memory  
So that our city can have this **distorted** image of perfection  
That's cough, cough...really **classy**  
**Really** classy

**Destroying** comfort zones  
**Brainwashing** the generations with time  
You'll **twist the story**

In the history books, it'll say the community was **broken**.  
But we weren't broken  
To say a **community**—  
To say a **common unity**  
Is **broken**? Makes no sense

A stained glass is nothing more  
Than **broken** pieces **held** together  
Soooo...**that** can be **shined upon**—  
**That** can be **appreciated**  
For being unique  
But not us?  
Not Cabrini?

So we're **ugly**?  
A **flaw** on America's next top model?  
**Never.**

Beauty is only  
**Skin deep**

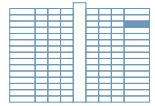
They never said the proof was  
**On** the pudding—  
No, it's **in** it.

You'll never understand the **pride**  
We have  
Unless you **hang with us lions**

Cabrini Green is mean  
They say  
But to me, **to us**, it's home  
A distorted kind of **classy**  
**Home.**

## I Wish I Lived

Ikayla Gregory, Dalaynna Smith



When we moved in  
there was the fresh yellow smell of the “new home”.  
It took a while to feel like home.

When you went outside  
there were patches of green plants, shattered pieces of steel,  
and beer bottles, wood, and plastic.

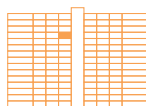
All the loud creatures within my sight  
would be fighting and screaming.

In this neighborhood you have friends.  
Real friends you can talk to  
and fake friends who just want to fight  
and get you in trouble.

Gangs hanging outside to four in the morning,  
the horrible stench of garbage.  
At this time I wish I lived...

# A Place That I Have Never Known

Jordan Eason



Cabrini Green is a place that I have never known,  
Many people there feel alone.  
To many people it means home,  
To others it means a danger zone.

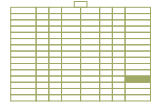
Though I had never heard of this place,  
Even I know it's wrong to chase  
People away from their home,  
Where if they step outside they can easily roam  
In their childhood past,  
Which they knew would never last.

Cabrini Green has  
Things that most of us  
Will  
Never  
Understand.



# We Were Once Here

Veronica Rodriguez



I was here

These streets were once filled with people –

My people

We weren't all one race or one class but

We were all the same

We knew the pain that most could not endure

We knew this world in its cruelest form

I was here

I walked here

I slept here

I lived here

I wasn't always happy but nobody really is

I am not ashamed for this was once my home

I was here

I do not wish to give up yet I feel that I must

To bring forth a new beginning yet –

I fear

I fear that our laughter will slowly fade

That our tears will soon go to waste and

That we will all be forgotten but –

I was here

Listen!

Listen to my silent resistance

My desire to leave something behind

A proof that I was alive

Prove to me

That we were never a burden to our dear city

Prove to me

That these crusted walls, these worn out streets and

These torn down floors meant more to you as it did for me

Don't deny me –

Don't demolish me –

I was here

This is what I had once called home

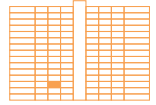
This will always be a part of me and I will always be a part of this

Like the sun in the sky

These once crowded paths, these once creaking halls and  
These once coarse laughter we all shared  
Will remain in my heart  
You were here  
But you were blinded to its very essence of its sour smell  
Its rusty rails and its peeling paint  
You couldn't see the happiness –  
The wisdom that filled our ambitions to dream  
These capturing scenes of joyful sorrows  
Helped us want to achieve  
And yet – this will be another chapter lost in history  
But remember  
We were here

# Free-dom fighter

Julia Kulon



I listen to his breathing

The monotonous ragged inhale going out and in

In

Out

In

Out

He looks at me

he, all of he-

he is young

with young hands and young legs and old eyes

he has old eyes

he has old eyes

he has—

he continues

In

Out

In

Out

“freedom fighter,” he says

his old eyes looking at me.

his ton-gue flaps again:

**“Free-dom Fighter. Crime Fighter.”**

In

Out

In

Out

Does he fight for **free**-dom? do I?  
Or does he fight crime? do I?

In  
Out  
In  
Out

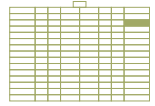
I don't ask.

His old eyes close with  
his young hands on his young  
chest and he is young.

Out  
Out  
Out

# Demolition

Charletta Thomas



I lost a piece of mind the way a child loses dreams.

Tears cascaded down my face in a race;  
in reverse.

Its feet trampled on air;  
running toward the past.

Scents of weed  
mixed with soul food  
heightened by sewer pipes  
downed with liquor, left hallways breathing in and out.

Walls were deserted without a body to touch.

Eyes open without a hope.

Dust slithering across floorboards.

Dirt making out with kitchen tiles.

Silence soothed the mourning as it was heard walking  
with slow.

Steady.

Heavy.

Boots out of the empty masses.

There were no kids yelling.

No bullets slicing air.

No swearing.

No I'm sorrys.

No hellos.

No goodbyes.

No Deuces.

No I got ya back.

No I see ya later.

Cause it is no later.

It's Gone.

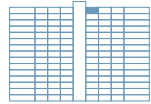
Betta for the community they say.

In with the new, out with the old.

In with bulldozers, out with the Greens.

# A Fatherless Child

Imann Mitchell



Growing up, my family was filled with killers and drugs.

One day I asked my friend what her father did for a living, she said he was a mechanic while mine was a dealer of drugs.

You see, that's how I missed out on his kisses and hugs because one day he fell victim to someone with a gun, and now I'm missing his love.

So let that be a lesson to you young heavies out there

Think with the right mind, and don't think you're too tough for anyone to cut your lifeline, because that will be the right time that they catch you slipping

Give you one shot that will have your whole block tripping

And when you're dead and gone he'll still be *glock* tipping

Until someone catches him slipping, you see, it's a cycle

But it's time to stop that cycle and put down the rifles. It's time for a change

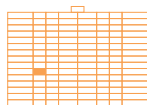
Go a different route, to help the community

Be a positive leader to a younger child

And enjoy the earth's beauty.

# Being Human

Maby Angulo



## **Just because I'm in high school**

Doesn't mean  
I'll get pregnant

Doesn't mean  
I'll do drugs

Doesn't mean  
I'll be in a gang

## **Just because I'm a girl**

Doesn't mean  
I don't get the same rights as men

Doesn't mean  
I have to be a housewife for the rest of my life

Doesn't mean  
I should get abused or raped

## **Just because I'm Mexican**

Doesn't mean  
I don't have the right to be in this country

Doesn't mean  
I shouldn't graduate and be successful

Doesn't mean  
I disobey the law

## **Just because I'm human**

Doesn't mean  
I can't make mistakes

Doesn't mean  
I can't believe in karma

Doesn't mean  
I shouldn't show my feelings towards others

**Just because I live in Bucktown**

Doesn't mean  
I shouldn't support Cabrini Green

Doesn't mean  
my community is not as important as other communities

Doesn't mean  
that where I live is more important than what surrounds me

**Just because I live in a home**

Doesn't mean  
I shouldn't help others who don't have a place to live

Doesn't mean  
I shouldn't care about where the people from Cabrini Green are going to live  
after they take it down

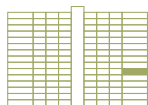
Doesn't mean  
I can't have a voice and express my opinions towards the demolition of  
Cabrini Green

**Just because I'm me**



## Welcome to Cabrini Green

Torian Fuller



ALL NIGHT ALL NIGHT ALL NIGHT

Do you see what I see?

ALL NIGHT ALL NIGHT ALL NIGHT

You see a radio jammed inside someone's window with loud music blasting filling the neighborhood with excitement.

ALL NIGHT ALL NIGHT ALL NIGHT

You see young adolescents outside. Playing, fighting, yelling, smoking, drinking, and shouting at the young girls around the way. Besides the fact it's a Tuesday night.

ALL NIGHT ALL NIGHT ALL NIGHT

You see multiple groups of older men. Shouting, drinking, gambling, and arguing about a craps game that went wrong. All look to be over the age of 30.

ALL NIGHT ALL NIGHT ALL NIGHT

You notice that the young girls rush their way over to the group of older men. Catching everyone's eye with their revealing clothing and grown woman attitude. Their parents tell them to watch themselves outside, but they don't listen.

ALL NIGHT ALL NIGHT ALL NIGHT

You see the local alcoholics and others strung out on some type of drug huddled together.

ALL NIGHT ALL NIGHT ALL NIGHT

It's the same thing over and over, and then it instantly comes to a stop.

ALL NIGHT ALL NIGHT ALL NIGHT

You hear gunshots and police sirens.

ALL NIGHT ALL NIGHT ALL NIGHT

The area is cleared away in fear. No one in sight. Total silence.

ALL NIGHT ALL NIGHT ALL NIGHT

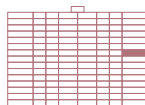
The local gang bangers return to claim the neighborhood as theirs.

ALL NIGHT ALL NIGHT ALL NIGHT

You see the everyday nightlife of Cabrini Green. Welcome.

## Talking about the Hood

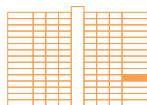
Kevin Stanfield



- Q:** So, what about your hood?
- A:** Man, my hood you get the guys talking to the Big Booty Lady, and the party, man, it is party time. The vodka and gin dude, the hood is crazy as hell.
- Q:** You love it, right?
- A:** It is so good, Boy, we party the day a-way.
- Q:** But what about the people who don't like to party?
- A:** Who, man, the cop-callers, the workers, and the people who lost loved ones? Man, fuck them. The hood say it is party time, yeah, so it's time for a crazy party to the death.

## They Are Not Alone

Michelle A. Rodriguez



I am happy that I have a place to call my own home  
Sad that some individuals don't  
Individuals old and young  
With old ripped clothes  
One pair of old ripped shoes  
To wear every day for many years  
Cold with no food

Living outdoors under a bridge  
Is their house  
Their home  
Not you or I  
Their true home is a memory that lies down inside  
They are not alone

They don't have a place to truly call home  
However, wandering the busy city streets  
As if the streets were their own  
Invisible  
Homeless  
Inadequate  
They are not alone

Families and children are the only sign for hope  
Yes! That is the reason, the innocent are left without words of their goals  
Feeling ashamed that violence  
Was part of what was once home  
They are not alone

Can we give those individuals a new beginning with hope?

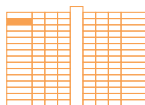
Alive, not alone

Alive, not alone

Alive , but not alone.....

# Home

Klara Suparman



Home is where I am  
Where my friends are  
Where my family is  
Where I can rely on those with me

Where it doesn't matter if we're  
Young or old  
Quiet or loud  
Fast or slow

Home is comfort  
Comfort in my faded clothes  
Comfort in being my sassy self  
Comfort in knowing what's right

Home for some is constantly changing like bipolar season  
Constantly out of my shaking hands' reach  
Constantly running away

Home is that rat-a-tat-tat that surrounds me  
That flow of words of lips that drown me  
That push and pull of life around me

Home isn't where I sleep  
Where I eat  
Where I brush my teeth

Home is who I am  
Living, learning, breathing, being

# Lost in This Tempest

Michelle Hurtado



I grew up in these buildings; it's all I've ever known.  
But then the city people came and said:  
"You have to temporarily move."

What's going on?  
This is my home.

What about my friends? My friends.  
No more knocking on each other's doors to play.  
Have to make new friends in a new neighborhood.

What's going on?  
This is my home.

My tiny room, whose broken walls are covered in my drawings,  
When it's all torn down, I'm gonna have nothing, nothing.  
Have to start from scratch.  
You have any idea how much dedication they required?  
All my hard work turned to rubble.

What's going on?  
This is my home.

It was hard saying goodbye, not knowing whether I'd see my friends again.  
Completely new people, everyone since I was a baby, a baby, left behind.

What's going on?  
This is my home.

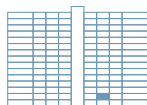
The colors are different in the new apartment, varied. Different.  
No clue where anything is.  
I'm lost in this unknown sea. I'm lost in this intimidating tempest.  
This tempest of new, unfamiliar things, swirling around me like my own  
Personal tornado.  
My temporary home, my blank room walls, and me, friendless.

What's going on? Out of place and blind.  
Back home I belonged, I saw and understood.  
Maybe the projects aren't the safest, prettiest, or the best,  
But for many of us, it's always been our home.  
For us, it's the most beautiful, the bestest. It's all we've ever known.  
These large, simple buildings, with graffiti on its bricks,  
This barely big enough apartment for my family of four,  
The familiar faces of all my best friends,  
These drawings covering my broken, beaten walls.

This is my home.

## My New Home

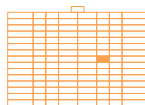
Jaquan Pickens



I moved...  
And when I did, I had to start anew.  
Left my home that was on a hill.  
I moved to a place called SEDVILLE!!  
New school, new people and new friends.  
I can't believe I have to do this again.  
New song by New Boys called "Jerk".  
And during the summer I had to work.  
It's not good to start over again for me.  
I got a job at the marching band called Q&B.  
As a new chapter started to end.  
A new chapter began and I made friends.

## Cabrini Green

Seamus Riordan



Growing up in a certain place,  
regardless of the negative aspects,  
you are emotionally and physically attached,  
and when this comfort zone is demolished,  
displacing not only you, but thousands of others,  
you are forced onto the streets,  
not able to have control of anything.  
Even though our country is overflowing with foreclosed homes,  
millions are forced to sleep in subways and vacant lots.  
And after these demolition sites are cleared, then what?  
More condominiums that will stand empty for decades?  
Just looking at the deteriorating buildings  
shows the rest of the world what less fortunate people have to deal with.  
Although these buildings are cracked and stained,  
they hold memories, memories of sentiment  
and history of the millions of poor people that have lived there  
through the decades,  
and to think that all of this will be knocked down by willing city workers,  
sending thousands into the desolate cave of homelessness.  
People have turned to things they would never have turned to  
if they had not been in the situation they are in,  
things that are hard to stop doing,  
addictions that are hard to break,  
turning to a life of crime to be able to support their family,  
making sacrifices to help their children.  
The appearance of the building is not important  
compared to the sentimental history,  
and to have this torn down is truly a tragedy.



## Forced to Endure

Alonnie White



To be rounded up like animals and shipped away to unknown places is what we have to endure...

To leave leaves of abandoned trees and strive HIGH where most people are afraid to die is what we have to endure...

To want to have goals beyond that of our bros seems so far FETCHED and STRETCHED in the place they call the PROJECTS is what we have to endure...

To tell lies within the eyes of a stranger who is no stranger to danger is POINTLESS and HOPELESS just like moving us into shells full of wishing wells where we can never be we...Again...

To shake our heads and close our minds only PRETENDING to be so blind because this is what the world wants so that they can point the finger at the niggers who so readily pull that trigger... That's what we have to endure...

We sell our soul for a little piece of gold so that our mother and our mother's mother can live in peace and harmony that only seems possible on that cartoon called Barney... That's what we have to endure...

We're supposed to go over there and frame while some don't even want to claim a land that was so graciously at the grasp of each hand and its own understanding...To life... That's what we have to endure...

The shackles that people bound us with...The ignorant language and unnecessary stench...Take us alive and throw us in a ditch... That's what we have to endure...

The demolition of our world... The reconstruction of our thoughts... the revolution of this matter is no longer senseless chatter... For what was once seen in the eyes of human beings...A soul...A breath... A step...A toll... That's what we have to endure...

You say that we are bad influences. That we are full of crime but the reality is...You wouldn't drop a dime or give the time for me and mine... That's what we have to endure...

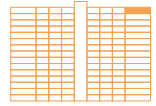
Can't you see that we will suffer?? Can't you see that we're trying to survive but realize that I am now deprived...Deprived of the right to prove you wrong about everybody in Cabrini-Greens...Because we can and will be seen... That's what we have to endure...

I will no longer endure the pain that you put on my people because this is deeper...Much deeper than even the grim reaper can contain but you still point the blame even though our world is being maimed... And our hearts are being strained.

This is what we have to endure...

# Old Days

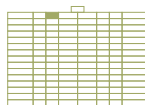
Corinne Jones



Those memories, a background of our everyday lives  
Old, dusty, black and white  
Sepia of the old days  
When I used to see you hang out with your friends  
Or when you'll see me play hopscotch with plastic Barbie dolls  
You know that we will still be friends, BFF's  
Told me that you never did like home  
That you didn't even have one  
When you seem to go down, I'll pick you up  
Up into the sky, where we will have nothin' but  
Good Days  
Don't think that you don't have a home, 'cause  
You'll still have me  
And nobody else 'cause I got your back  
Don't let it seep out your brain  
For all the pain and miseries you have  
Take my hand, your body against mine  
And we'll keep on walking home  
Till we don't even have to anymore

## Cabrini Green

Shivia Hardiman



When I was merely a fresh cement foundation, they foretold of my greatness.  
An opulent community's ideal segregated society.  
They molded bricks of wrath, selfishness, and greed.

Then with them,  
manifested me.

They built me of grand altitude—wide and robust.  
Weaved wires throughout me,  
and gave me a pulse.

Adorned me with windows and granted me sight.  
And like moths to a flame,  
The herd came,  
and thus there was the start

... My heart

Time expanded

Vandalized walls

Ignorance's offspring conceived in these rooms

Slayings in these halls

Gangs developed right outside these doors

Dreams smothered under these roofs

Drugs dealt on these floors

Ceilings that leak

Hallways that reek

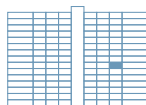
Busted windows

Elevators that don't elevate!

... and still my heart stayed close to me.

So today as I fall—dilapidated and rusted

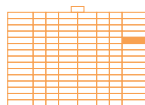
I take all of their memories with me.



Living life is not that easy, people will rather kill than get money like Chris Breezy. See, my life is a normal life; I fall down and get back up when the time's right. 16 trying to be a millionaire by 17, but little did I know dreams only happen in dreams? Football, baseball, yea, I am a sports man, trying to get my grades up, trying to fly like Peter Pan. But if you got God in your life, things will go right, now am sitting first class about to take flight. Living life is not easy, but if you got God in your life, things will go breezy. My dad told my mom "we can go around the world, just me and you hanging out in Hawaii like Barack do", and now they about to take flight first class. Life is not easy but you can make it last.

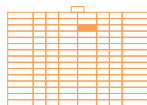
## Deadbolt Characterizations

David Farmilant



Waking to the landlady's screams, I  
Saw those deep marks in that mud that  
Dried in the early spring sun and  
The smell of tree buds and  
Rain and  
New starts  
That  
Didn't belong because  
The broken glass on our basement floor  
Was almost as bad as  
The mud prints on our clothes or  
Those footprints on my steps  
Or  
The deep brown scars they left  
On my mind  
Or that  
Broken glass  
Or those  
Muddy clothes  
Or the saw-dusted holes  
Where screws belonged  
My apartment had character  
And I remember my dad showed me  
What people were  
Capable of  
And  
What the world had to offer  
For a seven-year-old child  
But my apartment had character  
Because my neighbors had faith in their doors  
That became shrapnel  
But we had deadbolts  
And that apartment had character

Marisol Rincon



Home is a wonderful place,  
No matter how it looks, it is still your home.  
What matters is that everyone is together.  
But if everyone is not—  
Then there would be no longer a place called home.  
If families are separate,  
It might still be called a home  
And look like a home,  
But it won't feel like a home.

## With This Guy

Erin Miller



I've been here for twenty years  
With this guy.  
I've been there for him when he walks out—hollering—  
And I've never gone back.  
I've gone everywhere he's gone  
Creaking under his weight.  
I've held tin cans and wires and box springs from a mattress  
With my squeaking rubber muscles.  
I've been there when his eyes hold back tears  
Obeying the forlorn notion that he has to be tough.  
I've seen mouths erupt in screams of pain as we roll down the street  
As a circle of red spreads over their chest.  
I've been there watching his eyes flicker  
And falter.

Because each night we return down this alley  
Swerving around those potholes and those ruts  
As we turn right into the garage

With the rusty, blue-painted door  
And no lighting or heating  
Just grime and garbage.

And he slides off me into his bed, and

He's crying  
He's smiling  
He's staring  
He's whispering  
He's screaming  
He's being  
He's living.

I've been here  
With this guy  
Forever.

So it's not crazy for me to say  
I am home.



## A New Change

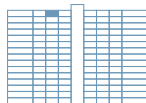
Jenetta Lumpkin-Bradley



We are a community who has knowledge  
We may say *No*, We may be *po'*, but deep inside we know  
Life is nothing but a learning experience,  
It's not how we live it, it's what we make of it  
Losing loved ones in violence, turning homes and buildings into dungeons  
Ooooooooooh yes,  
We know life comes and goes  
Destroying a life rather it's a person, place, or thing does NOT mean it's the end  
We all should stop the cycle from coming around again,  
It's *alllllll* about making a change in life.  
During our best or worst days  
We all should stay strong, keep the faith, and make the best out of our lives  
Starting today we need to understand that everything happens for a reason  
Maybe to make things better or worse  
However, we need to be aware that *eeeeven* though we may have  
More obstacles on us than happiness, just know it's NEVER a failure,  
It's just another step forward to *Successssss*  
Life may end a person's or an object's age BUT it gives US the opportunity to  
Walk, to Talk, to Live, to Give and to *Breeeeeeeeathe* until Eternity  
Life can have different meanings to a person, but we need to remember that  
Losing a home, a job, or a loved one, DOES NOT mean dreams are over for us  
It means that we are blind from seeing, and that's A New Beginning

# Why

Justus White



Why must we all have to live in a lie?  
Just to hear another voice of our people die.  
This, itself, enrages me in anger.  
But who really wants to hear the voice of a young black stranger?  
So all I can say is 'why?'

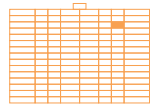
Why can't we live in a world where you can be you?  
How come people don't like you because of what you do?  
Soon as you hit those streets you better watch your back  
For those in which your abilities inside they lack.  
So all I can say is 'why?'

Why do we live in a world where everything my race does is bad?  
This in a sense is like being back-stabbed by your close friends,  
Which is kind of sad.  
I just really want to spread a deep message to this earth.  
To say that not all black kids are born the same at birth  
So all I can say is 'why?'

Me? Why should I always be the one to turn the other cheek?  
When a boy can't even be safe walking down his street.  
Sometimes my heart is filled with perpetual darkness and pain  
But it will never be enough for me to learn from this or gain  
The knowledge to know that this pain will not last  
This makes my heart beats one thousand times fast.  
Maybe one day I won't need to ask why  
Because the life I live, I know is not a lie  
Hope is of the essence, it will never be wrong  
All you need to do is keep faith and stay strong.  
So my last question I ask why  
Why can't we sprout our wings and just fly?

## Hot Chocolate

Gabriela Fuentes



A full breath, a deep breath of warmth  
Sweet lingers in the air.  
My hand heats wholly stirring the hot chocolate.  
The smell, so inviting seeps into the seams of my clothes and sticks to the  
walls of my house  
The fire boils the chocolate, the chocolate rises to my face.  
It's ready.  
"Ya esta listo el chocolate"  
*Pound, pound, pound, pound, pound, pound, knock, knock, knock.*  
"Ya esta listo el chocolate," I call to my cousins, my Tio, my Tia, upstairs.

My empty kitchen table gets full quite quickly.  
Chairs of different kinds—ones with wheels and stools—  
Steal space around the table meant for four now surrounded by sixteen.

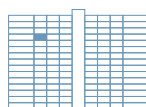
A sip, a sip of chocolate as I settle into my chair, steaming goes down  
warmly.  
A piece of concha, into my chocolate; the other half meant for my cousin.  
Sweet Mexican bread,  
tasted by Spanish-speaking lips that stretch across faces in smiles.  
The perfect picture:  
Full smiles,  
Full stomachs at a full table.

I dream, full and warm,  
yet, of perfect pictures shattered in empty, cold homes.  
Sadness.  
Those people hungry.  
Homes forced to be abandoned to be demolished,  
Along with the smiles and smells that inhabit them.  
The ones stuck in every crack in the wall,  
Sewn within torn jeans and tied between the laces of those who walked  
The streets of Cabrini;  
Those who paved the path of history.

Their perfect pictures, once nailed to those walls, diminished  
In a demolition.  
Left scattered to be reconstructed,  
Only possible with a mere sip of love and a taste of sweet, home, sweet home.

## Lost

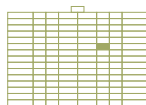
Ralph Lost



They really don't know how it feels to be pushed away  
Cold shoulders turn, heart yearns, and all the clouds are grey  
In the world alone—tell me, will we ever be OK?  
Government taking our homes so they think it's OK  
Life is a game  
So you gotta' know which role to make  
Whether to fold or play  
You gotta' know which road to take  
We lost  
So now we back to a ball of clay  
So to me I say, make everyday better than the last  
No looking back  
The past has passed  
Stand as a people, and the struggle  
Along with success we will have

## Demolish

Joseph Wells



Demolish  
Demolish Me  
No, not your childhood memories

Demolish  
Demolish Me  
The reason you were sent to the penitentiary

Demolish  
Demolish Me  
Your home in which lies your enemies

Demolish  
Demolish Me  
A place known as Cabrini Green

Everywhere you went there were  
People. People pushing you to do  
Your best, nobody cared that you  
Lived in Cabrini. Which will be  
Torn down by the “Go Green”

Demolish  
Demolish Me  
A place that eventually becomes 1  
Unity

Demolish  
Demolish Me  
A group of people who comes together  
As one, like a family.

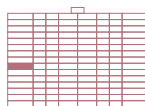
Demolish  
Demolish Me  
Your love, your faith, your blood

Demolish  
Demolish Me  
Your rights, your life, your brotherhood

Demolish  
Demolish Me  
A place known as Cabrini Green

## When I Walk in My Streets

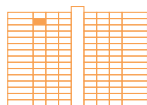
Nyshanell Freeman



Now when I walk in my streets all I see is open fields.  
Just to think back to a few years ago,  
These open fields had tall buildings.  
When I walk in my streets I can still see kids playing in the middle of the street.  
When I walk in my streets I can still hear loud music playing from people's cars.  
Now when I walk in my street all I see is new beginning.

## Heaven

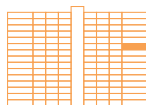
Ashton Foston



The People can feel the energy.  
Everywhere from Cabrini Green to Cicily.  
And sadly the feeling's still one of pity.  
See, they told you, if you're not living like them then just stop.  
But look at what Hov did, he softened them up with Roc.  
Now they're jumping out their socks at the sight of the people rising.  
They keep us in check when we try to connect, Verizon.  
My mind's on Zion. That's the reason why my heart's crying.  
Cause' it's preoccupied with its everlasting desiring.  
For us to re-realize they are gods and nothing less and  
We don't have to pray upward to receive our own blessings.  
People stressing whether I'm under the cross, ankh, or the crescent.  
But I challenge them all in a search for something refreshing  
Cause' this is Heaven  
If you create it.

## Message to the Universe

Sebastian Lungu

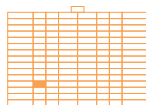


I always wished that I could go in the Universe and explore it. I wish I could explore other planets and maybe find an object that will make my home better. My home is a small but a very important part of the Universe for me. But how big is the Universe? Does it have objects that will make my home better? I mean, there are poor people who need homes and there are public houses, like Cabrini Green, but they aren't enough. There should be something that can change our lives, our planet, and our homes. Maybe some aliens in the Universe have perfect lives without money and with everybody being equal. If there is such a life in the Universe, then maybe aliens will find and teach us how to live a life like theirs. I remember one day at my school a quote was posted on a wall: "Live as if you were to die tomorrow; learn as if you were to live forever." From the day I read this quote by Gandhi, I always wanted to learn more and now I appreciate my life and know that I have to make something with it. But other poor people, who lived in Cabrini Green or other public houses, couldn't do anything with their lives and just tried to survive. I wish one day Earth will become a more friendly place where everybody will be equal and have homes, food, and a normal life.



## 7 Flights to Home

Lulu Matute



7 flights up to home

7 flights down to the rest of the world

7 up

To home-cooked meals

7 down

To businessmen that drug-deal

6 flights up

To the comfort of how momma's hugs feel

6 down

To lost boys that beat up and steal

I reach the fifth floor and study apartment door tattoos

Permanent like the regret of choices that led to mistakes

4 flights up

Memories of basement parties and blissful nights

4 flights down

Remembrance of fistfights that led to gunfights

3 flights

Up to home

Neighbors work together to catch each other before falling

In the cracks of the neglected building which they roamed

2 flights

To home

The same 2 flights I flew up

During adolescence as to rush my growth

Home on the seventh floor

Where I rested my head on the front of my door

Defeated by neighborhood brawls

7 flights up to home

7 flights down to the rest of the world

I'm seven-levels-elevated from the fiasco of the windy-breath-corrupted-Chicago

Home, with everything I know

I'm home in the esophagus of the breathing building

Beautiful and disaster in a high-rise  
My acropolis being swallowed from the bottom up  
Scheduled wrecking balls  
Demolishing memories of going...  
7 flights up to home  
7 flights down to the rest of the world

The sad eye to the rest of my door watched me walk away  
I peeped a tear falling from its hole

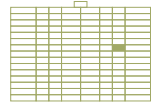
7 flights up to home  
7 flights down to the rest of the world

Memories of family and friends  
Followed me down to the sixth floor  
Revisiting visions of graffiti-plastered walls  
Followed me to the fifth  
A replay of stairway ciphers  
Escorted me out  
To the rest of the world  
Displaced, but my veins retrace  
To ground zero of Cabrini  
The muscle that pumped me to life  
Out in the world, Cabrini behind me  
I cross the street to find the rest of me  
I'm leaving home to come home

7 flights up  
7 flights down  
To the rest of the world

## Looking in the Mirror

Tatiana Mack



Looking in the mirror

*I be not who I'm suppose to be*

I've become a mother crying at the struggles ahead

Providing has become my biggest enemy

Do you hear my tears as I watch you destroy my home

You say I can't live in the past but you're not helping to brighten my future

Can you taste my fears as I pray to God?

Maybe we can make a deal

Peeling away flesh as it has become coated with my pain

I step out of old skin and force myself into something new

Looking in the mirror

*I be not who I'm suppose to be*

I've become a child not older than the age of three

I see you destroy the cracks where I used to play

Laughing and crying at how so many things have changed

Looking in the mirror

*I be not who I'm suppose to be*

I've become the thug that use to run these streets

Pants saggin' low, with 40 kilos of dope

Gun at my waist, drugs in my case I did all I had to do to save face

I've watched violence with a heavy heart

Sadden that

THIS

I was still part

Yet what can I do when this is all I am accustomed to

Looking in the mirror

*I be who I'm not suppose to be*

I'm a young girl happy to finally be free

Happy to be away from the fear of dying on the streets

Away from trash both object and human

Away from the drugs that wish to poison my mind and the 4's that only wish to waste my time

Looking in the mirror *I be not who I'm suppose to be*

I've become a grandmother looking at 93

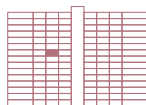
I could tell you a tale of all the things I've seen

Tales of dreams that were just dreams

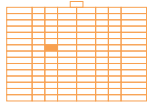
Tales of the successes and the failures of them all  
Tales of how my little one grew to be 6 feet tall  
Tales of how beautiful the community used to be  
Tales of all the dreams that became reality  
Tales of the gunshots that woke me from my sleep  
Tales of the murders that made my soul weep  
Weep to the point I couldn't eat  
C. Green was my home rooted in this soul that I own  
Looking in the mirror  
*I be not who I'm suppose to be*  
I'm 45000 voices that were not heard  
I'm 45000 forced to start new  
45000 forced to leave my home even if it was a little  
EWWWWW

## Tha' Home: A Picture in Itself

Paris Lockett



If you lived in my place, you would discover that I endured many hardships.  
Hardships like when he was taken from me.  
My Daddy, my life, he was everything to me.  
My home, this place I inhabited, took my uncle too.  
It put my other uncle in jail,  
And me?  
A child suffering with my state of mind being in a cell.  
So what to think...  
What to relate...  
My home, this place was bad but still had its goods.  
Winter brought free coats and toys.  
And when fall came around school supplies was there.  
And summer had its free lunch program and block parties.  
This home pulled me into two.  
I'm mad at me for the allure it has on me.  
I wanna leave but this is my home.  
This home...  
So bountiful in parties, family, and friends.  
This home...So strengthening of my character, mental endurance, and  
physical ability.  
This home, no one can mess with me because this home, my home, taught  
me to never step down.  
Where is my home, this home, you ask.  
It's on 14th and Blue Island.  
It's on Roosevelt and Racine.  
And now, till my grandma proves me wrong, it's on Roosevelt and Throop.  
These apartments were built in effort to house the ABLA residents whom  
they kicked out.  
I'm tired of everyone saying that they're for the good...  
This home, my home, maybe a beauty outside  
But on the inside it's inevitable, unsettled, packed with people,  
Babies crying, sisters arguing, animals cooing,  
And the smell and sizzle of chicken frying.  
Yet and still, it's unpredictable.  
My Home.

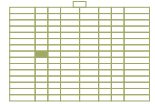


Amaya Mensinger

It was a crazy and frightful night  
My eyes and ears filled with light  
A sudden gust of wind swopped the trees  
I found myself crashing down on my knees  
A single tear ran down my cheek  
I heard the heater begin to leak  
My home will now be taken away  
Does this have to happen this very day?  
Cabrini Green was such a scary place to call home  
And now I feel so very alone  
So what, what will happen to my family and me?  
Though I think I may have sprained my knee  
Sadness and anger filled my heart  
Is this really the end, or is it the start?

# Ghost House

Asha Walker



Nightshade and elder vines that used to grow alongside our worn and  
Helpless fence  
Wrap around my arms and legs and neck and pull me from my dreams...  
...and make me long for long lost things

A box of a place, mirror image to the old one  
Flanked on both sides by its brothers and sisters  
United, a huge grey box the color of blood and cinder

Now we don't have the keys to its locks, but we're only a while away  
Far enough to cringe with need,  
But close enough to drop by and wave

At blackened windows, panes glimmering brighter than ever they did,  
At grass crushed flat beneath garbage cans, the white paint that  
Covers the green

This place is somehow lovely, and new, and pristine  
Empty, unshaken, and lonely,  
It cries so loudly that it pains us to listen  
That it pains us to tears to not speak the forbidden—  
I want to go home so badly I'd do almost anything  
That if I thought it would make a difference, I'd do something crazy

I'd take a flashlight and lock picks and see myself in,  
And spend a day, a night, a month lying in my old bedroom  
Just watching dust settle around me

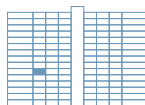
That if they'd lend me an ear,  
I'd take a knife and my tears and my stories  
And I'd show them that what to them is four walls and eleven hundred  
Is to me a ghost house, ringing with sound:  
Laughter, wailing, screeching, greeting, and sighing  
True contentment

I'd remind them that I'm human, more than a tenant  
I'd show them that I'm married to those memories for better or worse,  
For richer and poorer...

That that humble little box of a place, crawling with dust and peeling paint  
Was the place I grew up in and I'm still a tenant

And that little box?  
I'm dying to live in it.

Micah Johnson



**H** — The hurt & pain

**O** — The outrageous amount of suffering

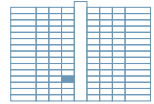
**M** — The moments we shared together

**E** — Enjoyable times we shared



## Why

Maria'h Foster



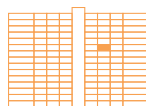
Praying and forsaking  
Nothing but faith that's most likely vacant  
From who? Not me  
The enemies that try to keep the sinful people from eating nothing because  
They have no mommies or daddies to run to  
Having them believe they got a problem when it's only the society's fault  
HEGEMONY!  
WOW! This is a cold case of death and thief  
Giving us options that we don't have the inner strength to refuse  
Giving us no opportunity to choose the life we live  
The life the most precious can only reveal  
You can break us down mentally  
Bruise us physically  
But you can't take our beliefs spiritually  
We speak in riddles and codes trying to be creative,  
To produce something on our own  
We go Mom's doubting me, Dad's abusing physically,  
And Brothers and Sisters on drugs mentally  
When do these fights end? This ish is crazy  
I don't want it  
Stereotypical politicians—that's ruling over us  
Tearing down our shelters and calling us the criminals  
Trying to increase hegemony  
Losing homes that were a part of me  
Now that's only my memories  
There's no place called home  
My comfort zone is long gone

All the rhymes trap in my own heart of lies, trying to figure out why who I  
was didn't last. Trying to fit in the popular categories of my peers, not as-  
sociating with 'friends' who care about what I fear.  
Making promises and then breaking them, trying to act tough and faking it.  
Thought who I was acting really wasn't who I was designed to be, but I knew  
my true destiny.

Unfortunately this thing called reality hit me.  
So caught up in this fairy-tale feeling,  
This control sensation that makes it hard to not repel  
So then I sat back.  
And I saw through the deceit that was surrounding me.  
In my heart I'm racing and in my mind I can't think.  
Eventually I found recovery.

## Home

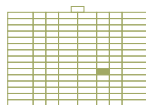
Dalia Bustamante



Home.  
Home is supposed to be safe.  
Your favorite place.  
Home.  
Home is supposed to be loving.  
Your favorite place.  
Home.  
Home is supposed to always be there.  
Home.  
So why is my home being destroyed?  
Where is my home?  
What is home now?  
Home.

## Picture This

Deono Matchem



Picture this, waking up every morning with the feeling of fear  
You hear gunshots and you ignore it as if it were crickets  
A mother coming in from her second job  
Working double overtime just to make ends meet  
Brother out at 3 a.m. hustling on the block  
Sister out partying while her son sits at home crying  
“When is mommy coming back”

Now picture this

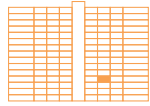
An unwanted guest that once inhabited these homes  
As well as many others  
A guest more deadly than AIDS, but even harder to get rid of  
This guest that puts a father in prison for trying to be a provider  
This guest that puts a young man on a street corner at the age of 13  
This guest that is the reason why kids look forward to lunchtime at school  
The reason why kids cry when the Link ain't on and all the WIC cereal gone  
This guest that turned a Building into a Burden

But picture this

Picture one day all of your greatest and worst days become memories  
The place that everyone claimed was infested with roaches and criminals  
And no it wasn't perfect, no home is  
But it was a home to Soul Survivors  
Those who we have long forgotten  
And those lost during the struggle always leave behind a memory  
A memory that will linger in the air until a day such as this  
When the place that gave them a home, and took away just as much  
Will join them, and become a memory  
So picture an image that many will never see clearly  
And though we all view the same picture,  
We depict it in a million and one ways  
So picture this, and answer this question  
Can you see what they saw?

# I Wonder

Alyssa Weyers



I wonder how they feel,  
How they feel when they go,  
How they feel when they leave,  
How they feel when they're gone,

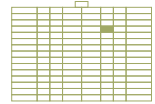
I wonder what happens,  
How it's destroyed,  
How it's exposed,  
How the darkness touches the heart,

I wonder if the sun ever hit the glass,  
The shattered glass,  
The broken glass,  
The glass that failed to reflect the sun and comfort people,  
The glass that had little time to make people happy and joyful,

I wonder how they feel,  
What happens,  
If the sun ever hit the glass...  
I think not.

# Night Comes

Damian Cabrales



The only thing that helps you sleep at night is the sound of death. Bang bang bang well there goes another. Hope to god you don't know them. When you wake up you ask, "Who died this time?" You're so tired of feeling for the dead so you only say "that sucks". When night comes to claim another you pray, "I hope it's no one I know". This time the night comes to hurt you as the bang bang bang comes from the front of your house. Death doesn't help you sleep this night only cry. You get up not wake up and ask, "What happened?" this time your uncle is dead and your dad has one eye. You pick up the phone and call 911. "Yes hello? My uncle is dead and my dad was shot in the eye. Ok bye." The cops come and push you aside as they take your family. Standing there no one comes to check up on you. It's midday and your mom comes home. She asks, "Where are your dad and uncle?" You look her in the eye and with your eyes you tell her.

Bang she falls to her knees and cries

Bang you fall to your knees but don't cry

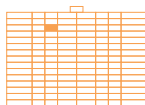
Bang nothing

She looks you in the eyes and sees you're dead on the inside. She knows she has to save you so she wipes her tears and asks, "What do you want to eat?" You look at the bags of food on the floor. "I'm not hungry" you tell her as you walk to your room. She cooks anyways because she loves you. The smell of food draws you to her. You both eat not talking to each other. Bang the spell of nothingness breaks you as the phone rings. She picks up the phone. "Ok thank you." She breaks down into tears and with that you know your father is dead. Night comes but it will hurt you in another way. You hear your mother cry at night and that sound of crying kills what little of your soul was left. Bang bang bang night has come for another.

Here is my expense in life

# One Goes On

Curtis Miranda

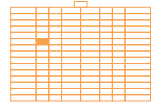


Friends are people who care. care.  
Everywhere. where. like at home.  
Home | like | a | dome. | dome. | sometimes.  
Small | as | a phone. | phone. | call on a phone.  
Who. | A friend. | when. | in my den.  
Again. yes again. | when. | at ten tonight.  
We will fight. | with a light.  
go and fly with a knight. | how high.  
Really high. | super high. that high. like hive. | hive.  
Five almost five. | dive. | we gonna dive.  
Live. | tonight at ten. when on CBS | yes.  
Do your best. | guess. you made a mess. or less  
Jess | you fail your test. | fail. | you're going to jail.  
Jail. | we gonna bail. | tail. | with a nail. | L. | with Gail.  
Without a tail. | Below. | so you know. | go. | outside and lay.  
By the bay and stay. | Ok. | Do as I say.  
How about I go eat some hay. | I can lay by the bay.  
And make things out of clay | I just made what you say.  
So Jack he was fat with a hat. | then we ran. | Dan. |  
He was a fan.

THE END

# I Carry My Home with Me

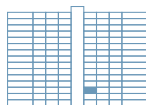
Paige Nygaard



Use thread  
place the stitches through again  
take my hand  
build these veins up again  
through the floor and concrete  
it's bleeding  
don't break them down  
force of hold that's making me  
Stand  
We cannot twirl  
us, not marionette dolls  
I cannot dance for you  
these thoughts and memories  
yours, or mine?  
Take my heart, brick  
by brick  
dreaming quick  
let the light seep in  
dripping through  
holding up the core of bone  
air we exchange between  
still feeling the same  
without walls to contain  
scatter ashes of self  
let me write time down  
inch, by inch  
growing into the wall  
no way to breathe it away  
tremble closer to nothing there  
dream no one can understand  
live safer, without me  
there  
my hand is in the doorway  
heart in the wall  
veins coming out  
trying not to fall

## Hands on Hips, Smiles on Lips

Mi'yanna Watkins



Right foot, left foot. Turn, STOP. Then breathe...

Stumble, Skip.

All I see is stage fright and dreams like Kanye West singing “Flashing Lights”. Tiptoeing across the floor with my eyes, and feeling the motions as my hands begin to rise. Seeking the tears as he begins to touch my thighs, the passion of his sin. Touching my 14-year-old body and the smiles he gets from touching my skin. The image of a swan-like Barbie constantly getting told, “Hands on hips, smiles on lips”. Getting stroked and kicked from relating my pain through my hips. Using the rhyme and similes from spins and dips. As he pushes me, he kisses my lips. The constant sound of “Hands on hips, smiles on lips”. Thirty-nine-year-old father clapping as I glide through the air, as he brushes up against me, caressing my hair. The blood, sweat, and tears from faith and sin, to down seeing my last jump caught by the wind. “Hands on hips, smiles on lips”. YES, I’m pretty, but to the stage, I’m graceful and talented. But on that night he brought me more than flowers, the last I remember: “Hands on hips, smiles on lips”.

But this memory was special because it was the last. He hit me too hard, and I shattered the glass.



# I Call It Mine

Nicole Carroll



I call it mine.

This place with every single possible emotion?

I call it mine.

Despite every crack in the molding,

Blankets not folded,

Left-over streamers from parties past,

Last night's dinner still in the sink,

I think, sure, I call it mine.

Even with every shout that has a mirroring tear,

Even when fear, here, takes those tears

And brings them to self-hate,

Even when hope is a concept that is blank,

I still call it mine.

And this is because of all that's left,

All the sweet words left unsaid,

Embraces after late night fights,

Knowing, if only for a moment, that everything's all right.

Showers that clean off the mess of the world,

Curled up silence when sleep so comes,

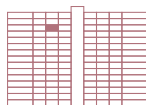
Yeah, I call it mine,

I call it home.

Should I not?

## Taken

Savon Clark



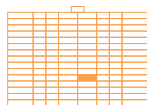
Cabrini Green is my primary home. Nothing can compare,  
not even the Superdome.

They took it from me, like candy from a baby.  
And they destroyed it, jus' like down there in Haiti.  
They took my community and ripped it apart.  
Now we don't remember, so we need a new start.

I used to play football, inside the black gate,  
with all my cool friends, *man*, it was great.  
Truth be told, yeah I made a few enemies,  
but family is your only true remedy.

Home is what you make it, so make it good.  
Cuz it's hard trying to live out here in da' hood.  
The stereotypes I heard about the Greens were incredible.  
Times have changed and we know it's inevitable.  
Just never let them sit you down in that pedestal  
Make your own goals and let them know what you're headed for.

Fernanda Angulo

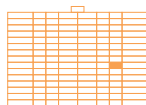


My home first started when I was little,  
how I would smell the nice glass windows,  
with a flavor of orange,  
the breeze around me of nice spring,  
the cats lying outside in the sun,  
the grasshoppers jumping around the garden,  
the sunlight in my hair,  
the feeling of taking a stroll to the park,  
walking through the garden,  
smelling fresh flowers,  
knowing that I am at home,  
no matter what happens.

Well, life was just unfair for the moment,  
I had to move,  
something inside me was freaking out,  
the sadness came,  
I felt like I was trapped in a cave,  
but I had no choice,  
just life brought me somewhere else,  
just blowing a goodbye kiss to my house  
that was my home,  
still is in my heart.

# To the People of Cabrini Green

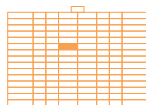
Michael Amaya



This is how I feel about Cabrini Green.  
I feel everyone who had a roof over their heads,  
Is heart-broken to the fact of what Mr. Daley said,  
I think they should get another chance, to live in a better Community  
I kinda live the same life.  
So this is my story of a home,  
Of my home.

My home is rough like my father  
My home is tough, so I don't bother being inside  
So I stay in the streets hustle every minute  
Tryin' to win it  
My home is colder then the weather. The forecast is no ceiling in December.  
My home is meant to get better. What should I do?  
I'm only a child, with a big dream  
I know this gun isn't lighter than a feather so I grip it close, my best friend.  
Watching as the sky dims down & soon my smile turns into a frown.  
I don't make a sound, I could feel my heart start to pound!  
So life isn't better now, life should be a treasure  
Is life really worth living?  
I know my roof was bound to fall I dream too far!  
So I step back & breathe for couple seconds,  
I know I'm not in heaven!

I start to think if you were to take my house away  
I'd feel more hurt than pain PHYSICALLY  
I wouldn't feel the same MENTALLY  
I know my life would change EMOTIONALLY  
I stay praying to G.O.D.  
To give me a better day &  
Let these clouds stay away  
So for now I hope my voice caught your attention, so please be quiet & listen.  
So my words could change your understanding  
Cause' everyone from Cabrini Green needs somewhere to fall back.  
In to move in to & not to lose & get kicked out.



Dear young Green,

How's life treating you now?

Is it better... is it worse... between the lines?

Are you still down in the slums, or are you excelling past choking dirt and broken roots?

Is change overwhelming for you?

Is a new slate your new phobia?

Are you still worried about the outcomes?

Is your mind still ruined like the debris of your past?

Will there be a day when you will smile, and say something close to thanking God for another day, another chance?

Is life treating you right?

Is life painful?

Better yet, are you dominant in your life?

Or is *life* dictating you?

Of course not... you're stronger than that.

Blowing dust and dirt off the rusted ashtray...

Have it washed, polished, pour potpourri to replace the debris and cinder that chokes and suffocate erstwhile.

Find your sentiment... your concise... your emblazon...

Hue-and-cry on the cracking concrete

What's been heard from an inspiring and an aspiring poet

'The rose that grows from the concrete...'

Thousands of roses... Rosenthal

Damaged petals fall and decorate forgotten thoroughfares.....

It's like, to delineate... a sort of closure.

Young Green, I ask you...

Is your mind still ruined like the debris of your past?

Hinder the chance to move forward. Maverick is losing, he is being subdued. Complacency overruled him at last, but he continues -- it's suicidal. When will he learn, age is just a number between him and his precocious baby sister.

The disease of diffidence, the symptoms so severe it's millennia of funerals for brain cells... Mawkish infant wails her grief, she's tainted by careless adults... the future is screwed, estrange, and traumatic... once again.

Soiled Maiden... save your tears over your defloweration... Lasc, his sadistic chara craves for your agony...  
So please... don't cry.  
Even though thugs cry at a time, be strong for baby Life.

# Never Will I Forget Their Dreams

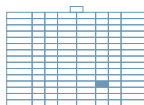
Nina Moore



Seen about a thousand dreams demolished into billions of pieces  
They tell me to chase my dreams, but how can I? When I'm constantly  
Waking up from sleeping?  
Hearing more shots than a Vietnam soldier,  
Blazoned cries and screams of fiends, trying to fill their pipes,  
To fights over making money only during sunlight, to scared,  
Cause the violence escalated throughout the nights.  
Cabrini Green, you are my life  
And you never gave up, quits, you had patience  
Fighting with me throughout these years like those  
Chemotherapy cancer patients  
They made it seem like we where a malignant growth of violence. A tumor of  
Poverty, abnormal upbringings, spreading news of us throughout the media,  
But only telling OUR MURDER QUANTITIES!  
Chicago Ave and Halsted, created more than just corner to stand on, your  
Walls supported a society where I learned to read and jump double-dutch rope  
They might have revoked your address, not even realizing what they were doing  
Serving me and all my family, a platter of disaster,  
Like those people from New Orleans  
We had to start over!  
They might have dispersed my friends,  
And stripped your identity,  
But they can NEVER obliterate our memories  
As I watched them tear your body down, tears rippled down onto my neck,  
I shook, like OCD, struggling to hold-up lighters, crying,  
I lost my best friend  
And at that moment,  
I saw 15,000 dreams, demolish into billions of pieces

## Can You Hear Me Now?

Brittany White

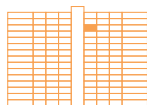


Can you hear me now? I'm calling you out  
Can you hear me now? I scream and shout  
We talk on the phone for hours and hours  
My phone bills going up like the Sears Tower  
Now I'm sitting in my room with nothing to do  
I'm sitting in my room, like I caught the flu  
Well it was one of those days not much to do, so I went downtown  
With my old school crew  
We went to the store to buy slices of pizza  
I ran into my friend named Mona Lisa  
She said 'Hey, what happened to your phone?'  
I told her just to leave me alone  
She said don't cry, dry your eye  
I told her that I'll give it a try  
So I went to my mom and asked her for my phone  
She told me just to leave her alone  
She let me know that I raised up her bill  
I told her 'Yeah', that I have another skill  
She said that she'll give me another try  
After she told me that, I felt a tear come down from my eye  
Now I'm sitting in my room like 'Can you hear me now?'



## Cabrini Green

Katie Polkinghorne



The rooms  
of Cabrini Green  
don't have walls anymore.  
But people lived here.  
They came back every night,  
they called this place their home,  
and maybe they still do.  
I've always heard it said  
that home is where the heart is.  
And now the building's bones are showing,  
neat little columns and rows  
crying for all that has been lost.

It's uncomfortable to see that.  
After all, it's not my life.  
Not my paint on the walls.  
It's not my tears that will wet the dust of this place  
when it's torn apart by the wrecking ball.  
This was never my home.

Seeing those walls,  
I feel the need to apologize  
for my  
invasive tendencies.  
But it was out there for everyone to see! I was only observing.  
I've done nothing wrong!

This is the mourning of those who loved  
and grew  
and hurt here.  
I do not belong.  
If I was on the inside  
looking at my own home being torn  
apart,  
demolished,  
it would be different  
but this is a private time.

Why am I defending myself for this,  
this crime against the people of a place  
so tragically shrouded  
in the misconceptions of outsiders?  
There is no excuse.

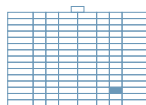
After all it has seen,  
all it has been through,  
I want nothing more  
then to look it in the face  
and apologize.  
Can't I just apologize?

I'm sorry.

I'm sorry for Cabrini Green.

## Hear Me Out

Shammyon Watson



Do you know me?  
Can you hear my cry for help?  
Do you understand my need for hope?

Look into me,  
Within my eyes. Past my reputation and where I grew up from...  
Put yourself in my shoes.  
Let me take you back, back how it used to be...into my house.  
Let me tell you what really goes down where I live.  
What they don't tell you on the news.  
If you haven't figured it out by now, yes, I LIVE IN THE GHETTO.  
I wake up every day, wipe the dried-up boogers out of my eyes and start my day.  
Mom's next door doing the grown folks, so  
She's not at home to feed me and my brother,  
But we have to get fed somehow.  
I have to make a way for us somehow...

Do you know me?  
Can you hear my cry for help?  
Do you understand my need for hope?

When I finally get situated  
And don't think about all my frustration,  
I head out the door facing nothing but discrimination.  
Everywhere I go, I get the same response,  
So I take my thoughts to the "local" pond.  
No one really understands my pain,  
But most of the time...it's always this way.

So tell me:  
Do you know me?  
Can you hear my cry for help?  
Do you understand my need for hope?

I sit at the pond for a while, but now it's about that time to get down to business.  
I go to the corner where my friends hang out.  
We pass out bags with plants and move about.  
Just to make sure that we don't get caught,  
We split up in shifts and at the end, round it all out.

It's close to dark now and the business is going good,  
But what you are now about to witness is what usually goes on in the hood.  
POW POW POW!!! I can smell the gunpowder in the air.  
I look to my left...no one's there.  
Then, I look to my right, suddenly standing there in despite.  
There he lies next to me;  
At my feet. The blood seeps...  
Out his chest, and in a split second, he was put to rest.

Do you know me?  
Can you hear my cry for help?  
Do you understand my need for hope?

I head down the block, sweating with fear.  
For some reason, I have a feeling that the police is near.  
Shhh...listen... *"reeer unnnne reeeer unnnne"*  
Can you hear it?  
Do you see the flashing lights?

If you look real close, you can see... someone's playing hide-and-seek in the dark.  
I'm hiding and the cops are seeking me out.  
I hear it again...  
POW POW POW!!! This time at the same time that I hear the shots, I feel the shots.  
I fall down onto the moist, dirty ground.  
I began to cry.  
Even though I didn't shoot my friend,  
I know that the policeman is going to pin the crime on me.

...

...

Do you know me?  
Can you hear my cry for help?  
Do you understand my need for hope?

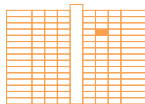
I lie there as the blood flows out of my body like a river.  
Time is going by fast.  
Every minute that goes past,  
My breath seems to become shorter and shorter.  
Now shortening by the second,  
I pray to GOD one last time.  
I ask Him to look after my little brother.  
My eyes drift close.  
I lie there as they put the handcuffs on me.  
No place is really safe.  
You just make yourself believe that where you live is safe  
To cover up the fact that "in reality" you're not.  
That when someone gets injured or killed,  
It's just another way for the "local" to be in your business.  
Filling their heads full of lies.  
Disowned by truth.

So I ask you once more:  
Do you know me?  
Can you hear my cry for help?  
Do you understand my need for hope?

Look into me, within my eyes.  
Past my reputation and where I grew up from.  
Put yourself in my shoes.

# Home

Rachel Weyers

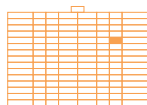


A home is a home.

A place where you spend most of your life,  
A place where the family is together,  
A place where you feel loved,  
A place where you can be yourself,  
A place where you can always go,  
A place where my dogs sleep in the shadow of the blazing sun,  
A place where memories are made good and bad,  
A place where your heart is filled with each and every word,

How do you feel taking these people's home away from them?  
After all a home is a home.

Sara Nieto



Time is time  
Time is hours  
Also it's minutes  
Time is very long  
It's also very fast  
But what is time?  
It could be lots of things  
So time is time  
Always will be  
Time

A home is your home  
Home is where you live  
A home is where the heart is  
What is your home?  
My home is your home  
Your home is also my home  
Love your home, it's your only home  
Take care of your home  
Your home is special  
We are all special  
Even our homes

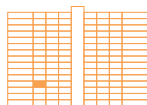
What is your community?  
My community is special but dangerous  
Sometimes it is  
But what about yours?  
Is it safe?  
Is it dangerous?  
Well, you better protect yourself  
Because a community could be  
dangerous!

Cabrini Green is a place  
But not just a place  
It's a home  
A home for the Cabrini Green people  
Think about Cabrini Green  
It needs help  
Because it's gone  
So help them  
To find a new home



# I Look out My Window

Bianca Ariel Moreno



I look out my window and  
I see a gang fight...

I look at my family and  
I see love and support...

I look out my window and  
I see broken beer bottles...

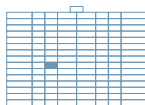
I look at my friends and  
I see hope...

I look out my window and  
I see the people I know and love  
fighting to survive...

I look at my family and  
I see people who will never quit,  
who will never stop fighting for what they deserve as human beings...

## What If

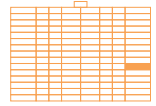
Marquise Jackson



What if you live in a world that's drug-crazy  
Your parents deserted you  
And your godparents is lazy  
I think that's sad  
That's at least what I say  
Because time is money  
And there is no time to play  
So think of your money  
As your education  
You know you got to have it  
I don't know what you are doing  
But I'm gonna grab it  
I may look like I don't have it  
But trust me when I tell you  
I got it  
I need it  
I want it  
I will put my money on the table  
And own it  
Take me for instance  
I have no style  
I have no flair  
But when I rap  
No one can compare  
Of what's coming  
It's like lighting  
I Know I am not Zeus  
But I call myself a Titan

## When a City Loves...

Aliyah Oyemade



Carried in baby carriers across corners  
To watch the mourners cry over the sinners  
Where streets passed over avenues  
Having fools get saved  
At food and liquor stores that  
Casted shadows over our Baptist Church  
And when your gritted sidewalks touched my shoe soles  
And your night swept starry view laid me down to sleep  
I knew, I couldn't blame you

As I grew old  
Through the winter you got cold  
Whipped me with your windshield winds  
When I acted wrong  
But on the nice summer days you brushed  
My hair back with a breeze of your breath  
Cried in the spring when your offspring caused another death  
Then used to hear you fall into laughter  
You were bipolar

Let's face it, I couldn't blame you

When dirty men laid hands  
Where your center heart was  
Moving in and out  
Then displacing your body structure  
Placed every vertebrate on your corn-rowed spine  
Upward to look like a skyscraper  
Of course they weren't through  
Till they had every part of you  
Guess your body was worth more money

I knew, I couldn't blame you

In your slippery south vessels  
Where the gang boys kissed

The side of your feet  
On streets with their mouths open  
Beat the curb, shattered their teeth on your skin  
After their brothers bashed their heads in  
You couldn't educate your kids well  
Getting too old to take care of them  
So they lost control

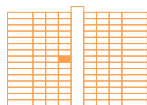
And we knew, we couldn't blame you

Cuz you sheltered us  
Even after we beat your reputation down  
Like potholes in the ground  
And even after replacing the cracks in your face  
And your plain fair-skinned plot blemishes  
With brown brick powered condos  
And even though  
You loved us even with S&M  
When we pricked your skin  
Covering with worn bandages  
But within you never really healed...

So why should we blame you?  
When you whipped our left side with your winds  
Trying to turn us right  
Cried uncontrollably over our sins  
And in your bipolar nature  
Grew cold  
When we grew old  
Cause all we left you with  
Was beaten potholes  
When we knew you helped us grow  
I knew you helped us grow  
Now I know you helped me grow

## Unwelcomed Change

Haley Prince



I am a place where hopes and dreams flourished.  
Where friendships prospered.  
Family traditions were born.  
People fell in love.  
Children went to school.

I am beautiful.  
I am a home, a shelter, a safe haven.  
I am praised.  
I am welcoming.

A few cracks in my foundation.  
My walls caving in.  
Damage to my exterior.  
Conditions around me, less than perfect.

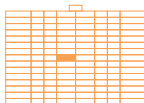
I am broken.  
I am no longer safe.  
I am disregarded.  
I am a problem.

I am a place where artificial escapes, violence, and false hopes flourish.  
Set to be destroyed, demolished.  
Soon to be an empty lot,  
forgotten.

I am a displaced family.  
I am a child missing her friends.  
I am for the better.  
I am the future.  
I am change.

## Home Is Within

Daniela Aguilar



Home is within  
the memories,  
the laughter,  
the simple treasures.

Home is within  
the talks,  
the feuds,  
even the friendly mocks.

Home is within  
the hearts,  
not these walls,  
but the thoughts.

So go,  
have it destroyed  
because I know,  
Home is within.