Remember to Read,
To be in a different body, able to do anything,
Remember to escape your worries, leaving your world behind you,
Doing the impossible,
Remember to fly through every dimension, having no limits,
You can fight dragons, and do things you would never be able to do in your world of reality,
Remember to flow through books,
Never an ending to the different voices,
Different worlds,
Different lives,
Exploring new things and looking through others perspective,
Remember how you are in someone else’s shoes,
And you are free

Remember the Moon and the Sun,
The king and queen of the sky,
Remember how they guide day and night, making sure everything is balanced,
Never too much light or too much darkness,
Both beauty beyond our earth,
Remember how every night and every day you look up and see them towering over you,
Knowing that’s the reason you are there too,
Remember how they are the sun and the moon, the king and the queen, the emperor and the empress,
They will always be the unearthly glow that keeps the Earth alive
Everything around us is taken for granted, from the Sun to the Moon to the very wind at our backs. It is with us so often, we don’t think of it as essential or vital. Just...there.

When it is taken from your life, you notice it. You crave it, you hunger for it, like food to a starving man. When you are alone, surrounded by four walls away from fresh air, cut off from the sun, absent to feel the very wind. Or even to hear the rainfall outside your room.

You forget how important they are to you—how it feels to exert your legs to climb simple steps. How the sun glints off of the leaves of the trees. How the wind sails past you and creeps against your skin, like the cold embrace of a thousand needles.

It is strange how inviting the clamor of a city can be after so long away from any noise—the only sound for you the beeping of machines, the pacing of nurses, and the beating of your own heart.

There are few who know of this curse.

There are fewer who have lived it.

When I had been released from the hospital after my bone marrow transplant, I knew this feeling firsthand. I felt as the sun kissed my skin after a month of absence, I shivered as the wind crawled against me. I sighed in fatigue when I had walked up a hill for the first time in weeks and I had grinned like a child on Christmas when I was able to feel the rain on my head again.

Now I know, nothing should be taken for granted. It all can be taken away, and once it is you don’t realize just how vital it is.

How important and crucial it is, until it is gone.
Pillar

AUDREY DRAKE, AGE 18
PORT TOWNSEND HIGH SCHOOL, 12TH GRADE

I have lost my fellow soldiers...
Downed by age,
Fallen by time,
Drowned by water.

I now stand alone.

My head, made of wood and filled with knots
Is tortured by harsh winds
That cut like knives.
Birds have built nests on my head
From the hairs of far off shores.

My feet are sunken in mud,
My ankles wear bracelets of small fish,
My body deteriorates under layers of barnacles.
Youth is long gone,
Hidden by growing kelp beds.

My eyes burn from the salt water
That washes over my thoughts.
Splinters are all that is left
Of what was once my strong hands,
That use to hold up the people
That dare walk on water.

Now all they hold up are the sky.

Currents wrap around my body
And as the wind picks up
My feet are pulled from their holding place
And my water logged body sinks,
And settles and disappears in between the seaweed.

The water’s surface now complete,
I have joined my fellow soldiers,
I am one of the fallen.
My Name

RIN DuCHARME, AGE 12
BIG PICTURE HIGH SCHOOL, 7TH GRADE

My name is shadow
You could call me broken
I’m always here,
But only my friends can see,
‘Cause they see the fault and troubles you cause
Remember me.
I believe that everyone’s a little insane, all my friends agree
All bodies frozen in time.
But there always moving, running
I come from shadows and black holes, the secrets you keep
I bathed in empty promises and deceit.
My people are known for hiding in the corner only
observing
You can only see their eyes
But even then, you’re drawn in and can’t escape
Something people don’t know about me is that I’m always here
But never really there
They think we’re all sane,
But my friends know your secrets they know what keeps you up at night
Living here in the neverland is nice until the sun falls,
‘Cause then my friends all disappear,
Once again I’m lonely.
The radio in my head plays emptiness
It plays cobwebs and violence
Sometimes it isn’t so easy for me to believe,
Believe that sun has to rise and fall again,
For eternity
If I could sing myself a lullaby,
It would be one that finally let me sleep.

This writing was created during the Seattle Arts & Lectures’ Writers in the Schools (WITS) 2020-21 residency at Big Picture High School with WITS Writer-in-Residence, Daemond Arrindell
Peace

GWYNETH FEBUS, AGE 15
NATHAN HALE HIGH SCHOOL, 9TH GRADE

Peace and I met at 2 in the morning
with my head hanging out the window to catch snow
on my tongue
He was so cold and refreshing and new
He breathed out white clouds
And the light of the moon reflecting on his skin
So I vowed to make him my friend
Peace and I played at the playground even though we
were far too big
And our soft whispers could be heard late into the
night
We ate cold pizza and watched shitty romantic
comedies
And screamed out the lyrics of songs that I used to cry
to in middle school
But now made me infinitely happy
Sometimes I got anxious or overwhelmed and he left
for a bit
I guess I was too much for him
And he too much for me
And every day he got most distant, off to help someone
else I guess
But you can still see glimmers of him in everyday things
Peace is how excited dogs get about everything
Peace is flowers over a grave
Peace is buying art supplies
Peace is being alone in a bookstore
Peace is being in a pulsing concert joined by the same
song
Peace is listening to thunderstorms
Peace is catching snow on your tongue
This Bowl of Soup

MARCUS FRANTELA, AGE 13
RENAISSANCE SCHOOL OF ART AND REASONING, 7TH GRADE

The times I smell the sweet and sourness of the broth
I know the night will be filled with joy.
The pork
so tender
Just slips off the bone
Like slipping into a fantasy of other worlds and imagination
Infused with the taste of the broth
It’s the kind of meat
just by thinking about it,
your mouth starts to water
and your head is filled with flavorful thoughts
It will fill up your mind
as does a dream of a fantastical world.
All the creativity in the world
built into this bowl of soup.
The vegetable
the perfect balance
The spinach and the sweet onions give this wonderful flavor
that adds so much it
Without them, it couldn’t be the same
There is always a need for balance
They are the counter
when there is light, there is dark
The perfect dishes have a story of opposites flavors
balancing each other out
This balance is from a faraway universe
locked in your taste buds
only able to travel there through the taste of the savory
flavors
All the conflict in the world
built into this bowl of soup.
Motion in the Ocean

JANAYA HALL, AGE 19
SEATTLE CHILDREN'S

I believe in peace
I believe in community
I believe in happy tears
I believe in sad tears
I believe in forgiving tears
Tears that don't forget
But tears that are strong enough
To have the wisdom to know
When to walk away
I believe in serenity
I believe in the motion of the ocean
And the waves of breath
That keeps the anxious tears from going too far

I don't believe in the current of the sad tears
That keep me awake until 3 a.m.
Giving me that bad motion of the ocean
The nausea, the vertigo, the anxiety
Biting off my lips
I don't believe in the anxious phone calls
So bad that my teeth tremble down to my stomach

I wish I believed that the flowers in my room
Were not sitting on a hospital window
I wish that those flowers were symbolizing
The colorful days of my future
I wish that the yellow flower that was once
Fluffy and bright wasn't orange and wilted and sad
I wish that my work apron that I once loved
To put on was not folded in a bag in a corner
In my hospital room
I wish I was not folded in a bag in a corner
In my hospital room.
The Church of Movement

DORIAN HAYES, AGE 16
BALLARD HIGH SCHOOL, 11TH GRADE

prayer is when you’re fourteen years old
riding the bus home from
a protest that ended two hours too late
and the cops running after your friends
because when you’re sitting in that bus seat
humming the lines to the song you were singing but
didn’t learn
an old woman will sit next to you
and talk about herself and how
she threw a brick through the window of a car and how
she worked as an illustrator for biology textbooks and
how
she believes in you and when she gets off the bus
you smile,
because you just met god.
keep on singing to yourself, sweet child, sweet boy,
but this time a hymn—
to the church of movements and moving
My name is truth …
but you could call me right on my ancestors’ history,
because being right is telling stories with meaning…
Remember me.

I believe in equality for my brother’s children …
I am built from glass which reflects truth and shatters
with lies…
Remember me.

I come from strength that my African ancestors have shown
in true times of peril …
My people are known for resilience
like the water that can’t be broken…
Remember me.

Something people don’t know about me is I’m curious…
They think I might be uncultured …
but the truth is I want to know the culture of others…

I wish I had known who I was going to grow up as …
because when I was younger, I would have changed faster…

Living in my neighborhood makes me want to imagine a
perfect world…
The radio in my head plays spontaneous…
And it sounds like a rhythm…

Sometimes it isn’t so easy for me to believe how broken
thoughts create distorted memories…

My shadow looks like moonlight, a hope of what I would
become…

When I’m sad, my heart sounds like a drum…
But when I’m feeling strong it sounds like a beat…

If I could sing myself a lullaby it would sound like a prayer
for the future…

In my next life I’ll be a memory of a household name…

This writing was created during the Seattle Arts & Lectures’ Writers in the Schools (WITS) 2020-21 residency at Washington Middle School with WITS Writer-in-Residence, Daemond Arrindell
Not Good at Grieving

DEILAH IVANEK, AGE 16
THE CENTER SCHOOL, 11TH GRADE

i want to sneak out at night and sit in empty parks and play truth or dare. i want to go for long walks and have a picnic. i want to eat lunch together with my friends again, sit at blue water and talk about meaningless petty shit and flirt and steal bites of their food. i want to run to the monorail and squeeze in next to them. i want to walk on pine street and wait for the bus and feel the wind blow my hair and laugh. i want to run down the streets with my backpack bouncing and go to kmart and buy cheap snacks and sit and eat. i want beechers and humbows and bubble tea and quincy’s fries. i want to stay up late and laugh and hear her play dragon ball durag and tell secrets. i want to go to the beach and kick a ball around and sit by the fire. i want to cuddle up in a million blankets and watch horror movies. i want to sit on the floor in the loft and lean on his shoulder doing my homework last minute. i want to whisper secrets at the water fountain. i want to take the train or a bus and sit there and fight over who’s gonna sit in a different row. i want to go out to dinner and walk around the city at night. i want to share airpods and hear a new song. i want to get lost and go stargazing and be hugged. i want to dye my hair. i want to skip class. i want to get dressed fancy and go to a dance and then leave and play on the playground.
Dancing is My Passion

IVY LORCA, AGE 10
DEARBORN PARK INTERNATIONAL ELEMENTARY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, 4TH GRADE

Dancing is you with me
floating on the sea
with the sunshine
on your face
like you’re on stage
with the lights on
finding your way back
but you can’t leave
Dancing is like poetry:
the song never ends
Poetry is like the beat
of the music
when you dance
like an echo of a voice
asking you to dance
You always say yes
like you can’t resist
like the moves your teachers say
you already know
with your heart spreading wide
like they don’t know
Dance is poetry, they’re both alike
on the beach
You are going to the sea again
Everyone’s watching
but I don’t care
Find your way back to fresh air
Dancing is my passion
as you can see
With me on the stage
setting all your worries free

This writing was created during the Seattle Arts & Lectures’ Writers in the Schools (WITS) 2020–21 residency at Dearborn Park International Elementary School with WITS Writer-in-Residence, Samar Abulhassan
The Mushroom and The Rock

AMANDA MILLER, AGE 12
RENAISSANCE SCHOOL OF ART AND REASONING, 7TH GRADE

This writing was created during the Seattle Arts & Lectures’ Writers in the Schools (WITS) 2020-21 residency at Renaissance School of Art and Reasoning with WITS Writer-in-Residence, David Lasky.
She Sits Next to Me

CASSIDY MURRAY, AGE 13
TOPS K-8 SCHOOL, 7TH GRADE

she sits next to me
and i can feel her heartbeat
she tells me stories of her past
of the rain and the morning prayers
and the leaves
and with every word
i fall in love
more deeply and strongly than i ever
have before.
i remember
the lake in april
the cry of the hawk, the deer in the shadows.
i remember
the yellow sky, so vivid we worried it would explode.
i remember
her hand on mine
sitting on the shore,
beads of water glistening on our skin.
the crocuses blooming,
 stopping to admire them.
the chirp of the chickadee
and she told me it was scarlet
and my voice was liquid gold, seeping through the cracks
in her foundation,
healing
slowly but surely.
and she grinned
and said
i am not ruined
i am ruination
and my heart opened
and i no longer wanted to cry
because she knows me so well.
is this love?
or am i just too desperate?
or am i just imagining things?
Odes to My Birth

QUYNH NGUYEN, AGE 14
EVERGREEN HIGH SCHOOL, 9TH GRADE

Three...two...one, just one more second
Only one more for a present
I wonder if this whole life is a running race
Eh... a loud cry from baby
The cold air sparking to this room,
Yet feeling a warm-up in parent’s arms
A tear slightly drop down from sky,
the sky of all lovings
Eyes are universe,
a space for shadow emotions
Why can’t babies jump up right away?
Wow! How amazing would that be?
They are tiny sand in desert,
born with curious eyes for whole new world
You came to me as a sun
Who shine my way to my future
Who training me in this life,
Give me my own property,
have everything I’ll ought to,
do anything my freedom allows me to
Oh, this moment of birth!
I wonder who borned you?
Gasp! They should save trillions of lives
build thousand of buildings
Your appear is a king,
You control this kingdom
this country, this galaxy
You are more than just a normal person,
You are a superman
I adore you like Devendra Banhart
Through how you add color, image and then rhythm to my journey
No birthday cake, balloons or parties
None of these beat me off
I can get through no matter what
But who knows how my life is
How it is if just missing you
Days to days in darkness
You matter my whole life
I love you, my birth!

Three...two...one just one more second
Close this book and open again
And in no doubt,
An Vietnamese girl did come to this Earth!
Poem of Silence

SAIOA OUYOUMJIAN, AGE 11
CATHARINE BLAINE K-8 SCHOOL, 5TH GRADE

Words.
Everywhere and nowhere.
Everything begins with them, a poem, a friendship, a thought.

To have silence, is to have words.
To have peace, is to have words.

Floating around you unseen.
You think then speak allowing the words to spring to life.
Blossoming terrible or wonderful.
Words dance around you being heard, being told.

Except the ones that aren’t.
The ones that are kept to yourself.
Not just unseen, unheard, untold.
Kept in darkness never able to blossom.
Kept inside because...
They may be greeted with anger.
Or maybe there’s no reason, no reason to share because you know you will meet disappointment.

That’s where the silence is made.
The silence of words.
The silence where your words are shared with yourself.
The silence where your unshared words make you burst.

Too many thoughts, not enough people.
That’s what makes a different kind of silence.

A silence not forced, but made.
By you, and everyone around you.

That is the silence that hurts.

This writing was created during the Seattle Arts & Lectures’ Writers in the Schools (WITS) 2020-21 residency at Catharine Blaine K-8 School with WITS Writer-in-Residence, Sierra Nelson
Marco Strong

AQEL PAIN, AGE 10
TOPS K-8 SCHOOL, 5TH GRADE

(An excerpt from the tall tale “Marco Strong”)

One day, a person came to Marco’s house and asked, “Could you come and fix my door frame? The outer wood is starting to crack.”

“Oh my!” Marco responded. “I can do that. Just give me a few hours to do it.”

“Thank you!” the person said gratefully.

So Marco spent the next four hours replacing the door frame. Marco believed that the longest work made the most effort and the best quality builds. But not everyone did.

The next day, Marco went to the Space Needle to see the new remodel. When Marco got there, he noticed just how tall the Space Needle was. It was so tall that at that moment, the needle on the top poked the moon and it deflated and came flying down to earth, straight toward the Space Needle.

“Look out!” Marco said. “The Space Needle is going to fall on us. Run!” Marco ushered gaping people away from the area. Just then, with an almighty crash, so loud that all of Australia heard, the moon hit the Space Needle and it came crashing down. Marco ran to MoPop and lifted the whole entire building off the ground and stuck it right where the Space Needle was about to land. Then, with another crash, ten times louder than the first, the Space Needle smashed to smithereens on the MoPop building.

Just then, Australia yelled, “What is going on over there, residents of Seattle? You are disturbing our sleep!” Marco stumbled out and coughed. The weird thing was that his pencil was still on his ear and he had his clipboard in his hand.

“Nice remodel! It was totally awesome!” Marco said sarcastically. Then, he walked over and checked on the people, who had scattered into the Arboretum and the Children’s Museum. Luckily, everyone was ok.
I like to drink coffee on sweet-illed mornings yet I don’t have an appetite for time. Both my ears and eyes feel as though they are vacant and withered. Like a stranded ant in the hills that can’t survive without its colony.

There’s times where my hands would shiver as they run over my eyes, and then attempt to seal the sound around me but still the only thing I can do is hold my breath until the monotonous bitter aroma of coffee is the only thing I can taste as I try to stumble my gasp. Even so, it’s okay.
No Name! No Title! Just Real Life!

ZAVYE’ RIVERS-JOSEPH, AGE 11
LESCHI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, 5TH GRADE

Here is to my Parents my two grandmothers too, who do so much for me in everything I do. Here’s to my ancestors. The ones before me. The ones who paved the way so I could be whoever or whatever I want to be.

Here is to my friends. My BFFs My Ride or Dies Friends Forever no matter where we are, I’ll cherish the moments forever.

Here is to a mince without a defense. Here is to the bottom of my heart where the sun makes light. Here is to the people that promised but never delivered.

Here is to the kombucha without a luffa. Here is to the lost people that can’t seem to be found. There is still hope for you just look around. Here is to the Grateful and Unbound; we’re all very blessed we all have minds that are still very sound.

Here is to the children within our generation; Always strive to be your very best, strive to be more, never settle for less.

To the Mod without a God, I encourage you to try mine. He’s someone that you could learn to love, I promise you it won’t be a waste of time.

I hope this poem has encouraged you as much as it has for me. This will not be the last thing that you’ll ever hear from me.
The Ocean

ESTELLE RYMAN, AGE 12
HAMILTON INTERNATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL, 6TH GRADE

When I was small
I went to the beach
And I stared at the waves
And wondered what was on the other side?
So I asked my mother
And she told me China
China was on the other side
But I could not see it
because there was an

Ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean
Ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean
Ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean
Ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean
Ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean
Ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean
Ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean
Ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean
Ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean
Ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean
Ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean
Ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean
Ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean ocean

Blocking my view
Of China
Self-Portrait Poem

MIYABI SCHORN, AGE 9
LAFAYETTE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, 4TH GRADE

i have a body small and impatient, and feet that can jump, arms that can climb, fingers that can type, a head that can nod, my brown eyes that can see, and a great big imagination.
The Two Americas
THEWDROS SHIBESHI, AGE 18
FRANKLIN HIGH SCHOOL, 11TH GRADE

For anyone who has been paying attention,
There are indeed two Americas:
There’s an America that’s a world of white racialesentment
Where the Confederate flag proudly flies,
Where monuments to traitors are to be revered,
Where protesting racial injustice is an intolerable act of
aggression,
Where the words “Black Lives Matter” are considered
words of hate.
And there is what I like to think of as the real America,
A deeply flawed country
Starting to come to grips with the wages of racism,
Hatred and racial division,
A too-violent police culture,
A wealth gap,
An education gap,
A health insurance gap.
A country that believes in its better angels
A country that knows it can do better!
Homage To My Brain

JULIAN SMITH, AGE 9
B.F. DAY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, 3RD GRADE

My brain is
Perfect and
Imperfect and
Hyper and
Fast and
Slow in some ways but
Running at infinite speed and
It hears and
Plays music and
I see colors and
Vibrations and
I feel restless and
Still
And
Silent

This writing was created during the Seattle Arts & Lectures' Writers in the Schools (WITS) 2020-21 residency at B.F. Day Elementary School with WITS Writer-in-Residence, Samar Abulhassan
Who made the camel and the spider?
Who made the scorpion?
This scorpion, I mean—
The one whose sting is worse than a bee’s,
The one who is pinching left and right,
Who is digging oh so fast,
Who walks very proud,
How it blends in with the rocks and the sand.
Now it walks away from explorers—
I don’t know exactly how to walk.
I do not know how to scurry,
And how to dig,
How to blend in with my surroundings,
How to sting and pinch.
How to survive in the desert—
Which is what I have been doing all day—
Tell me how to walk.
Tell me how you walk on the beautiful desert!
Red

ADRIAN H. VAZQUEZ, AGE 18
ALAN T. SUGIYAMA HIGH SCHOOL, 12TH GRADE

My red is plain.
Red is for the bloodshed of soldiers while they take lives
As the screams of their victims yell with a painful cry.

Red is for the roses with thorns that sting
As a slight pain fills the tip of your finger
The smell of metallic drops fills your nose
Blood dripping
Painting the once white floor.

Red is for the flames that engulf the world
While a voice shouts “Run Away” while a small part burns
Ashes cover the grassy floor
Running until your feet are covered in red and ash
Turn around you’ll see a bloody path that follows back.

Red is for the sound of a bang
A wall splashed with a bit of blood
But later to be covered by a red warm cloth
While he where’s a crimson coat.

Red like maple leaves as they fall with a slight cold breeze
While a red bird sings a smooth melody with an odd tone
As the sun slowly goes down
With a naked eye you can see the horizon showing a bright smooth red light.