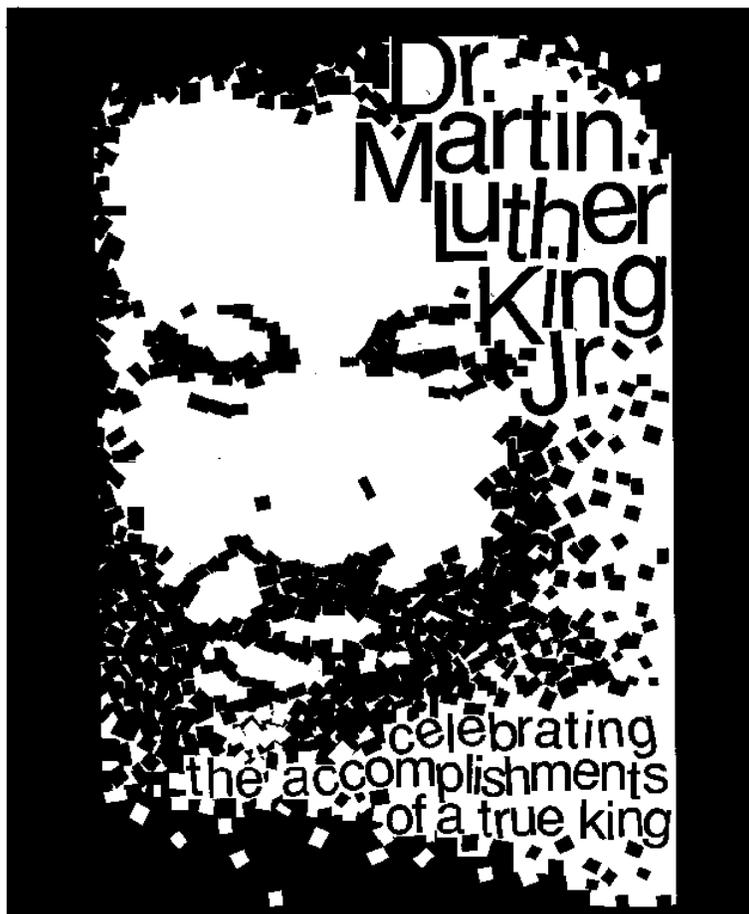


# COLORS, Celebrating the Diversity Within



Original Paper Collage by Brooke Vangel - Columbia, Missouri 1995

Essays and Poems by Columbia Public School Students

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Columbia Values Diversity Celebration  
January 17, 2002

## An Echo From The Past

"I have a dream that all my children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character. I have a dream."

We all have that dream where we would be together by what we were inside and look at us now. Because of the September 11th event, we are all coming together as one instead of as 1000 people with different thinking.

We were all scared, but we all came together and helped out with family and friends dying. We all sent our hearts out to heal others. We will always remember the day where our own people were used as bombs and died for the United States. We will always remember the people that are fighting for us and the people that helped each other by doing all they could do to save citizens.

Every one did their part in their own way. The firefighters helped by putting the fires, out, and the people coped with their losses as best as they could. Unnamed people, who died by choice and love of freedom not to let all humans become bombs for our nation's buildings, will never know how thankful and how proud we are of the.

This is what I mean when I say that we are all united into one when something hit our United States. This is how Martin Luther King wanted us to be – put together as one.

Yes, September 11 put us together in the right way but for the wrong reason. We were apart until this tragedy, now we are together as we mend this hurt. This is what Martin Luther King wanted us to be, but it has happened in different ways than he dreamed. In time circumstances may change, but the dream is still alive.

**Sara Lane, Jefferson Junior High, 8th Grade, Teacher Ms. Sinclair**

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It's easy to see  
You're no different from me  
We walk with a different sway  
And speak in a differing way  
My skin burns in the light  
And yours is dark as night  
We each come from a separate place  
And have a unique nose upon our face  
But we're the same don't you see  
We are the human race  
And together we set the pace  
Because we know the truth  
That it's not an eye for an eye, or tooth for a tooth  
We know nationality against nationality is wrong  
It's not the beat to our song  
For we look to the character coming from our insides  
To see the true person that there resides  
Yes, we are the same.

**Rachel Bacon, Rock Bridge High, 11th Grade, Teacher Mrs. Turner**

## We the People

We the people in order to form a more perfect union live together and help each other everyday. Everyone deserves equal treatment in the U.S.A. Harmony is beautiful. Hatred is ugly.

**Kelly Steinhaus, Ridgeway Elementary, 4th Grade, Ms. Seymour**

### **In the Eyes of a Blind Man**

No white nor black nor Hispanic nor Jew,  
There'd be no racism between me and you.  
For a blind man can't judge from the color of the skin  
So no racism can hinder him  
The blind man has been hidden from the thing we call hate,  
Now I call that a quality trait.  
In a way we are blinded by rage and fear,  
But soon we'll be united; the time is near.  
Through peace and love we'll come together  
And life in peace forever, and ever.

**Cory Schmidt, Jefferson Junior High, 8th Grade, Teacher Ms. Ridge**

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### **A Cry to My Fellow Americans**

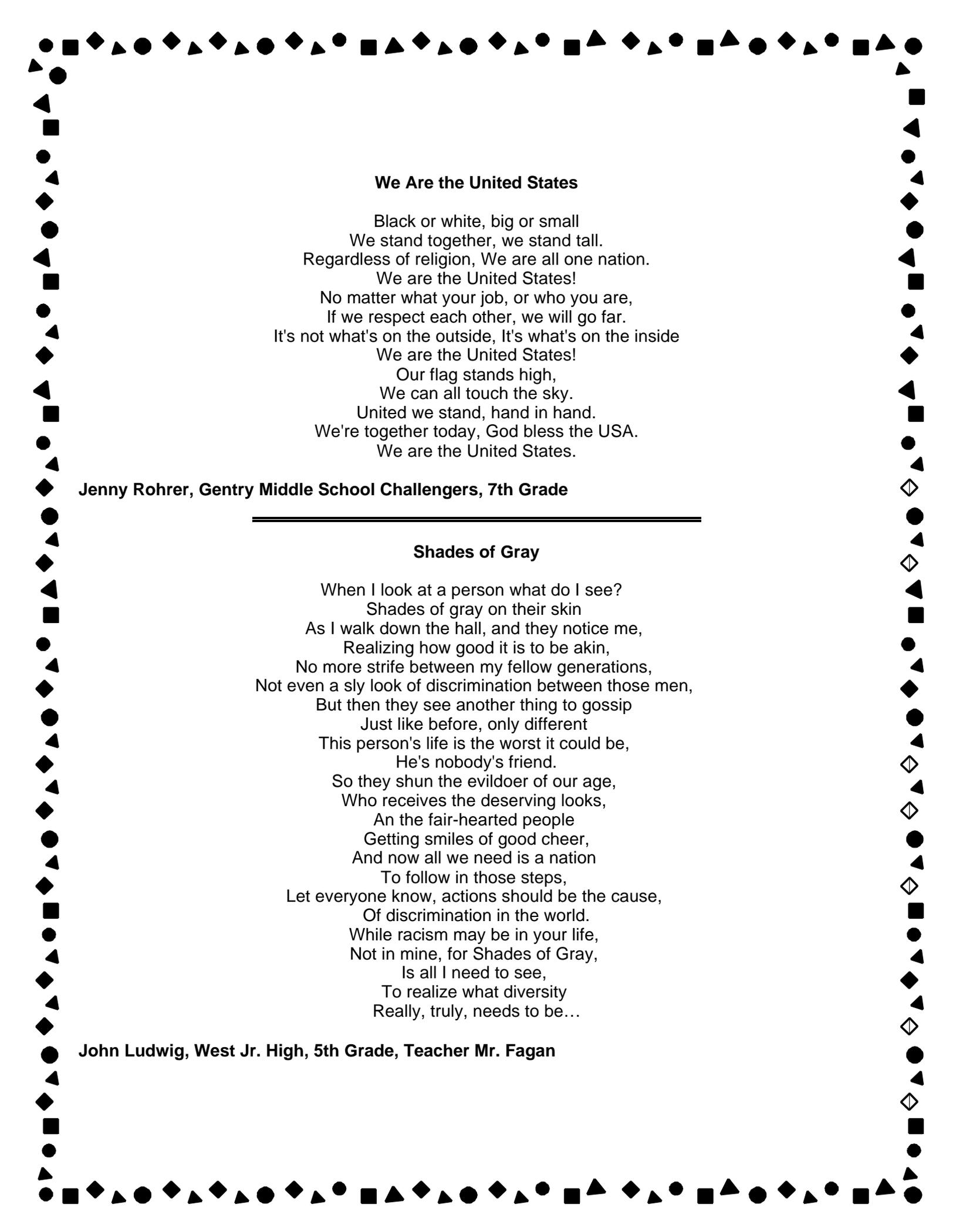
I sometimes lay awake at night and wonder why I was born right here in Columbia, and why I feel so safe, so insignificant, but so free. I guess I was blessed with a great deal of luck. I get carried away with life, and forget many things I take for granted every day. I can walk down the street without getting stared at, I can go take a drink at any drinking fountain, and I can purchase goods wherever I please. These are not freedoms that everyone can say they have, and an even greater number did not have for a large period of history. I challenge everyone to wake up and realize that not everything should be taken for granted. Since September 11th, we have been thrown 'Back into the Fray of History.'

No matter how small you think you are in the grand perspective of the world, just think of yourself as a piece to a puzzle. If you choose to be lost under the couch or hide yourself under the rug, then the puzzle will not be complete. Everyone plays a role, some drastically different than others. In the words of Mike Murdock, "Your significance is not in your similarity to others. It is in your differences." There are so many various faiths to choose from, so many great people sharing their customs with each other. Sharing ideas with each other is the fastest way to grasp knowledge. Always keep an open mind, no matter how perfect your method of living is. Teachers always tell their students to share because two ideas are always better than one. A

country such as ours with ideas coming from so many different perspectives and opinions can only benefit our stability and success.

The most important thing to keep in mind is, we are a role model for the world. If we wish to see equality and peace throughout the world, we must not be hypocrites. We are the example, not a perfect one, but nonetheless, we are the model. Our pride and joy is our freedom and comfort that we are the bread basket of the world. Words mean nothing without the commitment to personal hospitality. Our Muslim neighbors, our Black brothers, our Asian friends are no better or worse than each other or ourselves. Everyone is together in this great big game of life. Everyone may have a different political, social, and religious agenda, but we are all trying to run down the same path. Here in America, we see people slip, but we do not let them fall. Everyone is our comrade, and we must support them. We all have the same goals, pursuits, and livelihood. Why not work together? Sometimes we do not always look the same as our brothers and sisters, but we are still family. Every American is a part of that family. And I am honored and proud to be a part of its lineage.

**Austin Estabrooks, Rock Bridge High, 12th Grade, Teacher Mrs. Turner**



**We Are the United States**

Black or white, big or small  
We stand together, we stand tall.  
Regardless of religion, We are all one nation.  
We are the United States!  
No matter what your job, or who you are,  
If we respect each other, we will go far.  
It's not what's on the outside, It's what's on the inside  
We are the United States!  
Our flag stands high,  
We can all touch the sky.  
United we stand, hand in hand.  
We're together today, God bless the USA.  
We are the United States.

**Jenny Rohrer, Gentry Middle School Challengers, 7th Grade**

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**Shades of Gray**

When I look at a person what do I see?  
Shades of gray on their skin  
As I walk down the hall, and they notice me,  
Realizing how good it is to be akin,  
No more strife between my fellow generations,  
Not even a sly look of discrimination between those men,  
But then they see another thing to gossip  
Just like before, only different  
This person's life is the worst it could be,  
He's nobody's friend.  
So they shun the evildoer of our age,  
Who receives the deserving looks,  
An the fair-hearted people  
Getting smiles of good cheer,  
And now all we need is a nation  
To follow in those steps,  
Let everyone know, actions should be the cause,  
Of discrimination in the world.  
While racism may be in your life,  
Not in mine, for Shades of Gray,  
Is all I need to see,  
To realize what diversity  
Really, truly, needs to be...

**John Ludwig, West Jr. High, 5th Grade, Teacher Mr. Fagan**

I am a thirteen year old girl who was born and raised in the United States of America of Pakistani parents. Does that give you any idea of what I like to do in free time? I am a thirteen year old kid, who has a black belt in karate, likes to bicycle, volunteers at Boone Hospital and tries to be a good citizen. What do you think is a more accurate description of an individual?

Some people treat others based on their background, and I don't understand why. Does being of a certain descent make a person who he is? In these hard times in America, I get a reaction when I tell people I am Pakistani. I get a reaction when I tell people that I am Muslim. My reactions are anywhere from surprise, nervousness or fear, but mostly curiosity. But almost every time that I get a reaction, I get an assumption.

I am suddenly treated differently; I've suddenly become an alien. Why? Aren't I the same person you've always known? Not for some people.

You cannot judge a book by its cover. You can not judge a person by their color. What does it matter what race I'm from or what religion I practice, as long as I'm a good decent person. If we teach everyone that character matters and not race, then we will have many more tolerant people. Everyone will be given an equal chance to prove themselves, and that is a goal worth working toward.

**Nabihah Maqboo, Jefferson Junior High, 8th Grade, Teacher Mrs. Ridge**

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### **The Character of a Person is More Important than Their Skin Color**

The character of a person is more important than skin color because:

- ❖ Black people are really nice once you get to know them.
- ❖ When it comes to fights between non-white and white we find out that one of us is just being crazy.
- ❖ Nobody should judge a person before they get to know them.

THAT IS WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO GET TO KNOW A PERSON AND NOT TO JUDGE WHAT A PERSON IS REALLY LIKE.

**Katelyn Cockrell, Derby Ridge Elementary, 4th Grade, Ms. Fagan**

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### **Nameless Hero**

I don't know your name, and you don't know mine.  
But, I have heard of you, time after time.  
You don't expect money, glory or fame,  
But, you would give your last breath to the person with no name.  
In every day life we have probably passed  
A look, a nod, but, no bond that would last.  
But as I lay here along and afraid,  
A calmness comes over me, as your presence is made.  
The closer you get, the more at ease I feel.  
Its then that I know, my hero was real.  
I don't know your sex, race or size,  
But, you're probably a normal person in every ones eyes.  
Being this close to death, there is one thing I have found,  
There are heroes everywhere,  
Just look around.

**Brandi Drummond, Rock Bridge High School, 12th Grade, Teacher Mrs. Turner**

The most valuable thing about a person is who we are inside, not how our appearance is on the outside. Our skin color and nationality shouldn't matter when we make judgments about others or ourselves. In fact, Eleanor Roosevelt said:

*"No one can make you feel inferior without your consent."*

When someone tries to make us feel bad by doing something based on our appearance, we cannot let that have a big impact on us. We should be proud of ourselves because of whom we are and let other be proud of who they are. Differences are the things that make each of us special.

There are many people who stood up for themselves and others. One of those bravest people was Ruby Bridges. Ruby was a 6-year-old African-American girl that helped integrate schools and went to school with people yelling and throwing things at her outside. Martin Luther King was also one of the greatest people. He was brave and went for what he thought was right. The most important thing that he fought for was equal rights for all Americans looking beyond what skin color you have.

I am a Korean-American. Although I was born in the U.S., my parents are from Korea, so I look like an Asian. Ever since pre-school, I have been teased because of my appearances of having black hair, dark brown squinty eyes, yellowish-tan skin, and a nose that is considered flat. One time I came home from my pre-school crying. I told my mother that I had been teased because of my black hair. My mom calmed me down when she showed me a picture of Snow White. Snow White had black hair and so my mom made me feel better about having black hair. We need to be open to other cultures, nationalities, appearances, and religions because when we don't do that, then it makes others feel really bad.

When people accept different individuals as they are although they have different colors, races, religions, and beliefs, it draws us together. My friends from school now are always very good about this. One has even gone with me to the school International Fair and dressed up in the Korean traditional dress. The people there didn't mind her, even though she wasn't Korean. She eats sushi with my family and doesn't mind when we do different things than she does.

We need to value our differences and ourselves. We can only be open and kind to others if we are open and kind to ourselves first. We need to come together and accept our differences. When we judge people, we seem to do it so quickly before we get to know the person. We should value the inside of a person rather than the outside of that person.

**Connie Cho, Russell Blvd. Elementary School, 5th Grade, Teacher Ms Sedgwick**

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It doesn't matter what color you are or what you look like just as long as you get equal rights as everybody else in life.

**Jasmine Jenkins, West Boulevard Elementary, 5th Grade, Teacher Mrs. Williams**

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### **Look Behind the Color**

Color, color doesn't matter,  
People should be judged by their character.  
Get to know the person  
Before you make the decision.  
It's not a game  
Look at their record.  
Don't just pick the person who looks the same.  
Color, color doesn't matter.

**Rachel Rutter, Grant Elementary, 5th Grade, Teacher Mr. Hogan**

## YOU CAN BE YOURSELF

Each person that has touched your life has marked a special memory or time, and they have done so because of their individuality. An individual by definition is distinguished by particular attributes; distinctive, or it can be defined, a particular person. Individuality is something that I treasure in everyone I meet. Every person has certain things about him or her that make them who they are, and now, more than ever I look around and am so thankful for all the individuals that surround me. Whether that is because they act a differently, dress a different from the way that I do, talk a different way, or have different beliefs. In my mind, the color of a person's skin, or their ethnicity never gives or takes away person's individuality. The outside is never something that should be looked at when determining if your are going to become friend with a particular person, or if you are going to invite them to your party. The inside is what I look for, and what helps me to decide if I am going to hang out with a person.

Every friend I have is different, and one of a kind and I love each of them because of that. I love them for all of their individualities and because they have strong character. Character is the qualities that distinguish one person from another. I feel that each person should be himself or herself, and never, no matter what try to live their lives like someone else to enable their character to grow. To me it does not matter your age, race, ethnicity, religion, or background, the only thing that is important to me is the content of your character.

The United States is the great nation it is today because of individuals who were not afraid to be different. Over the years many people have, either made the history book, touched many lives, came up with new idealisms, which they could not of done if they were afraid to me different or afraid of being laughed at. Individuality is the threshold of our society, without it, we would constantly be bored, and begging for adventure. For me it is so hard to understand why people discriminate against the very thing that makes life interesting.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is my hero. He went against the majority to present what he believed in, and helped to stop discrimination. Discrimination defies every belief and moral that I was brought up with. From the first day of kindergarten we were taught to invite the child we saw standing alone to join our game, even if they were not our friend. The teacher told us it was how we meet new people, it is also, how we learn about others and learn to love and respect our differences. Discrimination was very much alive in the days of Dr. King' s life and is still living today, although in many different forms. Discrimination may never stop, but I can say that I will never promote discrimination and will do my best to stop every form of discrimination that I see take place.

Individualism is the very thing that makes life real and exciting. Individuals such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. are the very fabric of our country. They make our societies the way they are today, and will be in the future. There is no reason to deny your individuality. Hiding your individuality may actually be the reason you are not accepted, people may think you are too boring, or too much like someone else.

Let yourself be free, let your individuality out, and embrace the differences you find in others.

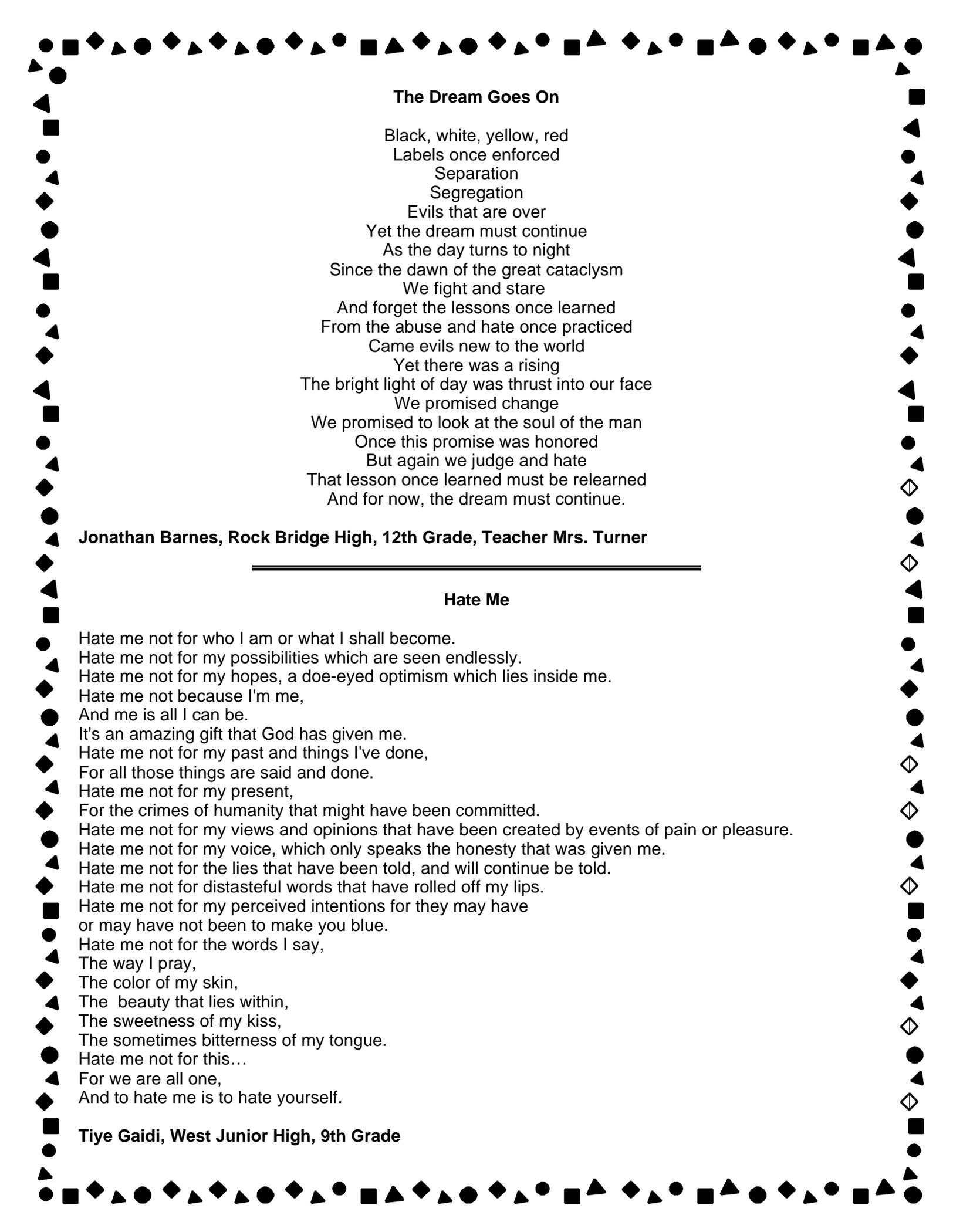
**Elizabeth Uptergrove, West Junior High School, 9th Grade, Teacher Mrs. Dobbs**

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### What Determines

What determines who someone is? Is it the color of their hair, the clothes they wear, or the job they have? Is it the color of their skin, what religion they practice, or where they come from? If someone is tall, short, skinny, or big, does that matter? The answer is no, none of that matters. Who the person truly is inside is what really matters, and what counts. Those who judge others by the color of someone's skin, what they wear, or where they're from need to know that none of that matters. Once we can all realize that, we can unite, like so many of us already have done. We just all have to remember that the character of a person determines who they are.

**Hailey Stamper, Jefferson Junior High, 8th Grade**



### The Dream Goes On

Black, white, yellow, red  
Labels once enforced  
Separation  
Segregation  
Evils that are over  
Yet the dream must continue  
As the day turns to night  
Since the dawn of the great cataclysm  
We fight and stare  
And forget the lessons once learned  
From the abuse and hate once practiced  
Came evils new to the world  
Yet there was a rising  
The bright light of day was thrust into our face  
We promised change  
We promised to look at the soul of the man  
Once this promise was honored  
But again we judge and hate  
That lesson once learned must be relearned  
And for now, the dream must continue.

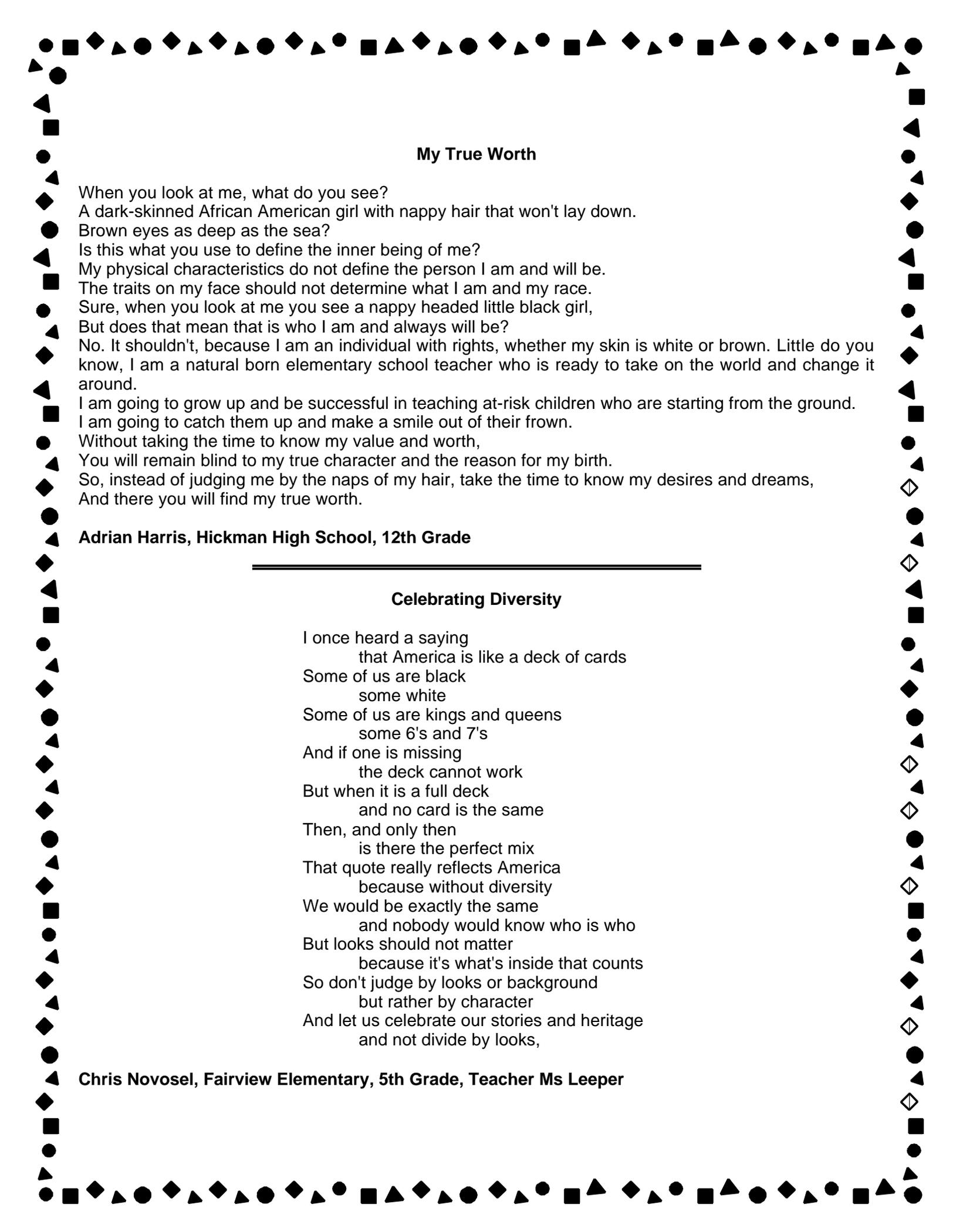
**Jonathan Barnes, Rock Bridge High, 12th Grade, Teacher Mrs. Turner**

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### Hate Me

Hate me not for who I am or what I shall become.  
Hate me not for my possibilities which are seen endlessly.  
Hate me not for my hopes, a doe-eyed optimism which lies inside me.  
Hate me not because I'm me,  
And me is all I can be.  
It's an amazing gift that God has given me.  
Hate me not for my past and things I've done,  
For all those things are said and done.  
Hate me not for my present,  
For the crimes of humanity that might have been committed.  
Hate me not for my views and opinions that have been created by events of pain or pleasure.  
Hate me not for my voice, which only speaks the honesty that was given me.  
Hate me not for the lies that have been told, and will continue be told.  
Hate me not for distasteful words that have rolled off my lips.  
Hate me not for my perceived intentions for they may have  
or may have not been to make you blue.  
Hate me not for the words I say,  
The way I pray,  
The color of my skin,  
The beauty that lies within,  
The sweetness of my kiss,  
The sometimes bitterness of my tongue.  
Hate me not for this...  
For we are all one,  
And to hate me is to hate yourself.

**Tiye Gaidi, West Junior High, 9th Grade**



## My True Worth

When you look at me, what do you see?

A dark-skinned African American girl with nappy hair that won't lay down.

Brown eyes as deep as the sea?

Is this what you use to define the inner being of me?

My physical characteristics do not define the person I am and will be.

The traits on my face should not determine what I am and my race.

Sure, when you look at me you see a nappy headed little black girl,

But does that mean that is who I am and always will be?

No. It shouldn't, because I am an individual with rights, whether my skin is white or brown. Little do you know, I am a natural born elementary school teacher who is ready to take on the world and change it around.

I am going to grow up and be successful in teaching at-risk children who are starting from the ground.

I am going to catch them up and make a smile out of their frown.

Without taking the time to know my value and worth,

You will remain blind to my true character and the reason for my birth.

So, instead of judging me by the naps of my hair, take the time to know my desires and dreams,

And there you will find my true worth.

**Adrian Harris, Hickman High School, 12th Grade**

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## Celebrating Diversity

I once heard a saying

that America is like a deck of cards

Some of us are black

some white

Some of us are kings and queens

some 6's and 7's

And if one is missing

the deck cannot work

But when it is a full deck

and no card is the same

Then, and only then

is there the perfect mix

That quote really reflects America

because without diversity

We would be exactly the same

and nobody would know who is who

But looks should not matter

because it's what's inside that counts

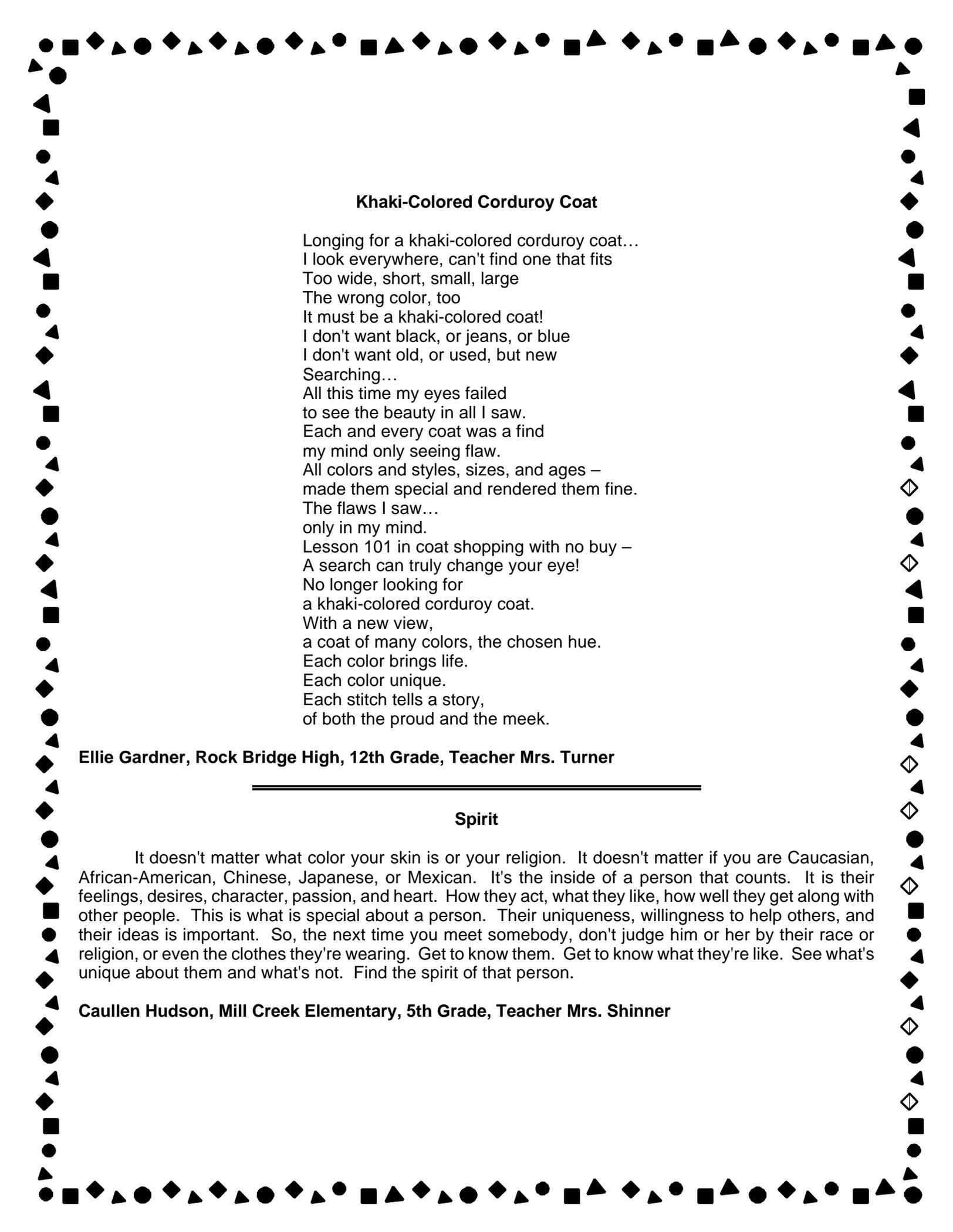
So don't judge by looks or background

but rather by character

And let us celebrate our stories and heritage

and not divide by looks,

**Chris Novosel, Fairview Elementary, 5th Grade, Teacher Ms Leeper**



### Khaki-Colored Corduroy Coat

Longing for a khaki-colored corduroy coat...  
I look everywhere, can't find one that fits  
Too wide, short, small, large  
The wrong color, too  
It must be a khaki-colored coat!  
I don't want black, or jeans, or blue  
I don't want old, or used, but new  
Searching...  
All this time my eyes failed  
to see the beauty in all I saw.  
Each and every coat was a find  
my mind only seeing flaw.  
All colors and styles, sizes, and ages –  
made them special and rendered them fine.  
The flaws I saw...  
only in my mind.  
Lesson 101 in coat shopping with no buy –  
A search can truly change your eye!  
No longer looking for  
a khaki-colored corduroy coat.  
With a new view,  
a coat of many colors, the chosen hue.  
Each color brings life.  
Each color unique.  
Each stitch tells a story,  
of both the proud and the meek.

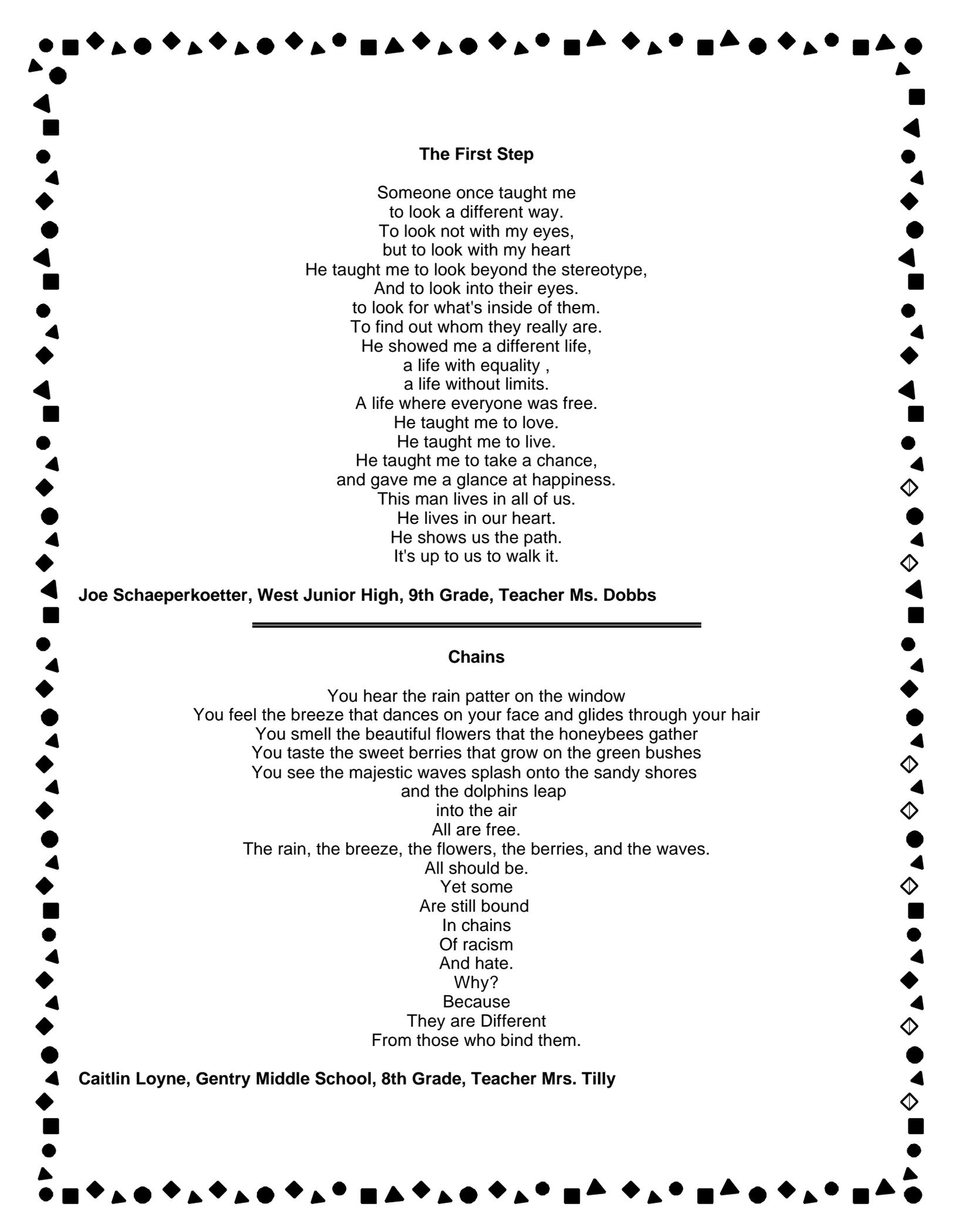
**Ellie Gardner, Rock Bridge High, 12th Grade, Teacher Mrs. Turner**

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### Spirit

It doesn't matter what color your skin is or your religion. It doesn't matter if you are Caucasian, African-American, Chinese, Japanese, or Mexican. It's the inside of a person that counts. It is their feelings, desires, character, passion, and heart. How they act, what they like, how well they get along with other people. This is what is special about a person. Their uniqueness, willingness to help others, and their ideas is important. So, the next time you meet somebody, don't judge him or her by their race or religion, or even the clothes they're wearing. Get to know them. Get to know what they're like. See what's unique about them and what's not. Find the spirit of that person.

**Caulen Hudson, Mill Creek Elementary, 5th Grade, Teacher Mrs. Shinner**



### The First Step

Someone once taught me  
to look a different way.  
To look not with my eyes,  
but to look with my heart  
He taught me to look beyond the stereotype,  
And to look into their eyes.  
to look for what's inside of them.  
To find out whom they really are.  
He showed me a different life,  
a life with equality ,  
a life without limits.  
A life where everyone was free.  
He taught me to love.  
He taught me to live.  
He taught me to take a chance,  
and gave me a glance at happiness.  
This man lives in all of us.  
He lives in our heart.  
He shows us the path.  
It's up to us to walk it.

Joe Schaeperkoetter, West Junior High, 9th Grade, Teacher Ms. Dobbs

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### Chains

You hear the rain patter on the window  
You feel the breeze that dances on your face and glides through your hair  
You smell the beautiful flowers that the honeybees gather  
You taste the sweet berries that grow on the green bushes  
You see the majestic waves splash onto the sandy shores  
and the dolphins leap  
into the air  
All are free.  
The rain, the breeze, the flowers, the berries, and the waves.  
All should be.  
Yet some  
Are still bound  
In chains  
Of racism  
And hate.  
Why?  
Because  
They are Different  
From those who bind them.

Caitlin Loyne, Gentry Middle School, 8th Grade, Teacher Mrs. Tilly

## Judge for My Inner-person, Not by My Race or Nationality

Martin Luther King, Jr. vividly announced to everyone how much he wanted his four children to live where they were not judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character. His dream somewhat came true, but the evil of prejudice still lurks among the people of the United States, and as well in other countries.

Every individual has different amounts of intelligence, beauty, ambition, kindness, and other characteristics, which create their personality. Each individual may use these qualities differently than others, which may be the cause of stereotypes. One individual's actions do not develop or set any kind of criteria as to what everyone else in that particular race should act, feel, and present themselves as. Judging someone by his or her race is simply unfair. Someone's skin color means nothing, but the character within that person does. How would you feel to have to be the topic of the hurtful jokes others make about you because of your race? How would you feel to be left alone because of your race? How would you feel to be ignored because of your race? No one really thinks about those questions until it happens to them. We tend to always think about ourselves, rather than to think about how our actions would affect someone else. Maybe one day there will be an opportunity when all of the races/nationalities of our world could work hand in hand without thinking twice about the color of the skin. We do not choose to be one race/nationality or another. We are who we are, and everyone needs to accept the fact that everyone is equal, and unique to our world. Our world has different "splashes" of life, and looks. What would it be like if there was only one way of living, looking, and being?

There are many people who are disgusted by one or more particular race/nationality, but are simply not aware that they enjoy the everyday entertainment, foods, and music, which have been contributed from that race.

The value of a person can be found through conversations, talents, etc., but the value of a person is not shown by their appearance or race/nationality. Get to know a person before you judge them.

**Kaneshya Lucas, West Junior High School, 8th Grade, Teacher Mr. Fagan**

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### Color of Friendship

They may be of a different color than you,  
but standing next to you in the shadows,  
they are as dark as you.

When next to you in the spotlight,  
they are as bright as you.

When grieving with you in a time of sorrow  
they are as blue as you.

When raving in your excitement,  
they are as happy as you.

When bellowing in your sickness,  
they are as green as you.

When stoned in panic,  
they are purple with you.

When you are hot with embarrassment,  
they are as red as you.

When colored with diversity,  
they see the rainbow with you.

We all can look different but inside we all feel the same colors.

**Jovonna Ferguson, Rock Bridge High, 12th Grade, Teacher Mrs. Turner**

Black, White, Muslim, Jew need to join together not just a few,  
For it isn't the color of the skin or race, what hurts us is a heart that hates.  
When we embrace our differences, which makes us unique  
We'll feel a change in the way we think.  
Of our differences, Americans should be proud, and as one voice, pledge our allegiance aloud.

**Taylor Cowan, Ridgeway Elementary, 5th Grade, Ms. Seymour**

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### **Does It Really Matter?**

Does it really matter about my nationality,  
or  
About the color of my skin?  
Does it matter how I walk or talk?  
Does it matter whether I am rich or poor,  
or  
About the clothes I wear, how I look  
or  
How I see the world through my eyes?  
For  
I was made the way I am,  
And  
Given all I have from birth.  
I was born into my heritage  
And  
I choose the way I act.  
I am proud for who I am,  
But don't judge me for all of these things,  
For it's the character that counts,  
1,2,3...  
That's adding up to equal the real  
You and Me.

**Debbie Saha, Gentry Middle School, 7th Grade, Teacher McClintic**

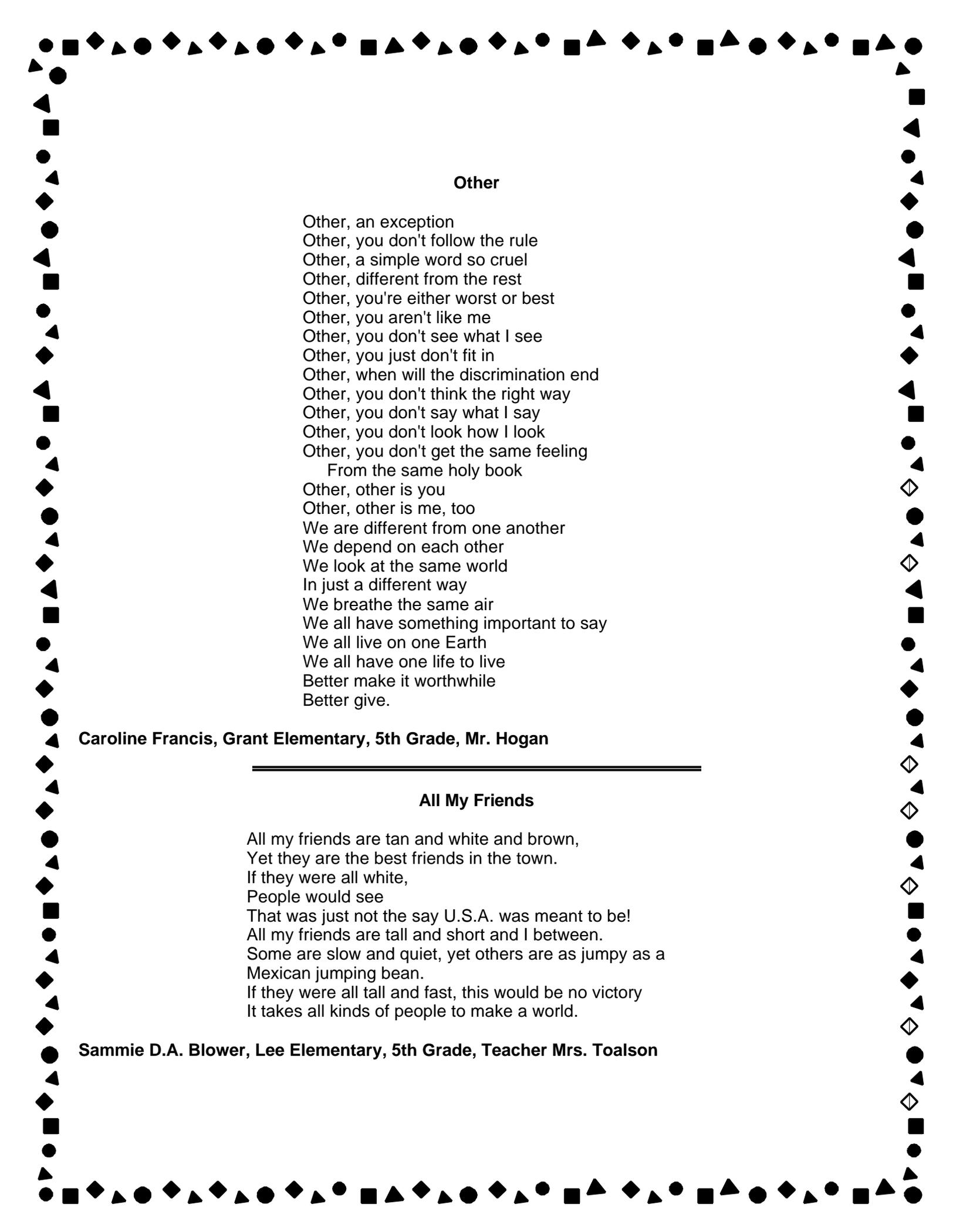
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### **Does it Matter?**

It doesn't matter shape or size,  
It all depends on what's inside,  
It doesn't matter color or religion,  
Or whether you can draw with precision.  
It doesn't matter Muslim or Jew,  
It's more important to be you.  
It doesn't matter woman or man,  
Just trying to be the best that you can,  
It doesn't matter young or old,  
Or if you have a heart of gold,  
What DOES matter, is that we stick together,  
And make the world a place that's better.

**Adithi Vellore, Ridgeway Elementary, 5th Grade, Ms. Seymour**



### Other

Other, an exception  
Other, you don't follow the rule  
Other, a simple word so cruel  
Other, different from the rest  
Other, you're either worst or best  
Other, you aren't like me  
Other, you don't see what I see  
Other, you just don't fit in  
Other, when will the discrimination end  
Other, you don't think the right way  
Other, you don't say what I say  
Other, you don't look how I look  
Other, you don't get the same feeling  
    From the same holy book  
Other, other is you  
Other, other is me, too  
We are different from one another  
We depend on each other  
We look at the same world  
In just a different way  
We breathe the same air  
We all have something important to say  
We all live on one Earth  
We all have one life to live  
Better make it worthwhile  
Better give.

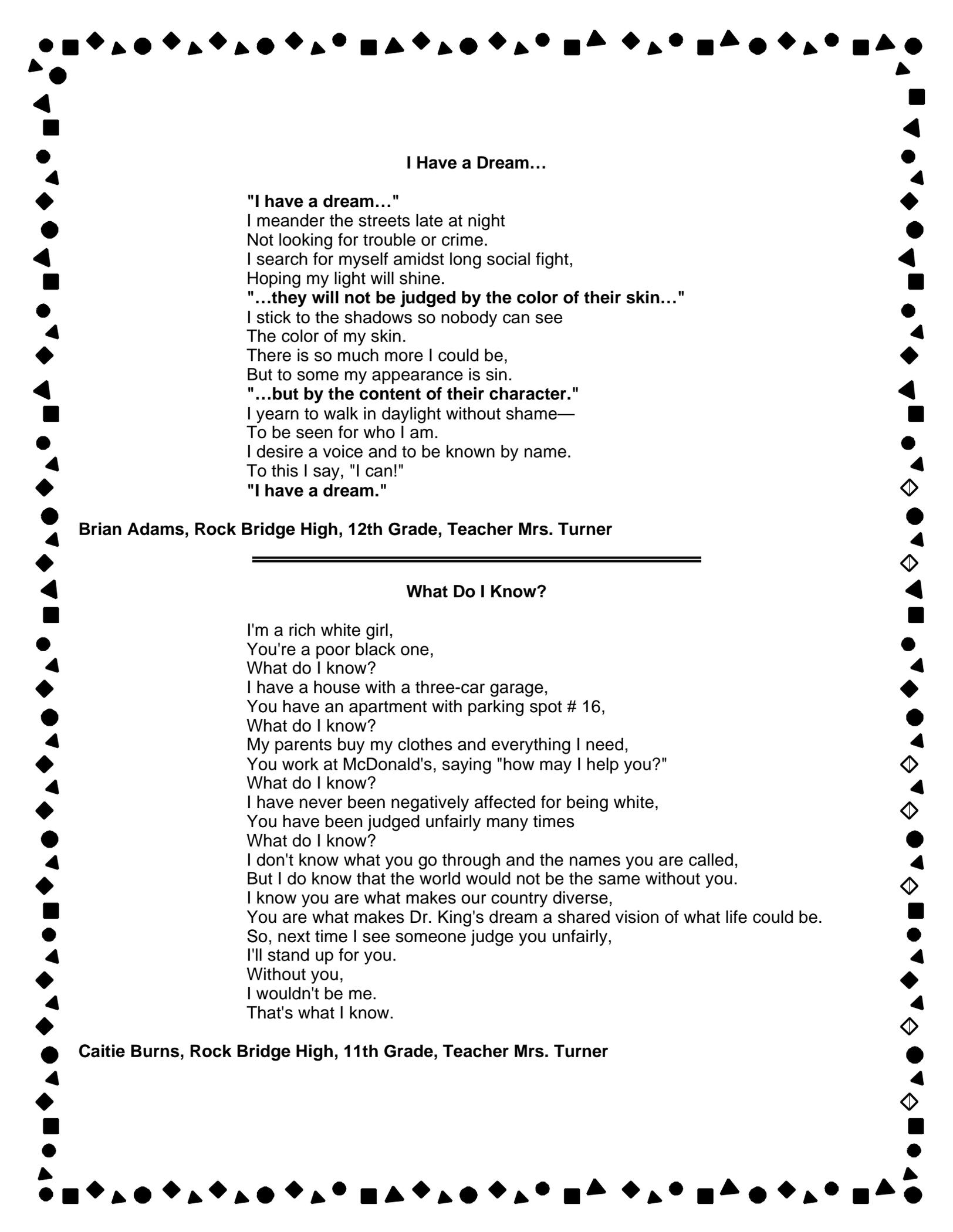
**Caroline Francis, Grant Elementary, 5th Grade, Mr. Hogan**

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### All My Friends

All my friends are tan and white and brown,  
Yet they are the best friends in the town.  
If they were all white,  
People would see  
That was just not the way U.S.A. was meant to be!  
All my friends are tall and short and I between.  
Some are slow and quiet, yet others are as jumpy as a  
Mexican jumping bean.  
If they were all tall and fast, this would be no victory  
It takes all kinds of people to make a world.

**Sammie D.A. Blower, Lee Elementary, 5th Grade, Teacher Mrs. Toalson**



### I Have a Dream...

**"I have a dream..."**

I meander the streets late at night  
Not looking for trouble or crime.  
I search for myself amidst long social fight,  
Hoping my light will shine.

**"...they will not be judged by the color of their skin..."**

I stick to the shadows so nobody can see  
The color of my skin.

There is so much more I could be,  
But to some my appearance is sin.

**"...but by the content of their character."**

I yearn to walk in daylight without shame—  
To be seen for who I am.

I desire a voice and to be known by name.

To this I say, "I can!"

**"I have a dream."**

**Brian Adams, Rock Bridge High, 12th Grade, Teacher Mrs. Turner**

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### What Do I Know?

I'm a rich white girl,  
You're a poor black one,  
What do I know?

I have a house with a three-car garage,  
You have an apartment with parking spot # 16,  
What do I know?

My parents buy my clothes and everything I need,  
You work at McDonald's, saying "how may I help you?"  
What do I know?

I have never been negatively affected for being white,  
You have been judged unfairly many times  
What do I know?

I don't know what you go through and the names you are called,  
But I do know that the world would not be the same without you.

I know you are what makes our country diverse,  
You are what makes Dr. King's dream a shared vision of what life could be.

So, next time I see someone judge you unfairly,  
I'll stand up for you.

Without you,

I wouldn't be me.

That's what I know.

**Caitie Burns, Rock Bridge High, 11th Grade, Teacher Mrs. Turner**

### My Family Is a Nation

my family is a nation  
and my grandmother is the obdurate dictator  
an antiquated relic  
from an age of intolerance  
issuing decrees and judgements  
she rules the supreme  
in her world  
with no patriotic subjects  
my family is a nation  
my grandmother is the obdurate dictator  
and my father, aunts, and uncle are the disregarding populace  
not seeing the rushing river  
that separates people  
and not seen  
the river disappears  
my family is a nation  
my grandmother is the obdurate dictator  
my father, aunts, and uncle are the disregarding populace  
and their children and grandchildren?  
We are the future

the white	and the brown	and the black	future
the Anglo-Saxon	and the Asian	and the Hispanic	future
the Protestant	and the Jewish	and the Catholic	future

we are  
the multiracial  
the multiethnic  
the multicultural  
the multilingual  
future  
my family is a nation  
my family is the future

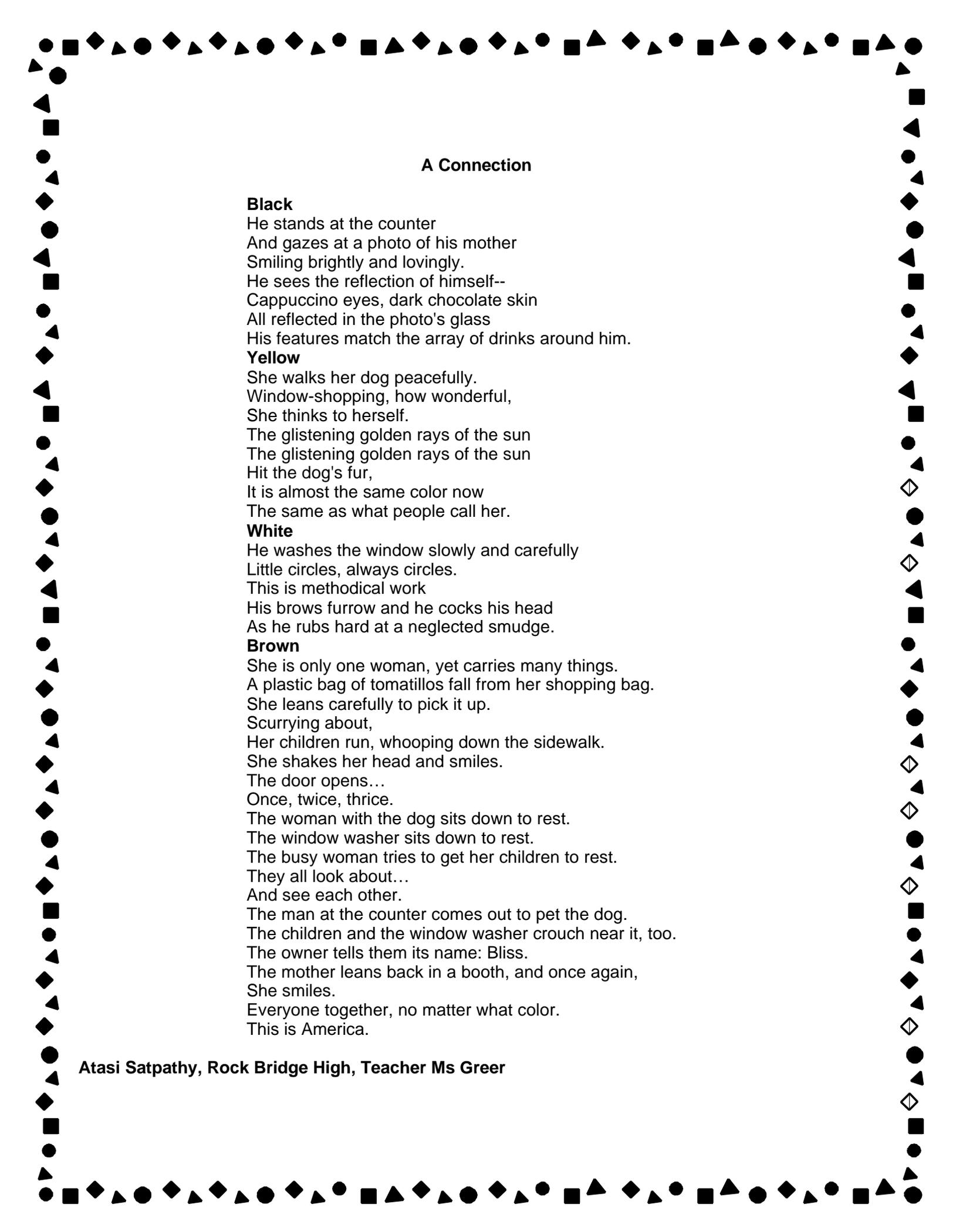
Rachel English, Rock Bridge High School, 10th Grade

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### Colors All Around

Black and White, Black or White, Colors all around.  
Look closely, what do you see?  
They're like a rainbow of colors twirling, whirling all around.  
They won't stop. On and on they go. Faster and Faster. Will they ever stop?  
They're a rainbow, a rainbow not everyone wants to accept.  
But we have to. Will you? It's a choice everyone has to make.

Alicia Lorio, Lee Elementary, 5th Grade, Teacher Mrs. Toalson



## A Connection

### **Black**

He stands at the counter  
And gazes at a photo of his mother  
Smiling brightly and lovingly.  
He sees the reflection of himself--  
Cappuccino eyes, dark chocolate skin  
All reflected in the photo's glass  
His features match the array of drinks around him.

### **Yellow**

She walks her dog peacefully.  
Window-shopping, how wonderful,  
She thinks to herself.  
The glistening golden rays of the sun  
The glistening golden rays of the sun  
Hit the dog's fur,  
It is almost the same color now  
The same as what people call her.

### **White**

He washes the window slowly and carefully  
Little circles, always circles.  
This is methodical work  
His brows furrow and he cocks his head  
As he rubs hard at a neglected smudge.

### **Brown**

She is only one woman, yet carries many things.  
A plastic bag of tomatillos fall from her shopping bag.  
She leans carefully to pick it up.  
Scurrying about,  
Her children run, whooping down the sidewalk.  
She shakes her head and smiles.  
The door opens...  
Once, twice, thrice.  
The woman with the dog sits down to rest.  
The window washer sits down to rest.  
The busy woman tries to get her children to rest.  
They all look about...  
And see each other.  
The man at the counter comes out to pet the dog.  
The children and the window washer crouch near it, too.  
The owner tells them its name: Bliss.  
The mother leans back in a booth, and once again,  
She smiles.  
Everyone together, no matter what color.  
This is America.

Atasi Satpathy, Rock Bridge High, Teacher Ms Greer

## Love

On September 11th I heard about a man helping a woman in a wheel chair down the stairs of a collapsing building. That's brotherhood and that's what stands strong about America. It doesn't matter if you're black or white. It really doesn't matter if you are from Mexico, short, or even fat. "You don't have to like someone, but you always have to love them." That's what my mom always says. I have learned that if you are nice to someone they'll be nice to you.

**Mary Acton, Grant Elementary, 5th Grade, Mr. Hogan**

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## Proud to be an American

We are proud to be known as Americans, as the strong and the brave. It doesn't matter what skin color an individual has, as long as they are a good person inside. You have to look past their skin and deep down. If they've been insulted all of the life, then it might be harder to get through their skin and inside.

Over the past 50 years, Americans have fought and won our freedom with many ethnic groups. They have sacrificed their life for this country during World War 1, World War 2 and the Vietnam War. Without each one caring person, America, today as we know it, might be changed in some way. Each person has a heart and feeling and when those are hurt, they're wounded badly. On half of the population of America is different from whites, so don't judge a person by their skin color, but what they are like inside.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had a dream that one day his children wouldn't be judged by the color of their skin. His words rang through America during the 1950's and stuck with us throughout the years. Although his words meant nothing to whites, blacks heard his words in their minds. Even though slavery was abolished in the 1800's blacks were not thought of as respected people. Over the past years, people have learned to accept and respect blacks for people, as leaders and as Americans.

In America, we don't let the differences in skin color and ethnic groups bother us. We judge a person as an individual and what they are like inside because we are the United States of America. Nothing can get past our many differences and still succeed in breaking us apart. We are one nation that can be stronger than many countries and that is because we stick together in a crisis, as what happened on September 11, 2001, and pull through.

The many differences in America make America a whole. It is the value of the person that is the most important part. In America we do respect one's differences and put their feelings first. We are the United States of America! Don't let our spirit die on account of our differences!

**Katy Epple, West Junior High, 8th Grade, Teacher Mr. Fagan**

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